Errata 2016

The following error on Page 80 of the Minutes of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) is called to the attention of users of that volume:

In Item 00-03, Mary C. (Molly) Baskin should have been listed in the Class of 2018 instead of the Class of 2020.

G. Board of Pensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mary C. (Molly) Baskin WFL 56–65 Chicago LIN PMAB NEW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mary C. (Molly) Baskin WFL 56–65 Chicago LIN PMAB NEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adam Ceteznik WMR 36–45 Seattle ANW AL NEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fairfax Fair WFT 46–55 Detroit COV AL REN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Amy Williams Fowler WFT 56–65 Genesee Valley NE AL REN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Margaret Fox WFL 26–35 Southern New England NE AL NEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Arlene Gordon BFT 66–75 Tropical Florida SA AL REN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mark LuAML 36–45 Los Ranchos SCH AL REN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Katherine (Kathy) Lueckert WFR (D)56–65 Heartland MAM AL NEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. David McBride WML 66–75 New Castle MAT AL NEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Linda Patrick WFL 56–65 Middle Tennessee LW AL REN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Floyd White BMT 46–55 West Jersey NE AL NEW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MINUTES

223rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2018
PART I
JOURNAL

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

Supplements

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OFFICERS

Two Hundred and Twenty-Third General Assembly (2018)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Co-Moderators
Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri
Teaching Elder Cindy Kohlmann

Stated Clerk
Teaching Elder Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II

Associate Stated Clerks
Tricia Dykers-Koenig
Ruling Elder C. Laurie Griffith
Teaching Elder Tom Hay
Teaching Elder Beth Hessel
Ruling Elder Kerry Rice
Teaching Elder Robina Winbush

Assistant Stated Clerks
Cora Brown
The Reverend Timothy Cargal
The Reverend Molly Casteel
The Reverend Luke Choi
Amanda Craft
Deborah Davies
The Reverend Everdith Landrau
Ruling Elder Martha Miller
The Reverend Ji Hyun Oh
Ruling Elder Valerie Izumi
Nancy Taylor
Kris Valerius
Flor Vélez Díaz
Teresa Waggener
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Changes made by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, communications, recommendations, and resolutions of General Assembly entities appear as text enclosed in brackets. Bracketed text that is underlined was added by the assembly to the original text; bracketed text that is stricken was original text deleted by the assembly. Bracketed text with a gray screen background indicates changes made by plenary.

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

Proceedings of the
223rd General Assembly (2018)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Including
Reports of Assembly Committees

The World Wide Web

http://www.pcus.org/ga223
https://www.pc-biz.org/#/

Many of the reports of the General Assembly and the minutes can be found on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Web site: http://oga.pcus.org/section#ga/publications/.
BUSINESS MEETING I

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was convened by Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Preceding this first business meeting, the assembly convened in Hall 5 at 11:00 a.m. with a service of opening worship. Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators, 222nd General Assembly (2016), jointly preached the sermon.

ECUMENICAL PRAYER AND GREETINGS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Debbie Braaksma, area coordinator for Africa, who introduced the Reverend Maï-Aïki Kadade (ecumenical advisory delegate) from the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Niger and the Reverend Seth Agidi (ecumenical representative) from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana, to bring greetings. Rev. Kadade opened the assembly with prayer.

COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS PRESENTATION

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized the Co-Moderators of the St. Louis Committee on Local Arrangements, Carol DeVaughan and Cedric Portis, plus Craig Howard, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy transitional leader, and Vanessa Hawkins, associate presbytery leader. The group welcomed the assembly to St. Louis and the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, and thanked all of the local volunteers. Portis then introduced a video about the ministries of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

REPORT OF THE CO-MODERATORS

Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators, 222nd General Assembly (2016), reflected on their two years as the first Co-Moderators of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

REPORT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY (PMA)

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Presbyterian Mission Agency Acting Co-Executive Directors Rhashell Hunter, Barry Creech, and José Luis Casal for a report from the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Casal introduced a video on the Young Adult Volunteer program. Hunter introduced PMA President and Executive Director Diane Givens Moffett who greeted the assembly, spoke about PMA, and closed the report with prayer.

QUORUM AND ENROLLMENT

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who advised the Co-Moderators that Standing Rule D.2. permitted the roll to be established by registration. Based on preregistration with General Assembly Meeting Services, there would be present at this assembly:

- 538 commissioners from 171 presbyteries
- 142 young adult advisory delegates
- 16 theological student advisory delegates
- 8 missionary advisory delegates
- 14 ecumenical advisory delegates

Stated Clerk Nelson recommended that the roll of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) be established by the list of those who had registered or would register.

The assembly approved that the roll of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) be established by the list of those who had registered or would register.

SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Stated Clerk Nelson, who announced that, in accordance with Standing Rule B.3., corresponding members were designated. Those persons are listed in the Roll of Participants (see p. 1249).

Co-Moderator Edmiston welcomed the corresponding members.
COMMISSIONER ORIENTATION

Co-Moderator Edmiston introduced the orientation leaders: Young Adult Volunteers Maura Drewry, currently serving in New York City; Simon Doong, who served a year in Korea and is currently serving in New York City; and Patrick Long, who served in New Orleans and is now serving in New York City.

As part of the orientation, commissioners received instructions on dividing into small groups. Doong then introduced the people on the platform: J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly; Tom Hay, Associate Stated Clerk and director of assembly operations; the three people who assist the moderator with recognizing speakers waiting at microphones during plenaries: Donnie Woods, stated clerk and executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic, and Kris Valerius and Luke Choi, both of the Office of the General Assembly; and the three platform managers: Don Lincoln, a pastor from the Presbytery of Donegal, Tamara Williams, stated clerk of the Presbytery of Charlotte, and Manuel Silva Esterrich, a pastor from Presbiterio del Noroeste en Puerto Rico.

Drewry asked floor parliamentarians to stand. Commissioners then viewed a floor parliamentarian video. The assembly then reviewed procedures for the use of microphones and paddles during plenaries. Doong then explained interpretation services for Spanish and Korean speakers who wish to speak during plenaries, and interpreters repeated these instructions in Spanish and Korean.

Drewry reminded everyone that the plenaries are open meetings, live streamed around the world. Drewry and Doong then reviewed the procedures for making motions from the floor, both in writing and through PC-Biz.

Doong explained the role of student assistants during the assembly and also reviewed instructions on connecting to wi-fi during plenaries. He then went over electronic voting, reminding commissioners that advisory delegates would vote this year through PC-Biz in order to test out this new method for possible use at future assemblies. Everyone else would vote using the keypads and voting smartcards distributed as commissioners entered the plenary hall.

Co-Moderator Anderson reminded the assembly of the high standards of conduct it is called to follow. Stated Clerk Nelson thanked all of the assembly volunteers and encouraged commissioners to refer to the program book found in registration packets for further information about the assembly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Danny Murphy, moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), who described the process by which the GANC places names in nomination and the procedure for making nominations from the floor.

REPORT ON BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Co-Moderator Anderson called upon Denise Hampton, controller for the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who described the process used in identifying items with budget implications and how that process could inform decisions made during the assembly.

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK ON THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Co-Moderator Anderson called on Stated Clerk Nelson to recommend a committee structure for the assembly as set forth in Standing Rule C.1.a. Nelson proposed the committees as described in Business Item 00-03.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) voted to approve Item 00-03 (approved). (See p. 96.)

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Cheni Khonje, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals, for a report from the committee, assisted by Ryan Landino, vice-moderator of the committee.

The assembly approved Item 01-01, the proposed docket. The assembly approved Item 01-02. The assembly approved Item 01-03. The assembly approved Item 01-04.

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

Assembly Committee on Business Referrals

Item 01-01. Proposed Docket

Approved. [See p. 101.]
Item 01-02. Referrals in Progress and Final Responses to Referrals  
Approved. [See p. 101.]

Item 01-03. Referrals of Business to Assembly Committees  
Approved. [See p. 149.]

Item 01-04. 2018 Final Business List  
Approved. [See p. 155.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS  

Stated Clerk Nelson made several announcements, including a reminder that the deadline for business to be submitted to the assembly was Sunday, June 17, at 1:30 p.m.

Co-Moderator Anderson reminded commissioners that signup sheets for committee hearings were posted and would remain up until Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m. She also directed everyone’s attention to General Assembly News, the official assembly newspaper, which was available online.

SIX AGENCIES VIDEO  

Stated Clerk Nelson introduced a video on the six agencies of the General Assembly.

CLOSING PRAYER  

Teresa Larson, theological student advisory delegate from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS  

The assembly recessed at 4:32 p.m.

Saturday, June 16, 2018, 7:00 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING II  

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

ECUMENICAL GREETING AND OPENING PRAYER  

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Mienda Uriarte, Presbyterian Mission Agency, area coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, who introduced the Reverend Kyoung-Gyun Han (ecumenical representative) from the Presbyterian Church of Korea; the Reverend Jae Cheon Lee (ecumenical advisory delegate) from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea; Elder Dr. Fook-Yee Wong from Hong Kong, and the Reverend Ling Zaw from the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. Rev. Zaw brought greetings to the assembly and led the assembly in prayer.

COMMISSIONING OF COMMISSIONERS FOR THE 223RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2018)  

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized the Reverend Dr. Susan R. Andrews, former Moderator of the PC(USA) and honorably retired minister member of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy; the Reverend Vanessa Hawkins, designated associate presbytery leader, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy; Elizabeth McDonald-Zwoyer, a member of Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis; and Mike Willock, ruling elder, Second Presbyterian Church and moderator of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. The group led the liturgy for commissioning commissioners. Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, then commissioned the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

REMEMBERING COLLEAGUES  

Elizabeth McDonald-Zwoyer then asked the assembly to give thanks for the lives of all the saints, remembering especially the teaching elders who have died since the last General Assembly.
ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR OR CO-MODERATORS


Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Nelson who described the procedure for electing the Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Co-Moderators.

Co-Moderator Anderson announced that they had been advised of the intent to nominate two teams of candidates for the position of Co-Moderator and one team of candidates for the position of Moderator and Vice-Moderator.

Larryetta Ellis from the Presbytery of West Virginia nominated Moderator Candidate Ruling Elder Chantal Atnip from the Presbytery of Carlisle and Vice-Moderator Candidate Teaching Elder Ken Hockenberry from the Presbytery of Chicago.

Ruling Elder Leslie Ferrall from the Presbytery of Seattle nominated Co-Moderator Candidates Teaching Elder Eliana Maxim from the Presbytery of Seattle and Teaching Elder Bertram Johnson from the Presbytery of New York City.

Scott Prouty from the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys nominated Co-Moderator Candidates Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida and Teaching Elder Cynthia Kohlmann from the Presbytery of Boston.

There were no nominations from the floor.

The Moderator candidate and the two pairs of Co-Moderator candidates addressed the General Assembly for five minutes each.

Co-Moderator Edmiston called on Stated Clerk Nelson to explain the use of the speaker-recognition system, and the candidates responded to questions from the floor for forty-five minutes. At the expiration of the time allotted for this process, the candidates met former Moderator Heath Rada backstage at the docket desk.

Co-Moderator Anderson called on Stated Clerk Nelson to explain the voting procedure.

Co-Moderator Edmiston polled advisory delegates and then Co-Moderator Anderson asked commissioners to vote.

On the first ballot, Chantal Atnip and Ken Hockenberry received 45 votes; Eliana Maxim and Bertram Johnson received 250 votes; and Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann received 229 votes. There was no majority.

On the second ballot, Chantal Atnip and Ken Hockenberry received 18 votes; Eliana Maxim and Bertram Johnson received 256 votes; and Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann received 248 votes. There was no majority.

On the third ballot, Chantal Atnip and Ken Hockenberry received 9 votes; Eliana Maxim and Bertram Johnson received 252 votes; and Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann received 261 votes. There was no majority.

On the fourth ballot, Chantal Atnip and Ken Hockenberry received 5 votes; Eliana Maxim and Bertram Johnson received 253 votes; and Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann received 266 votes.

Co-Moderators Anderson and Edmiston declared that Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann were duly elected to the office of Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), having received the majority of votes on the fourth ballot.

RECOGNITION OF FORMER MODERATORS

Co-Moderator Edmiston welcomed the following former Moderators to the platform:

Fahed Abu-Akel 214th General Assembly (2002)
Rick Ufford-Chase 216th General Assembly (2004)
Bruce Reyes-Chow 218th General Assembly (2008)
Neal Presa 220th General Assembly (2012)
Heath Rada 221st General Assembly (2014)

After being escorted back into the hall by former Moderator Rada, Co-Moderators-elect Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann were accompanied to the platform by family members and friends.
INSTALLATION OF NEWLY ELECTED CO-MODERATORS

Retiring Co-Moderators Anderson and Edmiston, along with Stated Clerk Nelson, installed Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann to the office of Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The Reverend Dr. Christopher Benek, pastor and CEO, CO-Creators Network and the 2018 Presbytery of Tropical Florida moderator, led the assembly in prayer for the Co-Moderators.


Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann addressed the assembly briefly.

PRESENTATION TO RETIRING CO-MODERATORS

New Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Carol DeVaughan and Cedric Portis from the Committee on Local Arrangements to make a presentation to the retiring Co-Moderators and to the new Co-Moderators. Stated Clerk Nelson presented retiring Co-Moderators Anderson and Edmiston with replicas of the Celtic cross that has been worn by all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Moderators since 1983.

CLOSING PRAYER

Andrian Jackson, youth advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina, offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 9:32 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2018

Sunday Morning, June 17, 2018

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

BUSINESS MEETING III

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

OPENING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Michelle Muñiz, young adult volunteer alum, who served in Miami in 2013 and 2014, and is now serving as a disaster recovery coordinator in the Presbiterio de San Juan. Muñiz opened the assembly with prayer.

KINDOM TIME

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who introduced the assembly to “Kindom Time,” a fifteen-minute period at the beginning of some of the plenary meetings to reflect together about the experience of being at General Assembly and to share that experience outside the structures of debate and business. At Stated Clerk Nelson’s invitation, the assembly broke into their small groups for five minutes to share their experiences worshipping at local congregations Sunday morning. Plenary attendees then spoke from the floor microphones for ten minutes to share information from their small group discussions.

STATED CLERK’S REPORT

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk Nelson who delivered his report to the assembly. Nelson posed the question, “Why did God bring us here for such a time as this?” He said that collective faithfulness will be the grounding for the transformation of the denomination and called for reform at every level. He challenged the church to move from success to significance and from change to transformation.

223RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2018)
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20

COMMISSIONING OF YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEERS AND PC(USA) MISSION CO-WORKERS

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Presbyterian Mission Agency Acting Co-Executive Director José Luis Casal and Lydia Kim, mission associate in World Mission, to commission young adult volunteers and mission co-workers. PMA President and Executive Director Diane Givens Moffett and Stated Clerk Nelson assisted with the commissioning.

REPORT OF THE 2020 VISION TEAM

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Bernadette Coffee and Lisa Juica Perkins, co-moderators of the 2020 Vision Team, who presented the report of the team with the assistance of team members Deborah G. Foster, Salvador D. Gavald Corchado, Jerrod Lowry, and Becca Snedeker-Meier. The team shared the vision “Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, and Alive” through a presentation and video.

REPORT OF THE WAY FORWARD COMMISSION AND THE ALL-AGENCY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Mark Hostetter, moderator of the Way Forward Commission, and Deborah Block, moderator of the All-Agency Review Committee, who presented the combined reports of the commission and committee. All-Agency Review Committee Vice-Moderator Jim Wilson, and committee members Debra Avery and Marco Grimaldo assisted along with Way Forward Commission Co-Vice-Moderators Eliana Maxim and Eileen Lindner and commission members Samuel Bonner, Mathew Eardley, and Julie Cox.

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE REFORMED PERSPECTIVE ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Stephanie Fritz, moderator, and committee members Matt Rhodes and Emily Chudy from the Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective on Christian Education in the 21st Century, who presented the report of the committee. They referred the assembly to Item 14-06 for the written report [see p. 1217].

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Stated Clerk Nelson for several announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leslie Vogel, missionary advisory delegate serving as regional liaison for Mexico and Guatemala, offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 4:48 p.m.

Sunday, June 17, 2018, 5:00 p.m.

The assembly met in assigned committees, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures beginning at 5:00 p.m. and all other committees at 7:30 p.m.

Monday, June 18, 2018, 8:30 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered in the Ferrara Theatre of America’s Center for Bible study.

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

Tuesday, June 19, 2018, 8:30 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered in the Ferrara Theatre of America’s Center for Bible study.

The assembly met in assigned committees from 9:30 a.m. until noon; from 1:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.; and from 7:30 p.m. until adjournment—or until business was completed.

Wednesday, June 20, 2018, 9:30 A.M.

BUSINESS MEETING IV

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderator Cindy Kohlmann.
Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri, for the Ecumenical Service of Worship. Najla Kassab, president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and an ordained minister in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, preached the sermon, titled “Towards a Kingdom of Reconciliation.”

**Stated Clerk’s Orientation II**

Co-Moderator Kohlmann reconvened the assembly after worship and recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who reminded the assembly that motions may be submitted electronically via PC-Biz. He also went over the different wi-fi options in the plenary hall. Stated Clerk Nelson announced that the consent agenda would be acted on during the Wednesday afternoon plenary and urged the assembly to take a few minutes to review the consent agenda in advance.

**Report of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures**

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Cheni Khonje, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, and Ryan Landino, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee. Moderator Khonje brought one item for action and three for information. The assembly approved Item 02-04, the proposed docket, which indicated the order in which committee reports would be heard.

Moderator Khonje introduced for information Item 02-03, the Bills and Overtures Report 1, which contained the actions of the committee related to the referral of commissioners’ resolutions.

Vice-Moderator Landino reported for information that Item 02-01 contained the minutes of the General Assembly Plenaries 1 and 2 from Saturday, June 16, 2018. Item 02-02 contained the minutes of Plenary 3 on Sunday afternoon, June 17, 2018. These minutes have been reviewed and found to be in order. Additional minutes will be added throughout the week and will be posted under Committee 02.

**Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures**

**Report One**

**I. For Plenary Action**

Item 02-04. Proposed Docket.

Approved. [See p. 158.]

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

9:30 AM Plenary 4
Ecumenical Worship Service
Stated Clerk Commissioner Orientation II
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
Report of General Assembly Nominating Committee
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Lunch

2:00 PM Plenary 5
Opening Prayer
Guest Speaker Chaplain Margaret Kibben
Consent Agenda
Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Issues (07)
Assembly Committee on Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions (14)
Announcements
Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts and PC(USA) Partnership
Closing Prayer
Dinner

7:00 PM Plenary 6
Opening Prayer
Kindom Time
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, and the Foundation (13)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination Committee Report (10)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess

Thursday, June 21, 2018

8:30 AM  Plenary 7
Opening Prayer
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mid Councils (05)
Assembly Committee on Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues (09)
11:15 AM Worship
Lunch

1:30 PM  Plenary 8
Opening Prayer
Memorial Minutes for Jack Rogers and Benjamin Wier
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on The Way Forward (04)
Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (11)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Dinner
Recess

Friday, June 22, 2018

8:30 AM  Plenary 9
Opening Prayer
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Environmental Issues (08)
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures Committee Report (03)
11:15 AM Worship
Lunch

1:30 PM  Plenary 10
Opening Prayer
Kindom Time
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues (12)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Dinner

7:00 PM  Plenary 11
Opening Prayer
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess

Saturday, June 23, 2018

9:00 AM  Plenary 12
Opening Prayer
II. For Information

Item 02-01. Minutes of the General Assembly, Plenaries 1 and 2. [See p. 157.]

In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for Plenaries 1 and 2 from Saturday, June 16, 2018, have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for Assembly Committee 02 (Bills and Overtures).

Item 02-02. Minutes of the General Assembly, Plenary 3. [See p. 157.]

In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for Plenary 3 from Sunday, June 17, 2018, have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for Assembly Committee 02 (Bills and Overtures).

Item 02-03. Referral of Commissioners’ Resolutions. [See p. 157.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09-12</td>
<td>On North Korean Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-13</td>
<td>On Prayer for the People of Nicaragua</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>Suicide Prevention Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-21</td>
<td>Responding to People Impacted by Opioids and Other Addictive Substances</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-14</td>
<td>Stop the Separation of Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-10</td>
<td>On Gaza Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-12</td>
<td>On Supporting the Reclaiming of Jesus Statement with Prayer and Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-07</td>
<td>On Covenant Agreement Between the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-22</td>
<td>On Advocating for the Citizens of Puerto Rico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03-22</td>
<td>On Directing the Office of the General Assembly to Develop a Plan for Cost-Reduction Measures for Meetings of the PC(USA) General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-08</td>
<td>On Transferring Fruitland Presbyterian from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-23</td>
<td>On Appointing Commission to Consider Social Impact of Automation</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-15</td>
<td>On Denouncing Violence and Injustice in Nicaragua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-11</td>
<td>On Issuing a Jubilee Declaration for Church Mortgage Grants</td>
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<td>12-11</td>
<td>Resolution on Reconciliation Ministries in Israel and Palestine</td>
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<td>05-09</td>
<td>On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC(USA)</td>
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<td>03-23</td>
<td>On Permitting Advisory Delegates to Have a Full Vote in Moderator Elections in Future General Assemblies</td>
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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE:
REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Dianna Wright, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report from the committee. Moderator Wright reported the per capita expenditure budget approved by the committee is a revised 2018 budget proposal of $14,064,357, a total of $14,338,326 for 2019, and $14,032,303 for 2020. Moderator Wright reported that the committee had recommended an increase in the per capita apportionment to $8.50 for 2019 and $8.50 for 2020.
On Saturday morning, the committee will present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the per capita budget for 2019 and 2020.

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

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Walter Rockenstein, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report on financial implications to the mission budget of actions taken at this assembly. Moderator Rockenstein reported the total financial implications of actions under consideration by the assembly for the mission budget were: $1,165,607 for 2019, and $1,010,091 for 2020. On Saturday morning, the committee will present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the mission budget for 2019 and 2020.

**NOMINATIONS INFORMATION**

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Stated Clerk Nelson for information regarding nominations. The Stated Clerk reported that there had been no challenges to the nominees of the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), found in Item 00-01 (see p. 85), and the Co-Moderators’ nominations to the GANC, found in Item 00-02 (see p. 95); therefore, per the standing rules, these unchallenged nominations in Item 00-01 and Item 00-02 were now included in the consent agenda.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Danny Murphy, moderator of the GANC, who reported that the assembly would have before it on Thursday afternoon, Recommendation 04-03 that restructures the governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, also known as A Corp. If approved, the assembly would elect the new A Corp Saturday morning.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Stated Clerk Nelson for several announcements.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized William Reinowski, theological student advisory delegate from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

The assembly recessed at 11:40 a.m.

**BUSINESS MEETING V**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

**OPENING GREETINGS AND PRAYER**

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Miriam Foltz, a young adult volunteer alum who served in Northern Ireland in 2010 and 2011, and now serves as the organizing pastor of UKirk in St. Louis, who brought greetings and offered prayer.

**GUEST SPEAKER CHAPLAIN MARGARET KIBBEN**

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Rear Admiral Margaret Grun Kibben, chief of chaplains, United States Navy, who spoke to the assembly about chaplaincy. Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, presented Chaplain Kibben with a gift.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri introduced the Wednesday Consent Agenda, found in PC-Biz as the Wednesday Consent Agenda. The Wednesday Consent Agenda included recommendations from committees that had been approved by 75 percent or more of the committee members. Items that were approved by less than 75 percent would be voted on individually in plenary. In addition, items that do not have constitutional implications or, in the judgment of the committee leaders, do not represent business requiring discussion by the full assembly are included in the consent agenda. When the consent agenda was presented to the body for a vote, commissioners voted for all the items included, without any alterations, in a single vote.
Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Cheni Khonje, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who led the assembly through the consent agenda process. Moderator Khonje moved the agenda. Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri announced that if a commissioner wished to have an item removed from the Wednesday Consent Agenda, they should go to one of the microphones.

Items removed from Wednesday Consent Agenda:

08-12 On Supporting Carbon Pricing—From the Presbytery of New Covenant, On Supporting Carbon Pricing. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 754–55.]

09-06 A Resolution on Global Order and National Purpose—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Referred with Comment. [See pp. 771–72]

11-02 On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. Approved as Amended. [See p. 991.]

11-18 Responding to Racist Nationalism. Approved as Amended. [See p. 1072.]


12-10 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Gaza Violence. Approved as Amended. [See p. 1152.]

14-12 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Supporting the Reclaiming Jesus Statement with Prayer and Study. Referred with Comment. [See p. 1224.]

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

**Wednesday Consent Agenda**

00-01 General Assembly Nomination Committee 2018 Nominations. Approved. [See p. 85.]

00-02 Co-Moderators’ Nominations to GANC. Approved. [See p. 95.]

03-02 Associate Stated Clerks—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approve. [See pp. 161–62.]

03-03 Amendment to *Organization for Mission*—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. [See p. 163.]

03-04 2024 Site Recommendation—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. [See p. 163.]

03-05 Approval of National Certifying Bodies—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. [See p. 163.]

03-10 Amending Standing Rule A.6.h. to Make Clear What Happens if Assembly Overturns Bills and Overtures Decision Not to Refer an Item of Business—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. [See p. 176.]

03-12 Amending Standing Rule E.2.f.(3) Regarding Privilege to Speak—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. [See p. 177.]

03-13 Amending Standing Rule E.5.a. Reviewing the Rules for Who Can Appropriately Use the Public Hearings to Address the Committee—From the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. [See pp. 177–78.]


03-16 Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Regarding Commissions and Special Commissions—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. [See p. 179.]


04-01 On Appointing a Team to Review the Current Per Capita Based System of Funding the Ministry of Councils Higher Than the Session—From the Presbytery of Newton. Approved as Amended. [See p. 355.]

05-01 On Realigning the Border Between the Synod of the Northeast and the Synod of the Trinity so the Village of Waverly, New York, Shall Be Within the Synod of the Trinity and the Presbytery of Lackawanna—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley. Approved. [See p. 527.]

05-02 On Changing the Name of Eastern Korean Presbytery—From the Synod of the Northeast. Approved. [See p. 528.]

05-05 On Changing the Boundaries within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies—From the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Approved. [See p. 531.]

05-07 On Changing the Name of Midwest Hanmi Presbytery—From the Synod of Lincoln Trails. Approved. [See p. 534.]

05-08 Commissioners’ Resolution: On Transferring Fruitland Presbyterian from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast. Approved. [See p. 535.]

07-02 Churches to Invite to send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Approved. [See pp. 660–61.]


07-04 Report of the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Dialogue. Approved. [See p. 662.]

07-05 Prospectus for the Third Round of Dialogue Between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Approved as Amended. [See p. 666.]

07-06 Prospectus for the Ninth Round of Dialogue Between Reformed Churches in the United States and United States Conference of Bishops—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Referred. [See p. 667.]

08-06 The Earth Is the Lord’s—Not Ours to Ruin: Priorities for a New Moral Era—From the Presbytery of Monmouth. Approved. [See p. 712.]

08-09 On Advocacy for Climate Change Action and a Thriving Lower-Carbon Economy—From the Twin Cities Area Presbytery. Answered with Action on another Resolution. [See p. 745.]

08-11 Regarding the Use of Products Made of Polystyrene—From the New Covenant Presbytery. Approved as Amended. [See p. 753.]

09-03 On Support of Peace Churches in the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of San Jose. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 761–62.]

09-05 A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns. Approved as Amended. [See p. 768.]


09-15 Commissioners’ Resolution: On Denouncing Violence and Injustice in Nicaragua. Approved as Amended. [See p. 804.]

10-05 Institutional Relationship Agreement Between the General Assembly of PC(USA) and Historically Racial Ethnic Institutions. Approved. [See p. 821.]

10-06 Institutional Relationship Agreement between Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. and the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Approved. [See p. 824.]

10-10 Approve List of Presbyterian Related Schools and Colleges—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Approved as Amended with Comments. [See pp. 830–31.]


11-04 On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty—From the Presbytery of Boise. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 996–97.]

11-05 Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Name Change—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 998–99.]

11-08 A Report with Recommendations on Drug Policy: Putting Healing Before Punishment—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Approve as Amended. [See pp. 1001–1005.]

11-12 On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities—From the Presbytery of New Castle. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 1050–51.]

11-13 On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church. Approved as Amended. [See p. 1054.]

11-15 A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). Approved as Amended. [See pp. 1060–61.]

11-16 A Resolution on Honest Patriotism—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Approved. [See pp. 1064–66.]

11-17 Declaration on Where We Stand Regarding Concerns About Direction Towards Autocracy That This Country Is Taking. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 1070–71.]

11-19 Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy Self-Study. Approved. [See p. 1073.]

11-20 Commissioners’ Resolution: Suicide Prevention Resolution. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 1095–96.]

11-21 Commissioners’ Resolution: Responding to People Impacted by Opioids and Other Addictive Substances. Approved as Amended. [See p. 1098.]

11-24 Commissioners’ Resolution: On the Degradation of Civil Discourse. Approved as Amended. [See p. 1104.]

12-01 On Opposition to Congressional and State Anti-BDS Legislation—From the Synod of the Covenant. Approved as Amended. [See p. 1117.]

12-03 On Creating a Task Force to Examine NCCOP’s Call to Ecumenical Solidarity for Justice for Palestinians—From the Presbytery of Grace. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 1126–27.]

12-04 On Responding to the Open Letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) to the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Movement—From the Presbytery of San Francisco. Answered with Action on another Resolution. [See pp. 1130–31.]

12-06 For the Protection of the Children of Israel and Palestine—From the Presbytery of Philadelphia. Disapproved. [See pp. 1138–39.]

12-08 A Resolution on the Status of Jerusalem—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns. Approved. [See pp. 1145–46.]

12-09 On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis—From the Presbytery of the Cascades. Approved as Amended with Comments. [See pp. 1148–49.]
12-12 Commissioners’ Resolution: On Ending the Classification of Israel as a “Colonial Project.” Disapproved. [See p. 1155.]

12-13 Commissioners’ Resolution: On Opposing and Disengagement from Iran. Approved. [See p. 1158.]

13-01 On Creating an Administrative Commission to Work with the Synod of the Northeast Regarding the Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Fund—From the Presbytery of Huntingdon. Approved Alternate Resolution. [See p. 1165.]

13-02 Confirm Individuals to PILP Board of Directors—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Approved. [See p. 1170.]

13-03 Confirm the Director of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.—From the Presbyterian Foundation. Approved. [See p. 1170.]

13-06 Continue the Churchwide Gifts Program for the Benefit of Churches—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Approved. [See p. 1171.]

13-07 On Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Launch of the Jarvie Program—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. Approved as Amended. [See p. 1172.]

13-08 On Creating a Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review of the Governance of the Jarvie Commonweal Service—From the Presbytery of New York City. Answered with Action on another Resolution. [See p. 1174.]

13-10 Living by the Gospel: A Guide to Structuring Ministers’ Terms of Call—From the Board of Pensions. Approved as Amended. [See pp. 1176–77.]

13-11 Commissioners’ Resolution: On Issuing a Jubilee Declaration for Church Mortgage Grants. Approved Alternate Resolution. [See p. 1178.]

14-02 On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Rec. 01. Referred. [See p. 1198.]


14-02 On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Rec. 03. Referred. [See pp. 1198–99.]


14-02 On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Rec. 05. Referred. [See p. 1199.]

14-02 On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Rec. 06. Referred. [See p. 1200.]


14-02 On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Rec. 08. Referred. [See p. 1200.]


14-07 Approve New Trustees Elected by PC(USA) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education. Approved with Comment. [See p. 1220.]

14-08 Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Serve the Lord’s Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education. Approved. [See p. 1221.]
Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Scott Prouty and Vice-Moderator Susan Etherton of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, for the committee report.

Moderator Prouty presented Co-Moderators Cintrón-Olivieri and Kohlmann with pocket prayer crosses.

Moderator Prouty moved Item 07-01 as amended. It was approved.

Vice-Moderator Etherton called on Mienda Uriarte, area coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, to speak briefly on Item 07-07. Vice-Moderator Etherton moved Item 07-07 as amended. It was approved.

Vice-Moderator Etherton recognized Executive Secretary Carlos Malavé of Christian Churches Together who addressed the assembly.

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

**Assembly Committee on Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations**

**Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.**

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

### I. Plenary Action

**Item 07-01. On America’s Interfaith Context and the Church’s Challenge—From the Presbytery of Carlisle.**

Approved as amended. [See p. 657.]

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

2. Condemn all religiously inspired and motivated violence, prejudice, discrimination, and hate speech, in particular, those actions based upon anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim behaviors and language.

3. Affirm our positions as stated in “The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” 221st General Assembly (2014); “Toward a Christian Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations,” 219th General Assembly (2010); “A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews: A Paper Commended to the Church for Study and Reflection, 199th General Assembly (1987); A Study on Islam approved by the 199th General Assembly (1987).”

4. Call upon all Presbyterians to continue to live repentantly by seeking reconciliation with all religious groups who have been hurt by unjust actions and words of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with those who have hurt Presbyterians and ecumenical partners in the United States and overseas.

5. Encourage presbyteries to create promote interfaith relations committees or task forces to promote interfaith relations, dialogue, and understanding by creating committees, task forces, or something of a similar nature."

**Item 07-02. Churches to Invite to send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.**

Approved. [See pp. 660–61.]

**Item 07-03. Report of the Reformed Churches and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Dialogue—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.**

Referred to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [See p. 661.]

**Item 07-04. Episcopal Church and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Dialogue Report—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.**

Approved. [See p. 662.]

**Item 07-05. Prospectus for the Third Round of Dialogue Between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.**
Amend the third bullet of Recommendation 3 as follows: [Text to be stricken is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“● [Recognizing we are in a post-Christendom world, and using] [Using] a historic and socioeconomic lens, explore and examine how our ecclesiological identities, doctrines, systems, and institutions have been used with prejudicial power to “other-ize” and exclude people from our denominations, especially in the areas of class and race. What “idols” do we have that prevents us from fully participating in God’s mission and reconcile all things, including our two denominations, to God (relating, again, to Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 of the agreement)?”


Item 07-07. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Covenant Agreement Between the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Approved as amended. [See p. 668.]

“That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) ask that the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, in partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, [develop] [explore the possibility of developing] a covenant relationship with GMIM. This covenant relationship will be developed in consultation with presbyteries having significant Indonesian and Minahasan-speaking members. A [final] report is to be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).”

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

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

Approved with comment. [See p. 669.]

Comment: Receive GACEIR 2017 Minutes, with one comment:

Page 8—Refers to presidential campaign of 2017 [sic], should be 2016.

Receive GACEIR 2016 Minutes, with one comment:

Page 13—Executive Committee did not adjourn with prayer.

Item 07-Info

A. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda [See p. 669.]

B. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Agency Summary [See p. 670.]


D. National Council of Churches of Christ Report to PC(USA) [See p. 675.]

E. World Communion of Reformed Churches Report to PC(USA) [See p. 682.]

F. World Council of Churches Report to PC(USA) [See p. 690.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL AND CHURCH GROWTH ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Anne H.K. Apple and Vice-Moderator Miriam Foltz of the Assembly Committee on Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions.

Vice-Moderator Foltz introduced a video on the new worshipping community initiative in Kalispell, Montana, the skateboard ministry Serious Juju.

Vice-Moderator Foltz and Moderator Apple introduced Item 14-09. Vice-Moderator Foltz called on Tom Trinidad, chair of the Committee on Theological Education, who recognized the two winners of the Award for Excellence in Theological Education, Douglas Oldenburg and Katie Geneva Cannon, and introduced a video tribute to the honorees. Moderator Apple moved Item 14-09. It was approved with amendment.

Moderator Apple moved Item 14-10. It was approved.
Moderator Apple moved Item 14-06. A motion was made to amend paragraph 1.a. The amendment was approved. Item 14-06 was approved as amended in plenary.

Vice-Moderator Foltz moved Item 14-11. It was approved. Dr. Alton B. Pollard, III, then addressed the assembly.

Moderator Apple moved Item 14-01. A motion was made to amend Recommendation 2. to strike the word “unfair” and replace with “unjust.” The amendment was approved. A motion was made to amend Recommendation 2. to strike the word “near.” The amendment was approved. The assembly approved Item 14-01 as amended.

Moderator Apple moved Item 14-03 with comment. It was approved.

Moderator Apple moved to disapprove Item 14-04. The assembly voted to disapprove Item 14-04.

Moderator Apple moved Item 14-12 with referral as amended. A motion was made to amend the referral to include language that: “[The assembly calls for an examination by members, congregations, and presbyteries of what it means to be a people ‘Reclaiming Jesus,’ the Jesus of scriptures. We commend for study, comment, and prayer the resources that the ‘Reclaiming Jesus’ movement gives, including the Reclaiming Jesus statement and its summary, its Bible studies, and its Civil Discourse Curricula.]” The amendment was approved. Item 14-12 to refer was approved as amended in plenary.

Moderator Apple moved an alternative resolution as Item 14-05. The alternative resolution was approved.

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

Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

I. Plenary Action

Item 14-01. On Developing a Letter to Accompany the Confession of Belhar—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1193.]

Amend 2. to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.]

“2. Include within the development of this U.S. accompanying letter such topics as [unfair] [unjust] land acquisition; [near] genocide of native peoples; the enslavement of African men, women, and children; and a system of white privilege that unfairly discriminates against people of color.”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $13,364. Total—$26,728]

*Item 14-02. On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

Referred to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship, to be brought back to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [See pp. 1198–1201.]

Item 14-03. On Amending W-4.0202 Concerning Participation in the Lord’s Supper by Baptized Children—From the Presbytery of Grace.

Approved with comment. [See p. 1205.]

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 14-03, directing the Stated Clerk to send the proposed amendment along with the rationale and comments from the ACC and PMA, and advice from the ACC to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes.

Item 14-04. On Amending W-4.0404 by Adding Constitutional Questions to the Installation of Ministers of Word and Sacrament to Be Answered by Members of the Presbytery—From the Presbytery of Wabash Valley.

Disapproved. [See p. 1206.]
SItem 14-05. On Adopting the “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” Written by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as a Contemporary Statement of Faith (But Not with Constitutional Standing)—from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Approved the following alternative resolution: [See p. 1208.]

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) commends the “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” written by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to the church for study, as a resource that provides prophetic witness that inspires, challenges, and educates both church and world, and furthermore, to begin the process outlined in G-6.03 to include it in the Book of Confessions.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $20,540. Total—$41,080]

SItem 14-06. Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1217.]

Amend Item 14-06 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.]

“The General Assembly’s Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

“1. Encourage the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to adjust to a shift in Christian education paradigms and practices over the last several decades and therefore

   “a. support the restructuring, resourcing, and staffing of the ministry area of Christian formation, working to [deemphasize] [include and expand upon] [continue resourcing] age and stage Christian education[, and instead focus on] [by developing] [while transitioning to an emphasis on] lifelong Christian education and faith formation, especially intergenerational ministry;

   “b. encourage the newly structured ministry area of Christian formation to dedicate resources to be focused on supporting local congregations (facilitating the networking, coaching, and training of local leaders).

   “2. Direct that curriculum and/or resources produced by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and [Congregational Ministries Publishing] [Geneva Press] shall be in consultation and collaboration with the ministry area[s] of Christian Formation [and Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries] of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Moreover, PPC and Geneva Press should make it a priority to hire culturally proficient and multilingual staff to produce culturally sensitive and appropriate resources.]

   “3. Direct the [Office of the] General Assembly [to adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report] to collect disaggregated data on certified Christian educators and non-certified Christian educators (employed or volunteer who are functioning as staff).

   “[Recommendations 4. through 6. remain unchanged.]”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $13,732. Total—$27,464]

*Item 14-07. Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education.

Approved with comment. [See p. 1220.]

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions recommends that the assembly direct the Committee on Theological Education to encourage member theological institutions to actively recruit Native American, Hispanic, and other underrepresented communities, as well as equal and appropriate gender representation, as members for these boards of trustees.

*Item 14-08. Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord’s Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education.

Approved. [See p. 1221.]

Item 14-09. Recognize Persons for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education—From the Committee on Theological Education.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1221.]
Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Schedule [three minutes each] docket time in plenary session to celebrate with each awardee.”

Item 14-10. Recommendations from the Committee on Theological Education Self Study Report, Fall 2010–Fall 2017. Approved. [See p. 1222.]

Item 14-11. Approval of Seminary President and Request for Docket Time for President-Elect to Make Brief Remarks—From the Committee on Theological Education. Approved as amended. [See p. 1223.]

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

“2. Approve [three minutes of] docket time in the plenary session for Dr. Pollard to make brief remarks.”

*Item 14-12. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Supporting the Reclaiming Jesus statement with Prayer and Study. Referred to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship, with amendment and with comment. [Actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.] [See p. 1224.]

Comment: [The assembly calls for an examination by members, congregations, and presbyteries of what it means to be a people “Reclaiming Jesus,” the Jesus of scriptures. We commend for study, comment, and prayer the resources that the “Reclaiming Jesus” movement gives, including the Reclaiming Jesus statement and its summary, its Bible studies and its Civil Discourse Curricula.] The committee also made an editorial correction to Recommendation 4. to update the number and the year as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[3.] [4.] Encourages the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its 224th General Assembly [(2018)] [(2020)], to endorse the Reclaiming Jesus movement through signing onto its statement.”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita 2019 Total $105,000]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 14-A. Minutes, Committee on Theological Education

Approved with comment: [See pp. 1225–26.]

Comment: Although it was necessary to involve two different clerks over the course of the past two years, consistency is needed in presentation of the minutes:

1. Persons attending should be referenced by their full name or with title.

2. Care should be exercised in recording actions as motions and votes with less emphasis on recording discussion, especially when discussion notes are unclear, spotty, and incomplete. The minutes from February 21 are more helpful in clarity. Earlier minutes were less clear.

These comments were also part of the recommendation to approve with comment by the Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Item 14-Info

A. Committee on Theological Education Self-Study, Fall 2010–Fall 2017 [See p. 1226.]

B. Committee on Theological Education Agency Summary [See p. 1233.]

CELEBRATION OF 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOY SCOUTS AND CLOSING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Phillip E. Melberg, president of the National Association of Presbyterian Scouters. Melberg reported that the National Association of Presbyterian Scouters launched a celebration of the partnership between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Boy Scouts of America, which began in 1918. The observance of the centennial continued through Scout Sunday this past February, and here at the General Assembly.
Brian Frick, the associate for camp and conference ministries, presented Melberg with the highest honor in the National Association of Presbyterian Scouters, the Celtic Cross.

Melberg recognized Eagle Scout Patrick Rouff, who recited the Boy Scout Oath and offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 4:59 p.m.

Wednesday, June 20, 2018, 7:00 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING VI

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

OPENING GREETINGS AND PRAYER

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Robina Winbush, Associate Stated Clerk and director of ecumenical relations. Winbush introduced ecumenical representatives from the United States and Canada: the Reverend Michael Blair of the United Church of Canada; the Reverend Dr. Penny Ross-Corona of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Bishop George D. Crenshaw of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. She also introduced the following ecumenical advisory delegates: the Reverend Hyo-Jung Kim of the United Church of Christ, and Bishop Lemuel Thuston from the Church of God in Christ. Bishop Thuston brought greetings and offered prayer.

KINDOM TIME

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who opened the assembly’s second “Kindom Time.” At Stated Clerk Nelson’s invitation, the assembly broke into their small groups for five minutes to share their experiences with the Public Witness opportunity that occurred the previous day. Plenary attendees then spoke from the floor microphones for ten minutes to share information from their small group discussions.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Cheni Khonje, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee. Moderator Khonje brought one item for action, the docket as amended, Item 02-04 (Docket_REV_06.20.18_corrected.pdf). It was approved. [See p. 158.]

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

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Vince Patton and Vice-Moderator Kathy Westmoreland of the Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, and the Foundation, for the committee report.

Vice-Moderator Westmoreland moved Item 13-04. It was approved. Co-Moderator Kohlmann offered a prayer of thanks giving for the service of Tom Taylor, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Presbyterian Foundation. Taylor briefly addressed the assembly.

Vice-Moderator Westmoreland asked Co-Moderator Kohlmann to recognize Marc Lewis, President and Publisher of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, who briefly addressed the assembly.

Moderator Patton asked Co-Moderator Kohlmann to recognize James Rissler, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., who briefly addressed the assembly.

Moderator Patton asked Co-Moderator Kohlmann to recognize Frank Spencer, President of the Board of Pensions, who briefly addressed the assembly.

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

Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, and the Foundation

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.
I. Plenary Action

*$Item 13-01. On Creating an Administrative Commission to Work with the Synod of the Northeast Regarding the Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Fund—From the Presbytery of Huntingdon.

Approved an alternate resolution: [See p. 1165.]

In regard to the Jarvie Commonweal Endowment, the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) are directed to form a Reconciliation Team to identify and engage those concerned in a peacemaking and reconciliation process, and report out to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual—$75,600. Total—$151,200]

*$Item 13-02. Confirm Individuals to PILP Board of Directors

Approved. [See p. 1170.]

*$Item 13-03. Confirm the Director of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.

Approved. [See p. 1170.]

Item 13-04. Affirm the Election of the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation

Approved. [See p. 1170.]

Item 13-05.

Moved to 13-Info (New Covenant Trust Company) [See p. 1189.]

*$Item 13-06. Continue the Churchwide Gifts Program for the Benefit of Churches

Approved. [See p. 1171.]

*$Item 13-07. On Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Launch of the Jarvie Program

Approved as amended. [See p. 1172.]

Amend Item 13-07 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, through the Board of National Missions (a constituent corporation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation),] [Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, & Foundation] recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. [Text remains the same.]

2. Affirm the [successful transition and] ongoing work of the Jarvie Program in support of elderly beneficiaries[,] and the ongoing oversight of said program by the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee (JCSC) pursuant to the donative documents].

3. Commend [the commissioners to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and others who have collaborated and] [all those who have] worked in good faith and good will [with members of the JCSC and staff of the Presbyterian Foundation] to continue the healthy and strong ministry to the Jarvie family of clients.”

*$Item 13-08. On Creating a Special Committee to Assure Compliance with Donor Restrictions on the Administration of the Jarvie Commonweal Service—From the Presbytery of New York City.

Answered by the action taken on Item 13-01. [See p. 1174.]

Item 13-09

Moved to 13-Info. [See p. 1180.]
*Item 13-10. *Living by the Gospel: A Guide to Structuring Ministers’ Terms of Call*

Approved as amended. [See pp. 1176–77.]

Amend Item 13-10 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Board of Pensions recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) accept the document, *Living by the Gospel: A Guide To Structuring Ministers’ Terms Of Call*, and request the Board of Pensions to annually update and distribute, at the Board of Pensions’ expense, the document to all mid councils, committees on ministry, committees on preparation for ministry, and pastor nominating committees.

“In an effort to promote awareness of gender disparity in clergy benefit and salary packages, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) urges COMs, within twelve months of the close of the assembly, to

“[● study and adopt the theology of benefits in the document *Living by the Gospel*;]

“[● conduct a review of the last five years of salary and benefit statistics by gender in their own context and share the findings with clerks of session, CPMs and candidates for ministry;]

“[● share these statistics annually at presbytery;]

“[● provide a copy of *Living the Gospel* to PNCs and incoming committee members; and,]

“[● in situations where a pastor is not receiving benefits, or when his or her salary is below minimum, require the session to provide a full written explanation to the COM.

“[Replace ‘sisters and brothers in Christ’ with ‘siblings in Christ,’ in good stewardship, as reprinted.]”


In response to Item 13-11, the assembly approved an alternate resolution: [See p. 1178.]

1. Encourages the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to consider forgiveness of mortgage grants established in 1968 or earlier only to congregations closing and turning over their assets to their presbyteries, potentially including the total amount of the grant as well as any accumulated interest.

2. Request the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to inform all affected congregations and their presbyteries as this decision effectively provides debt relief to presbyteries closing congregations and thus may affect presbytery mission strategy as well as the decisions of congregations.

[Financial Implications: PMA Restricted Annual Loss of Revenue $106,485; PMA Restricted Total Loss of Revenue $212,970]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 13-A. Minutes, Board of Pensions

Approved. [See p. 1179.]

Item 13-B. Minutes, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

Approved. [See p. 1179.]

Item 13-C. Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Approved. [See p. 1179.]

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

Approved. [See p. 1179.]

Item 13-Info

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MID COUNCILS

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Moon Lee and Vice-Moderator Bear Ride of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils, and Kennerly Benraty, young adult advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, for the committee report.

Moderator Lee stated that the committee recommended the assembly answer Item 05-03 and Item 05-06 with the alternate resolution found under Item 05-03. Item 05-03, the alternate resolution, was approved. Item 05-06 was answered by the action taken on Item 05-03.

Moderator Lee moved Item 05-09 and invited Young Adult Advisory Delegate Benraty to speak to it. It was approved.

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

Assembly Committee on Mid Councils

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

I. Plenary Action

*Item 05-01. On Realigning the Border Between the Synod of the Northeast and the Synod of the Trinity so the Village of Waverly, New York, Shall Be Within the Synod of the Trinity and the Presbytery of Lackawanna—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

Approved. [See p. 527.]

*Item 05-02. On Changing the Name of Eastern Korean Presbytery—From the Synod of the Northeast.

Approved. [See p. 528.]

$Item 05-03. On Establishing an Administrative Commission to Address Issues in the Synod of the Covenant—From the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

Approved an alternate resolution: [See pp. 528–29.]

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) form an administrative commission to address disorder in the Synod of the Covenant as provided in G-3.0109(b)(5) and in accordance with Standing Rule K.2.(a). The commission shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) persons appointed by the Co-Moderators and shall:

1. Honor the principles of Seeking to Be Faithful Together with the intent to restore trust and mutuality between the synod and its staff with its constituent presbyteries and their staff and elected leadership. All will:
   a. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ.
   b. Share concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom there are disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus’ teachings.
   c. Seek to stay in community though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension.

2. Conduct a Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108(b) for the purpose of inquiring into and settling allegations of disorder:
   a. To review and recommend revisions to synod procedures, to institute changes that are necessary to ensure the fulfillment of the PC(USA) principles of participation and representation as outlined in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. This will include but is not limited to a review of records, bylaws, procedures, policies, and manuals of the synod.
b. To assure effective consultation with the synod committees and commissioners, synod staff, racial ethnic caucuses, Presbyterian Women, presbyteries, presbytery executives, and others as it may determine helpful to its tasks.

c. To assure adequate support for the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations (G-3.0401).

d. To assure adequate communication with and among its presbyteries, G-3.0401(a), through commissioners to synod, presbytery leadership, staff, and others as it may determine helpful to its task.

e. To assure pastoral care among its presbyteries in order that the synod may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments, G-3.0401(b).

f. To address conflicts in a pastoral manner that promotes reconciliation, healing, and restores unity between synod and its presbyteries using professional mediation services if necessary. They may use processes of D-1.0103 Conciliate and Mediate as needed.

g. To assume original jurisdiction if deemed necessary by the commission.

h. To have full authority to enforce the findings and recommendations with due process, granting fair notice and an opportunity to be heard by all parties.

This commission shall report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Financial Implications: Per Capita 2019 $24,888. Total—$48,376

Item 05-04. On Transferring Fruitland Presbyterian Church from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.

Item 05-04 was not referred by the Stated Clerk upon recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

*Item 05-05. On Changing the Boundaries within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies—From the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

Approved. [See p. 531.]

Item 05-06. Response to Item 05-03—From the Synod of the Covenant.

Answered by the action taken on Item 05-03. [See p. 532.]

*Item 05-07. On Changing the Name of Midwest Hanmi Presbytery—From the Synod of Lincoln Trails.

Approved. [See p. 534.]

*Item 05-08. Commissioners’ Resolution: On Transferring Fruitland Presbyterian Church from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast.

Approved. [See p. 535.]

Item 05-09. Commissioners’ Resolution. On the Challenges of Being Black in the PC (USA).

Approved with amendment. [See p. 535.]

Amend Item 05-09 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. [Direct mid councils to recommit to] [Reaffirm the] committee on representation requirements for inclusiveness as stated in the constitution (G-3.0103), paying careful attention to issues of inclusiveness and fair practices by the pastor nominating committees and committees on preparation for ministry.

“2. [Direct] [Advise] mid councils to [raise] [follow the lead of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus in raising] awareness of the declining nature of black congregations throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the lack of pastoral leadership, both current and future, for those congregations.
“[3. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to respond to the presbyteries that the National Black Presbyterian Caucus has identified as not abiding by Committee on Representation Guidelines.

“[4. The Office of the General Assembly is to report within one year to presbyteries and synods concerning the progress on this resolution and a full report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

“[5. Advise the Board of Pensions to analyze and report on the viability of African American Presbyterian Churches and the challenges of supporting installed pastoral leadership.]”

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 05-A. Review of Synod Minutes

Approved with comment and with exceptions. [See p. 538.]

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synods for their good work and makes the following suggestions for the review of minutes:

- Provide more training for assembly committee members on how to review minutes.
- Provide a list of acronyms used.
- Advise synods to include photos and a narrative of the mission work being done in the synod.
- Advise synods that all minutes should be provided to the General Assembly electronically in order to facilitate the review in a process.

The committee lifts up the synods who provided reports and presentations regarding the mission work in their particular synod. All synods are encouraged to participate in this process for future assemblies.

Comments and Exceptions:

**Synod of Alaska-Northwest**

2016
Exception: No list of roster of last six years of former members of PJC. Minutes should be numbered consecutively.
Comment: They noted exceptions but did not comment on action taken.

2017
Exceptions: Minutes should be numbered consecutively.
No Comments

**Synod of Boriquen (Puerto Rico)**

The Assembly Committee on Mid Council Ministries (05) received the minutes and commends the synod for providing the minutes while in the midst of a devastating natural disaster.

**Synod of the Covenant**

Overall the Synod of the Covenant meeting minutes appear in order and follow the requirements of the Constitution. Many of the policies and other items missing in the regular minutes are found in the appendix.

2016
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

2017
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

**Synod of Lakes and Prairies**

2016
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

2017
No Exceptions.
No Comments.
**Synod of the Lincoln Trails**
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils recommends the synod consider a narrative report in their minutes highlighting their good work.

2016
No Exceptions.
Comment: No opportunity for floor nominations reflected in the minutes.

2017
Exception: No evidence of a Child & Youth protection policy.
No Comments.

**Synod of the Living Waters**
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils encourages the synod to provide evidence of ecumenical engagement.

2016
No Exceptions.

2017
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

**Synod of the Mid-Atlantic**
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the work on crisis assistance with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

2016
Exception: #8—No financial report included in the minutes.

2017
Exceptions: #8—No financial report included in the minutes.
No Comments.

**Synod of the Northeast**

2016
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

2017
The Synod of the Northeast formally meets only once every two years.

**Synod of Mid-America**
The committee commends the Synod of Mid America for their electronic presence.

2016
No Exceptions.
Comment: No index provided in the minutes.

2017
No Exceptions.
Comment: No index provided in the minutes.

**Synod of the Pacific**
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their work with Disaster Assistance.

2016
No Exceptions
Comments:
1. No evidence of nominations from the floor.
2. Evidence of nominations missing from index.
2017
No Exceptions.
Comments:
1. No evidence of nominations from the floor.
2. Evidence of nominations missing from index.

Synod of the Rocky Mountains
2016
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.

2017
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.

Synod of the South Atlantic
2016
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.

2017
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.

Synod of Southern California and Hawaii
2016
No Exceptions.
Comments: Called electronic meeting June 4, 2016, does not appear to qualify as a meeting.

2017
No Exceptions.
Comments: The review checklist for the December 2, 2017, meeting wasn’t completed.

Synod of the Southwest
2016
No Exceptions.
Comments: Minutes were missing a previous PJC class.

2017
Exception: Child and youth protection policy not evident in minutes.
Comment: Minutes were missing a previous PJC class.

Synod of the Sun
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their creative ways of electronic meetings.

2016
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

2017
Exceptions: None.
Comments: None.

Synod of the Trinity
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for the substantial mission support to its presbyteries.

2016
Exceptions: COR, no members listed and no report, but in bylaws.
Comments:
1. Decisions not as an attachment to minutes of the meeting.
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3. Minutes included evidence of “property and liability insurance coverage.”
4. No motions listed in consent agenda, just a few words

2017

Exceptions:
1. No number needed for quorum listed. Quorum announced.
2. Not included in the minutes.
3. No members listed and no report, but in bylaws.
4. #6—No COR report.
5. #7—Budget not approved by Synod Assembly or Governing Commission.

Comments:
1. #19—Decisions not as an attachment to minutes of the meeting.
2. #28—No listing of nominating committee and COR and other committees other than assembly commissioners, governing commission, six years former PJC and PJC.
   a. No motions listed in consent agenda, just a few words
   b. No check list included.

Item 05-Info

Synod Reports in Response to Item 05-01 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) [See p. 541.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Walter Rockenstein and Vice-Moderator Sunny Kang of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination for the committee report.

Moderator Rockenstein asked Co-Moderator Kohlmann to recognize the Reverend Dr. Ary Fernandez Alban, Moderator of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba, ecumenical representative, who brought greetings to the assembly.

Moderator Rockenstein moved Item 10-04. It was approved. Moderator Rockenstein moved Item 10-02. It was approved. Moderator Rockenstein moved Item 10-03. There was a motion to amend Item 10-03 to replace all references to LGBTQ+ with LGBTQIA+. The amendment was approved. The motion as amended was approved.

Vice-Moderator Kang moved Item 10-13. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Kang moved Item 10-12. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Kang moved Item 10-01. It was approved.

Moderator Rockenstein moved Item 10-11. There was a motion to amend Item 10-11. The amendment was approved (see approved changes highlighted in gray in report below). The item, as amended, was approved.

Moderator Rockenstein moved the approval of a substitute resolution for Item 10-09. It was approved.

Moderator Rockenstein asked Co-Moderator Kohlmann to recognize Hill Jordan, ruling elder commissioner from the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, who spoke briefly about Freedom Rising.

Moderator Rockenstein moved Item 10-14. Moderator Rockenstein invited Ruling Elder Nancy Ramsay, Moderator of the Search Committee for the President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to give the report of the search committee. Co-Moderator Kohlmann then recognized the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett who spoke to the assembly. Item 10-14 was approved. [For Report Two of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, see p. 80.]

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

Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination

Report One

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.
I. Plenary Action

SItem 10-01. On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the Churches and Properties in the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field of the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

Approved as amended and with comment. [See p. 809.]

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

“The Presbytery of Grand Canyon overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to direct the Mission Agency to [provide] [work with mid councils to facilitate] an assembly-wide inventory documenting the physical needs of Native American churches and chapels and creating an ongoing fund for urgent and immediate repairs and improvements. The property assessments shall be done during that time between the meetings of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and the 224th General Assembly (2020). The comprehensive report shall be comprised from the on-site inventories and shall indicate what repairs need to be completed for congregation use.

“The PC(USA) has identified ninety-eight Native American churches in the denomination. Inventoring the ninety-eight campuses is manageable over the two-year assessment period. A formal assessment of churches/chapels in the Synod of the Southwest was launched in 2016. An assessment of ten churches and chapels in Presbytery of Grand Canyon’s northern bounds was completed in nine months. The assessment process, as completed and critiqued, provides a guide for future and expanded inventories in PC(USA) with the following components:

1. Inventory—Intentionally working together, evaluation teams would use survey forms that allow for both check-offs and narratives of the situation of each church. Teams [should] [shall be led by individuals with the appropriate professional certification, licensures, or degrees appropriate to the work and may also] include synod and presbytery staffs, Native American ministries committees, Native American congregations, and special task forces. Focus would be on immediate safety and health repairs needed to stop leaking roofs, build-up of mold, buckling walls, collapsing retaining walls, dangerous furnaces, stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, deteriorating fences, parking lot potholes, graffiti, and abandoned buildings.

[Recommendations 2. through 5. remain unchanged.]

Comment: While the overture contains significant funds for assessing all Native American churches, if a church community or mid council feels they can accurately assess and tabulate the cost through volunteers in the community in an effort to be good stewards of our denomination and diminish costs, this action could be permitted


SItem 10-02. On a Collaborative Study of the Place and Purpose of the Humanities in the Teachings of PC(USA) Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

Approved. [See pp. 811–12.]

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual—$23,240. Total—$46,480]

SItem 10-03. A Resolution on Determining the Need for an [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] Advocacy Committee in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

[Title above amended: Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Action taken in plenary is shaded in gray.]

Approved with amendment. [See p. 813.]

Amend the recommendation section as follows [title above also amended]: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Action taken in plenary is shaded in gray.]

“The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) to create a five-member task force (with a commitment to gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, and race inclusiveness and balance) to investigate the need for creating an Advocacy Committee for [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] Concerns. The task force will report back with recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) after:
“a. [No changes.]

“b. Meeting with a diverse (age, gender, race, etc.) collection of Presbyterian individuals (either face-to-face or via video conference) from various segments of the country who identify as [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+];

“c. Reviewing the history of PC(USA) policies and actions impacting [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] people directly, and ultimately the entire denomination; and

“d. Reviewing the scope of the history of ACWC’s advocacy work on behalf of [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] people.

“2. [No changes.]

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $11,060. Total—$22,120]


Approved with comment. [See p. 816.]

Comment:

[This comment addresses the Justice and Reconciliation portion of the Mission Work Plan.] While the item overtly names white supremacy and racist systemic structures, it does not name violence against women in a time when the United States of America society is grappling with the violence perpetrated against women. If not now, when? When violence intersects with poverty and racism, women have experienced hurt and harm. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to put into practice the PC(USA)’s confession and beliefs (from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns comment).

The Mission Work Plan, written in the form of worship, allows for repentance (confession) and a way forward. The focus on an intentional mission plan with specific areas of intention (Evangelism & Discipleship, Leader Formation, and Justice and Reconciliation) allows for a radical turn in the mission of the denomination. Addressing structured racism and white supremacy is emphasized, and yet the lens of gender justice is omitted.

The Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) Report, written by Research Services of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, states:

Although male and female members are equally likely to be asked to serve in a leadership role, the nature of that role varies by gender. Men are more likely to hold an official leadership role, in which they have an official title and/or receive a paycheck, and women are more likely to be heavily involved in a voluntary capacity. Women still comprise only about 38% of all active PC(USA) teaching elders, and only 29% of teaching elders overall. These percentages are slowly increasing. If the rate remains the same, we won’t achieve gender parity among active teaching elders until 2027. [Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA), https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/4.]

With this present reality as evidenced in the above-mentioned report, the delayed justice for women must be included in the overall fiber and ethos of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. To fail to intentionally include addressing known gender injustices in our denomination does a grave disservice to the recent findings included in the research of 2016.

For these reasons, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) would like to see an emphasis on support/leadership efforts (including mentoring) for women leaders in ordered ministries, as well as an overall acknowledgement of the need to address gender injustices via the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns comments).

*Item 10-05. Institutional Relationship Agreement Between GA of PC(USA) and Historically Racial Ethnic Institutions

Approved. [See p. 821.]

*Item 10-06

Approved. [See p. 824.]

Item 10-07

Moved to 04 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, as Item 04-08. [See p. 469.]

Item 10-08

Moved to 04 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, as Item 04-09. [See p. 478.]

Sltem 10-09. Overture Concerning Small Churches—From the Presbytery of Grace.

Approved an alternate resolution with comment. [See pp. 827–28.]
Alternate Resolution:

Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on its efforts to strengthen the mission and ministry of small congregations, including the progress of implementing the Vital Congregations and Christian Formation initiatives.

The Presbytery Mission Agency (PMA) currently supports the ministries and missions of small churches through a wide range of ministries that have been designed to partner with small congregations as they live into the challenges and opportunities of the present moment.

The Theology, Formation, and Evangelism (TFE) ministry area of the PMA is a strong advocate for small churches and their ministry.

- The Vital Congregations initiative is a ministry designed to help all our churches become more vital, including small congregations. This initiative brings church leaders together in prayer, Bible study, and discernment. It provides them with tools and support for the work of revitalization. Because presbyteries are essential partners in ministry with congregations, TFE staff members have begun a two-year pilot project in five presbyteries to obtain some experience with this initiative. The pilot project includes small congregations. The current plan is to launch this initiative at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

- 1001 New Worshiping Communities is deeply engaged in ministry with new small congregations and has seen 445 new worshiping communities take shape in a variety of contexts and with a diverse group of people. Many of these new worshiping communities continue to be small churches even as they reach new people and experience vitality and vibrancy. TFE staff are beginning to work with existing churches so that they can learn from the new worshiping communities and the new worshiping communities can learn from them.

- The Christian Formation and Theology and Worship ministries of TFE continue to work with all our churches, including our small congregations, on the practices of our faith that lead to evangelism and sharing our hope with the world.

The Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministry (RE&WM) area of the PMA is also a strong advocate for small churches and their ministry.

- Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Intercultural Ministries offers support for African, African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino-a, Korean, Middle Eastern, and Native American small and large congregations. The small congregations are racial ethnic and new immigrant worshipping communities that regularly gather together, constructing a racial ethnic identity that stems from a common history, heritage, and language. The support includes working closely with racial ethnic and new immigrant worshipping communities through mid councils, caucus groups, and networks, engaging in the mission to grow, transform, empower, lead, and develop communities.

- Women’s Leadership Development and Justice Ministries provide opportunities and training for women leaders to serve in small congregations. The office annually gathers Presbyterian racial ethnic and new immigrant seminarians from different theological institutions across the United States for the Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Seminarians conferences and helps prepare them for ministry.

Comment: We recognize the need for assistance for small churches to support their vitality. We ask that the Presbyterian Mission Agency and corresponding committees and agencies not only work to grow new churches but to also support small churches struggling with vitality using innovative resources to support their missions. We also recognize membership numbers alone do not indicate the health of a church but a more comprehensive approach should be taken when determining vitality and the need of assistance. We have reservations regarding creating a new director position for small churches but ask the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with existing programs specifically targeting outreach to smaller churches.


*Item 10-10. Approve List of Presbyterian Related Schools and Colleges

Approved as amended and with comment. [See pp. 830–31.]

Amendment:

Add the following to the end of the recommendation section:

“[The Presbyterian Mission Agency will use the existing criteria and develop additional criteria as needed for placing and removing colleges, universities, and secondary schools on this list.]”

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination recommends the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board clarify the criteria for being included on this list and confirm through positive affirmation from the school to be included on the list. We believe the schools’ lack of response should not indicate a positive response to remain on the list of schools related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
Item 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues—From the Presbytery of Mission.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 831–32.]

Amend Item 10-11 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Action taken in plenary is shaded in gray.]

“The Presbytery of Mission overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Recognize the 10th anniversary of the ‘Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness’1 approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to acknowledge the relevance it still holds for our church and society in 2018. [Commend the initial work of the Presbyterian Serious Mental Illness Network (PSMIN) of the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) in distributing Comfort My People.]

2. Establish a $250,000 grant to be used to implement the provisions of this overture. The funds will be used to develop plans of action and resources that will be used by presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries of the PC(USA) to further educate these entities within PC(USA) regarding serious mental illness issues with the intent to provide a foundation for action within the denomination, and that the materials developed include help for congregations interfacing with mental illness found in the homeless population surrounding the church.

3. Direct Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to launch a churchwide network following Recommendation 10 in the Comfort My People policy (p. 10).

4. Consult with Presbyterian seminary professors of pastoral psychology, counseling, and psychiatry on models, incentives, existing resources, and counseling centers that provide holistic mental health ministries.

5. Draw upon those academic and practical experts, Presbyterian Research Services, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in the survey design, analysis, and preparation of recommendations for action and policy update outlined in Recommendations 4 and 5.

[Recommendations 3. through 5. remain unchanged.]


Approved as amended. [See pp. 838–40.]

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

“Recommendations 1. through 3. remain unchanged.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate with congregations and mid councils, encouraging them to explore the following:

[a. The local history of how the land was acquired from indigenous residents,

[b. The local history of how the community and the church formed, and how that community or church pursued relationships with the indigenous people of the region.

5. Make recommendations for how mid councils, as well as the national council and ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to issue a call for the engagement of mid councils and their congregational members to start a flow of ideas and information back and forth between mid councils and congregational members, directed at understanding how the Doctrine of Discovery has been present in our history and our theological positions, and continues to be present today.

[We recommend a two-step process: confession, repentance. These are concepts that have always been central to Presbyterian theology. These interactions should include:

[a. Confession:

1. An exploration of the local history of how the land was acquired from indigenous residents, and

2. The local history of how the community and the church formed, and how that community or church pursued relationships with the indigenous people of the region.
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“[b. Repentance:

“(1) Development and implementation of a beginning strategy for entering into dialogue and action with relevant local communities, and

“(2) Planned reflection over time on how on those efforts, to discern what God is revealing through these relationships, and what next steps are needed in this work.]”

“5. Direct the PMA to form a coordinating council for the purpose of encouraging, monitoring, and sharing the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk, as listed in Recommendation 4, above. The council will also have the purpose of making recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on how the national church, mid councils, and congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.

“a. The coordinating council should be comprised of at least two members from the Native American Consulting Committee, plus at least two members from national church, two from mid councils, and at least two members from congregations.

“b. The General Assembly should commit funds to enable this group to meet quarterly throughout the next two years. This means a total of seven or eight meetings. These meetings can be virtual if the group desires this, however, it is important that the group meet together at least twice: at the start and toward the end.

“c. The coordinating group must be organized and have its first meeting within three months of the passage of this overture.

“d. The coordinating group will be responsible for generating a report back to the next General Assembly, in 2020, and for making recommendations for actions that the next General Assembly may consider.]”

“6. [Text remains unchanged.]”


S1 Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 842–43.]

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

“1. Urge the session of each congregation, as well as each mid council, [seminary] [COTE-member seminaries], Presbyterian Women’s groups, and other organizations to confess their complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.

“2. Text remains unchanged.

“3. Encourage [PC(USA) schools and seminaries] [COTE-member seminaries] to prepare students to articulate Native American theologies to give voice to these theologies and disrupt historic oppression and racism in Native American communities.

“Recommendations 4. through 11. remain unchanged.

“12. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to initiate a survey in order to create a listing of courses taught in [Presbyterian-related seminaries and schools] [COTE-member seminaries] that focus on the histories of Indigenous peoples and current issues facing Indigenous peoples, identifying specific instructors, courses, texts, and syllabi when possible.

“Recommendations 13. through 16. remain unchanged.

“17. Urge the session of each congregation—as well as each mid council, [seminary] [COTE-member seminaries], Presbyterian Women’s groups, and national church agency—to review the existing study resources on the Doctrine of Discovery (posted on the Facing Racism website: https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/item/41901/), and to lift up histories of Indigenous peoples and current issues facing Indigenous peoples.

“18. Text remains unchanged.”

[Financial Implications: PMA (2019) $6,000; PPC (2019) $2,917. Total—$8,917]

Item 10-14. Confirming the Election of the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett as President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency—From the Presbytery Mission Agency Board (PMAB).

Approved. [See p. 854.]

A. Relating to Budgets for Presbyterian Mission Agency

   Approved. [See p. 856.]

   Approved. [See p. 856.]

   Item 10-15, Recommendation A.3. will be dealt with in 10 Mission Coordination, Report Two. [See p. 857.]

B. Relating to Net Assets and Reserve Funds

Unrestricted and Restricted Net Assets and Reserve Funds  
Approved. [See p. 857.]

C. Relating to Support for Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission

1. John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds  
   Approved. [See p. 859.]

2. Special Offerings 2017  
   Approved. [See p. 859.]

   Approved. [See pp. 859–61.]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 10-A. Sam and Helen Walton Awards.  
   Approved. [See p. 862.]

Item 10-B. Women of Faith Awards.  
   Approved. [See p. 862.]

Item 10-C. Minutes, PC(USA), A Corp.  
   Approved. [See p. 864.]

Item 10-D. PC(USA), A Corp. Audit  
   Approved. [See p. 864.]

Item 10-Info


B. Report of Changes to the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [See p. 873.]


D. Report to Committee 10 in Response to Item 10-03 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) [See p. 883.]

INSTALLATION OF THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY

Co-Moderator Kohlmann invited the assembly to participate in the installation of the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett as the President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Co-Moderator Kohlmann, Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri, Stated Clerk Nelson, Chair of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Ken Godshall, Incoming Chair of the Presbyterian Foundation Board Eustacia Moffett Marshall, Moderator of the Search Committee for the President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Nancy Ramsay, member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Joe Morrow, and Presbytery Executive of Salem Presbytery Stephen Scott participated in the installation.

CLOSING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Young Adult Advisory Delegate Ashley Denham, from the Presbytery of Palo Duro, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 10:10 p.m.

Thursday, June 21, 2018, 8:30 A.M.

BUSINESS MEETING VII

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS AND OPENING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Robina Winbush, Associate Stated Clerk and director of ecumenical relations. Winbush introduced Rabbi Leonard Gordon from the National Council of Synagogues (ecumenical representative) and Dr. Kathryn Johnson (interfaith representative) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Rabbi Gordon brought greetings and Dr. Johnson offered greetings and prayer.

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who spoke on current issues of race, immigration, and Tuesday afternoon’s march to end cash bail.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE:

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Dianna Wright and Vice-Moderator Madeline Alvarez Soto of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report from the committee. Vice-Moderator Alvarez Soto reported the following impact on the per capita budget of the items approved by the assembly to this point: for 2019, $183,564; for 2020, $175,064. This represents an increase in the General Assembly per capita rate of $.13 in 2019 and $.13 in 2020. The total cost of actions still pending: for 2019, $567,774; and for 2020, $422,672.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE:

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Walter Rockenstein for a report on financial implications to the mission budget of actions taken at this assembly. Moderator Rockenstein reported the following impact on the mission budget of the items approved by the assembly to this point: 2019, $403,688; and 2020, $365,596. The total cost of actions still pending is: 2019, $761,919; and 2020, $644,495.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING, IMMIGRATION, AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Luci Duckson-Bramble and Vice-Moderator Amir Tawadrous of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues, for the committee report.

Moderator Duckson-Bramble moved Item 09-02 as amended. It was approved.

Moderator Duckson-Bramble moved Item 09-04. A motion was made to amend the first paragraph to insert the word “all” before “migrants and refugees” The amendment was approved. A motion was made to amend by striking Recommendation 3 from the resolution. The amendment was approved. Item 09-04 as amended was approved.

Moderator Duckson-Bramble moved Item 09-10 as amended. It was approved.

Moderator Duckson-Bramble moved Item 09-14 as amended with comment. A motion was made to amend Item 09-14 as follows: strike “Department of Justice” and replace with “federal government” in Recommendations 1–4; in Recommendation 2, add “ensuring access of attorneys to those in detention” to the end of the sentence; in Recommendation 5, strike the current language and replace with “Condemns the President’s June 20, 2018 Executive Order ‘Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation’ that further criminalizes migration through the expansion of family detention on military bases and other government property, potentially indefinitely.” The motion to amend was approved. The motion, as amended in plenary, was approved.

Vice-Moderator Tawadrous moved an alternative resolution for Item 09-12. The alternative resolution was approved.

Vice-Moderator Tawadrous moved that the action taken on Item 09-12 answer Item 09-09. The motion was approved.

Vice-Moderator Tawadrous moved to refer Item 09-06 with comment. A motion was made to amend the comment by inserting the following at the end of the comment: “We encourage ACSWP to collaborate and/or partner with a variety of other funding sources in order to move this study forward and better reflect and incorporate the voices of diverse persons and marginalized communities.” The amendment to the comment was approved. Item 09-06 with amended comment was approved.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues. A summary of the report is as follows:

**Assembly Committee on Peacemaking, Immigration, & International Issues**

**Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.**

**Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.**

**I. Plenary Action**

**Item 09-01**

Item 09-01 has been moved. It can be found in 12 Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues as Item 12-09. [See p. 1148.]

**Item 09-02. On Support and Prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan—From the Presbytery of Shenango.**

Approved as amended. [See pp. 759–60.]

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

“c. Learn about the mission work of the PC(USA) in South Sudan and continue to support PC(USA) mission co-workers [and encourage donations to PDA’s South Sudan Direct Account].”

*Item 09-03. On Support of Peace Churches in the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of San Jose.**

Approved as amended. [See pp. 761–62.]

Amend Recommendations 3., 7., 8. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. Acknowledge that the Five Affirmations were one of the fruits of this church-wide discernment and commend them to all church sessions for reading and study: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/five-peace-making-affirmations/. [Each of the five affirmations is supported in the full report: https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/300047. This is also presented in the short study book from Westminster/JohnKnoxPress, *Five
Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace: https://www.wjkbooks.com/Content/Site117/FilesSamples/307161FiveRisks_0000026401.pdf.

“7. Encourage the Peacemaking Program to identify or develop curriculum [that explores the full spectrum of biblical and Reformed theological thinking concerning war] to help young adults discern their position on war and violence before registering with the Selective Service System for possible military conscription as required by federal law.

“8. [Reaffirm] [Affirm] the PC(USA) policy on conscientious objection[, including our long support for selective conscientious objection,] and encourage those who are conscientious objectors to register their decision with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly as established by previous General Assemblies and described in “Presbyterians and Military Service,” http://oga.pcusa.org/section/stated-clerk/stated-clerk/conscientious-objection/.”

$Item 09-04. On Endorsing Affirmations Regarding the Welfare of Our Neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—From the Presbytery of the Pacific.

Approved as amended. [See p. 764.]

[Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline; actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.]

“The Presbytery of the Pacific overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to endorse the following affirmations and actions regarding the welfare of our neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (the Northern Triangle of Central America) and the welfare of [all] migrants and refugees in the United States.

“[Text in Recommendations 1. and 2. remains unchanged.]


“[Direct the Office of Public Witness and the Office of Immigration Issues to hire and share a national grassroots network organizer in the United States. This position will train and organize congregations and governing bodies. Networks of Presbyterians will receive training from this organizer in advocacy, community organizing, solidarity and accompaniment, and establish rapid response networks to support faith-rooted, migrant-led organizing.]”


*$Item 09-05. A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

Approved as amended. [See p. 768.]

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

“[c. Encourage churches to support relief efforts in Yemen through PDA.]”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $2,000. Total—$2,000]

*$Item 09-06. A Resolution on Global Order and National Purpose—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Referred to Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy with comment. [See pp. 771–72.]

Comment: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline; actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.]

The Assembly Committee on Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues [09] thanks the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy for their affirmations and recommendations related to global order and our nation’s
purpose. We commend their creative and comprehensive exploration of global themes in an effort to reinvigorate the collective conscience of Presbyterians and other ecumenical partners to speak ethically and morally to a changing and challenged world.

We recognize the need to speak with a measured urgency to the many existential threats facing our nation and the world, and we appreciate the vision for ecumenical partnerships in addressing them. We offer the following suggestions to clarify and focus your recommendation to the General Assembly. [We encourage ACSWP to collaborate and/or partner with a variety of other funding sources in order to move this study forward and better reflect and incorporate the voices of diverse persons and marginalized communities.]

Recommendations:

1. Clearly name the audience for the study, as well as the final objectives of the study.

2. Focus and limit the affirmations thematically. Furthermore, decide on a scope for the project that honors the complexity of the issues we face while systematically addressing individual issues.

3. The formation of the steering committee should include the participation and comments from diverse persons and those from marginalized communities (e.g. ethnicity, gender, orientation, cultural origin, age, economic status, ability, education level, geographical region).

4. State how you will invite diverse persons including those from marginalized communities, beyond theological differences, into the public forums.

5. Create a curriculum from the findings of the study that would be teachable, useable, and approachable to the whole church.

6. Integrate the sacred texts of traditions that represent the voices of the participants in the study. Bring them to the forefront of the conversation/study.


Rationale

The affirmations and recommendations presented by ACSWP feel comprehensive to the point of confusion, making it difficult to discern the audience, participants, and outcomes of the study. Outside of theological diversity, other diversities (ethnicity, gender, orientation, cultural origin, age, economic status, ability, education level, etc.) were not included as participating voices throughout the process and in the creation of a final document, leaving us to wonder if it would have its intended effect. Finally, in honoring the intent to develop a theologically sound moral and ethical framework and set of practices, we trust that ecumenical and interreligious sacred writings will ground the document as it seeks to speak prophetically to the political structures being scrutinized. The importance of the project was noted by several committee members, and we would encourage ACSWP to broaden its input while creating another proposal to be presented at a later time.


Approved. [See pp. 785–86.]


Approved. [See pp. 788–89.]

[Financial Implications: $2,500/year. Total—$5,000]

$Item 09-09. On Concerning Prayer and Preparation for Peace on the Korean Peninsula—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.

Answered by the action taken on Item 09-12. [See p. 792.]
Item 09-10. On a Study of the Current Socioeconomic and Political Realities in Central America—From the Presbytery of New York City.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 793–94.]

Amend Item 09-10 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to develop a comprehensive study of the current socioeconomic and political realities in Central America and report its findings and recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [The study would be done in consultation with the Latin America Office of World Mission and a team of five persons working with the mission personnel in the region, and included the theological and ethical reflection required.]”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $12,000 (2020) $18,500 (Total—$30,500]

Item 09-11.

Not referred due to lack of concurrence.

Item 09-12. Commissioners’ Resolution. On North Korean Refugees

Approved an alternate resolution. [See pp. 795–96.]

Approved the following alternative resolution:

1. Designate September 2018 as a Korean mission month

   a. to pray for peace in the Korean peninsula and for victims of division and conflict on both sides of the Korean peninsula, and

   b. to reflect on the past 130 years of Presbyterian mission to Korea including both the positive legacies and also the ways in which mission workers might have contributed to the Korean conflict.

2. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to communicate with domestic and international governments and agencies to encourage peaceful resolution of the divisions on the Korean peninsula, which will foster an environment where no party to the historic conflict feels the need to sacrifice civil liberties in the name of security and where refugees and asylum-seekers are treated humanely.

3. Authorize the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through World Mission Ministries and other appropriate Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bodies and staff, to support and monitor progress toward reconciliation and de-nuclearization in consultation with Korean and other Asian partners, including the following actions:

   a. Explore, in conjunction with current refugee ministries, caring and support ministries for those displaced from both South and North Korea;

   b. Share more broadly within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) an understanding of current relationships with the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK);

   c. Deepen the participation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reconciliation, and Development Cooperation in order to prepare U.S. Christians for reconciliation in Korea by expanding people-to-people exchanges and other forms of trust building.

   d. Plan events and programs for the Korean mission month and providing informational resources to local councils and congregations.

   e. Encourage the United States and other governments to lift sanctions on North Korea, as appropriate, to begin genuine steps toward peace and justice and in respectful consultation with regional allies.
f. Expand ministries of healing and reconciliation, building on the example of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) peace delegation visit to No Gun Ri in 2017, and including as feasible additional areas in Korea significant to the history of the conflict.


Approved. [See p. 799.]

Item 09-14. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Stopping the Separation of Immigrant Families at the Border and Upholding the Integrity of the U.S. Asylum System.

Approved as amended and with comment. [See pp. 800–801.]

Amendment:

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

“That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA):

1. Call upon the [Department of Justice (DOJ)] [federal government] to immediately end the newly implemented zero-tolerance policy that is tearing apart families.

2. Call upon the [DOJ] [federal government] to reunite parents and children that have been separated as soon as possible, under the care of the community, not in family detention [ensuring access of attorneys to those in detention].

3. Call upon the [DOJ] [federal government] to make certain that every parent in custody knows the location of their children and facilitate regular communication between parents and their children until they are reunited.

4. Call upon the [DOJ] [federal government] to not use possible reunification with children to force immigrant parents into a concession to plead guilty to a crime in exchange for reuniting with their children.

5. [Call upon churches and individuals to advocate for the passage of the Keep Families Together Act in Congress, which would take away the power of the DOJ to continue separating families. [Condemns the President’s June 20th Executive Order ‘Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation’ that further criminalizes migration through the expansion of family detention on military bases and other government property, potentially indefinitely.]

6. Call upon synods, presbyteries, and individual churches to understand, condemn, and work against the ideology of white supremacy undergirding these racist immigration policies.

7. Remind our denomination of the Gospel call to work for just and humane policies for all immigrant communities, grounded in the principles of family unity, human dignity, and rights.

8. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate the contents of this overture to the President of the United States, our representatives in Congress, as well as to Jeff Sessions, U.S. Attorney General, and Kirstjen Nielson, U.S. Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

9. Directs the PMA, through the Office of Public witness, to advocate for a policy that ensures family unity and safety for those in the asylum process.

9[.][10.] Strongly encourage congregations to learn about the impact of these immigration policies on the lives of church members as well as members of our local communities, making use of resources listed below:

- The Genesis of Exodus film and Story Map resources: www.genesisofexodusfilm.com;
- Family Detention: www.pcusa.org/familydetention;

“● Resources on Refugees and Asylees http://oga.pcusa.org/secti on/mid-council-ministries/immigra-

tion/refugees/.

“(11. Urge churches and congregations to connect with, accompany, support, and advocate alongside immigrant-focused organizations that can lead us to be part of the voices working for change and transformation of unjust immigration laws and policies.)”

Comment: The commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) support and pray for effective humane and swift action to end this atrocity.


Approved as amended. [See p. 804.]

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

“That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, Presbyterian Office of Public Witness, and Presbyterian World Mission) to speak out on behalf of the people of Nicaragua in response to violent repression taking place at the hands of their own government, and other violent actors. The assembly directs these entities to work together to:

“1. Develop a moral, theological, and prophetic framework in consultation with our mission partners in Nicaragua, in response to escalating violence and the growing outcry for international support, thus adding our faith-rooted witness to the growing chorus of voices denouncing the actions of the Nicaraguan government [and other violent actors]. The assembly asks that such a condemnation would take the form of a written statement and press release. Such a statement should make reference, but not be limited to, the following points:

“[Recommendations 1.a. through 1.f. and Recommendations 2. through 3. remain unchanged.]

“[4. Continue to consult with and listen to the perspective of our partners in Nicaragua and count on their guidance on how to support and respond to this crisis.]

“[5. Encourage the National Dialogue and the mechanisms that they agree upon, which to date include invitation of the OAS’ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights back to Nicaragua; to accelerate the formation of an international and independent expert Truth Commission; to invite the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights to Nicaragua; to invite the Secretary General of the OAS to Nicaragua; and to call for an end to all forms of violence from all sides.]”

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Cheni Khonje, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. Moderator Khonje moved that the docket be amended to hear the report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues next. The motion to amend the docket was approved.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Bill Wildhack of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues.

Moderator Wildhack moved Item 11-10. Moderator Wildhack asked Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri for permission to recognize the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues committee member, the Reverend Robert Dyer of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, who spoke on the item. Item 11-10 was approved.

Moderator Wildhack moved Item 11-03 as amended. It was approved.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Ryan Landino, Vice-Moderator of the Committee on Bills and Overtures. Vice-Moderator Landino moved that the report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues be arrested and the remainder
of the report be scheduled at a later time. The motion to arrest and reschedule was approved. [For the remainder of the report, see p. 55.]

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk Nelson who announced there would be a fifteen-minute break before daily worship.

The assembly entered into daily worship at 11:15 a.m. The Reverend Floretta Barbee-Watkins of The Avenue Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, delivered the sermon, titled “The Radical Difference.”

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 12:15 p.m. after worship.

THURSDAY, JUNE 21

BUSINESS MEETING VIII

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS AND OPENING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Philip Woods, Presbyterian Mission Agency area coordinator for Europe and the Middle East. Woods introduced the Reverend Nicola Kontzi-Méresse of the United Protestant Church of France (ecumenical advisory delegate); the Reverend Megrditch Karagoezian, the president of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (ecumenical advisory delegate); Daniel Ženatý, the synodical senior of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (ecumenical representative); Bassem Thabet, the synod secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ecumenical representative); the Reverend Farouk Hammo, president of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iraq (ecumenical advisory delegate); and the Reverend Hendrik Shanazarian, moderator of the Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church of Iran (ecumenical representative). Shanazarian offered greetings and prayer.

MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR JACK ROGERS

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Beth Hessel, Associate Stated Clerk in the Office of the General Assembly and executive director of the Presbyterian Historical Society, for a brief celebration of the life and ministry of former General Assembly Moderator Jack Rogers. Hessel read the following tribute, presented a short video on Rogers’s life, and offered a prayer.

The Reverend Dr. Jack Bartlett Rogers, born January 23, 1934, in Lincoln, Nebraska, was the son of Harold and Ruth Rogers, a postman and a school teacher, and a beloved child of God. Through his many years of ministry, scholarship, and compassionate, courageous, and committed witness to God’s love and mercy, Rogers remained faithful to the Reformed faith, the centrality of the Bible to his life, and a belief that intentional listening, open hearts, and unceasing gratitude to our Triune God were keys to the beloved kindom.

Rogers attended the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, where he participated on the debate team and with the Cornhusker’s marching band. In the late 1950s, following a United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. work camp immersion experience in Egypt, he took a year interlude from Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary to participate in a “Faith at Work” internship program. That year, Rogers shadowed Christians working as police, bartenders, lawyers, and in other professions to learn how their faith shaped and informed their work.

Faith at Work profoundly influenced Rogers. In his academic studies, his teaching, and his pastoral leadership, he would consistently ask questions about the choices God’s people make and wonder how to help them attune their lives to the witness of God’s Word in Scripture and the confessions. Through his internship, Rogers developed a deep interest in case studies as a means to explore and understand human actions.

Jack Rogers believed firmly in the Presbyterian ethos of being reformed and always reforming. He opened his life to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit and led our denomination into rich conversations about the meaning of reformation. Along the way, he trained and mentored countless women and men for ministry.

As a faculty member at numerous institutions, including Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, and Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, where he started the Office of Presbyterian Ministries and championed increased representation of women and people of color; as vice-president and professor at the southern California campus of San Fran-
Cisco Theological Seminary; and as a teacher of the popular Presbyterian Polity class at General Assembly, he gained a reputation as a careful, skilled, and deeply engaged teacher. Rogers served on the UPCUSA Task Force on Biblical Authority and Interpretation from 1980–1982 and on the committee that developed A Brief Statement of Faith. After serving as Moderator of the 213th General Assembly (2001), Rogers became a staunch ally for full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ Presbyterians in ordination and marriage.

The Reverend Dr. Jack Rogers wrote prolifically, publishing thirteen books that deepened our ability as Presbyterians to think holistically about Scripture and the Reformed tradition. Before his death on July 14, 2016, Rogers was working on a book about the Westminster Divine Edward Reynolds. In Reynolds, Rogers glimpsed a kindred soul seeking the joy of God in daily living.

Rogers was what we lovingly call a “GA Junkie.” He loved immersing himself in each General Assembly, finding richness in the worship, the time spent together as a church, and the rich dialogue. Jack Rogers believed participation in the assembly enabled us Presbyterians to see a broader perspective beyond our local church. Rogers fought dearly for what he humbly claimed was his one tangible contribution to A Brief Statement of Faith: the inclusion of the phrase “holy and joyful lives.” He embodied that phrase in the way he carried out his work, and by the way he integrated his insatiable and faithful curiosity about the endless manifestations of God’s Word in God’s world.

Many of us lost a friend, teacher, and mentor when Jack Rogers died. His beloved wife of fifty-nine years, Dr. Sharon Rogers, and his three sons, Matt, John, and Toby, continue his life’s work of embodying holy and joyful lives, which was his hope for each of us children of God.

**MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR BENJAMIN WEIR**

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Debra Avery, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Oakland, California, to pay tribute to the life and work of former General Assembly Moderator Benjamin Weir.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you about a man who, throughout his life, embodied these words: “The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life” (*Book of Order*, F-1.0301).

Ben and his wife Carol were not the kind of people who sought the spotlight. They modeled for us all what humility and commitment looked like, what it meant to center the work of justice, not the justice workers.

In truth, I feel a pretty strong sense of irony that we are celebrating a man who would have preferred quietly rolling up his sleeves and getting to work over having his photos on the big screen.

Ben oriented his life toward the relentless and often risky struggle for justice. From the more than thirty years he and Carol spent as mission co-workers in Lebanon to the thirty years of ministry that followed his return in 1985, that included

- Serving as Moderator of the 198th General Assembly (1986),
- Inspiring the next generation of risk-takers at San Francisco Theological Seminary,
- Offering his wisdom and support to those who worked for freedom in Israel-Palestine,
- Working for full inclusion for LGBTQIA+ people seeking ordination,
- raising funds for the Near East School of Theology.

Even in his last years, when I had the blessing of serving as his pastor, he shared his hard-won wisdom, offering encouragement to me.

When I first arrived at First Presbyterian Church of Oakland, we found ourselves in the early days of the movement for Black Lives. We had some tough Sundays; our mixed-race congregation, as members and friends who have always been afraid for the lives of the young (primarily men) in their lives, were hit especially hard.

Deep grief and fear were often part of the sharing of joys and concerns, and sermons often took a more focused turn toward connecting the injustice directed toward people of color with the radical Christ we saw in the gospels. It was not long after one such sermon that Ben grasped my hand and said: “Keep it up. You’re doing great.” He held on to my hand and over the next three years I would come to learn that was exactly who Ben was—provoked by injustice, Ben thoughtfully and carefully made sure that his justice collaborators had the encouragement and the tactical support they needed to endure the long journey toward shalom.
What this looks like in each of our contexts will be different. For Ben one of many such moments came in 1975, shortly after the situation in Lebanon had worsened. A leader of Lebanon’s oppressed Shiite Muslim community came to him, saying: “My people are in trouble; can you be of help?” Ben shared that in moments like this.

He believed that our faith doesn’t allow us to back out of any situation. No matter how risky.

Former Ambassador to Qatar Andrew Kilgore wrote that Ben’s experience as a hostage “instilled in him a deep sympathy for the poor, the dispossessed, and the afflicted.” But I believe that Ben’s understanding of justice and mercy was and had always been rooted in his faith—the faith that we all share—a faith that calls us to risk everything for the sake of the gospel.

So today, we give thanks that Ben Weir did not forget God’s teaching.

We give thanks that he showed us what it is to live as a faithful disciple of a radical Christ.

We give thanks that he consciously chose to stay in the struggle, to enter deeply into human suffering.

We give thanks that his vision of freedom, his vision of justice for everyone continues to call us today. And as we follow Jesus, as we follow Ben and Carol and all the saints who showed them the way, may we come to that day when EVERYONE is free and God’s kingdom of shalom is truly fulfilled.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Ryan Landino, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who moved that the assembly continue with the docket as presented in Item 02-04: begin with the report from the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward followed by the continuation of the report from the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues. The motion was approved.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Cindy Jarvis and Vice-Moderator Veronica Goines of the Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, for the committee report.

Moderator Jarvis moved Item 04-05 with comment. It was approved.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Samantha Gonzalez-Block, teaching elder commissioner from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, who led a salsa lesson from the platform for members of the assembly as a stretch break.

Moderator Jarvis and Vice-Moderator Goines then spoke to Item 04-03. Moderator Jarvis invited Shelli Latham, teaching elder commissioner from the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, to speak to Item 04-03, Recommendation 5. Moderator Jarvis moved Item 04-03. There was a motion to amend Item 04-03, Recommendation 4.c., to change the name from “Global Communications” to “Global Resources.” It was approved. Co-Moderator Kohlmann and Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri led the assembly in prayer before the vote. Item 04-03 was approved as amended with comments.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Cheni Khonje of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, who moved to limit debate to 1 minute per speaker. The motion was approved.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann introduced for the assembly’s viewing a brief trailer for the Mr. Rogers documentary, Won’t You Be My Neighbor?

Vice-Moderator Goines moved Item 04-04. It was approved.

Moderator Jarvis moved the disapproval of Item 04-06. It was approved to disapprove the item.

Moderator Jarvis moved that Item 04-07 be answered by Item 04-03, Recommendation 4. It was approved.

Moderator Jarvis moved that Item 04-08 be answered by Item 04-03. The motion was approved.

Moderator Jarvis moved Item 04-09 be approved as amended. It was approved as amended.

Vice-Moderator Goines invited Carolina Treviño, teaching elder commissioner from Presbytery of Mission, to speak to Item 04-02. Vice-Moderator Goines moved Item 04-02 be approved as amended. There was a motion to amend Item 04-02 to delete the phrase “the blind and vision impaired” and replace with “people who are blind and vision impaired.” The amendment was approved. There was a motion to amend Item 04-02 to add the phrase “and captioning services for the hearing-impaired” after “ASL.” There was a motion to amend the amendment to delete “the hearing-impaired” and insert “deaf and hard of hearing community.” This motion to amend the amendment was approved. Item 04-02 was approved as amended.
Moderator Jarvis invited Committee Assistant Steve Yamaguchi to lead the assembly in a benediction. Yamaguchi gave the benediction saying the words of 2 Corinthians 13:14 in Greek, English, Korean, Spanish, and Japanese.

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

Assembly Committee on The Way Forward

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

I. Plenary Action

*$Item 04-01. On Appointing a Team to Review the Current Per Capita Based System of Funding the Ministry of Councils Higher Than the Session—From the Presbytery of Newton.

Approved as amended. [See p. 355.]

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

“The Presbytery of Newton respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to do the following:

“1. Direct the Moderator(s) of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk and the General Assembly Committee on Representation, to appoint a team of no less than [six] [twelve] and no more than [ten] [fifteen] elders and ministers to review the current per capita based system of funding the ministry of councils higher than the session, for financial sustainability into the next ten years. The team will accomplish this by identifying the adaptive and technical challenges of sustainability in funding the ministry of councils higher than the session, consulting and receiving feedback/input from the leadership of the presbyteries, synods, and the Office of the General Assembly, as well as the Presbyterian Foundation.

“2. Direct the team to make a final report of their work, along with recommendations and suggestions of potential experiments for changes to the system that funds the ministry of councils higher than the session, to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [If the work requires more time, the team is directed to report to 225th General Assembly (2022), with an interim report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $38,240. Total—$76,480]

$Item 04-02. A Resolution on Prioritizing Translation and Accessibility in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

Approved as amended. [See p. 358.]

Amend the recommendation section as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.]

“The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

“1. Direct all six of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies to be intentional and proactive in prioritizing the hiring and retaining of people from [the ‘Global South,’ Presbyterian communities and other historic Presbyterian ‘Communities of Color,’] [Presbyterian communities in the global south and other historic Presbyterian ‘Communities of Color,’] preferably with theological training and fluency in languages other than English, in [every] [each] of their program areas or departments so that resources, as well as theological, ecclesiological, and other pertinent documents, if applicable, will be written from the cultural, methodological, and linguistic worldviews of those communities. The agencies will report back on their progress to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

“2. Direct all the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to create an ‘Office of Translation and Interpretation’ that will develop and share resources with other agencies and mid councils to create a systematic approach to language accessibility for the entire church. The translators should have direct interaction with the associates in the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Intercultural Ministries as well as the Racial Ethnic Caucuses and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (proposed recommendation to change name to Racial Equity Advocacy Committee) to ascertain the actual needs of their constituencies and prioritize the documents, articles, and news items that are important and relevant to these communities.]
[3.] Encourage all councils of the church to conduct all meetings related to the ministry of the church in their respective jurisdiction in languages common to their constituencies and to offer simultaneous interpretation in those languages as well as American Sign Language (ASL) [and provide captioning services for the deaf and hard of hearing community]. All pertinent documents should be sent ahead of time in the proper languages in a format accessible to [the blind and vision impaired] [people who are blind and vision impaired]. [This will allow those church members and leaders of immigrant, deaf, and blind communities who are not proficient in the English language or are unable to hear or see to participate and have a “place at the table.”]


Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report

1. Composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp.”)

   Approved as amended and with comments. [See comments starting on p. 49 after Recommendation 6.] [See pp. 360–61.]

   Amendment:

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

   “The Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

   “a. [Text remains unchanged.]

      “(1) [Text remains unchanged.]

      “(2) [Text remains unchanged.]

      “(3) That the current Board of Directors of ‘A Corp.,’ upon adoption of such amendments, tender their resignations as directors to be effective at the [conclusion of the meeting, or upon execution of the unanimous consent] [constituting of the new board], adopting such amendments.

   “b. [Text remains unchanged.]

   “c. [Text remains unchanged.]

   “d. [Text remains unchanged.]

   “e. [Text remains unchanged.]

   “f. [Text remains unchanged.]

   “h. [Text remains unchanged.]

   “i. [Text remains unchanged.]”

2. Role of the Stated Clerk

   Approved as amended and with comments. [See comments starting on p. 49 after Recommendation 6.] [See pp. 361–62.]

   Amendment:

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

   “The Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

   “a. Amend the Manual of the General Assembly called the Organization for Mission, Chapter IV.B.2. with a new section “a” and renumber the current a–p as b–q. The new section IV.B.2.a. shall read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

   “a. In partial fulfillment of his/her role as the continuing ecclesial officer and Head of Communion for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Stated Clerk will offer constitutional and spiritual leadership for the life and witness of
the church and exercise pastoral authority over concerns of the church in times of crisis. The Stated Clerk is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s chief ecumenical officer and its primary representative in national and international interchurch and interfaith organizations and speaks to and for the church in matters of faith and practice [except as the General Assembly directs otherwise] [in accord with the beliefs, policies, and actions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]

“b. [Text remains unchanged.]

c. [Text remains unchanged.]

d. [Text remains unchanged.]”

3. **Financial Sustainability of the National Denomination**

Approved with comment. [See p. 362.]

Comment: The Way Forward Commission recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) create a twelve-person committee (to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) after consultation with the General Assembly Nomination Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and to include two presbytery executives and one synod executive) with a deadline of 12/31/2019, to provide a comprehensive resource projection analysis and summary assessment—in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and representatives of all other agencies—of national church assets and income for financial sustainability review. Such analysis/report will be forwarded to each of the six agencies, the 2020 Vision Team, and the ongoing Moving Forward Implementation Commission proposed in Recommendation 5 below.

4. **Inclusion and Equity**

Approved as amended and with comments. [See comments starting on p. 49 after Recommendation 6.] [See pp. 362–63.]

Amendment:

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


“a. [Diversity and Reconciliation.] Require that all six agencies participate [and invite Presbyterian Women to participate] in the Diverse Voices Table being established (described under Ongoing Commission Administrative Actions below); and similar to what has been undertaken by the FMA’s Office on Diversity and Reconciliation, create a process to examine issues of equity and inclusion particular to their own agencies.

“b. [Completion of Audits.] [Require that the prior 222nd General Assembly (2016) mandate for personnel audits from each agency be completed by January 1, 2019, and to recur every four years (see Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 788, GA 222 Item 11-24 (Recommendation 1.b., ‘Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricty Report’)).] [Require that the previous mandate originating from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for personnel audits from each agency must be completed by January 1, 2019. Further, direct that all agencies incorporate ‘race audits’ occurring at least every four years, utilizing an external professional auditor, who can objectively report systemic bias and prejudice, as well as suggesting actions to becoming more racially just and equitable employers. The same external auditor shall be utilized by all agencies in order that the same standards are applied. The results of these audits will be reported to respective agency boards and committees and to the next General Assembly. We further recommend that the members of the Diverse Voices Table and the ‘Chairs & Chiefs’ group of agency executives and board chairs collaborate to select the external auditor. (See Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 788, GA 222 Item 11-24 (Recommendation 1.b., ‘Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricty Report’)).]

“c. [Translation Services.] [Require that all translation services of the six agencies be moved to shared services under ‘A Corp.,’ and be staffed appropriately in order to provide translation services to all six agencies for translation of all materials going forward and historical/existing records upon request. Prioritization and exceptions of translation services is to be discerned and directed by an inclusive group, such as the Diverse Voices Table being established (described under Ongoing Commission Administrative Action below). Translations services shall include websites and the translation into English of materials originally written in other languages. Translations services will be one more service residing within Shared Services in “A Corp.” The total cost of these services shall be allocated to and paid for by each agency as a percentage of work completed. Specific funding sources and budgets used by each agency shall be determined by their respective board(s)/committee(s) and/or executive leadership.]

223RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2018)
[Understanding that we desire to create a systematic approach to language accessibility for the entire church, require that translation services be staffed appropriately in order to provide translation services to all six agencies and be centralized in Shared Services. We recommend that our existing translation staff spread across several agencies be coordinated within Global [Communications] [Resources]. Global [Communications] [Resources] would translate all materials going forward and historical/existing records upon request.

“[Prioritization and exceptions of translation services is to be discerned and directed by an inclusive group, such as the Diverse Voices Table, in consultation with associates in Racial Ethnic and Women’s Intercultural Ministries, as well as the racial ethnic caucuses and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

“[Translation services shall include websites and the translation into English of materials originally written in other languages. Translation services will be one more service residing within Shared Services in ‘A Corp.’ The total cost of these services shall be allocated and paid for by each agency as a percentage of work completed. Specific funding sources and budgets used by each agency shall be determined by their respective board(s)/committee(s) and/or executive leadership.”

5. Moving Forward Implementation Commission

Approved as amended and with comments. [See comments starting on p. 49 after Recommendation 6.] [See pp. 363–64.]

Amendment:

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

“The Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) create a “Moving Forward Implementation Commission” [to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) after consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and to include four members of the 2016 Way Forward Commission, four members of the 2016 All-Agency Review Committee, and four members to be appointed from the commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (including one young adult advisory delegate), for a term ending at the 224th General Assembly (2020), with the mandate and authority to (1) ensure compliance and implementation of 2018 assembly action on recommendations from the Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee, (2) ensure continued implementation of collaborations and commission administrative actions underway as outlined in this report and the report of the All-Agency Review Committee, (3) coordinate with the 2020 Vision Team, (4) report findings and make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020). (5) working together with the Stated Clerk and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, may secure an outside consultant to address the issues raised in the June 12, 2018, Administrative Action Regarding Trust and Transparency, (6) direct an evaluation of Shared Services and report to the 224th General Assembly (2020). The report is to include:

“(a) An itemized list of all services shared through the Office of Shared Services and services that might be contracted with other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies to provide.

“(b) Assessment of transparency by which rent and all other fees are calculated and charged.

“(c) Commission may direct appropriate denominational agencies or corporations to provide financial documents, billing data, fees lists, etc.

“(d) A Corp Board Composition.

“(e) Recommendations, in consultation with the A Corp board, of additional services that should or could be shared by the agencies and Presbyterian Women.

“(f) Recommendations regarding potential for mid councils, congregations, and other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) organizations to contract for any or all Shared Services.

“(g) Take any and all administrative action necessary to accomplish the Moving Forward Implementation Commission vision with respect to the Way Forward Commission initiatives and the June 5, 2018 Administrative Supplement.

“If any of the four members to be appointed from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is a representative of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or of the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly shall ensure that both such agencies are represented among those four members. [The Moving Forward Implementation Commission is to be appointed by October 1, 2018.]”
6. [Note from the Way Forward Commission: The Way Forward Commission concurs with and urges approval of the recommendations of the All-Agency Review Committee with respect to agency reviews.]

Comments:

We believe that there is potential for equity and inclusion that is not fully realized by the current configuration and lack of organizational clarity regarding Shared Services.

We believe that by engaging all agencies in determining the constitution of Shared Services and how services are administered, in a transparent and holistic process, that greater buy-in will be accomplished across the six agencies and Presbyterian Women, giving the General Assembly as a whole greater bargaining power, opportunities for cross-agency collaboration, and shared accountability.

We believe that areas identified in “Ongoing Commission Administrative Action”: Partnership of six agencies to identify solutions for the cultural, cost, and efficiency issues within Shared Services, property usage, institutional culture, communications, and equity all directly have great potential to be addressed through improved collaboration and shared establishment of a pool of resources that benefit our whole body.

1. There is lack of clarity around what is meant by Shared Services—these should be readily defined with a clear understanding of who is delivering the services. Additionally, it is possible that an agency separate from A. Corp might be more equipped to deliver particular services with greater quality and cost benefit than the Office of Shared Services. We should explore how we can best leverage the skills of our different agencies for the good of the whole.

2. In order for agencies to commit to participation in Shared Services, they must be given enough data to comparison shop and to know and trust that their fees are paying for the services they receive. Currently there is a lack of transparency regarding how service fees are calculated, which leads to distrust and desire to pursue other options.

3. Is the A. Corp Board, as established at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), constituted in a way that encourages all agencies to engage enthusiastically in the opportunity to participate in Shared Services? Trusting that we will learn a lot about what is actually needed for governance of this body during its first two years of implementation, the Moving Forward Commission may realize a different configuration benefits the whole.

4. How might we further partner to create cohesive messaging and bargaining power through Shared Services? Would we benefit from housing some other services such as communications, Human Resources Support, IT, etc. within Shared Services?

5. It seems that there is potential for Shared Services to benefit our denomination beyond the General Assembly level. How can we better resource our congregations and mid council bodies and their work on the ground?


Approved as amended. [See pp. 413–15.]

Amend the last bulleted item (sixth bullet) of Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“• What will the PC(USA) do to open wide the doors of the church to God’s amazing diversity, welcoming all ages and all expressions of race, class, gender, [and] sexual orientation, and differing abilities in striving to increase the membership of our denomination and achieve the great ends of the church?”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $31,844. Total—$63,688]

$Item 04-05. 2020 Vision Team—Interim Report

Approved with comment. [See p. 432.]

Comment: We commend the 2020 Vision Team for their work. We desire to hear explicit examples of what this would look like in different contexts and how to get there. We would like to hear more inclusion of grace, joy, and the Great Ends of the Church. We encourage the 2020 Vision Team to make the guiding statement more succinct.

Item 04-06. Deliverance Dividing The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, Into Two Corporations—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Disapproved. [See p. 437.]

Item 04-07. A Resolution to Require Race Audits of the Six PC(USA) Agencies—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-03, Recommendation 4. [See p. 468.]

Item 04-08. On Amending the Organization for Mission—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-03. [See p. 469.]


Approved as amended. [See p. 478.]

That the following sections be deleted:

1. Delete Section I.F. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

"[F. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation

[Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation is the principal corporation of the General Assembly. The voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are, by virtue of their offices, the directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation. The directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation, are, by virtue of their offices, the directors or trustees of each constituent corporation listed below:

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)
2. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC. (Incorporated in North Carolina)
3. THE HUBBARD PRESS (Incorporated in Ohio)
4. PEDCO, INC. (Incorporated in Delaware)
5. THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
6. PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC. (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
7. PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)
8. BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
9. COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL MISSION AND RELATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)
10. THE WOMAN’S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“Corporation”), was created by action of the 198th General Assembly (1986) and incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania effective December 31, 1986. The Corporation (a central treasury corporation) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (a fiduciary corporation) were the surviving corporations of the division of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Corporation, with both surviving corporations dating back to 1799. A brief summary of the Corporation can be found in the Organization for Mission, and the Corporation’s Deliverance is included as an appendix to the Organization for Mission.

By corporate action of the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the corporate Property, Legal, and Finance Committee was created. The corporate Property, Legal, and Finance Committee, now known as the Legal/Property Committee considers and recommends actions to the Board of the Corporation for approval (Corporate Minutes, February 2018). International property matters requiring approval by the Board of Directors of the Corporation are referred to the Board via recommendation from the]"
World Ministries area for action and recommendation of the corporate Legal/Property Committee (Corporate Minutes, February 2018).

“The Corporation is the sole member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (“Foundation”) without vote, and receives the Foundation’s annual report. The Corporation is the attorney-in-fact of the Foundation and each Foundation constituent corporation for the purpose of disbursing unrestricted income or unrestricted principal of invested funds, as well as restricted income and restricted principal of invested funds. The substance of any proposed amendment to the Foundation bylaws must first be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

“The Corporation is the sole member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (“PILP”) without vote, except PILP may not be dissolved without the consent of the Corporation. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board elects the Board of PILP subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, and may direct or approve PILP’s providing other mission, finance, and related services. The PILP administers the PMA’s church loan program under an Operating Agreement.”

2. Delete Section V.B.(3) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

“The Corporation is the sole member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (“Foundation”) without vote, and receives the Foundation’s annual report. The Corporation is the attorney-in-fact of the Foundation and each Foundation constituent corporation for the purpose of disbursing unrestricted income or unrestricted principal of invested funds, as well as restricted income and restricted principal of invested funds. The substance of any proposed amendment to the Foundation bylaws must first be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

“The Corporation is the sole member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (“PILP”) without vote, except PILP may not be dissolved without the consent of the Corporation. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board elects the Board of PILP subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, and may direct or approve PILP’s providing other mission, finance, and related services. The PILP administers the PMA’s church loan program under an Operating Agreement.”

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 04-Info

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Way Forward Commission Administrative Action Regarding Trust and Transparency [See p. 485.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Stated Clerk Nelson to make announcements. Stated Clerk Nelson announced that there were still tickets available for tonight’s Hands and Feet Concert featuring Kirk Whalum.

CLOSING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Young Adult Advisory Delegate Ben O’Connell from the Presbytery of Des Moines who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 5:02 p.m.

Friday, June 22, 2018, 8:30 A.M.

BUSINESS MEETING IX

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS AND OPENING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Valdir Franca, Presbyterian Mission Agency area coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. Franca introduced the Reverend Carola Tron from the Waldensian Evangelical Church of Rio de la Plata (ecumenical advisory delegate); Martha Munoz-Duarte from the Presbyterian Church of Colombia (ecumenical advisory delegate); Anita Wright Torres from the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil (ecumenical representative); Carmen Díaz from the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador; Jose Huertas Rodriguez from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Costa Rica (ecumenical representative); Noé Sánchez from the National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala (ecumenical advisory delegate); and Ary Fernandez from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba (ecumenical representative). Rev. Tron offered greetings and prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Cheni Khonje, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. Moderator Khonje moved that the docket, Item 02-04, be amended to hear the completion of the Assembly Committee on
Social Justice Issues report this morning following the Assembly Committee on Environmental Issues report. She also recom-
mended moving the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures report to the afternoon. The motion to amend the
docket was approved.

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

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Vice-Moderator Madeline Alvarez Soto of the Assembly Committee on General
Assembly Procedures, for a report from the committee. Vice-Moderator Alvarez Soto reported the following impact on the per
capita budget of the items approved by the assembly to this point: 2019, $499,490; 2020, $390,030. This represents an increase
in the General Assembly per capita rate of $.35 in 2019 and $.29 in 2020. The total cost of actions still pending is: 2019,
$197,259; 2020, $151,959.

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

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination Walter Rock-
enstein for a report on financial implications to the mission budget of actions taken at this assembly. Moderator Rockenstein
reported the following impact on the mission budget of the items approved by the assembly to this point: 2019, $1,004,978;

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Michael Kirby of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Is-
sues, for the committee report.

Moderator Kirby moved Item 08-05 as amended. It was approved as amended. Moderator Kirby moved to answer Item
08-04 with the action taken on Item 08-05. The motion was approved.

Moderator Kirby moved Item 08-01 as amended and informed the assembly that there was a minority report on the item
that brought forth Item 08-08. Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, explained the minority report process to the assembly. Co-
Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Jacqueline Cummings, ruling elder commissioner from the Presbytery of South Loui-
siana, to move the minority report. Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri then recognized Moderator Kirby to speak to the majority
report. Moderator Kirby requested permission from Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri for President Frank Spencer of the Board
of Pensions to address the assembly. Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri then recognized Sam McGregor, a teaching elder from the
Presbytery of Providence; Jacqueline Cummings; and Kerri Allen, a teaching elder from the Presbytery of Chicago and repre-
sentative member from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns on the Mission Responsibility Through Investment
Committee, who spoke to the minority report.

After the assembly considered and disapproved a number of amendments, Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri declared the
main motion (08-01) perfected.

A motion was made to amend the substitute motion (08-08) in Recommendation 4. as follows: “Direct MRTI to pursue
its engagement process with deliberate haste and utilize its Guideline Metrics with corporations in the 2019 and 2020 proxy
seasons and report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with divestment recommendations for the companies who are not moving towards compliance with the General Assembly’s criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). [Companies previously identified by MRTI for this focused engagement include, but are not limited to, Chevron, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Marathon Petroleum, Valero Energy, Philips 66, Duke Energy, Ford, General Motors.]” The amendment was approved.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri declared the substitute motion (08-08) perfected.

Vice-Moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Ryan Landino moved that the report of the Committee
on Environmental Issues be arrested and resumed after worship and lunch. The motion was defeated.

Debate on whether the substitute motion (08-08) should become the main motion commenced.

A motion to reconsider the defeated motion to arrest the report of the Committee on Environmental Issues and resume
after worship and lunch was made. The motion to reconsider was approved. Vice-Moderator of the Assembly Committee on
Bills and Overtures Ryan Landino moved that the report of the Committee on Environmental Issues be arrested and resumed
after worship and lunch. The motion was approved. [For the remainder of the report, p. 53.]

The assembly entered into Daily Worship at 11:22 a.m. The Reverend Don Meeks of Greenwich Presbyterian Church in
Nokesville, Virginia, delivered the sermon, titled “A Modest Attempt at Cultivating Unity in the Church.”

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 12:15 p.m. after worship.
BUSINESS MEETING X

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS AND OPENING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized the the Reverend Dr. Victor Makari, missionary advisory delegate serving in Israel and Palestine as partnership liaison for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Rev. Dr. Makari offered greetings and prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Ryan Landino, Vice-Moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. Vice-Moderator Landino moved that the docket, Item 02-04, be amended to hear the completion of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Issues report, followed by the completion of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues report. The motion to amend the docket was approved.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Michael Kirby of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Issues, to continue the committee’s report. [See p. 52 for the first part of the report.]

Prior to the break for lunch and worship, the assembly had been debating whether the minority report (Item 08-08) should become the main motion for Item 08-01.

The assembly decided the minority report should become the main motion, which was to insert the text of Item 08-08 in place of the text of Item 08-01. The assembly approved the text of Item 08-08 as the text of Item 08-01. Item 08-08 is now answered by the action taken on Item 08-01.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri yielded the podium to Co-Moderator Kohlmann.

Moderator Kirby moved to answer Item 08-02 with the action taken on Item 08-01. Item 08-02 was answered with action taken on Item 08-01.

Moderator Kirby moved to answer Item 08-10 with the action taken on Item 08-01. Item 08-10 was answered with action taken on Item 08-01.

Moderator Kirby moved Item 08-12 as amended. It was approved.

Moderator Kirby moved Item 08-03 as amended. It was approved.

Moderator Kirby then moved Item 08-07. It was approved.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann led the assembly in prayer following the vote.

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

Assembly Committee on Environmental Issues

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

Plenary Action

Item 08-01. On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities That Focus on Renewable Energy—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

Approved with amendment by replacing the text of Item 08-01 with the text from Item 08-08 (with amendment to Recommendation 4.) [See p. 693.]

“The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation from the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

“1. Affirm the need of urgent and robust responses to the threat of climate change, as well as the need for Presbyterian entities and individuals to pursue a comprehensive set of faithful responses.
“2. Receive the report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) on its extensive engagement of corporations as well as its implementation of the criteria included in the directive from the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

“3. Affirm the Guideline Metrics (see appendix) MRTI developed for measuring progress towards compliance with General Assembly established criteria for all corporations, especially those that produce and/or heavily consume fossil fuels.

“4. Direct MRTI to [pursue] [continue] its engagement process with deliberate haste and [continue to] utilize its Guideline Metrics with corporations in the 2019 and 2020 proxy seasons and report back [three years of metrics] to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with divestment recommendations for the companies who are not moving towards compliance with the General Assembly’s criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). [Companies previously identified by MRTI for this focused engagement include, but are not limited to, Chevron, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Marathon Petroleum, Valero Energy, Phillips 66, Duke Energy, Ford, General Motors.]

“5. Commend all corporations who are working to address the risks of climate change by aligning and adopting policies and practices in line with Paris Accords including: reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved energy efficiency, incorporation of renewable energy and having robust disclosure of the risks related to the 2-degree warming scenario, and how they plan to manage operations in line with low carbon demand scenarios.

“6. Commend the investing agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their work to provide options for congregations, mid councils, and individuals working for a fossil fuel-free future. Specifically, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for its Restoring Creation Loan program; the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its positive investments in renewables and its environmental investment option for plan members; and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation for its positive investments in renewables, and for providing, through its New Covenant Trust Company subsidiary, fossil free investment strategies for congregations, mid councils, and individuals.

“7. Encourage continued respectful discussion and engagement in the church and civil society on the critical issue of climate change, and how it should be addressed, not only through the responsible use of investments, but also as individuals, churches, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) working together to reduce our carbon footprint.”

Item 08-02. On Adding to the GA Divestment List All Companies That Meet Specific Listed Criteria—From the Presbytery of East Tennessee.

Answered by the action taken on Item 08-01. [See p. 700.]

Item 08-03. On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 704–05.]

Amend Recommendation 12. as follows:

“12. Advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gases through the use of alternative, cleaner energy sources, such as [natural gas, nuclear,] wind, solar, and industrial-scale power storage, even if only as a bridge to the long-term future.”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $8,100 (2020) $7,800. Total—$15,900]

Item 08-04. On Renewing Our Call to Promote Environmental Justice—From the Presbytery of Newton.

Answered by the action taken on Item 08-05. [See p. 708.]

Item 08-05. On Responding to Environmental Racism—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.

Approved with amendment. [See p. 710.]

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

“Item 08-05. On Responding to Environmental Racism [and to Promote Environmental Justice]—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.”

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

“The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

“[1. Renew our denomination’s call to promote environmental justice and oppose environmental injustice in all its forms.]

“[2.] [3.] Take action to respond to environmental racism [and environmental injustice] in all its forms.

“[a. To provide educational resources to churches and mid councils about environmental racism and injustice.
“[b. To provide information and resources to enable the buildings and operations of our churches to be more environmentally sound.]”

“[2.] [3.] Listen to the perspectives and voices of people most impacted by environmental racism [with awareness to cultural diversity domestically and internationally].”

“[3.] [4.] In accordance with the Gospel, position the church’s approach to environmental problems to include responses to the voices most directly impacted by environmental racism.”

*Item 08-06. The Earth Is the Lord’s—Not Ours to Ruin: Priorities for a New Moral Era—From the Presbytery of Monmouth. Approved. [See p. 712.]

Item 08-07. Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Approved. [See pp. 714–18.]


Answered by the action taken on Item 08-01. [See pp. 734–35.]

*Item 08-09. Advocacy for Climate Change Action and a Thriving Lower-Carbon Economy—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Answered by the action taken on Item 08-12. [See p. 745.]

Item 08-10. On Seeking Middle Ground on Fossil Fuels—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

Answered by the action taken on Item 08-01. [See p. 750.]

*Item 08-11. On Regarding Use of Products Made of Polystyrene [Foam]—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

Approved as amended. [See p. 753.]

Amend Recommendations 1. and 2. [and title above] as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and other related agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to reduce, to the maximum extent feasible, use of products made of polystyrene [foam].”

“2. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Environmental Ministries, to communicate with the more than 9,000 congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urging them to reduce to the maximum extent feasible use of products made of polystyrene [foam].”

Item 08-12. On Supporting Carbon Pricing—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 754–55.]

Add a Recommendation 8. to read as follows:

“[8. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to support congregations’ advocacy with elected officials on climate action including just carbon pricing such as carbon fee and dividend.]”

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Bill Wildhack and Vice-Moderator Julie Hodges of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues, to continue the committee’s report. [For the first part of the report, see pp. 41–42.]

Moderator Wildhack moved Item 11-25. It was approved. Moderator Wildhack moved Item 11-07. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Hodges moved the approval of Item 11-11 as amended. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Hodges moved Item 11-22 as amended. It was approved as amended.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann invited Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri to offer a prayer following the vote.

Vice-Moderator Hodges moved Item 11-18 as amended. It was approved as amended.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann led the assembly in song.
Vice-Moderator Hodges moved Item 11-14 as amended. There was a motion to amend, inserting following “b.”: “[Such studies should make every effort to incorporate the perspectives of communities of color which already bear the burdens of racialized policing and which struggle under education and economic oppression, two root causes of violence, which grow out of the long history of the continual and systematic reassertion of white supremacy.]” The amendment was approved. Item 11-14 was approved as amended. Vice-Moderator Hodges requested permission from Co-Moderator Kohlmann to lead the assembly in a unison prayer, which was granted.

Moderator Wildhack moved Item 11-02 as amended. There was a motion to amend Item 11-02 by striking in paragraph one “[all executions]” and replacing it with “[the imposition of the death penalty],” adding “[and for the commutation of all death sentences to sentences of life imprisonment]” following “capital punishment,” and to amend paragraph four by adding “[and to call for the commutation of all life sentences to sentences of life imprisonment]” following “awaiting execution.” The amendment was approved. Item 11-02 was approved as amended.

Moderator Wildhack moved Item 11-09 as amended. Co-Moderator Kohlmann introduced a five minute “Kindom Time” break. Item 11-09 was approved as amended.

Moderator Wildhack moved Item 11-23 as amended. The motion was defeated. A motion from the floor was made to disapprove Item 11-23. The motion to disapprove was approved.

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

Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.
Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

I. Plenary Action

Item 11-01
Moved to 10 Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, as Item 10-11. [See pp. 831–32.]

Item 11-02. On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

Approved as amended. [See p. 991.]

Amend Recommendation 2. and amend the rest of the recommendation section by adding a new Recommendation 3 and re-numbering current Recommendation 3. as Recommendation 4 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.]

“2. Call for an immediate moratorium on [all executions] [the imposition of the death penalty] in all jurisdictions that impose capital punishment [and for the commutation of all death sentences to sentences of life imprisonment].

“(3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries, to post and publicize an updating of its resources on criminal justice and capital punishment, including the General Assembly’s resolution on Restorative Justice (2000), guidance for prison ministries, and any actions from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) advocating greater fairness in policing, provision of public defenders, availability of diversion and treatment programs, bail and sentencing standards for drug and other crime, consistent with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s vision of a less violent and more healing society, based in the teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth.]”

“(3.) ![4.] Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate the call for an immediate moratorium and our continuing opposition to capital punishment to the president of the United States, our representatives in Congress, as well as the governors and legislators of the thirty-three states with persons incarcerated while awaiting execution [and to call for the commutation of all life sentences to sentences of life imprisonment].”

Item 11-03. On Recognizing the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet’s Prophetic Voice for Today—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 994–95.]

Amend Item 11-03 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

“1. Recognize the prophetic witness of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet, pastor of 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City, and founding pastor of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year].
“2. Authorize an anniversary publishing of “A Memorial Discourse,” to be published by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, with the proceeds to benefit [the 175-year-old] 15th Street Presbyterian Church, Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, and St. James Presbyterian Church, which will soon celebrate its 125th anniversary, in close proximity to Hamilton Grange National Park. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) shall consult with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns on how the new publication can best meet the needs of contemporary and future ministries of the PC(USA) including the unique needs of local congregations and youth ministries [the successor church to Shiloh Presbyterian Church].

“3. Encourage the members of the [denomination] [PC(USA)] to visit [these congregations] as shrines to freedom [these congregations] and to actively support their continuing ministry.

“4. Encourage Presbyterian seminaries and other institutions of higher learning to actively study the impact of this divinely gifted orator and writer, and the way in which his witness helped lead to such documents as the Confession of Belhar.

“[5. Request Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to include ‘A Memorial Discourse’ in any materials developed in the future for the study of The Confession of Belhar.]”


*Item 11-04. On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty—From the Presbytery of Boise.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 996–97.]

Amend Recommendations 2. through 5. as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Affirm, consistent with these actions of previous assemblies, and the principles of the Confession of Belhar, that religious freedom is not a license for discrimination against any of God’s people, and cannot justify the denial of secular employment or benefits, healthcare, public or commercial services or goods, or parental rights to persons based on race, ethnicity, [sex] gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion] or gender expression.

“3. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to oppose legislative, judicial, and administrative efforts at the state and federal levels to limit the protection of persons based upon race, ethnicity, [sex] gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion] or gender expression in the guise of religious freedom.

“4. Encourage synods and presbyteries to oppose legislative, judicial, and administrative efforts at the state and federal levels to limit the protection of persons based upon race, ethnicity, [sex] gender, physical limitations, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion] or gender expression in the guise of religious freedom.

“5. Encourage all Presbyterians to distinguish between our historical understanding of our religious freedom to practice the essential tenets of our faith, and the misuse of the term religious freedom as a justification for discrimination in the provision of secular employment or benefits, healthcare, public or commercial services or goods, or parental rights to persons based on race, ethnicity, [sex] gender, physical limitations, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion] or gender expression.”

*Item 11-05. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Name Change

Approved as amended. [See pp. 998–99.]

Amend Item 11-05 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

“[1. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to change its name to Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).]

“[4.] [2. Direct all six agencies of the PC(USA) to move toward changing “racial ethnic people” to “people of color” in all documents, parlance, and programs from this point forward.

“[3. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to change its name to Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).]
“3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) to change “Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC)” to “Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)” in all documents, parlance, and programs.”

Item 11-06

Moved to 04 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, as Item 04-07. [See p. 468.]

Item 11-07. A Resolution to Respond to Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Approved. [See pp. 999–1000.]

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $11,060. Total—$22,120]


Approved as amended. [See pp. 1001–1005.]

Amend the recommendation section in A. Recommendations for PC(USA) Action and Policy, 2.a. Education, by adding a new paragraph (5) to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“(5) Educate church leaders that substance abuse is often a co-occurring disorder with mental illness and in order to move towards recovery on one, both must be addressed.”

Item 11-09. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Approved as amended and with comment. [See pp. 1024–25.]

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

“The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

“1. Direct the Stated Clerk to declare that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) confesses its failure to listen to the long-silenced voices of [victims] [survivors] of clergy sexual misconduct, repents its institutional sins of ineffective sexual misconduct policy, and commits to the deep systemic changes needed to create just systems.

“2. Text remains unchanged.

“3. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to provide and, where necessary, develop pastoral, Trauma-Informed Clinical Care (TIC) based and theologically-grounded resources for healing [victims] [survivors] and their families, congregations, and presbyteries from sexual misconduct within the church, including:

“a. Text remains unchanged.

“b. Text remains unchanged.

“c. through e. Text remains unchanged.

“4. Text remains unchanged.

“5. Direct the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), “Safe and Sacred Space Task Force,” and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to form a five-member task force composed of [victims] [survivors] and advocates for [victims] [survivors] of sexual misconduct. The task force will oversee the implementation of Recommendations 1. thru 4. while undertaking a comprehensive examination of Presbyterian policy, judicial process, and rules of discipline. It will evaluate the need for a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator within each presbytery and the collection of the number of sexual misconduct allegations and charges occurring within the bounds of the denomination. The task force will be staffed by both OGA and PMA, and will report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with
recommendations on how the PC(USA) can be more effective in ensuring justice, accountability, and pastoral support for individuals, families, and congregations when charges of sexual misconduct have been made."

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues feels it is necessary to create a new task force as described in Recommendation 5. in order to take immediate and decisive action.


Approved. [See pp. 1030–32.]

Item 11-11. “Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era.”

Approved as amended. [See pp. 1045–46.]

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

“The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation from the Presbyterian Intercultural Network (PIN), recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

“[Recommendations 1. through 3. remain unchanged.]

“4. Immediately after the 223rd General Assembly (2018), direct the Moderator to appoint a cross-sectional task force to develop and publish priorities and guidelines for congregations, mid councils, and General Assembly entities for the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation” and recommend appropriate resources to deepen understanding and skills for resisting [racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism] discrimination based on race, class, gender, sex, or sexuality. Promote awareness of resources currently available that deepen understanding of intersectionality and skills for resistance including those less frequently discussed, such as interfaith competencies so essential in these times.

“[Recommendations 5. through 9. remain unchanged.]

“10. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to encourage, assist, and support presbyteries’ committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry to

“a. Urge candidates for ministry to engage in internship and/or field education experiences in intercultural settings; especially for “white” students to work in a racial and cultural context different from their own.

“b. Provide opportunities for candidates for ministry to gain experience preaching and teaching about racial justice.

“c. Include members of diverse intercultural backgrounds on committees on preparation for ministry, guiding candidates for ministry.

“[d. Encourage synods and presbyteries to institute dismantling racism programs and encourage all staff and clergy to take the training every three years in like manner of PC(USA) mandated sexual abuse policy.]

“[d.][e.] Provide regular white privilege recognition, cultural humility, and antiracism trainings at presbytery gatherings.

“[e.] [f.] Support seminarians in their study and learning from diverse readings and topics in seminary curriculum about the lived realities of people of color in the U.S. and the life experiences of immigrants to the United States.

“[f.] Direct General Assembly to focus on planting new congregations, and raising indigenous leadership for all levels of the church from within communities of color, with special emphasis on the Latin, African American, Native American, and immigrant communities.

“[b. Remove barriers and create pathways to full inclusion in the PC(USA) for congregations and pastors coming from historically non-white traditions.
“[If these directives require changes to the Book of Order, these changes should be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

“[4-] [12.] Encourage all members, particularly “white” members, in the PC(USA) to work to end racism in our individual and institutional lives by working on the following eight steps:

“The rest of the recommendation section remains the same.”

[Financial Implications: PMA Annual $16,500; Per Capita Annual $23,740. Total—$80,480]

*Item 11-12. On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 1050–51.]

Amend the tenth paragraph of “Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The General Assembly also encourages congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to welcome transgender and gender non-binary people into the life of the church and to continue to grow in compassion and knowledge about the full expression of our individual and respective gender identities. To that end, the General Assembly directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consult with existing LGBTQIA+ focused advocacy organizations to develop and/or adopt educational resources to support congregational and denominational learning, and encourages synods, presbyteries, seminaries, and congregations to do the same.”

*Item 11-13. On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1054.]

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

“The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve the following resolution:

“1. Celebrating the expansive embrace of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the breadth of our mission to serve a world in need, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirms the gifts of LGBTQIA+ people for ministry and celebrates their service in the church and in the world.”

“2. The assembly celebrates that over the years, LGBTQIA+ people have faithfully, lovingly, and courageously served in every kind of service to which Christian disciples are called—notwithstanding the church’s efforts to exclude them from particular types of service.”

“3. The assembly laments the ways that the policies and actions of the PC(USA) have caused gifted, faithful, LGBTQIA+ Christians to leave the Presbyterian church so that they could find a more welcoming place to serve, as they have been gifted and called by the Spirit.”

“4. At the same time, the assembly gives thanks for the LGBTQIA+ pioneers of the faith who have persisted in relationship with the Presbyterian church, at great personal cost and sacrifice, together with the whole of the LGBTQIA+ community, moving the church toward a more generous, loving, and just understanding of God’s grace.”

“5. The assembly also gives thanks for those who continue to seek deeper understanding, and more authentic welcome, even amid discomfort or uncertainty about how best to show hospitality, in the spirit of continuing Reformation.”

“6. Today, openly LGBTQIA+ people are leading churches, preaching the gospel, serving those in need, and otherwise using their gifts for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

“[Recommendations 7. through 10. remain unchanged.]”


Approved as amended. [See pp. 1056–58.]

Amend the recommendation section as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline. Action taken in plenary is shaded in gray.]
“The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

“1. Confess that, in spite of fifty years of Presbyterian advocacy to reduce gun violence, we have been paralyzed by fear of the gun and ammunition lobby and our church has not adequately applied the power of God’s love to the issue of gun violence, with more than 1,600,000 Americans dying from guns since 1968 and many millions more wounded, orphaned, and devastated by gun violence.

“[Recommendation 2. remains unchanged.]

“3. Call upon God to wake us up from seeing gun violence as normal and to grant divine courage to our more than 10,000 churches that we might foster a nationwide conversation on gun violence in every community; specifically, to stand in prayer during the 223rd General Assembly (2018), to share this overture and prayer with the presbyteries and synods, to share it in any other way possible, and to encourage every General Assembly commissioner and observer to continue to pray when they go home for a movement of the Spirit to engage our churches in study and action to prevent gun violence. May every congregation know that the whole church has prayed for them and for God’s intervention through them in the face of a gun violence epidemic. In love, may our churches help our country enact sensible steps to prevent gun violence from murders, suicides, accidents, family disputes, and mass shootings.

“[3. This is the time for us to act and intervene in the gun violence epidemic. We will stand in prayer during the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to share this overture, to take action, and to pray with presbyteries and synods, to share it in any way possible, and for every General Assembly commissioner, and to encourage every General Assembly commissioner and observer to continue to pray when they go home for a movement of the Spirit to engage our churches in study and action to prevent gun violence. May every congregation know that the whole church has prayed for them and for us to take transformational action in this gun violence epidemic. In love, may our churches help our country enact sensible steps to prevent gun violence from murders, suicides, accidents, family disputes, and mass shootings.

“4. Encourage congregational and presbytery leaders

“[a. to work with teen and young adults especially in proposing local and state legislation prior to and in preparation for the 2018 and 2020 elections, to hold elected officials accountable, and to ensure accurate historical treatments of gun violence are included in high school curricula; and

“[b. to create opportunities for study of this issue in the local churches and at the presbytery level with an emphasis on the use of resources from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Such studies should make every effort to incorporate the perspectives of communities of color which already bear the burdens of racialized policing and which struggle under education and economic oppression, two root causes of violence, which grow out of the long history of the continual and systematic reassertion of white supremacy.]

“[c. to strategize with ecumenical partners based on the five elements on successful social movements cited in the General Assembly report, Gun Violence, Gospel Values (2010, p. 14), including use of the prayer below in public worship and protest events.]

“[The rest of the recommendation remains unchanged.]”


Approved as amended. [See pp. 1060–61.]

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

“In keeping with its Historic Principles of Church Order (1788), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the following affirmation and action steps:

“Affirmation

“[The text in the Affirmation section remains unchanged.]”

“Action Steps

“In order to effectuate the above principles, based upon legal and theological understandings of the First Amendment and free exercise of religion consistent with those of the Reformed tradition in the United States, the General Assembly:
"1. Resolves to stand against any invocation of ‘religious freedom’ [in the public sphere] that deprives people of their civil and human rights to equal protection under the law, or that uses ‘religious freedom’ to justify exclusion and discrimination;

[Recommendations 2. through 4. remain unchanged.]

"5. Directs the Office of the Stated Clerk to send this resolution[, with the rationale,] to every congregation and presbytery, encouraging Presbyterians to distinguish between the historical understanding of religious freedom to practice one’s faith and current efforts to discriminate against, exclude, and marginalize vulnerable people in the name of ‘religious freedom.’

"*NOTE: [Text remains unchanged.]

Item 11-16. A Resolution on Honest Patriotism—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Approved. [See pp. 1064–66.]

Item 11-17. Declaration on Where We Stand Regarding Concerns About Direction Towards Autocracy That This Country Is Taking—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 1070–71.]

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

“The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to affirm the following declaration [and offers it as a resource to congregations]:

“As confessing Christians,

“we trust God, whom we know through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray as others pray in other names

“We are obligated to declare our concerns about the direction towards autocracy that our country is taking.

“We say Yes to God’s power of love and justice for the neighbor as well as the self; and we say No to demonic power that urges hate of the other, scatters blame, and creates civic discord.

“We say Yes to our imperfect democracy with one person, one vote, and No to any corruption of our elections.

“We say Yes to universal health care and No to care based on the ability to pay.

“We say Yes to safe schools, houses of worship, and public gathering places; and No to civilian access to assault [and/or military-style] weapons.

“We say Yes to core human values and No to dividing our humanity by ideology and partisanship.

“We say Yes to bridges and [preservation of families and] No to walls.

“[We say Yes to affirming and celebrating the full spectra of human identity and No to discrimination and bigotry.]

“We say: “In life, and in death we belong to God.”

Item 11-18. Responding to Racist Nationalism—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1072.]

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

“1. Approve the following resolution:

“The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) strongly condemns the unjust, racist disparagement of people and entire nations [lately], promoted by politicians and government officials at all levels in the mistaken effort to place “America First.” As Christians, our call is to bring to “all nations” (Mt. 28:19) the good news that God loves all people equally. [Historically, America has been “first” in espousing human equality as the principle on which nations are founded.] We call upon our national leaders to lead by that principle. We pray that God may open the minds and hearts of the American people to understand that the real problems they face result from real causes and not from the presence of demonized “others.” We commit to working with people of good will, regardless of political or religious affiliation, in a collective effort to solve the real problems facing our nation and the world.
We ask forgiveness from those who have been hurt by hateful rhetoric and harmed by unjust government policies. We acknowledge our responsibility and urge our elected officials to speak out against hate and “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly” with God (Mic. 6:8).”


Approved. [See p. 1073.]


Approved as amended. [See pp. 1095–96.]

Amend Recommendation 5. and add a new Recommendation 11. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“5. Recognize and share the Gospel message of life, hope, and resurrection [as an antidote to] [in relation to] suicide, in coordination with professional and medical assistance.”

“(11. Direct the General Assembly to publish the list of resources found in the rationale in all online denominational resources to congregations.)”

*Item 11-21. Commissioners’ Resolution. Responding to People Impacted by Opioids and Other Addictive Substances.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1098.]

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

“The 223rd General Assembly (2018) recommends that PC(USA) congregations take [action as follows] [the following actions, as appropriate,] to address the impact the opioid crisis and other substance use disorders have on our churches and communities:

“(Recommendations 1. through 5. remain unchanged.)

“6. [Learn how to recognize signs of addiction and knowing local treatment and prevention services as well as how to make a referral.] [Partner with local treatment and prevention services for ongoing referral and training on how to recognize signs of addiction.]

“(Recommendations 7. through 10. remain unchanged.)

“11. Host NA, AA, or [Nar-Anon, Al-Anon, or other faith-based recovery groups] [other spiritual recovery programs].

“(12. Host Nar-Anon or Al-Anon spiritual recovery programs for those affected by the disease of addiction for families and friends.]

“(14–13. Partner with local jails and recovery home operators to offer opportunities for spiritual and social connection after release for people recovering from a substance use disorder.”


Approved as amended. [See p. 1100.]

Amend the recommendation section by adding new Recommendations 4. and 5. to read as follows:

“(4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the U.S. Government to repeal the provisions in the Jones Act that limit Puerto Rico’s imports to using U.S.-owned shipping companies, a requirement that has substantially hindered its recovery from the 2017 hurricanes and its economic growth more generally.]

“(5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the U.S. Government to conduct another rescheduling of Puerto Rico’s debt obligations, given the way that, since the previous rescheduling, the hurricanes (and the insufficient support for recovery) have greatly reduced the island’s fiscal capacity to service its debt.]”

[Financial Implications: PMA $4,500]

Disapproved. [See p. 1102.]


Approved as amended. [See p. 1104.]

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

“That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. Expresses to the world its dismay and concern at the degradation of civil discourse, the system of checks and balances, and other practices typical of a representative democracy.

2. Directs the Stated Clerk to collaborate with ecumenical and interfaith partners to communicate directly and individually via the appropriate media our dismay and concern to the President and Vice-President of the United States of America, each member of the United States Congress currently in session, and each member to serve in the Congress that will convene in January 2019, governors of states, leaders of state legislative bodies from at least two political parties, and local government executives, and urge them to speak out about similar concerns regarding the function of representative democracies in the United States of America; and urge them to protect the freedoms inherent to representative democracies.

3. Urges those in church leadership roles within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to seek opportunities for conversation and reconciliation with those encouraging discord with regard to civil discourse [and representative democracy] [using Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians in Times of Disagreement, as approved by the 204th General Assembly (1992)].

4. Directs the Stated Clerk to notify leaders of other branches of the church and other faiths, and to communicate directly and individually via the appropriate media our dismay and concern to the President and Vice-President of the United States of America, each member of the United States Congress currently in session, and each member to serve in the Congress that will convene in January 2019, governors of states, leaders of state legislative bodies from at least two political parties, and local government executives, and urge them to speak out about similar concerns regarding the function of representative democracies in the United States of America; and urge them to protect the freedoms inherent to representative democracies.


Approved. [See p. 1105.]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 11-A. Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Approved. [See p. 1106.]

Item 11-Info

A. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary [See p. 1106.]


C. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy Agency Summary [See p. 1111.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Associate Stated Clerk Tom Hay who noted that the bow ties people were wearing on this Bow Tie Friday were in honor of Bill Forbes, longtime General Assembly platform manager. Many of the bow ties were pink in honor of the #MeToo movement.
Hay also announced that the Presbyterian Foundation would have coffee for the assembly available during the evening’s plenary.

CLOSING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Kohlmann invited Angela Williams, theological student advisory delegate from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, to offer the closing prayer.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 5:24 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 22

BUSINESS MEETING XI

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

OPENING GREETINGS AND PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Ellen Smith, missionary advisory delegate serving as regional liaison in Eastern Europe, who brought greetings and offered prayer.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who announced that the cross in front of him on the platform was crafted in honor of the 300th anniversary of the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Cheni Khonje, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee. Moderator Khonje brought one item for action, the docket as amended, Item 02-04. Moderator Khonje moved Item 02-04. It was approved as amended.

REPORT ONE OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Y. Dianna Wright and Vice-Moderator Madeline Alvarez Soto of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for the committee report.

Vice-Moderator Alvarez Soto moved disapproval of Item 03-11. It was approved to disapprove.

Vice-Moderator Alvarez Soto moved Item 03-19, and asked to speak to it. Vice-Moderator Alvarez Soto moved to consider each recommendation separately. Vice-Moderator Alvarez Soto moved approval of Recommendation 1. It was approved. Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri moved approval of Recommendation 2. It was approved. Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri moved disapproval of Recommendation 3. It was approved to disapprove.

Moderator Wright moved approval of Item 03-22. It was approved.

Moderator Wright called on Young Adult Advisory Delegates John Daniel DeBevoise from the Presbytery of Central Florida and Katie Pratt from the Presbytery of Abington to move Item 03-23. DeBevoise and Pratt moved to refer Item 03-23 with comment. The referral with comment was approved.

Moderator Wright moved approval of Item 03-09 with comment. There was a motion to amend Item 03-09 to include the collection of data in the Session Annual Statistical Report relating to gender, disability, and Christian education enrollment. The amendment was approved. Item 03-09 was approved as amended.

Moderator Wright moved approval of Item 03-06 as amended. It was approved.

Moderator Wright moved approval of Item 03-01. Moderator Wright invited Kerry Rice, Deputy Stated Clerk of the Office of the General Assembly, to share an overview of the ministries supported through the per capita budget. Moderator Wright requested that Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri ask the assembly to spend ten minutes in small groups, discussing the following questions: “How can we reconcile adding financial implications to a per capita budget that cannot sustain even the current ministry expectations from the church?” or, “What do we do with a proposed budget that will not support all the financial implications we have passed at this assembly?” At the end of the ten minutes, Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri opened the floor
FRIDAY, JUNE 22

microphones for five minutes of reporting from the small group discussions. After the five-minute session, discussion continued, and an amendment to Item 03-01 was made to raise the per capita increase in 2019 from ten percent to fifteen percent. There was a motion to postpone debate until the Saturday morning plenary. The motion to postpone debate was approved.

This concluded Report One for this plenary of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures. A summary of the report is as follows (Report Two can be found on p. 78):

Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures

Report One

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

I. Plenary Action


Item 03-01 can be found in Report Two of 03 Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures. [See p. 161.]

*Item 03-02. Reelection and Election of Associate Stated Clerks—From the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Approved. [See pp. 161–62.]

*Item 03-03. Amendment to Section IV.C. of the Organization for Mission—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved. [See p. 163.]

*Item 03-04. Site Selection for the 226th General Assembly (2024)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved. [See p. 163.]

*Item 03-05. Approval of National Certifying Bodies—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved. [See p. 163.]

$Item 03-06. General Assembly Committee on Representation Recommendations—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 164–65.]

Amend Recommendations 2. and 3. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strikethrough.]

“2. Direct the [two] agencies that are under their six-year General Assembly review to:

“a. Assign at least one representative to attend one GACOR meeting per year in their two-year review cycle for the purpose of developing a collaborative working relationship.

“b. Invite one representative from GACOR to attend one meeting of that agencies’ board or comparable governing body per year in the two-year review cycle.

“3. Direct all [six] agencies to apply Recommendations 2.a. and 2.b. above in the years when each agency is under review by the General Assembly.”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $3,848. Total—$7,696]

Item 03-07. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Self-Study

Moved to Item 03-Info. [See p. 188.]
Item 03-08. General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) Self-Study 2012–2017.
   Moved to Item 03-Info. [See p. 200.]

Item 03-09
   Approved as amended and with comment. [See p. 167.]
   Amendment: Add a new Recommendation 3. to read as follows: [Text added in plenary in brackets, underlined, and shaded in gray.]

   “[3. Include the collection of data in the Session Annual Statistical Report relating to gender, disability, and Christian Education enrollment.]”

   Comment: The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) asks that the Office of the General Assembly, GACOR, ACWC, and ACREC continue to improve and expand the gathering of statistical information, especially in the areas of gender, race, and ethnicity, and report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

   [Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $7,500. Total—$7,500]

*Item 03-10. Amending Standing Rule A.6.h. to Make Clear What Happens if Assembly Overturns Bills and Overtures Decision Not to Refer an Item of Business—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.
   Approved. [See p. 176.]

Item 03-11. Amending Standing Rule B.2.e. to Anticipate Need to Adjust Number of Advisory Delegates—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.
   Disapproved. [See p. 176.]

   Approved. [See p. 177.]

   Approved. [See pp. 177–78.]

   Approved. [See p. 178.]

   Approved. [See p. 178.]

   Approved. [See p. 179.]

   Approved. [See pp. 179–80.]

Approved. [See p. 180.]


1. Recommendation 1.

Approved. [See p. 180.]

2. Recommendation 2.

Approved. [See p. 180.]


Disapproved. [See pp. 180–81.]


Approved. [See pp. 181–82.]


Approved. [See p. 182.]


Approved. [See p. 182.]

Item 03-23. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Permitting Advisory Delegates to Have a Full Vote in Moderator Elections in Future General Assemblies.

Referred to the Office of the General Assembly with comment. [See p. 183.]

Comment: Recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) refer Item 03-23 to the Office of the General Assembly, to be in consultation with the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and to bring a recommendation before the 224th General Assembly (2020) for full consideration, including the possibility of constitutional amendment.

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

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

Approved. [See p. 185.]

Item 03-B. Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society

Approved with Comment. [See pp. 185–86.]

Comment: Approved with the following exceptions:

Minutes for the January 28, 2016 meeting:
Page 2, paragraph 7—Incorrect date, should be 2015, instead of 2016. Further, the replacement motion is not detailed.
Page 3—Advisory Council—Says they approved the names, but no names were listed for the Advisory Council.

Minutes for the April 14–15, 2016, meeting:
Page 1—List of those attending ends in “and” and ends with a period with no other names.
Item 03-C. Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation

Approved. [See p. 186.]

Item 03-Info

A. Appointment of Assistant Stated Clerks—From the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. [See p. 186.]

B. GACOR Agency Summary. [See p. 186.]


D. General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) Self-Study 2012–2017. [See p. 200.]

E. Report on the Six Agencies Supplier Diversity—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation. [See p. 209.]


G. General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) Agency Summary 2018. [See p. 218.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri handed over the podium to Co-Moderator Kohlmann, who recognized Moderator Ruth McCollum Huff and Vice-Moderator Melinda Hunt of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry for the committee report.

Moderator Huff moved Item 06-02 for approval. It was approved. Moderator Huff moved Item 06-11 for approval as amended. It was approved as amended. Moderator Huff moved Item 06-12 for disapproval. It was approved to disapprove. Moderator Huff moved Item 06-21 for approval. It was approved.

Moderator Huff moved Item 06-06 for disapproval. It was approved to disapprove. Moderator Huff moved Item 06-01 for disapproval. It was approved to disapprove.

Moderator Huff moved Item 06-NB for approval. There was a motion to amend by adding “[for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) employees, including but not limited to ministers,]” following “paid parental and family leave,” and adding

“The duties of this task force shall include but not be limited to:

1. Gathering information from multiple sources regarding implementing paid family leave.

2. Entering into discussion with the Board of Pensions and other applicable bodies to discern how to most effectively implement and finance the recommendations of the Committee, those being: Provide eight weeks of paid family leave and four weeks unpaid leave for plan participants.

3. Seek other options similar in intent should programs implementing these recommendations prove economically unfeasible for employers and participants.

4. Exploring how to encourage employers to extend love and compassion to these employees by granting appropriate requests for family leave time.

5. Exploring how to provide financial assistance to help local congregations pay for moderator coverage and/or pastoral care during leave period within the local usual pay rate guidelines. This task force shall prepare a report with recommendations for implementation to be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

This task force [will report to] shall prepare a report with recommendations for implementation to be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020).”

There was a motion to amend the amendment to include “[6. In addition to the six task force members, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns, and the Board of Pensions will advise the task force with voice, but will not have vote.]” The amendment to the amendment was approved. The amended motion to Item 06-NB was approved. Item 06-NB was approved as amended.
There was a motion to refer Items 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-17, and 06-20 to the task force created in Item 06-NB. There was a motion to amend the referral by striking Item 06-20. The amendment was approved. The amended motion to refer was approved.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann introduced a video from the Presbyterian Mission Agency about the water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

Moderator Huff moved Item 06-20 for approval as amended. There was a motion to amend by adding “[4. To direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to forward the details of its Family Leave Policies and other pertinent information to the synods, presbyteries, and congregations in order to facilitate and expedite the creation of fair and equitable family leave policies.]” It was approved. There was a motion to amend Recommendation 2, to read: “[Strongly urge and recommend] all synods, presbyteries, and congregations to create a Family Leave Policy that each member congregation can adopt, which includes at a minimum six [eight] [twelve] weeks paid leave [and an additional six] [four] weeks unpaid leave] during a twelve-month period for new parents for the birth or adoption of or to care for a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.” It was approved. Item 06-20 was approved as amended.

Vice-Moderator Hunt moved Item 06-03 for disapproval. The motion to disapprove was approved. Vice-Moderator Hunt moved to answer Item 06-10 with the action taken on Item 06-03. It was approved.

Vice-Moderator Hunt moved Item 06-08 for approval. The motion was defeated. A motion to disapprove Item 06-08 was brought from the floor. The motion to disapprove was approved.

There was a motion to reduce the amount of voting time from 15 seconds to 10 seconds. The motion was approved.

Vice-Moderator Hunt moved Item 06-22 for approval. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Hunt moved Item 06-23 for approval. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Hunt moved Item 06-16 for approval. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Hunt moved Item 06-05 for approval as amended. It was approved as amended.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann gave the assembly a stretch break.

Moderator Huff moved Item 06-04 for approval as amended. It was approved. Moderator Huff moved Item 06-19 for referral. The referral was approved. Moderator Huff moved an alternate resolution for approval in place of Item 06-24. It was approved.

Moderator Huff moved Item 06-09 for approval as amended. There was a motion to amend by adding to the end of the recommendation, “[Refer the question of permitting trials in absentia for those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding to the Office of the General Assembly and Rules of Discipline Task Force to bring a recommendation to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]” The amendment was approved. Item 06-09 was approved as amended.

Moderator Huff moved that Item 06-07 be answered with the action taken on Item 06-09. It was approved.

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

Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry

There are no items for the Wednesday Consent Agenda.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

I. Plenary Action


Disapproved. [See p. 563.]

Item 06-02. On Amending G-3.0307 to Clarify the Responsibility of the Presbytery—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

Approved. [See pp. 565–66.]
Item 06-03. On Adding G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA)—From the Presbytery of Central Nebraska.

Disapproved. [See pp. 566–67.]


Approved as amended. [See p. 570.]

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

“b. An offense is any act or omission by a member or a person in an ordered ministry of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). [An act or omission prohibited by the council of authority’s duly adopted sexual misconduct policy and/or child and youth protection policy] [Sexual abuse as defined in Section D-10.0401c] shall be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules.”

Item 06-05. On Amending G-2.0503 with Additional Language—From the Presbytery of Tropical Florida.

Approved as amended. [See p. 571.]

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

“The Presbytery of Tropical Florida respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

“[Shall G-2.0503 be amended by inserting the following paragraph after G-2.0503(5): [Text to be added is shown as italic.]:

“*When ministers of Word and Sacrament are called to a validated ministry within the bounds of another presbytery, permission to labor outside the bounds of the presbytery of membership and within the bounds of the presbytery where the ministry is located shall be obtained from both presbyteries. Such permission shall be reviewed annually.*”

“[Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0306 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italics.]:

“*Every minister of the Word and Sacrament shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his or her work is situated or of the presbytery where she or he resides. [The presbytery may grant a minister permission to engage in work validated ministry that is outside its geographic bounds or which is not under its jurisdiction, but no presbytery shall permit a minister to engage in work that is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery and which is properly within the responsibility of another presbytery without consent of that presbytery. Such permission shall be obtained from both presbyteries and shall be reviewed and renewed annually.]*

Item 06-06. On Amending G-6.04e to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote to Amend the Constitution—From the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest.

Disapproved. [See pp. 572–73.]

Item 06-07. On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d When Former Ministers of the Word and Sacrament Who Renounced Jurisdiction While Being Accused in a Disciplinary Case Wish to Work for the PC(USA) Again—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Answered by the action taken on Item 06-09. [See p. 576.]

Item 06-08. Amending G-1.0304 to Allow Congregations to Elect Individuals as Ruling Elders Without Requiring Them to Assume a Seat on the Session—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.

Disapproved. [See pp. 584–85.]

Item 06-09. On Amending G-2.0509 Regarding Renunciation of Jurisdiction—From the Presbytery of Central Florida.

Approved with amendment. [See p. 588.]
Amend Item 06-09 by adding a second recommendation to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through. Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline. Actions approved in plenary are shaded in gray.]

“[2. Shall D-10.0401d be amended to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“[1 For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament comes forward in self-acusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509) who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church, no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.]"

[3. Refer the question of permitting trials in absentia for those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding to the Office of the General Assembly and Rules of Discipline Task Force to bring a recommendation to the 224th General Assembly (2020)].”

Item 06-10. On Adding a New Section G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

Answered by the action taken on Item 06-03. [See pp. 590–91.]

Item 06-11. On Amending G-2.0401 Regarding the Composition of a Congregational Nominating Committee—From the Presbytery of Grace.

Approved as amended: [See p. 592.]

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

“Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. [Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the minimum size of the committee shall consist of is at least three active members of the congregation, and at least one of those three is a shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session, and the voting majority is comprised of those not currently serving on the session (members-at-large).] [Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee. The rule shall meet the following criteria: (1) the minimum size of the committee as specified in the rule shall be at least three persons; (2) at least one member of the committee shall be an elder currently serving on session; and (3) a majority of those persons on the committee who are eligible to vote shall consist of persons not currently serving on session.] The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.”

Item 06-12. On Amending G-3.0201, Composition and Responsibilities of the Session—From the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois.

Disapproved. [See p. 594.]

Item 06-13. On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as Part of the Benefits Package—From the Presbytery of Boston.

Referred to the task force created in Item 06-NB. [See p. 595.]


Referred to the task force created in Item 06-NB. [See p. 601.]


Referred to the task force created in Item 06-NB. [See p. 606.]

Approved. [See pp. 611–12.]

Item 06-17. On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including Pastors, Certified Christian Educators, and Certified Associate Christian Educators—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Referred to the task force created in Item 06-NB. [See pp. 615–16.]

Item 06-18.

[Item 06-18, Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary, has been moved to Item 06-Info. See p. 634.]

Item 06-19. A Resolution to Amend the Book of Order, D-11.0403a—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Referred to the Task Force on the Rules of Discipline. [See pp. 621–22.]

Item 06-20. A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Approved with amendment. [See p. 623.]

Amend Recommendation 2. and add a new Recommendation 4. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline. Plenary actions are shaded in gray.]

“2. [Strongly] urge [and recommend] all synods, presbyteries, and congregations to create a Family Leave Policy that each member congregation can adopt, which includes at a minimum six [eight] [twelve] weeks paid leave [and an additional six [four] weeks unpaid leave] during a twelve-month period for new parents for the birth or adoption of or to care for a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.”

“4. To direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to forward the details of its Family Leave Policies and other pertinent information to the synods, presbyteries, and congregations in order to facilitate and expedite the creation of fair and equitable family leave policies.”

[Financial Implications: PILP $13,100; PPC $9,000. Total—$44,200]

Item 06-21. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Findings and Recommendations as to Request 18-01.

Approved. [See pp. 626–27.]

Item 06-22. Request 18-02 for Constitutional Interpretation to Resolve Tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202—From the Synod of the Northeast.

Approved. [See p. 628.]

Item 06-23. Request 18-03 Advisory Committee on the Constitution Findings and Recommendations as to Request 18-03.

Approved. [See pp. 630–631.]

Item 06-24. In Response to 06-16 from the 222nd General Assembly—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Approved an alternate resolution. [See pp. 631–32.]

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directs the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Amend Section D-10.0401e(1) to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]
“(1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or”

2. Amend D-10.0401b as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person, the five-year time limit shall not apply. There is also no time limit for charging that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-10.0401c(1) or (2) failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk. Both charges may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.”

Item 06-NB. To Create a Task Force on Family Leave

Approved as amended. [See pp. 633–34.]

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

“That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) appoint a six-person task force to study, work, pray, and discern on the issue of paid parental and family leave “[for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) employees, including but not limited to ministers,” to implement a faithful resolution with all the challenges associated with this.

“The duties of this task force shall include but not be limited to:

“1. Gathering information from multiple sources regarding implementing paid family leave.

“2. Entering into discussion with the Board of Pensions and other applicable bodies to discern how to most effectively implement and finance the recommendations of the committee, those being: Provide eight weeks of paid family leave and four weeks unpaid leave for plan participants.

“3. Seek other options similar in intent should programs implementing these recommendations prove economically unfeasible for employers and participants.

“4. Exploring how to encourage employers to extend love and compassion to these employees by granting appropriate requests for family leave time.

“5. Exploring how to provide financial assistance to help local congregations pay for moderator coverage and/or pastoral care during leave period within the local usual pay rate guidelines. This task force shall prepare a report with recommendations for implementation to be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020).”

“6. In addition to the six task force members, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, and the Board of Pensions will advise the task force with voice, but will not have vote.”

This task force [will report to] [shall prepare a report with recommendations for implementation to be submitted to] the 224th General Assembly (2020).

[Financial Implications: Per Capita $13,344. Total—$26,688]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 06-Info

A. Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary [See p. 634.]
B. Advisory Committee on Litigation Self-Study [See p. 636.]
C. Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) Agency Summary [See p. 640.]
D. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission [See p. 641.]
E. Mid Councils’ Statements of Compliance with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions [See p. 654.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES

Co-Moderator Kohlmann yielded the podium to Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri.
Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Charon Barconey and Vice-Moderator Steve Shively of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues, for the committee report.

Moderator Barconey moved the approval of Item 12-02 as amended. There was a motion to amend by adding “[6. To call on the United States government to rejoin and re-engage with the United Nations Human Rights Council.]” The amendment was approved. Item 12-02 was approved as amended.

Vice-Moderator Shively moved the approval of Item 12-11 as amended. A substitute motion was made:

“Recognizing that hope and love in the Israel and Palestine crisis must come from within, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

“1. Celebrates whenever and wherever Palestinians and Israelis come together in building honest understanding and peace, working together to address inequality to pave the way to reconciliation.

“2. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to identify grassroots organizations and ministries (especially for youth) in Palestine or Israel working for radical, systemic change.

“3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to make these ministries and organizations known to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations for support and encouragement.

“4. Where there are obstacles to this grassroots engagement in Israel/Palestine, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will advocate for freedom of engagement.”

The main motion was declared perfected. The substitute motion was declared perfected. The substitute motion became the main motion. Item 12-11 was approved.

Moderator Barconey moved the approval of Item 12-10 as amended. There was a motion to strike “[by Hamas]” in Recommendation 3. It was approved. Item 12-10 was approved as amended.

Moderator Barconey moved the approval of the alternate resolution to Item 12-05. It was approved.

Moderator Barconey moved the approval of Item 12-07 as amended. It was approved.

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

Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a $ sign.

I. Plenary Action

*Item 12-01. On Opposition to Congressional and State Anti-BDS Legislation—From the Synod of the Covenant.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1117.]

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

“2. Defend and advocate for the constitutional protection under the First Amendment for all United States citizens, religious and civic organizations, companies and corporations that exercise their freedoms of speech, association, and other civil rights to support measures of economic witness [boycott, divestment, sanctions, or BDS policies and strategies] designed to bring those freedoms and rights to Palestinians and other persons living without full citizenship and under occupation.

“3. Oppose specific U.S. legislation [and efforts by agents of foreign governments] to suppress [measures of economic witness (boycott, divestment, sanctions, or BDS policies and strategies)] those freedoms, such as “The Israel Anti-Boycott Act,” Senate Bill (S) 720 and House Resolution (H.R.) 1697, which seek to impose civil and criminal penalties for nonviolent BDS resistance against human rights violations in Israel and Palestine.”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $1,000 (2020) $2,000. Total—$3,000]
Item 12-02. On Advocating for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Israel—From the Synod of the Covenant.

Approved with amendment. [See p. 1120.]

1. Amend Recommendation 2. as follows:

   “2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, through its Stated Clerk, to write to the United States president and secretary of state urging them to [seek United States government suspension of all economic and military aid to Israel until the latter is in] [use diplomatic tools to bring Israel into] full compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (of which Israel is a signatory) by changing its laws, policies, and practices that favor its Jewish citizens and discriminate against its Christian and Muslim citizens and other ethnic minorities.”

2. Add a new Recommendation 6. to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Actions approved in plenary are shaded in gray.]

   “[6. To call on the United States government to rejoin and re-engage with the United Nations Human Rights Council]”

*Item 12-03. On Creating a Task Force to Examine NCCOP’s Call to Ecumenical Solidarity for Justice for Palestinians—From the Presbytery of Grace.

Approved as amended. [See pp. 1126–27.]

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

   “[2. Create a task force of twelve representatives from all] [All] relevant, appropriate, official PC(USA) staff, committees, task forces, and mission networks [are directed to continue to respond] [to examine the NCCOP’s nine-part call to] [in] ecumenical solidarity for justice for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, in Israel, throughout refugee camps and the diaspora] [The task force will be] [as] informed by existing policy statements of previous General Assemblies.

   “[3. Instruct the] [bodies named above, coordinated by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy] to make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) [as necessary in continuing to act in solidarity with our partners in Palestine and Israel] [and to bring a full report of its meetings and activity].”

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $27,688. Total—$55,376]

*Item 12-04. On Responding to the Open Letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) to the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Movement—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

Answered by the action taken on Item 12-03. [See p. 1130.]


Approved an alternate resolution. [See p. 1135.]

The 223rd General Assembly (2018)

1. Urges its members, congregations, presbyteries, and national staff units, to reach out in open, truthful dialogue with our Jewish colleagues, engaging the issue of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

2. Challenges dialogue partners to build on common values for justice and peace in Israel/Palestine.

3. Facilitates the above dialogue by directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consider preparing study resources and urge presbyteries to provide opportunities for study to further educate church members about truthful, open interfaith dialogue.

*Item 12-06. For the Protection of the Children of Israel and Palestine—From the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

Disapproved. [See p. 1138.]

Item 12-07. On Urging RE/MAX to Stop Facilitating the Sale of Property in Israeli Settlement Colonies—From the Presbytery of Redwoods.

Approved. [See pp. 1141–42.]
Item 12-08. A Resolution on the Status of Jerusalem—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

Approved. [See pp. 1145–46.]


Item 12-09. On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.

Approved as amended and with comment. [See pp. 1148–49.]

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

“1. Stop the Killing

“Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to send a message to the President of the United States, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and to each United States Senator and Representative to use all diplomatic means, in cooperation with the United Nations’ Security Council and other major parties in the Syrian crisis, to bring about a durable ceasefire, in tandem with a cessation of military support to any participant in the conflict to bear witness to the world to the call for peace as a way of encouraging world-wide pressure for peace in Syria].

“...

“3. Alleviate the Suffering

   a. [Text remains unchanged.]
   b. [Text remains unchanged.]
   c. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to call on the United States Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, to review and revise the current program of economic sanctions on Syria so as to reduce their painful impact on ordinary Syrian families and on religious, civic, educational, and medical bodies involved in peaceful pursuits for reconstruction and humanitarian relief unassociated with any form of terrorism.”

Comment: The amendments from committee were included at the request of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.

[Financial Implications: PMA $15,000]


Approved with amendment. [See p. 1152.]

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

“1. Expresses its profound grief and sorrow for the families of all Palestinians killed in the Great March of Return protests at the Gaza border. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), from March 30–June 7, 2018, that number has reached 131 Palestinians (see OCHA Humanitarian Snapshot link), which includes fourteen children. [The names of those who were killed shall be included in the minutes of this proceeding, as available.]

“...

3. Deplores the [targeting] [killing] of more than twenty clearly marked Palestinian medics serving the wounded, which includes Razan al-Najjar, a twenty-one-year old woman, and supports specific inquiry into the violation of international humanitarian law regarding this practice by the Israeli military. [As well, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) does not condone inciteful discourse [by Hamas] that inserts acts of violence into a massive peaceful demonstration.]”

Item 12-11. Commissioners’ Resolution. Resolution on Reconciliation Ministries in Israel and Palestine.

Approved an alternate resolution. [See p. 1154.]

Recognizing that hope and love in the Israel and Palestine crisis must come from within, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
1. Celebrates whenever and wherever Palestinian and Israelis come together in building honest understanding and peace, working together to address inequality to pave the way to reconciliation.

2. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to identify grassroots organizations and ministries (especially for youth) in Palestine or Israel working for radical, systemic change.

3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to make these ministries and organizations known to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations for support and encouragement.

4. Where there are obstacles to this grassroots engagement in Israel/Palestine, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will advocate for freedom of engagement.

*Item 12-12. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Ending the Classification of Israel as a Colonial Project.

Disapproved. [See p. 1155.]

*Item 12-13. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Opposing and Disengagement from Iran.

Approved. [See p. 1158.]

CLOSING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Young Adult Advisory Delegate Corrine Burch from the Presbytery of The James who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 12:11 a.m.

Saturday, June 23, 2018, 9:00 A.M.

BUSINESS MEETING XII

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann in Hall 5 of the America’s Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

OPENING GREETINGS AND PRAYER

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Brian Ballard, theological student advisory delegate from Princeton Theological Seminary, who brought greetings and offered prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Cheni Khonje and Vice-Moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Ryan Landino for a report from the committee. Moderator Khonje moved Item 02-04 [see p. 158], the docket as amended. It was approved.

Vice-Moderator Landino brought forward Item 02-05 for information only, the minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for the plenaries on Wednesday morning, June 20, 2018, through Friday morning, June 22, 2018 [see p. 159]. In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes have been reviewed and found to be in order. In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes for the rest of the assembly will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures and will be posted on PC-Biz.

A protest found to be in decorous language is recorded in the Minutes as follows:

Protest on Item 06-08 from Carlos Wilton, minister commissioner from the Presbytery of Elizabeth:

I respectfully wish to protest, under G-3.0105b, the decision of the General Assembly not to approve its committee recommendation of item 06-08, which I believe was based on two instances of inappropriate and extra-constitutional advice provided by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

1. In its written response to item 06-08, the ACC says “The essential functions of ruling elders identified in G-2.0301 (exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline) are yoked to the practice of governance in the context of councils. The Constitution assumes such experience as a prerequisite to exercise governance in higher councils. Removing this requirement would deemphasize the essential governance function of ruling elders and incorporate other forms of service.” The ACC’s use of the word “assumes,” here, without a Constitutional citation to support it, goes beyond the ACC’s remit to provide advice that is explicitly founded on the Constitution. The ACC, I believe, should restrict itself to communicating what the Constitution actually says, not what it assumes.

2. In his response to a question posed by a commissioner late on the evening of June 22, 2018, ACC representative Daniel Williams advised the Assembly that the Constitution, in G-2.0202, provides the option of individually commissioned deacons solely for congregations that do not have a Board of Deacons. This assertion is likewise an assumption that is not explicitly founded in the Constitution.

I believe the ACC best serves the General Assembly when it confines its advice to directing the Assembly’s attention to explicit Constitutional provisions and avoids opining on what the General Assembly assumed or intended when it adopted specific sections of the Constitution.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE: REPORT TWO OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Y. Dianna Wright of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures for the conclusion of the committee report. (For Report One of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, see p. 65.)

Moderator Wright reminded the assembly that debate on an amendment to Item 03-01 was arrested during plenary Friday evening. Moderator Wright moved that that amendment be amended with the updated recommendation brought from the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures:

“1. Approve the revised 2018 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling $14,214,859.
   “[See 2018-2020-Summary-Budget-final.pdf.]”

“2. Approve the 2019 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling $15,129,906, including $643,000 in new financial implications, and the 2020 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling $14,661,459, including $488,000 in new financial implications.
   “[See 2018-2020-Summary-Budget-final.pdf.]”

“3. Approve a [requested]
   a. per capita rate of $8.95 per active member for 2019, which includes the .45 cents for new financial implications; and a
   b. per capita rate of $8.95 per active member to be effective for 2020, which includes .36 cents for new financial implications.

4. Approve an amount of $1,448,693 be designated from the 2019 Per Capita budget (about half the cost of the General Assembly meeting), and be reserved for use for the 224th General Assembly (2020).”

The committee’s recommendations were approved as an amendment to the amendment that was pending from the Friday evening plenary and subsequently approved by the assembly.

A motion was made on the floor:

“Instruct the Co-Moderators to appoint a Fiduciary Commission with the authority to:

“Work with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the other agencies to determine where the mandates established by this General Assembly can be fulfilled by existing staff and structure and refer those matters appropriately.

“To oversee cost containment of the implementation of those mandates ensuring that committees and task forces utilize available technology and cost-effective meeting strategies.

“To spend no more than $100,000 of per capita money and no more than $100,000 of mission money on meetings of task forces and committees.

“To refer what cannot be accomplished to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

“To work with the leadership of OGA and PMA to identify mid council leaders who can serve as volunteer staff for task force and committees.

“To work with the leadership of OGA and the Moving Forward Commission so that the 224th General Assembly (2020) is aware of financial implications as these implications develop over the course of the assembly.”

A motion was made to refer this motion to the group established by Item 04-03, Recommendation 3. The motion to refer was approved.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures. A summary of the report for this plenary is as follows:

Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures

Report Two

I. Plenary Action


Approved as amended. [See p. 161.]
Amend the recommendations as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline. Action taken in plenary is shaded in gray]


1. Approve the revised 2018 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling $14,214,859.

[See 2018-2020-Summary-Budget-final.pdf.]

“2. Approve the 2019 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling [[$15,565,244] [$15,129,906, including $643,000 in new financial implications],] and the 2020 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling [[$15,818,969] [$14,661,459, including $488,000 in new financial implications].

[See 2018-2020-Summary-Budget-final.pdf.]

“3. Approve a [requested]

   “a. per capita rate of [[$10.71] [$8.95 per active member] for 2019], which includes the .45 cents for new financial implications]; [and a]

   “b. per capita rate of [[$11.45] [$8.95 per active member to be effective] for 2020], which includes .36 cents for new financial implications.

“4. Approve an amount of $1,448,693 be designated from the 2019 Per Capita budget [(about half the cost of the General Assembly meeting), and be reserved] for [use for] the 224th General Assembly (2020).

“5. Approve [Designated Budget expenditures of] [the attached allocation of designated funds for OGA and PMA task forces, totaling] $1,211,461 for 2019 and $1,731,808 for 2020.

[See 2018-2020-OGA-Designated-Budget.pdf.]

Refer the following motion to the committee created by Item 04-03, Recommendation 3:

Instruct the Co-Moderators to appoint a Fiduciary Commission with the authority to:

| Work with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the other agencies to determine where the mandates established by this General Assembly can be fulfilled by existing staff and structure and refer those matters appropriately. |
| To oversee cost containment of the implementation of those mandates ensuring that committees and task forces utilize available technology and cost-effective meeting strategies |
| To spend no more than $100,000 of per capita money and no more than $100,000 of mission money on meetings of task forces and committees. |
| To refer what cannot be accomplished to the 224th General Assembly (2020). |
| To work with the Leadership of OGA and PMA to identify mid council leaders who can serve as volunteer staff for task forces and committees. |
| To work with the leadership of OGA and the Moving Forward Commission so that the 224th General Assembly (2020) is aware of financial implications as these implications develop over the course of the assembly.”

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

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Walter Rockenstein of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination for a report from the committee. [For Report One of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, see p. 28.]

Moderator Rockenstein stated the committee had reviewed and received on behalf of the assembly Recommendations A.2. and B. of Item 10-15, including the 2018 revised report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget totaling $68,255,478.

Moderator Rockenstein reported the total financial implications for actions taken at this assembly on the PMA Budget as $1,030,978 for 2019; and $874,305 for 2020.
Moderator Rockenstein moved Item 10-15 in three parts as a single motion with comment, including Part 1, approval of the 2019 PMA Budget totaling $71,589,237 and the 2020 PMA Budget totaling $70,531,957; and the comment that: “The adjustments necessary to incorporate these changes (the financial implications passed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and any changes coming from the per capita budget as approved by the 223rd General Assembly [2018]) into the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget may require a reduction in program or staff currently provided for in the budget or an increase in mission giving.” For Part 2, Moderator Rockenstein called the assembly’s attention to Recommendations A.1. and C.2. For Part 3, Moderator Rockenstein called the assembly’s attention to Recommendation C.1. Item 10-15 was approved.

This concluded Report Two of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination. A summary of the report for this plenary is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination

Report Two

I. Plenary Action


Approved with comment: [See p. 857.]

[Comment: The adjustments necessary to incorporate these changes (the financial implications passed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and any changes coming from the per capita budget as approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018)) into the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget may require a reduction in program or staff currently provided for in the budget or an increase in mission giving.]

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Danny Murphy of the General Assembly Nominating Committee for a report from the committee.

Moderator Murphy reminded the assembly that on Thursday afternoon, the assembly approved Item 04-03, which restructured the governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, also known as A Corp. The General Assembly Nominating Committee prepared, in accordance with the bylaws for the A Corp, a slate of nominees found in Item 00-04. [See p. 97.]

Moderator Murphy placed in nomination the slate of persons found in Item 00-04. The slate was approved.

YAAD PRESENTATION TO CO-MODERATORS AND STATED CLERK

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized members of the Young Adult Advisory Delegate Council. Sophia Alecci, Hananeel Tanojo, and Emily Costello spoke. The council members presented donations made in the name of Moderator Kohlmann to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for refugee ministries; in the name of Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for Puerto Rico hurricane relief; and in the name of Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, to the Poor People’s Campaign.

OGA THANK YOU TO 2018 COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Associate Stated Clerk Tom Hay and Assistant Stated Clerk Deborah Davies, who made a presentation to the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy Committee on Local Arrangements. COLA members presented communion ware from this assembly to the Co-Moderators.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2020) IN BALTIMORE

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Jacqueline Taylor, general presbyter of the Presbytery of Baltimore, and Carrie Finch-Burriss, chair of the Presbytery of Baltimore Committee on Local Arrangements, for a presentation and video on the 224th General Assembly (2020) in Baltimore.

THANKS TO STAFF

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk Nelson, who thanked staff of the Office of the General Assembly and volunteers for their work at the assembly. Stated Clerk Nelson and Co-Moderators Cintrón-Olivieri and Kohlmann then shared comments about the assembly experience and additional thanks.
ADJOURNMENT

At 10:47 a.m., Co-Moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann declared the 223rd General Assembly (2018) adjourned following worship, to be dissolved upon the convening of the 224th General Assembly (2020) on June 20, 2020, in Baltimore, Maryland.

During worship, Ruling Elder Ekram Kachu, commissioned as a pastor at the First Arabic Presbyterian Church in Waukee, Iowa, delivered the sermon, titled “The Persistent Prayer.”
SECTION TWO

Assembly Committee Reports Containing
All Reports, Referrals, and Recommendations of the
Committee on the Office of the General Assembly,
the Office of the General Assembly, Permanent and Special Committees,
the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions,
the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation,
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation,
Overtures, and Commissioners’ Resolutions
Item 00-01

[The assembly approved Item 00-01. See pp. 10, 11.]

General Assembly Nominating Committee 2018 Nominations

Commissioners to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) will vote to elect many people to positions on the various entities of the General Assembly. In accordance with the Book of Order, G-3.0111, and to ensure careful nominations of members to these entities, the General Assembly Nominating Committee proposes a slate of nominees for election. Positions to be filled are listed on the attached pages.

Biographical Information: A short descriptive paragraph for each nominee being presented by the General Assembly Nominating Committee can be found by May 16 on the GA Nominations website—www.pcusa.org/nominations.

Inclusive Representation: The nominations made by the General Assembly Nominating Committee are responsive to and reflective of the principles of participation and representation expressed in the Book of Order, F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. This report provides diversity information following the name of each nominee as well as a chart describing inclusiveness information for each committee to which the General Assembly is electing members.

Nominations Process: The process for nominations proposed to the General Assembly is a long and thorough one. As of May 1, 2018, the General Assembly Nominating Committee has on file approximately 130 Application for Nomination forms. The names of these persons were gathered through

- self-nomination;
- suggestions from sessions, presbyteries, and synods;
- and other Presbyterians who suggested the nominations of persons they knew or with whom they’ve worshipped and worked.

Application for Nomination forms are received by the General Assembly Nominations office and a copy of each form is shared with all members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee. In addition, a copy of the application is sent to the committee or entity itself.

Each applicant is asked to solicit references from three persons of their choosing. In response to the action of the 208th General Assembly (1996), an appraisal is also solicited from the applicant’s council of membership—presbytery for teaching elders and session for ruling elders and church members. The General Assembly Nominating Committee will not nominate a person unless it has received three appraisals.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation has encouraged persons, particularly those in underrepresented categories, to consider serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on General Assembly entities and to submit an application for nomination form for the General Assembly Nominating Committee consideration. The General Assembly Committee on Representation has reviewed the GA Nominating Committee’s nominations.

Although the majority of nominations are proposed for “at-large” positions, some people are nominated as representatives of specific presbyteries or synods to a particular entity. In these cases, the General Assembly Nominating Committee requests presbyteries and synods to send the names of no less than three persons for consideration. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may select only from the pool suggested by the synod or presbytery—through its regular nominating process—when filling a mid council representation slot in these instances.

This report lists the names of persons being proposed for nomination and distinguishes between those positions that are at-large (AL), those that are synod (S) or presbytery (P) representation slots, etc., and those that are filled by representatives from other General Assembly agencies or ecumenical bodies.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee also needs to take into account the people of color, geographic, physical, theological, and age diversity. The committee is also sensitive to the needs for expertise expressed by the entities themselves. It is a balancing act that the General Assembly Nominating Committee takes seriously and faithfully as it attempts to discern the call of Presbyterians to service on committees at the General Assembly level.

Persons who are elected to service on General Assembly committees and entities are, in most cases, eligible to be reelected to a second term. The 219th General Assembly (2010) urged “General Assembly entities to consider re-nominations as the exception, rather than the rule and applied only to those members whose continued service is clearly beneficial to ongoing or projected work in order to assist the GANC in making its careful nominations.” However, many of the persons who are proposed in the report are re-nominations.
Descriptions for each committee have been developed by the entity and adapted from the Entity Lists and Descriptions page of the General Assembly nominations website—pcusa.org/nominations. Nomination information for the 2018–2020 cycle is available at the Office of the General Assembly exhibit area.

Procedure for Nominations from the Floor: The procedure for nominations from the floor is described in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, F. General Assembly Plenary Meeting, 6.c. Nominating from the Floor:

When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the “Nomination by Commissioner Form” provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk. The availability of the pertinent information provided by the person challenging the nominating committee’s nominee shall be announced to the assembly at least twenty-four hours in advance of the nomination being made from the floor.

“Nomination by Commissioner Forms” are available at the from the Assembly Information Center in the Plaza Lobby.

The name of the specific person being challenged must be stated on the “Nomination by Commissioner” form. Please return this form, completed in full on all sides, to the ASSEMBLY INFORMATION CENTER in the Plaza Lobby no later than 11:00 am on Monday, June 18, 2018, so that it may be verified for eligibility and the Stated Clerk may prepare for a ballot. Thank you.

This report containing the General Assembly Nominating Committee “Proposed Nominees” will be reported for action on Friday, June 22. Commissioners and advisory delegates will need the following pages for action at that time.

Key for the General Assembly Nominating Committee Report

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Mariana Pardo</th>
<th>(D)</th>
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<th>HFR</th>
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<th>Milwaukee</th>
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*means*

Mariana Pardo (person living with a disability) (Young Adult) Hispanic/Latina, Female, Ruling Elder, 26-35 years old, Milwaukee Presbytery, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, At-large position, New (first term) nomination.

**Key:**

1. **Gender and Ordination designation:**
   - FT—Female Teaching, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
   - FR—Female Ruling Elder
   - FL—Female Church Member
   - FD—Female Deacon
   - FC—Female Minister (non-Presbyterian)
   - MT—Male Teaching Elder, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
   - MR—Male Ruling Elder
   - ML—Male Church Member
   - MD—Male Deacon
   - MC—Male Minister (non-Presbyterian)

2. **Racial Ethnic designation:**
   - A—Asian American
   - B—African American
   - H—Hispanic/Latina/Latino
   - M—Middle Eastern
   - N—Native American
   - O—Other (*will further specify)
   - W—Caucasian
   - Combination of letter codes may be used when applicant indicates more than one racial/ethnic category (bilingual or multi-racial) i.e. B/N = African American and Native American.

3. **Person living with disability designation:**
   - D—Disability (persons with self-identified disability)

4. **Youth/Young Adult designation:**
   - YA—Young Adult (35 years and younger when nominated)
Age Range:
25- (25 years old and younger); 26+=26–35 years old; 36+ =36–45 years old; 46+ =46–55 years old; 56+ =56–65 years old; 66+ = 66–75 years old; and 75+ = over 75 years old

Presbytery

Synod:
ANW—Alaska Northwest; BPR—Borinquen en Puerto Rico | Puerto Rico; COV—Covenant; LAK—Lakes and Prairies; LIN—Lincoln Trails; LW—Living Waters; MAM—Mid-America; MAT—Mid-Atlantic; NE—Northeast; PAC—Pacific; ROC—Rocky Mountains; SA—South Atlantic; SCH—Southern California and Hawaii; SUN—Sun; SW—Southwest; TRI—Trinity

Membership:
AA =Asian American At-Large
AC =Asian American Caucus
ACE =Associate Pastor of Christian Education
AL =At-Large
BA =African American At-large
COGA =Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
COMM = Commissioner
DCE =Director of Christian Education
ELCA =Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
FND =Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
HC =Hispanic/Latina/Latino Caucus
MC =Middle Eastern Caucus
NC =Native American Caucus
P =Presbytery
PMAB =Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
RE Comm = Ruling Elder Commissioner
S =Synod
TE Comm =Teaching Elder Commissioner
UCC =United Church of Christ
WCL =Woman Church Lay Employee

Nomination Category:
NEW =New Nomination
REN =Re-nominated
† =Appointed by General Assembly Moderator

Diversity Chart

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<th>FR</th>
<th>MR</th>
<th>FT</th>
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<th>CGMT</th>
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</table>
| FR | = Female Ruling Elder
| MR | = Male Ruling Elder
| FT | = Female Teaching Elder
| MT | = Male Teaching Elder
| FD | =Female Deacon
| MD | =Male Deacon
| FC | =Female Minister (non-Presbyterian)
| MC | =Male Minister (non-Presbyterian)
| QFR | =Queer Female Ruling Elder
| SGLT | =Same Gender Loving Teaching Elder
| CGMT | =Cisgender Male Teaching Elder

A. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Christian Boyd  WMT  36-45  Milwaukee  LAK  AL  NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2024
2. Carla Campbell  WFR  46-55  Pittsburgh  TRI  AL  NEW
3. Greg Goodwiller  WMT  56-65  St. Andrew  LW  AL  NEW
4. Daniel Saperstein  WMT  56-65  Lake Huron  COV  AL  REN

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B. Advisory Committee on Litigation

GANC Nomination – Class of 2024
1. Jay Summerville  WMT  66-75  Giddings-Lovejoy  MAM  AL  NEW
2. Judy L. Woods   WFR  56-65  Whitewater Valley  LIN  AL  NEW

C. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Jacob Douylliez  WMT  26-35  Western North Carolina  MAT  AL  NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
2. Darcy Metcalfe  WFT  36-45  East Iowa  LAK  AL  NEW
3. Erica Nelson  WFR  26-35  Utah  ROC  AL  NEW
4. Rick Nutt  WMT  56-65  Scioto Valley  COV  AL  NEW
5. Susan Smith  WFR  56-65  Monmouth  NE  AL  NEW
6. Robert Trackson  WMR  46-55  Hudson River  NE  AL  REN
7. Steven B. Webb  WMR  66-75  National Capital  MAT  AL  REN

D. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Adebiyi (Bisi) Shofu  O*FR  56-65  New Brunswick  NE  AL  NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
2. Antonio Aja  HMT  56-65  Santa Fe  SW  HC  REN+
3. Flora Wilson Bridges  BFT  66-75  New York City  NE  BA  NEW
4. Eun Sung Cho  AMT  46-55  Midwest Hanmi  LIN  AL  NEW
5. Fern Cloud  NFR  66-75  Dakota  LAK  NC  NEW
6. Michelle Hwang  AFT  46-55  Greater Atlanta  SA  AA  REN+
7. Noha Khoury-Bailey  MFT  26-35  West Virginia  TRI  MA  NEW

+Moderator appointment
*African
E. Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Courtney Steininger  WFD  25- National Capitol  MAT AL NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2021
2. Joy Durrant  WFR  Mission  SUN PW NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
3. Cecilia Armstrong  BFT  46-55  Charleston Atlantic  SA AL NEW
4. Jeanne Choy Tate  WFR  66-75  San Francisco  PAC WCL REN
5. Shanae D. Leonard  BSGLFT  36-45  Pittsburgh  TRI AL NEW
6. Madison McKinney  NFR  25-  Northern Kansas  MAM AL NEW
7. JoAnne Sharp  WQFR  56-65  National Capitol  MAT AL NEW
8. Floretta Watkins  BFT  46-55  Charlotte  MAT AL REN

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F. Audit Committee

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Steve Asher  WMR  66-75  Mackinac  COV AL REN

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G. Board of Pensions

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Mary C. (Molly) Baskin  WFL  56-65  Chicago  LIN PMAB REN

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
2. Philip D. Amoa  BML  26-35  Philadelphia  TRI AL REN
3. Fredric Joseph Bold, Jr.  WML  26-35  Greater Atlanta  SA AL REN
4. Richard R. Clark  WMR  46-55  Milwaukee  LAK AL REN
5. Gordon Enderle  WML  56-65  John Knox  LAK AL NEW
6. George Hauptfuhrer  WMR  56-65  Greater Atlanta  SA AL NEW
7. Andrew Junkin  WML  36-45  Denver  ROC AL NEW
8. Charles (Bill) Keith  WMR  56-65  Charlotte  MAT AL NEW
9. Cindy Levering  WFD  66-75  Baltimore  MAT AL NEW
11. Roger L. Myers  WML  56-65  Detroit  COV AL REN
12. Larry Palmer  BMR  66-75  The James  MAT AL NEW
13. Stan Reid  WMT  56-65  Foothills  SA AL NEW
14. Fernando Rodriguez  HMT  36-45  Detroit  COV AL NEW
15. Joshua Power Stevens  WMR  36-45  San Francisco  PAC AL NEW
16. Paul L. Vikner  WML  66-75  Lehigh  TRI AL REN

Diversity Information

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H. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
1. Samuel Bonner  BMR  66-75  New Brunswick  NE  AL  NEW
2. Frank S. James  BMR  66-75  Sheppards and Lapsley  LW  AL  NEW
3. Wilson Kennedy  WMD  26-35  New Hope  MAT  AL  REN
5. Leanne Masters  WFT  36-45  Homestead  LAK  AL  NEW
6. Luis Ocasio Torres  HMT  46-55  San Juan  BPR  AL  REN
7. Sallie Watson  WFT  56-65  Mission  SUN  AL  NEW
8. Pending  GA  Mod  NEW

+Moderator appointment

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I. Committee on Theological Education

Note: The Committee on Theological Education has requested in Item 14-10 that no new members be added to the Class of 2022; only those eligible to be re-nominated be added.

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Saundra Tracy  WFR  56-65  Ohio Valley  LIN  AL  REN

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J. Educator Certification Committee

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Johanna Wagner  WFT  46-55  Giddings-Lovejoy  MAM  ACE/PAS  NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
2. Jenna Campbell  WFR  36-45  Cimarron  SUN  DCE  REN
3. Denise Kennedy  BFT  56-65  Newark  NE  R/E  NEW
5. H. Carson Rhyne  WMT  66-75  The James  MAT  AL  NEW

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K. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Brian Merritt  WMT  46-55  Santa Fe  SW  AL  NEW
2. Aaron Stauffer  WML  26-35  Middle Tennessee  LW  AL  NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
3. Amantha Barbee  BFT  46-55  Charlotte  MAT  AL  REN
4. Heidi Hadessell de Nascimento  WFL  56-65  Chicago  LIN  AL  REN
5. Mary Newbern-Williams  BFT  56-65  Minnesota Valley  LAK  AL  NEW
L. General Assembly Committee on Representation

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2020**
1. Taejin Hahn   AMT  56-65 San Jose   PAC AL NEW
2. Raj Nadella   AML  36-45 Greater Atlanta   SA AL NEW+
3. Eric Thomas   BMT  46-55 New York City   NE AL NEW+

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
4. Maribeth Culpepper W/NFR (D)  56-65 Santa Fe   SW AL REN
5. Ajah Hales BFL  26-35 Western Reserve   COV AL NEW
6. Michael Hauser WMR  46-55 Southern Kansas   MAM AL REN
7. Anna Kendig H/MFT  26-35 Twin Cities Area   LAK AL NEW
8. Larissa Kwong Abazia AFT  36-45 New York City   NE AL REN
10. Oghene’tega Swann O*FT  36-45 Beaver-Butler   TRI AL NEW

**M. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission**

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2020**
1. Mari Glory González Guerra HFR  36-45 San Juan   BPR AL NEW

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2024**
2. Brian Ellison WMT  36-45 Heartland   MAM AL NEW
3. Dave Goss WMR  66-75 Denver   ROC AL NEW
4. Linda (Windy) Johnston WFR  66-75 Tropical Florida   SA AL NEW
5. Diana Moore WFT  56-65 Holston   LW AL NEW
6. James Pak AMR  56-65 Atlantic Korean   MAT AL NEW

**N. Mission Development Resources Committee**

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
1. Ron Fong AMR  56-65 San Francisco   PAC AL NEW
2. Marilyn Gamm WFT  56-65 Riverside   SCH AL NEW
3. Linda Jones WFR  56-65 S. Dakota   LAK AL NEW
4. Emily McGinley A/WFT  36-45 Chicago   LIN AL NEW
5. Calik “Tito” Rivera HMR  56-65 Kendall   PAC AL REN
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O. Mission Responsibility Through Investment

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2020**
1. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty WFT 46-55 Mid-Kentucky LW AL NEW

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
2. Sandra Moon AFT 26-35 Mid-Kentucky LW AL NEW
3. Gregory I. Simpson BML 46-55 New York City NE AL NEW

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P. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
1. Victor Aloyo HMT 46-55 Elizabeth NE AL NEW
2. Jason Ko AMT 36-45 Los Ranchos SCH AL NEW
3. Gregory McCoy WMR 56-65 Grace SUN AL NEW
4. Samuel D. Muse WMR 26-35 Whitewater Valley LIN AL NEW
5. John M. Nelsen WMT 56-65 Tres Rios SUN AL REN
6. Terry Allison Rappuhn WFR 56-65 Middle Tennessee LW AL REN
7. Claire Rhodes BFR 56-65 Arkansas SUN AL NEW
8. Ruth F. Santana-Grace HFT 56-65 Philadelphia TRI AL REN
9. Kathy Trott WFR 56-65 Sacramento PAC AL NEW
10. David Zimmerman WMR 46-55 San Francisco PAC AL REN

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Q. Presbyterian Council on Chaplains and Military Personnel

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
1. Leslie Hyder WMT 56-65 San Joaquin PAC AL REN
2. Josephine Laury BFR 66-75 Miami Valley COV AL REN
3. Joanne Martindale WFT 56-65 Redwoods PAC AL NEW
4. Barbara Sherer WFT 56-65 Heartland MAM AL NEW

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R. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
1. Dagmary Fornes HFR 36-45 Noroeste BPR AL NEW
2. John R. Buchanan WMR 46-55 Chicago LIN AL REN
3. Sandra L. Maffett BFR 66-72 Philadelphia TRI AL REN
### S. Presbyterian Hunger Program

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2020**
1. Frank Dew  
   WMT 66-75 Salem  
   MAT AL NEW  
2. Sun (Sunny) Kang  
   AMT 56-65 Pacific  
   SCH AL NEW  

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
3. Eric Dillenbeck  
   WMT 36-45 Western Reserve  
   COV AL REN  
4. Abigail Mohaupt  
   WFT 26-35 San Jose  
   PAC AL REN  
5. Sharon Oglesby  
   BFR 56-65 Detroit  
   COV AL NEW  
6. Alexander Peterson  
   WML 26-35 Central Nebraska  
   LAK AL REN

### T. Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Note: The Presbyterian Mission Agency is proposing in Item 04-09 a change in its composition.

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2020**
1. Michelle Hwang  
   AFT 46-55 Greater Atlanta  
   SA ACREC NEW  
2. Kevin Johnson  
   BMT 56-65 Detroit  
   COV ACSWP NEW  
3. Susan Wonderland  
   WFT 56-65 Philadelphia  
   TRI AL NEW+  

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2021**
4. Jyungin (Jenny)Lee  
   AFR 46-55 New Brunswick  
   NE PW Moderator  

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
5. Stephanie E. Anthony  
   WFT 36-45 Blackhawk  
   LINCOGA NEW  
6. Floretta Watkins  
   BFT 46-55 Charlotte  
   MAT ACWC NEW  
7. Judith Wellington  
   NFT 56-65 Grand Canyon  
   SW AL NEW  

### U. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

**GANC Nomination – Class of 2022**
1. Cynthia M. Campbell  
   WFT 56-65 Mid Kentucky  
   LW AL REN  
2. Christine Chakoian  
   W/MFT(D) 56-65 Chicago  
   LIN AL REN  
3. Cathy Caldwell Hoop  
   WFT 46-55 Sheppards and Lapsley  
   LW AL NEW  
4. LaVert Jones  
   BMR 66-75 Cherokee  
   SA AL REN  
5. Rebeca Kirkpatrick  
   WFT 36-45 Philadelphia  
   TRI AL NEW  
6. Cynthia Rigby  
   WFT 46-55 Cimaron  
   SUN AL REN

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+Moderator Appointment

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223rd General Assembly (2018)
V. Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Katherine J. Runyeon WFT 56-65 San Francisco PAC AL NEW
2. Colin Yuckman WMT 36-45 Redstone TRI ACAD NEW

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
3. Peter C. Devries WMT 46-55 Beaver-Butler TRI ACAD NEW
4. Trent Hancock WMT 56-65 Pittsburgh TRI AL REN
5. Sandra Luciano-Andujar HFT 56-65 Central Florida SA AL REN
6. Robert Lowry WCGMT 46-55 Mississippi LW AL NEW
7. Jean Olson WFR 66-75 Boston NE AL NEW
8. Jung Sook Kim AFT 56-65 Atlantic Korean MAT AL NEW

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W. Resource Allocation and Stewardship Committee (formerly Finance Committee)

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. John Hinkle WMR 75+ Western North Carolina MAT AL REN
2. Raul Felipe Santiago-Rivera HMR 36-45 San Juan BPR AL REN

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X. Self-Development of People National Committee

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Wayne Steele BMT 56-65 Mid-Kentucky LW AL NEW+

GANC Nomination – Class of 2022
2. Delores Adams Henderson BFR 46-55 Ohio Valley LINAL NEW
3. Samantha Davis BFD 26-35 Pittsburgh TRI AL NEW
4. Tracey Dace BML 36-45 Southeast Illinois LINAL NEW
5. Rebecca Davis WFT 56-65 Charlotte MAT AL NEW
7. Gail Porter Nelson BFT 56-65 National Capital MAT AL NEW
8. John (Pat) Osoinach WMR 66-75 Palo Duro SUN AL REN
9. Elizabeth Swee WFR 66-75 Northern Plains LAK AL NEW
10. Phil Tom AMT 66-75 New York City NE AL NEW
11. Wesley Woo AMT 66-75 San Francisco PAC AL REN

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Y. Stated Clerk Nomination Committee

GANC Nomination – Class of 2020
1. Moon Kyung Kim AFR 56-65 Eastern Korean NE RE Comm NEW
2. Harold Ellis BMR 66-75 Detroit COV RE Comm NEW
3. Amos Joel Mendez-Gutierrez HMT 36-45 Noroeste BPR TE Comm NEW
4. Aimee Moiso WFT 36-45 Mid-South LW TE Comm NEW
5. Kevin Porter BMT 56-65 Philadelphia TRI Stated Clerk NEW
6. Wilson Kennedy WMD 26-35 New Hope MAT COGA NEW
Z. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (A Corp)

Class of 2020
1. Thomas McNeill BMR 56-65 Southern New England NE PILP
2. Julie Cox WFR 46-55 New Harmony SA WFC
3. Bridget-Anne Hampden BFR 56-65 Charlotte MAT FDN
4. Thomas Priest, Jr. BMT 66-75 New Hope MAT REAC
5. Erica Rader WFT 46-55 San Jose PAC AL
6. William Teng AMT 56-65 Peace River SA AL

Class of 2022
7. Christopher Mason WMR 56-65 New York City NE AARC
8. Samuel Bonner BMR 66-75 New Brunswick NE COGA
9. Cynthia M. Campbell WFT 56-65 Mid-Kentucky LW PPC
10. Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz HFR 36-45 Tropical Florida SA PMAB
11. Robert Schulz WMR 66-75 Grand Canyon SW AL
12. JoAnne Sharp WQFR 56-65 National Capital MAT ACWC
13. Carol Winkler WFR 66-75 Cincinnati COV PW

Item 00-02

[The assembly approved Item 00-02. See pp. 10, 11.]

T. Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), place in nomination the following persons for election to the General Assembly Nominating Committee:

Nominee Diversity Age Synod of Residence

Class of 2020
Craig M. Howard BMT 56–65 Mid-America

Class of 2022
Shawna Bowman WQFT 36–45 Lincoln Trails
Daris Bultena WMT 46–55 South Atlantic
Il Kim AMR 66–75 Pacific
Sonya McAuley-Allen BFT 46–55 Mid-Atlantic
Annabel (Abbie) Watters WFR 66–75 Alaska-Northwest
Pending

Acronyms for Diversity Chart

First letter is racial ethnic designation:
A—Asian American|Pacific Islander
B—African American|Black
Item 00-03

[The assembly approved Item 00-03. See p. 2.]

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following assembly committee structure [a brief list of the business to be referred to that committee follows the committee title]:

02 Bills and Overtures

03 General Assembly Procedures

Consider matters related to: Meetings of the assembly and standing rule amendments, except those items assigned to the Way Forward Committee; per capita budget; operation of the Office of the General Assembly; statistics; publishing of reports; General Assembly Nominating Committee process; special committees; commissioners and advisory delegates credentials/leaves of absence; GA child protection policy; reports of the Self-Review of ACC, GACOR, and Advisory Committee on Litigation.

04 The Way Forward

Consider matters related to: Reports of the Way Forward Commission, All-Agency Review Committee, and 2020 Vision Team, and overtures and business related to national structure and funding.

05 Mid Councils

Consider matters related to: The ongoing strengthening and nurturing of the mid councils of the PC(USA), with particular emphasis on collaborating with the synods of the PC(USA) to support clarity as to their ecclesial and missional identity, purpose, structure, and strategies. Review of synod minutes. Hear any reports of synod conversations and collaboration. Review for comment provisional work of Revision of Rules of Discipline.

06 Church Polity and Ordered Ministry.

Consider matters related to: Amendments to Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (Chapters 1 and 3), Form of Government Chapters I–IV, VI with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; amendments to the Rules of Discipline with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; recruiting, enlistment of persons to service of church; Advisory Committee on Litigation; Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

07 Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Consider matters related to: Amendments to Chapter V of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; matters dealing with relationships with, and attitudes toward, other religious movements or bodies; conversations with other Presbyterian denominations; nominations for ecumenical advisory delegates; nominations for delegations to corresponding churches; reports of corresponding bodies.

08 Environmental Issues

Consider matters related to: The church’s response to issues and matters related to carbon fuels, food sovereignty, and the environment.
09 Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues

Consider matters related to: Peacemaking, international military affairs, and the arms race, excluding matters concerning the Middle East; international matters; human rights; international economic justice, and the church’s response to U.S. immigration policies and related issues.

10 Mission Coordination

Consider matters related to: Mission programs authorized by General Assembly; PC(USA) vision and mission goals; Organization for Mission and Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations; mission budget; audits; churchwide compensation; initiatives on church growth and the 1001 Worshiping Communities program.

11 Social Justice Issues

Consider matters related to: Concerns of church in national affairs; matters relating to righteousness and justice of persons/organizations; global evangelism and education. Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. Report of Self-Review of ACWSP.

12 Middle East Issues

Consider matters related to: The Middle East.

13 BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation

Consider matters related to: Report of Board of Pensions; business related to the church’s pension, annuity, and medical plans; other forms of such programs, including government or private retirement programs; business related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

14 Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions

Consider matters related to: Amendments to the Directory for Worship and Chapter II of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and Book of Confessions with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; authority and interpretation of Scripture; recruiting, enlistment of persons to service of church; Christian educators; theological institutions; celebration of Lord’s Supper requests. Report of Self-Study of COTE.

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**Item 00-04**

[The assembly approved Item 00-04. See p. 81.]

*General Assembly Nominating Committee 2018 Additional Nominations*

**Z. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation “A Corp”**

**Class of 2020**

1. Julie L. Cox WFR 46-55 New Harmony SA AL/WFC*
2. Bridget-Anne Hampden BFR 56-65 Charlotte MAT FDN
3. Thomas McNeill BMR 56-65 Southern New England NE PILP
4. Christopher Mason WMR 56-65 New York City NE AL/AARC*
5. Thomas Priest, Jr. BMT 66-75 New Hope MAT REAC

**Class of 2022**

6. Samuel Bonner BMR 66-75 New Brunswick NE COGA
7. Cynthia M. Campbell WFT 56-65 Mid-Kentucky LW PPC
8. Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz HFR 36-45 Tropical Florida SA PMAB
9. JoAnne Sharp WQFR 56-65 National Capital MAT ACWC
10. William Teng AMT 56-65 Peace River SA AL
11. Carol Winkler WFR 66-75 Cincinnati COV PW

*During the first term only, two of the at-large positions have been designated for the All Agency Review Committee and the Way Forward Commission.
Rationale

Commissioners to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) will vote to elect persons to serve on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, (A Corp). The General Assembly Nominating Committee proposes the above slate of nominees for election.

Floor Nominations are eligible only for lines 1, 4, and 10. At-large. However, floor nominations for lines 1 and 4 must be from the membership of the WFC for line 1 and AARC for line 4. See more information with the commissioner nomination form packet. The commissioner nomination form must be submitted on the Commissioner Nomination Form available at the Assembly Information Center and returned by 6 pm on Friday, June 22, 2018.

Key for the General Assembly Nominating Committee Report

Mariana Pardo (D) (YA) HFR 26-35 Milwaukee LAK AL NEW

means

Mariana Pardo (person living with a disability) (Young Adult) Hispanic/Latina, Female, Ruling Elder, 26-35 years old, Milwaukee Presbytery, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, At-large position, New (first term) nomination.

1 Gender and Ordination designation:
   FT—Female Teaching, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
   FR—Female Ruling Elder
   MT—Male Teaching Elder, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
   MR—Male Ruling Elder
   QF—Queer Female

2 Racial Ethnic designation:
   A—Asian American
   B—African American
   H—Hispanic/Latina/Latino
   M—Middle Eastern
   N—Native American
   O—Other (*will further specify)
   W—Caucasian

Combination of letter codes may be used when applicant indicates more than one racial/ethnic category (bi-racial or multi-racial) i.e. B/N = African American and Native American.

Person living with disability designation:
D—Disability (persons with self-identified disability)

4 Youth/Young Adult designation:
   YA—Young Adult (35 years and younger when nominated)

5 Age Range:
   25—25 years old and younger; 26+ =26–35 years old; 36+ =36–45 years old; 46+ =46–55 years old; 56+ =56–65 years old; 66+ = 66–75 years old; and 75+ = over 75 years old

5 Presbytery

6 Synod:
   ANW—Alaska Northwest; BPR—Borinquen en Puerto Rico | Puerto Rico; COV—Covenant; LAK—Lakes and Prairies; LIN—Lincoln Trails; LW—Living Waters; MAM—Mid-America; MAT—Mid-Atlantic; NE—Northeast; PAC—Pacific; ROC—Rocky Mountains; SA—South Atlantic; SCH—Southern California and Hawaii; SUN—Sun; SW—Southwest; TRI—Trinity

Entities:
AARC All Agency Review Committee
ACWC Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns
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<td>Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program Board</td>
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<td>Presbyterian Publishing Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>Presbyterian Women</td>
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<td>REAC</td>
<td>Racial Equity Advocacy Committee</td>
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<td>WFC</td>
<td>Way Forward Commission</td>
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**Item 01-01**

*Proposed Docket.*

[The assembly approved Item 01-01. See p. 2.]

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**Item 01-02**

[The assembly approved Item 01-02. See pp. 2, 3.]

### I. Referrals in Progress

#### A. Board of Pensions


*Interim Report:*

The Board of Pensions has employee demographics that exceed all General Assembly goals for gender and racial ethnic representation on its staff.

The gender and racial ethnic diversity goals and results are reviewed annually by the executive team of management and the board of directors.

The Board of Pensions does not track racial ethnic data of its members as this is a prohibited activity for healthcare payers. Therefore, the board continues to reach out to caucuses, other self-identified groups, and other agency staff who work with these organizations. The board continues to dialogue with national committees, including the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns, and welcomes additional conversation partners. This area is of consistent interest to our board of directors, and the board looks forward to this important and continuing work.

#### B. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations


*Response: In progress.* The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations has worked on developing a theological rationale for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) engagement in interfaith relationships. This rationale builds on the Interfaith Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations would like to invite further response and reflections from stakeholders within the PC(USA) as well as our ecumenical and interfaith partners before finalizing the rationale. Therefore, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations reports this as a referral in progress with the expectation that a final report will be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

#### C. Office of the General Assembly


*In Process: Will work with OGA manager for equity and representation to disseminate resources to these committees once identified.*


*In Process. The following specific points addressed in updates to the Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), released at the end of 2017:*

a. Promote training to be more effective in cross-cultural relations.

b. Include members of diverse racial backgrounds in the oversight of candidates and those in ministry where possible. ...

c. Regularly address issues of racism on ordination exam questions, ensuring that ordination exam questions are culturally sensitive to the racial- and language-diversity of candidates, the Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) includes within its process for review of questions and reader training resources specific attention to potential issues of cross-cultural accessibility.
d. Offer retreats or trainings at the mid council level for those in the ordination discernment process to dialogue about race and racism

e. Request presbyteries to explore a standard of practice for psychological exam providers that are applicable for broader racial and ethnic demographics.

3. **2016 Referral: Item 05-10. A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. Urge All Presbyteries, Synods, and Sessions to Evaluate Their Leave Policies for New Parents for the Birth/Adoption, or Care for, a Child or Other Family Member (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 32, 34, 292).**

   *In Progress.* OGA has begun the necessary research to provide the information needed for us to make an informed and cost-effective decision, while also meeting the needs of our staff.

4. **2016 Referral: Item 12-05. On Affirming Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression—From Presbytery of Muskingum Valley. Recommendation 4. Direct the Stated Clerk to Communicate This Action to All Other PC(USA) Councils and Entities, etc., Calling Upon Them to Build Greater Awareness of Our Historical Witness for Peaceful and Nonviolent resistance to Oppression and to Inform Our Ecumenical Partners of This Action Making Resources We Create Available to Them as Well. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 66, 67, 860–61).**

   *In Progress.* The Office of the General Assembly will continue to lift up the PC(USA)’s affirmation of nonviolent resistance through educational initiatives, preaching, and other resources.


   *In Progress.* OGA initiated a race audit using statistics provided by PMA-Human Resources. Also, conducted an employee survey with a race audit portion on the topics of: job satisfaction, workplace values, discrimination and harassment, and leadership. This work will continue in 2018 as we analyze responses to the employee survey and develop a course of action to respond to concerns or issues raised. Race audit work will continue as OGA undertakes an organizational review to assess the impact of its current practices and policies and future initiatives on people of color.

6. **2016 Referral: Item 10-11. A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, Recommendation 5. Direct the Six Denominational Agencies to Collaboratively Create the Expense of New Leadership Development Opportunities for All Clergywomen (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 41, 44, 614).**

   *In progress.*

7. **2016 Referral: Item 11-08. On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians—From the Presbytery of Baltimore. Recommendation 2. That the Moderator of the PC(USA) Share This Apology with Native American Congregations, Coordinated with PMA’s Native American Congregational Support Office and with the Native American Consulting Committee (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 47, 54–55, 711–12).**

   *In Progress.* Apology trip made to Barrow, Alaska, where former Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons made apology to Alaska Natives with current Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson in attendance.

8. **2016 Referral: Item 11-08. On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians—From the Presbytery of Baltimore. Recommendation 3. That OGA Share the Apology with Native American Tribal Authorities in the US, Coordinated with PMA’s Native American Congregational Support Office and with the Native American Consulting Committee (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 47, 54–55, 711–12).**

   *In Progress.* Apology trip made to Barrow, Alaska, where former Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons made apology to Alaska Natives with current Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson in attendance.


   *In progress.*
D. **Presbyterian Mission Agency**


   Progress Report: The referral is complicated to implement as it directs detailed planning at the national level to be implemented at multiple subsequent levels both inside (congregations, mid councils, assembly) and outside of the church (ecumenical). Multiple actions of the assembly, sharing common issues differing in approach, are converging and competing. Additional time for this referral will improve the response. As a partial response, PMA and OGA formed a Diversity & Reconciliation Team that gathers monthly to coordinate strategies and work. Both agencies consulted with the Way Forward Commission separately and together. The Diverse Voices working group indicated the commission will recommend using the Diversity & Reconciliation team to help formulate a national strategy. Moreover, a new resolution (the Decade of Intercultural Transformation) seeking the same national push to dismantle racism is going to 223rd General Assembly (2018). An effective strategy will require a deep partnership between all agencies and mid councils. PMA and OGA will bring a final response to this referral to the 224th General Assembly (2020).


   Response: Final response will be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).


   Response: Final response will be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).


   Response: Final response will be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).


   Response: Final response will be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).


   Response: Ongoing. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, per its standard practice, provided the 2015 and 2016 report to the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

E. **Rules of Discipline Task Force Interim Report**


   Response: The Rules of Discipline Task Force was created by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in response to an overture from the Presbytery of Chicago. The task force was charged with “revising the entire Rules of Discipline to make the
Rules of Discipline more accessible to the church, to preserve and enhance the accountability of councils and individuals to the church, to expand the role of mediation and alternate dispute resolution, and to provide flexibility in crafting censures and remedies, particularly in light of recent learnings in ethical and social development and experiments by the secular legal system with alternate sentencing” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 374).

The Co-Moderators appointed five persons to make up the task force in May of 2017. The five are Doska Ross, retired Stated Clerk of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; Barbara Burdick, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Chicago; Donna Wells, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta; Therese Howell, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee; Greg Goodwiller, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of St. Andrew; and Paige McRight, retired Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Central Florida, Moderator. The task force is ably staffed by Laurie Griffith and Flor Velez-Diaz. Dan Saperstein is liaison from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Since its appointment in May of last year, the task force has been at work to revise the Rules of Discipline as charged. The task force has met three times face-to-face and held several electronic meetings in the writing process. A survey in the summer of 2017 and a meeting with stated clerks and other interested parties at the 2017 Mid Council Leadership Forum in St. Louis provided vital input on particular items in the revision that would be helpful to the church.

The first draft of the revised Rules of Discipline will be available for review and response across the church by March 1, 2018. That draft is comprised of three major sections. The initial section contains the preamble and general description of the judicial process. The second section deals with the remedial process through which councils in the church are held accountable. The third section deals with the accountability of individuals to the church. Currently, this section is referred to as the disciplinary process. This nomenclature itself has caused confusion in the church since both councils and individuals are accountable through church discipline. The task force proposes to rename the process of individual accountability the restorative process because its intent is to restore wholeness in the body of Christ when trust is broken.

The task force will be available for interpretation of its work on invitation in all of 2019. It will make its report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

F. Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space Interim Report


Interim Report from the Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space

The 221st General Assembly (2014) directed the Office of the General Assembly to appoint a task force to help congregations implement child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection policies. Members of the Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space were identified in June of 2017:

Nancy Cavalcante: Synod of Living Waters, Presbytery of Mid Kentucky
Windy Johnston: Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Tropical Florida
Jody LeFort: Synod of the Covenant, Presbytery of the Western Reserve
Doreen Der McLeod: Synod of the Pacific, Presbytery of San Francisco
Sheila Palmer: Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Florida

The task force held its first meeting in Louisville, August 14–15, 2017, reviewing the resources that can be accessed through the PC(USA) website and beginning to identify additional sources for education and training materials. Representatives from the task force attended the October 2017 Mid Council Leaders Gathering to seek feedback regarding the needs of congregations as they implement protection policies. Our continuing work, individually and in conference calls in November and December of 2017 and February of 2018, has been focused on identifying best practices and effective resources for education, training, and response.

The task force will meet in Louisville in March of 2018. Part of that meeting’s agenda will be a conversation with a survivor of sexual abuse in the church. The need for healing materials has surfaced, and we hope this conversation will result in suggestions of processes for congregational healing when abuse does occur.

Because the task force did not begin its work until mid-2017, we are not prepared to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Members of the task force are committed to continuing efforts and anticipate making a final report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Creating Safe Ministries, https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/, in the Presbyterian Mission Agency section of the PC(USA) website begins with this statement: “God intends for the church and its ministries to be a safe place for all to encounter God and grow into lives of service and fulfillment. We are called to be a holy community.” The Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space joins other groups and individuals in the church whose efforts respond to that call.
II. Final Responses to Referrals

A. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns


Response: This referral is answered by Item 11-05 being presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

B. Board of Pensions


Response: The Board of Pensions has reviewed its employment policies and is in full compliance with this resolution.


Response: The Board of Pensions has fully implemented this request.

The Board of Pensions invested $100,000,000 with Impax Asset Management Group, a London-based investment manager that specializes in resource efficiency markets in their Impax Leaders Strategy. The Leaders Strategy is a fossil fuel-free portfolio that invests worldwide in resource efficiency and environmental markets.

The Board of Pensions added the Pax Global Environmental Markets Fund Institutional Class (PGIX) to the Retirement Savings Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (RSP). Pax Global joins the PC(USA) Socially Responsible U.S. Equity Fund and the PC(USA) Socially Responsible Balanced Fund as a screened option in the RSP. Pax Global is fossil fuel-free and invests in companies worldwide that produce products or create solutions to drive positive environmental performance, such as alternative energy or waste management technology. The RSP is available to any employee of an organization affiliated with the PC(USA). Participation in Pax Global has been modest. As of December 31, 2017, 148 participants out of 11,957 selected Pax Global for their accounts. Total investment was approximately $2.7 million of the $706 million in total assets in the RSP.

3. 2016 Referral: Item 10-11. A Resolution to Contribute to a Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. 5. Direct the Six Agencies to Collaboratively Create the Expense of New Leadership Development Opportunities for All Clergywomen (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 41, 44, 614).

Response: The Board of Pensions (BOP) does not provide leadership development programs.

All of the BOP plans serve women equally with men. For those clergy who are plan members, the Board of Pensions successful CREDO program has been expanded to include all newly ordained members. To ensure full participation of clergywomen, the Board of Pensions pays for licensed infant care and encourages nursing mothers to participate fully. Six programs were offered in 2017, attended by 87 women and 73 men. In addition, the Board holds periodic CREDO conferences for mid council clergy. The most recent one was attended by six women and eleven men.

The Board of Pensions is expanding its educational debt relief program from grants of up to $25,000 for new minister members who are directly out of seminary, second career, or identify as racial ethnic. Our educational debt coaching partner is a racial ethnic owned enterprise and is particularly sensitive to the particular needs of racial ethnic ministers.


Response: The Board of Pensions is and continues to be committed to a diverse workplace where staff of all backgrounds can feel comfortable and be effective in serving the church. The Board of Pensions is supportive of the principles of cultural proficiency: Since the inception of the cultural proficiency initiative, the Board of Pensions

- has incorporated the principles into its Mission Statement, Values, and Personnel Policies and Procedures,
works with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) to ensure gender and racial ethnic balance on the board of directors,

has employee demographics that exceed all General Assembly goals for gender and racial ethnic representation on its staff,

uses these guidelines in the board’s recruiting efforts, both directly and through search firms,

has met as board and executive team to ensure representation goals are met,

maintains an annual compliance education calendar that includes diversity training, and,

has posted on the board’s internal employee-focused website, the report “Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as an Employer” (Minutes, 2012, Part I, p. 1091). The 220th General Assembly (2012) directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to publish and distribute this report of the Creating a Climate for Change Task Force to employees of all six corporate agencies.


Response: The Board of Pensions worked closely with the other five agencies and is grateful for the leadership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and their submission of a response on the Board of Pensions’ behalf.


Response: The Board of Pensions was pleased to co-sponsor and design the 2017 Mid Council Leaders Gathering (formerly the Fall Polity Conference) with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) from October 15–17, 2017, in St. Louis, Missouri. The Board of Pensions was pleased to be a sponsor and contribute to the design of Big Tent, and its theme of “Race, Reconciliation, and Reformation” held July 6–8, 2017, in St. Louis, Missouri. These conversations utilized “Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries” and was incorporated into this national gathering.

C. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations


Response: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directed GACEIR to encourage appropriate General Assembly entities to do the following: “Collaborate with councils at all levels (of the PCUSA) to work ecumenically and interreligiously in addressing such crucial issues as violent conflict between states, climate change, transnational terrorism, global economic system, global persecution of Christian minorities and LGBTQ persons, and extremist interreligious violence.”

Collaboration being central to its charge, GACEIR identified key features of effective collaboration, which build on the foundation of trusted relationships. These are an empowering vision, organizing for common purposes, frequent interpersonal communication among leaders, shared decision-making, truthful and transparent interpretation, effective use of social media, and mutual accountability in the stewardship of limited resources.

The subcommittee researched the issues within contemporary global contexts and created a document with several parts including brief working descriptions of each issue, identification of current General Assembly mission areas that relate to these issues, documentation of associated General Assembly policies, notations of relevant Presbytery Mission Agency programs and offices currently addressing the issues, and wherever possible, references to ecumenical and interreligious partners with whom the PC(USA) is collaborating on the issues.

The GACEIR received the attached report from the Presbyterian Mission Agency about how they are working with ecumenical and interfaith partners on the above identified issues. We share it with the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for information and guidance for other councils of the PC(USA)—synods, presbyteries, sessions on ways to work with ecumenical and interfaith partners on critical global issues.

Given elements of persistent xenophobic and misogynistic mindsets within every faith group, including the PC(USA), and assuming their influence in perpetuating these global issues, GACEIR decided it is imperative, together with others throughout the PC(USA), to increase awareness of racial/cultural bias and white privilege. Committee members began self-examination by participating in an intense bias/privilege experiential training workshop.

Response: GACEIR was asked by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to encourage mid councils to enter into consultancies with neighboring ecumenical councils regarding shared administrative tasks. GACEIR worked with Presbyterian Research Office in surveying mid councils within the PC(USA) and some of their ecumenical counterparts. While this is still a project in process, the survey provided some examples that may serve as models for other mid councils to emulate.

3. 2016 Referral: Item 07-06, 15. Commit to Further Reflection on the Nuanced Definitions of “Interfaith” and “Interreligious” for the Purpose of Clarity in Communications. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 448)

Response: The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations was asked to provide clarity about the use of the words “interfaith” and “interreligious,” and to provide direction about how the terms should be used in our work as a denomination.

Interreligious and interfaith are terms that are so close together in meaning that they are frequently used interchangeably. Interreligious refers more to the institutional aspects of religions and may include religions that do not necessarily claim faith. Interfaith points more towards the inner meaning and experience of faith and spiritual practices in different religious traditions.

While interreligious offers a broader base of relationships to include traditions that do not claim faith, our preference is to use interfaith as we engage people of faith in dialogue and relationships. We may use interreligious as we work cooperatively with organizations of different religious traditions for the common good.

D. General Assembly Committee on Representation


Response: The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) reviewed two agency benchmarks for employment and supplier diversity and recommended changes for OGA and PMA (Item 03-10) to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The committee will incorporate its agency benchmark reviews with other reviews of the agency by the assembly. GACOR reports to every assembly regarding employment and supplier diversity reports it receives regularly. The committee includes reviews of major contracts and policies in its review of an agency. As ongoing work, we are answering this as a final response knowing it will continue as a function of the reviews that have a periodicity set by the assembly.


Response: With the approval of Standard Definition for Supplier Diversity by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) by its action on Item 03-12, the General Assembly Committee on Representation has what it needs for agencies to report on supplier diversity regularly. Reporting on agencies regarding supplier diversity resumes with its report to this assembly (Item 03-Info: Supplier Diversity Report on Six Agencies). This practice is now a regular feature of the committee’s reporting to the assembly and will remain until the assembly deems it necessary to stop.


Response: The committee has made it a regular feature of its meetings to hear from the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly considering the new benchmarks and changing practices to track this work. GACOR has made efforts to communicate with PMAB leaders and/or staff of PMA in its meetings of March 2017 (board and committee members met) and October 2017 (committee met with staff leaders). PMA has improved in communicating with GACOR and sent their data reports in a timely fashion. All parties are committed to continuing these practices of regular communication going forward.

E. Office of the General Assembly

Response: Presbyteries voted to approve the amendments, which have been incorporated into the 2017–2019 Book of Order. New preference for titles will be incorporated into CPM and COM resources as they are updated.


Response: The Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) advised candidates, their presbyteries, and their seminaries, as well as exam readers, that the standard ordination examinations would require use of the 2017–19 Book of Order beginning with the October 2017 exams. (PCC policy is that constitutional documents current when registration opens are required for the exams; registration for the October exams open on August 1).


Response: OGA and PMA collaborated in 2017 and contracted with a curator for this project. Staff transition in PMA meant main contact with contractor shifted to OGA while payment was through PMA. The work spans more than a century and is curated by themes and timeline. The study guide (integrated into the materials) and worship resource is intended to be posted to the Facing Racism webpage (https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/) when all materials can be can accommodated. The scope of the ask provided challenges. Copyright issues are being worked on at the time of this reporting and will be resolved in coming weeks. Materials will be posted to the website for distribution and promoted accordingly.


Response: Approved by the presbyteries and included in the 2017–2019 Book of Order.


Response: Approved national certifying bodies were informed of their approval by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). In addition, a web page was created to list the approved national certifying bodies that included links to the organizations’ own websites.


Response. The Office of Public Witness has been working closely with the No Way to Treat a Child Campaign. We have sponsored a congressional briefing on the issue of the treatment of Palestinian Children in the Occupied Territories and asked Presbyterians to urge their members of congress to attend. We sponsored two webinars on this issue as well.

We have worked in coalition with other denominations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to have HR 4391 introduced—Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act. We have promoted webinars on this as well as issued action alerts to Presbyterians to ask their members of congress to cosponsor.

There is ongoing work to support cosponsors and the following letter will be signed by heads of communion and be sent to all who cosponsor. This should be finalized and sent in the next week or two.

We believe advocacy on HR 4391 to be the most pressing and strategic issue in congress right now that directly relates to the situation of Palestinian children in detention. Letter has been sent to representatives.


Response: The Office of Immigration Issues of the Office of the General Assembly advocated for an increase in the number of refugee arrivals to the Obama administration in 2016 and the Trump Administration in 2017. The office expressed opposition
to the multiple travel bans in 2017, which disproportionately affected refugees and migrants from primarily Muslim countries, including resourcing the Stated Clerk so he could participate in two amicus briefs, in the fourth and ninth circuits asking to enjoin the government from refusing refugees from primarily Muslim countries.

The office created a new webpage to educate Presbyterians about refugees and equip them to advocate for refugees. www.pcusa.org/refugees. The office partnered with Presbyterian Mission Agencies to create a “We Choose Welcome” resource that congregations can participate in to offer support to and advocate for refugees in their communities. The office presented on issues of refugees at Big Tent with Susan Krehbiel of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance at the workshop, Creating Spaces of Welcome: Acting in Solidarity with Refugees and Immigrants of all Faiths and Nationalities. The Office lead workshops at the 2018 Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Refugee Summit, an event that prepares the National Response Team to assist people of varying immigration statuses in their natural and human-caused disaster responses.


Response: The Stated Clerk of the Office of the General Assembly has written letters to the President of the United States asking for an increase in the number of refugee arrivals. The Stated Clerk has written multiple letters for refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented members of our congregations who are at risk of deportation. These letters are written with the input of the person at risk of deportation and their attorney. Taking their guidance, these letters have been addressed to members of Congress, leadership in the Department of Homeland Security, leadership in Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and local Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. No one, for whom the Stated Clerk has personally advocated, has wanted a letter written and sent on their behalf to the President or the Attorney General.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) has taken lead on this referral; see PMA response to Item 11-12 Recommendation 1, in I. Referrals in Progress, D. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Response 1.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) has taken lead on this referral; see PMA response to Item 11-18 Recommendation 1. II. Final Responses to Referrals, G. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Response 3.


Response: The Office of the General Assembly’s Cultural Proficiency Plan is available to all employees. OGA partners with PMA to ensure employees receive announcements of activities, events, and educational opportunities that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.


Response: A letter was sent.


Response: Letters were sent to the President and to members of Congress.

Response: In coordination with the Stated Clerk, the Office of Public Witness has continued to advocate for policies that would protect human rights, promote security, and support effective electoral participation. Because of the current situation in the DR Congo, public advocacy on these issues may put our partners in danger. We have, however, continued to work with allies in congress, including Rep. Karen Bass, as well as the State Department, to promote free and fair elections in the DRC, as well as to condition aid and impose sanctions if steps towards the protection of human rights and collective security are not taken.


Response: In partnership with the Stated Clerk, the Office of Public Witness continues to build a strong partnership with the Presbyterian AIDS Network and other ecumenical partners to advocate for maintenance and increase to federal programs that support people living with HIV. One example of this is raising awareness about Faith HIV AIDS Awareness Day, through action alerts such as this: http://capwiz.com/pcusa/issues/alert/?alertid=78494626. We also participate in interfaith and secular efforts around Advocacy for World AIDS day.


Response: Answered by PMA’s response to Item 12-10, Recommendation 4.b. (See II. Final Responses to Referrals, G. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 66.)


Response: The Stated Clerk of the Office of the General Assembly has written letters to the President of the United States asking for an increase in the number of refugee arrivals. The Stated Clerk has written multiple letters for refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented members of our congregations who are at risk of deportation. These letters are written with the input of the person at risk of deportation and their attorney. Taking their guidance, these letters have been addressed to members of Congress, leadership in the Department of Homeland Security, leadership in Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and local immigration and customs enforcement officers. No one, for whom the Stated Clerk has personally advocated, has wanted a letter written and sent on their behalf to the president or the attorney general.


Response: The Office of Immigration Issues of the Office of the General Assembly, on behalf of the Stated Clerk, participates in the National Sanctuary Movement, an interfaith movement of sanctuary partners across the U.S., and has hosted members of this movement to speak at presbytery meetings, congregational meetings, and Big Tent.

The office is a member of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition and collectively works to keep family unity as a cornerstone in immigration policy, for due process in immigration proceedings, for enforcement policy that honors borderland communities and to resource congregations wishing to offer sanctuary.


Response: The Office of Immigration Issues of the Office of the General Assembly, on behalf of the Stated Clerk, participated in and provided guidance and resources for a sanctuary training retreat with the Synod of the Northeast with more than eighty Presbyterians in attendance.
The office attended and spoke at multiple presbytery events where members were interested in learning more about sanctuary.


The office created a new sanctuary resource webpage to help Presbyterians discerning whether to enter, offer, or support sanctuary: www.pcusa.org/sanctuary.

The office created multiple resources, including a film, Bible study, and StoryMap around the root causes of migration from Central America, all of which can be accessed and utilized by congregations at www.genesisofexodusfilm.org.

The office provided assistance to the Office of Public Witness as they created the Sanctuary Discernment Guide to help congregations work through how they can offer sanctuary: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/pc(usa)_opw_sanctuary_final_6.21_edit.pdf.


Response: The special committee was formed and is bringing a report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). (See Item 14-06.) The committee was staffed by both the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly.


Response: Distributed electronically to all presbyteries and synods of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and asked that they forward this action to sessions so that all councils of the church can use it for their study, reflection, and, where possible, their approval.


Response: The Office of the General Assembly co-sponsored the Mid Council Leaders Gathering in October 2017 with the Board of Pensions. A workshop was offered on the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity.

23. 2016 Referral: Item 08-07. On Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS). Recommendation 5. Direct the Stated Clerk to Distribute, for Prayerful Study, the Text of the Palestinian Call and Documentation from Interfaith Partners Who Oppose the BDS Movement to All PC(USA) Congregations—From the Presbytery of New Hope (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 60, 62, 217 of the print copy, 504–06 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Stated Clerk has transmitted the following URL containing “the call” for participation in the BDS Movement to all presbyteries, with the request that it be forwarded to every congregation within their bounds: https://bdsmovement.net/call.

The Stated Clerk offers the following URL locations representing our primary “interfaith partners,” each of which includes material opposing participation in the BDS Movement. This information is to be forwarded as stipulated in the paragraph above.

The Religious Action Center—https://rac.org/opposing-bds

The Central Committee of American Rabbis—www.ccarnet.org

For additional perspectives from interfaith partners regarding the BDS Movement, the following sites provide additional reflections on the search for a future of peace and justice, including theological concerns:

The American Council for Judaism (Reform)—www.acjna.org

Jewish Voice For Peace—https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org


Response: For the OGA response to this referral, see Item 06-24.
Response: The Co-Moderators, working in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, appointed former General Assembly Vice Moderator Byron Wade as the chair and sought to fill out the membership of the commission as directed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). After months of work, the Co-Moderators, along with GANC and Commission Chair Byron Wade, came to the conclusion that the assembly might be better served if the composition of the commission was changed. The Co-Moderators, along with Byron Wade, will be bringing those recommendations to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

26. 2016 Referral: Item 08-02. On Advocating for the Safety/Wellbeing of Children of Palestine/Israel—From the Synod of the Covenant, Recommendation 2. Calls on U.S. Senate to Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; Direct the Stated Clerk to Communicate This Call to All Members of the U.S. Senate, the President, and the Vice President (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 59, 61, 458).

Response: Completed. The OPW has been working closely with the No Way to Treat a Child Campaign. We have sponsored a congressional briefing on the issue of the treatment of Palestinian Children in the Occupied Territories and asked Presbyterians to urge their members of congress to attend. We sponsored two webinars on this issue as well.

We have worked in coalition with other denominations and NGO’s to have HR 4391 introduced—Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act. We have promoted webinars on this as well as issued action alerts to Presbyterians to ask their members of congress to cosponsor.

There is ongoing work to support cosponsors and a letter will be signed by heads of communion and be sent to all who cosponsor. This should be finalized and sent in the next week or two.

We believe advocacy on HR 4391 to be the most pressing and strategic issue in congress right now that directly relates to the situation of Palestinian Children in Detention.

Letter has been sent to representatives.

27. 2016 Referral: Item 08-03. On Upholding Peoples and Partners in the Middle East and in the United States—From the Presbytery of New York City, Recommendation 4. Direct Stated Clerk, Other Staff to Foster Joint Action with Partner Churches and Others to Address Ways of Increasing the Respect of Christians, Other Minorities in the Middle East (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 13, 61, 463).

Response: Presbyterian World Mission continues to develop and strengthen its partnerships with churches in the Middle East, principally with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), the Presbyterian Church of Iraq, and the Presbyterian Church of Iran, as well as with the Lutheran and Anglican churches in Israel-Palestine (among others), the Middle East Council of Churches, and the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches. This is expressed through regular visits, including a leadership visit to the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon in March 2017, led by Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston and PMA Interim Executive Director Tony De La Rosa, and a leadership visit to Christian partners in Israel-Palestine planned for Advent 2017, led by the Stated Clerk.

Our embedded staff in the region, Steve Gorman, formerly in Cairo (until November 2016), Elmarie Parker in Beirut and working with NESSL, and Kate Taber, soon to be succeeded by Doug Dicks, in Jerusalem, facilitate many of these visits, helping to make the region accessible to congregations, mid councils, partnerships networks, and interested individuals. They do this both practically (assisting with arrangements) and through interpreting the experience (helping people to understand the joys and concerns of our partners, and why Christians feel the way they do about their region).

Through our funding programs and with the generous support of Presbyterians, we have been able to expand our support for the Synod of the Nile’s new church development program, and continue to contribute to the sustainability of the Presbyterian Church of Iraq, among other things working with them to plan an international partners meeting in 2018 focusing on rebuilding the church’s presence in society. With the Presbyterian Church of Iran, we are developing a program of financial support that will help sustain the presence and witness of their church. As things settle down in Syria and people return to their communities, Presbyterian World Mission (along with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) are working with NESSL on reconstruction efforts, enabling Christians to return to their homes and take up their lives again.

With our ecumenical partners in the U.S., we have relaunched the Churches Middle East Forum, bringing together the Middle East officers of our principal ecumenical partners to better coordinate our efforts as we journey with and support the churches of the Middle East.

At Big Tent in 2017, we ran a workshop that featured Hadi Ghantous, from NESSL, introducing Christian-Muslim relations from a Middle Eastern perspective, highlighting both the opportunities for peaceful coexistence and the trials and challenges
Christians in the region face. Building on this, and in cooperation with the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, we are running in July 2018, a two-week intensive course on Christian-Muslim relations that, among other things, will tackle the issue of religiously based radical thought and responses to it.

In 2017, World Mission’s Equipping for Mission Involvement group created a mission toolkit on Muslim-Christian relations that provides educational and liturgical resources for congregations to build bridges with Muslims locally and abroad.

28. **2016 Referral: Item 08-04. On Calling for the RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements—From the Presbytery of the Redwoods, Recommendation 7. Direct the Stated Clerk to Communicate This Action to All Other PC(USA) Councils and Entities and to the Re/Max Corporation** *(Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 13, 61, 465–66).*

**Response:** Because the Board of Pensions and Foundation of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. do not hold stock in RE/MAX, LLC; the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has not engaged with representatives from RE/MAX, LLC. In mid-2017, the Office of Faith-Based and Corporate Engagement drafted and sent the official response from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to the CEO of RE/MAX, LLC, commending the company’s commitment in 2016, ahead of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), to take action to ensure RE/MAX, LLC, will no longer receive income from the sale of Jewish-settlement properties in the West Bank or East Jerusalem. The correspondence from the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement also reiterated the request of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for RE/MAX, LLC, and its franchisees to continue to do everything in its legal and moral power to stop facilitating the sale or rental of properties in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and to continue to be in conversation with the proponent of the overture from the Presbytery of the Redwoods.

29. **2016 Referral: Item 08-07. On Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)—From the Presbytery of New Hope, Recommendation 5. Direct the Stated Clerk to Distribute the Text of the Palestinian Call and Documentation from Interfaith Partners Who Oppose the BDS Movement to All PC(USA) Congregations** *(Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 60, 62, 504).*

**Response:** The Stated Clerk has transmitted the following URL containing “the call” for participation in the BDS Movement to all presbyteries, with the request that it be forwarded to every congregation within their bounds: [https://bdsmovement.net/call](https://bdsmovement.net/call).

The Stated Clerk offers the following URL locations representing our primary “interfaith partners,” each of which includes material opposing participation in the BDS Movement. This information is to be forwarded as stipulated above.

- The Religious Action Center: [https://rac.org/opposing-bds](https://rac.org/opposing-bds)
- The Central Committee of American Rabbis: [www.ccarnet.org](http://www.ccarnet.org)

For additional perspectives from interfaith partners regarding the BDS Movement, the following sites provide additional reflections on the search for a future of peace and justice, including theological concerns:

- The American Council for Judaism (Reform): [www.acjna.org](http://www.acjna.org)
- Jewish Voice For Peace: [https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org](https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org)

30. **Alternate Resolution to 2016 Referral: Item 09-01. On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment—From the Presbytery of San Francisco, Recommendation 3. Direct the Stated Clerk to Inform the Denomination and the Larger Public of the Passage and Implementation of This Overture** *(Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 62, 63, 511–12).*

**Response:** Completed. We’re encouraging diversified energy portfolios and for MRTI to study an issue.


**Response:** A letter was sent to each expressing appreciation to Pope Francis I and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

32. **2016 Referral: Item 09-05. On Communicating for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si’”—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe, Recommendation 2. Direct Stated Clerk to 2. Encourage Study and Use Throughout the PC(USA), in Dialogue with PC(USA) Statements of Environmental Theology** *(Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 13, 63–64, 535).*

**Response:** PMA has agreed to be lead on this recommendation.

Response: PMA has agreed to be lead on this recommendation.


Response: PMA has agreed to be lead on this recommendation.


Response: PMA has agreed to be lead on this recommendation.


Response: The Office of General Assembly is making this document available to the church and sharing with church partners, ecumenical bodies, and public officials. The Office of General Assembly will place the document in an easily downloadable format.


Response: Letters to the president and congressional leaders have been sent.

F. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation, in collaboration with the other five General Assembly agencies, approved a definition of Supplier Diversity as a guideline for all agencies to follow in the selection of vendors. This definition outlines Supplier Groups, Supplier Categories, and Payment Thresholds.

2. 2016 Referral: Item 05-10. Urge All Presbyteries, Synods, and Sessions to Evaluate Their Leave Policies for New Mothers and Fathers for the Birth or Adoption of, or to Care for, a Child or Other Family Member, Such as Seniors or Those Who Require Health Assistance—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 32, 34, 292).

Response: The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation currently provides five weeks of paid time off that employees may utilize in these circumstances. We also comply with FMLA requirements to provide twelve weeks of unpaid time off. New mothers who go on short-term disability (which pays 60 percent of their normal pay) may also use available PTO from their sick bank to pay the remaining 40 percent.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation continues to pursue its Transformational Investment program in the Middle East. The Foundation has now invested more than $2 million in seven initiatives in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan designed to help create conditions for peace and human flourishing in the region. These include:

- Creation of a microfinance program in partnership with The National Bank, which has generated 136 sustainable new jobs throughout the West Bank.
- Installation of a 168kw solar field to provide low-cost electricity for the Arab Development Society in Jericho.
● Construction of a new Continuous Education building and a Media Center building at Dar al Kalima University College in Bethlehem.

● Incubator funding for life sciences companies through New Generation Technologies in Nazareth, which brings together Christian, Muslim, and Jewish scientists and doctors to create new businesses.

● Construction and expansion of a pilgrimage center at the site of Jesus’ baptism operated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land.

● Line of Credit for the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem supporting its work to promote sustainable development and self-reliance of the Palestinian people.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation is aligned with the General Assembly goal of a sustainable environment for all of God’s creation. The Presbyterian Foundation, in coalition with MRTI, has participated in corporate engagements with energy companies regarding sustainability and clean energy, voted proxies to support clean energy, and filed shareholder resolutions calling for sustainability reporting for energy companies held in portfolios. Energy investments held by the Presbyterian Foundation are diverse among oil and gas companies, utilities, and renewable power producers. Furthermore, our investment strategy includes a direct allocation of at least 1 percent in clean energy investments for the Presbyterian Endowment Fund. Today, this allocation has a market value of $9.3 million. These investments include solar power, wind power, and other renewable sources. Lastly, the Foundation communicates in writing directly with all investment managers to consider environmental impact when making investment decisions.

5. 2016 Referral: Item 10-01 On Seeking to Eradicate Slavery from the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses That the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business—From the Presbytery of Newark (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 13, 42, 567).

Response: The Foundation works cooperatively with the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) to research, identify, and develop practices to certify vendors’ supply chains are free of slavery. The Foundation regularly submits Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity and supplier diversity reports to GACOR.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation established a Ministry Partnership Fund for the initiative and has worked with the five pilot presbyteries and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to promote gifts to the fund.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation’s initiative on church financial literacy and leadership addresses clergywomen specifically, including those in their first five years of ministry, second-career clergywomen, clergywomen of color, and senior pastors. Elements of this initiative are conducted in partnership with the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Discussions are ongoing with the other agencies about how all can work together to fulfill this resolution.


Response: The Foundation submits a request for proposal for larger contracts with outside vendors and vets smaller contractors before finalizing the agreements. Consideration is given for: (a) qualification under the Supplier Diversity Policy; (b) negotiated pricing; (c) financial stability and reputation.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation adheres to the General Assembly’s guidelines regarding cultural proficiency goals and resources.

Response: The Presbyterian Foundation was not reviewed in 2017–2018. These recommendations will be addressed during the time period of the Foundation’s next agency review.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation shares the General Assembly’s goal to eradicate human trafficking from the supply chains of vendors and uphold the human rights of all people. We work with the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment and participate in corporate dialogues to raise awareness and advocate for corporate training for prevention of human trafficking and promotion of human rights. We vote shareholder proxies in favor of fair labor practices and support of human rights. We have filed shareholder resolutions calling for corporate policies to prevent human trafficking and to support fair labor practices in supply chains. Furthermore, the Foundation and its investment advisor, Northern Trust, are both signatories to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment. These principles seek to prevent human trafficking by encouraging companies to have policies that adhere to fair labor practices whereby a company is responsible to its employees and the communities in which they operate.

United Nations Principles for Responsible Investing (PRI)

The PRI is the world’s leading proponent of responsible investment.

It works to understand the investment implications of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors and to support its international network of investor signatories in incorporating these factors into their investment and ownership decisions. The PRI acts in the long-term interests of its signatories, of the financial markets and economies in which they operate, and ultimately of the environment and society.

The PRI is truly independent. It encourages investors to use responsible investment to enhance returns and better manage risks, but does not operate for its own profit. It engages with global policymakers but is not associated with any government; it is supported by, but not part of, the United Nations.

PRI’s aim over the next ten years is to bring responsible investors together to work towards sustainable markets that contribute to a prosperous world for all.

The United Nations (UN) has been supporting the Principles for Responsible Investment ever since their launch. The PRI has two UN partners—UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative and UN Global Compact—which play an important role in delivering the PRI’s strategy, including by holding a seat each on the PRI Board, and provide additional avenues for signatories to learn, collaborate and take action towards responsible investment.

Principle 1: We will incorporate ESG issues into investment analysis and decision-making processes.

Principle 2: We will be active owners and incorporate ESG issues into our ownership policies and practices.

Principle 3: We will seek appropriate disclosure on ESG issues by the entities in which we invest.

Principle 4: We will promote acceptance and implementation of the principles within the investment industry.

Principle 5: We will work together to enhance our effectiveness in implementing the principles.

Principle 6: We will each report on our activities and progress towards implementing the principles.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation joined with the other PC(USA) agencies to jointly formulate and implement a communications plan to share implicit bias and antiracism resources. The Foundation used its electronic communication resources to help share this information with congregations and mid councils.


Response: The Presbyterian Foundation has not supported therapies that attempt to alter sexual orientation.

**Response:** The Presbyterian Foundation has completed an organizational review of practices and policies as they impact people of color and continues to evaluate potential impacts of future initiatives.

**G. Presbyterian Mission Agency**


   **Response:** The Presbyterian Mission Agency website includes a section Creating Safe Ministries—https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/.

   On that webpage, councils of all levels can find PC(USA) statements and resources to help them develop dependent care policies. The resources include:

   - Dependent Care Reimbursement Policy for Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to the 222nd General Assembly (2016);
   - Dependent Care Expenses While Traveling (from the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Guidelines for Reimbursement of Expenses);
   - Standards of Ethical Conduct (1998);
   - Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures (2013);
   - Resolution on Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Against Educators (2004);

   The webpage provides links to other resources.

   During Big Tent 2017, a presentation was offered on drafting child protection policies. A presentation on child protection policies was offered at the Mid Council Leaders Gathering in the fall of 2017. It is anticipated that other similar presentations will be offered at future conferences. Such presentations offer guidance concerning how to create policies, policies that can include how to organize dependent care in a safe manner.

   During the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons announced that the PC(USA), in partnership with the Insurance Board, had established a Helpline that is staffed by experts from Praesidium. Informational brochures and magnets on the Helpline were passed out to commissioners and attendees, and were distributed at other events such as Big Tent. One of the functions of the Helpline is that councils can seek information on how to develop policies, such as child protection policies. Callers can also access the Insurance Board’s Workbench where they can find resources to help create policies (https://www.insuranceboard.org/safety-resources/safeconduct-workbench/).

   The networks of the Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) also provide good resources in this area, in particular the page “Presbyterians for Disability Concerns” https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/pdc/. That webpage includes resources such as Congregational Audit of Disability Accessibility & Inclusion and Living into the Body of Christ: Towards Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities (2006).

   The PHEWA website also offers a connection to four consultants in the areas of visual disabilities, hearing, mobility and accessibility, and developmental disabilities. These consultants are available to resource councils who may assistance in drafting dependent care policies that include care for persons who are disabled.


   **Recommendation.** To Establish the Goal of Achieving, in a Reasonable Period of Time, a 5:1 Salary Ratio Between the Highest-Paid and Lowest-Paid Employees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), Beginning with New PMA Positions, Understanding This to Be a Partial Return to Earlier Policy and a Practical Embodiment of Missional Solidarity—From the Presbytery of Newton (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 41, 44, 262 of the print copy, 617–21 of the electronic copy).

   **Response:** As of 12/11/2017, the ratio between the highest and lowest paid employee stands at 5.31 percent. This is a decrease from the June 2016 ratio of 6.04 percent. The PMA will continue its efforts to reach a 5:1 ratio.


   **Recommendation 1.** Direct the Six Agencies of the General Assembly to Have Their Leadership Meet Twice a Year to Collaborate and Improve Their Cultural Proficiency (or Comparable Initiative) Goals and
Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency initially interpreted this referral as a request for the senior leadership of each General Assembly agency to confer. Following conversations with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, the intent of the referral was clarified as a request for the staff in each agency who work in the area of cultural humility to collaborate twice each year. As a result of this initial misunderstanding, focused collaboration with all six agencies has not yet occurred. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will take the lead and make this a high priority for the first quarter of 2018.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency regularly partners closely with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., on cultural proficiency efforts, including plan development, training, and initiatives.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s 2016–17 Cultural Humility Implementation Plan is available to all employees through Center Net, our internal communications site. Announcements and articles are run periodically throughout the year about educational offerings with a reminder that the Plan is posted and available to all employees. A hard copy of the Plan is given to employees during our Staff Development Day, where a mandatory educational workshop on a specific cultural humility/antiracism topic is held.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) currently has a liaison relationship with the advocacy committees, which sends one of its members to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) as a full member, and which receives the chair (or designee) of ACREC and ACWC as a PMAB corresponding members. This provision fulfills Recommendations 2 and 3, not only in the years during which the PMA is reviewed, but at all times.

In order that this General Assembly mandate be remembered into the future, a section will be added to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations outlining this requirement.


Response: PMA started a race audit through two inquiries.

- Inquiry 1—2017 Employee survey with a race audit portion on the topics of: a-recruitment, b-training and leadership development, c-workplace values, d-discrimination and harassment and leadership, e-supervisors and human resources.

The PMA formed a Race Audit team to study these two inquiries. It was purposefully formed without a majority ethnicity and with other factors of diversity for differing perspectives.

As of the time of this writing (December 2017), we are continuing to study the responses to Inquiry 1 and 2. The data thus far has not shown structural racism in our policies or practices. However, there are signs that further work is needed:

- In 2010, 20 percent of PMA staff reported experiencing some form of discrimination. In 2017, only 5 percent reported that experience. Five percent is still a significant number we need to address.
- There is indication that white staff feel more valued by their colleagues than staff members of color.

Therefore, the Race Audit work will continue into 2018.

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice (CPJ), has made “Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25” a major priority since the last assembly.

In order to fulfill the mandate and develop a “cycle of social engagement,” CPJ organized and coordinated all of its work around four priority areas directly connected to the initiative: Environmental Justice and Creation Care; Human Rights, Dignity and Racial Justice; Advocacy, Peace, and Reconciliation; Poverty, Hunger, and Disaster Response. CPJ also recognizes that this response is core to the church’s mission and cannot be accomplished in a two-year time frame. There are challenges facing society that demand ongoing and sustained efforts in order to fully develop a “cycle of social engagement.” There are also several initiatives emerging in the church and the broader ecumenical and interfaith community that call the church to continue its engagement in “Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25,” including the “Hands and Feet” initiative launched by the Office of the General Assembly, http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/hands-and-feet/ and the “Poor Peoples’ Campaign,” https://poorpeoplescampaign.org. As a result, CPJ will continue in its efforts to deepen its engagement and its response to this request over the next two years.

The outline below offers some examples of CPJ’s efforts to engage the church and partners in “Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25.”

**Confronting Racism**

- Hosted Compassion, Peace, and Justice Training Day—More than 270 people attended based on the theme, “Confronting Chaos, Forging Community” that focused on the challenges of, and solutions to, racism, materialism and militarism. Some of the relevant plenary and workshop topics were:
  - Police/citizen relations and mass incarceration in low income communities
  - Urban ministry
  - Refugee and immigration ministry
  - “White Folk Work”: equipping white people to intervene in racism in our daily lives
  - Addressing the impact of environmental injustice in low-income and communities of color

  This gathering was followed by Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) that focused on the same theme. EAD is a three-day event that includes advocacy visits to members of Congress. For the fifth year in a row, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) had the largest percentage of participants across the ecumenical community. Plans are underway for the 2018 gathering that will focus on “A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced People.”

- Created a new ministry position to work with Racial Ethnic and Women’s ministry racial justice staff to facilitate trainings and other events that confront racism and white privilege.

- Supported Charlottesville and other communities impacted by racially motivated public violence events. Provided grant support and training opportunities to presbyteries in Freedom Rising responses.

- Facilitated antiracism/Beloved Community trainings in N.J., Tex., Ky., Ohio. These trainings were designed to engage Presbyteries, faith communities, and seminaries to gain both awareness and proactivity in addressing issues of race, as well as examine issues of privilege.

- Facilitated an Education Roundtable (Educate a Child), bringing together Presbyterians concerned about education to conceptualize and develop an “Education Covenant” to be used in congregations to address issues of racism and concentrated poverty in public schools.

**Environmental Concerns**

- Engaged ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, Noble Energy, Valero, AES Corporation, Dominion Energy, and numerous other oil and gas companies in dialogue around their corporate responsibility in implementing stronger environmentally responsible practices.

Led climate justice travel study seminars to Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Madagascar to help Presbyterians learn about environmental challenges and the impact of climate change in a global context. Met with impacted communities, expressed PC(USA) solidarity with efforts, and shared their stories with the larger church.

Began conversations with Presbyterian leadership in Puerto Rico and other VOAD (voluntary organizations active in disasters) partners concerning the most appropriate response to Hurricane Maria, including ways that solar power and sustainable food production can be incorporated into the long-term recovery.

Working in collaboration with partners in Flint, produced the Flint Water Crisis documentary, developed a strategic release and distribution of the documentary to facilitate congregational/community engagement with Flint and broader issues around water.

Standing Against Violence and Militarism

Responded to global conflicts in: Syria/Lebanon, Myanmar, Philippines, South Sudan, Kenya civil society, and pre-and post-election peacebuilding events.

- Provided grants, partnership visits, and developed education initiatives related to continuing violence, war, and displacement in Syria/Lebanon.
- Provided grants, solidarity visits, and developed educational resources for deeper understanding and response to the ongoing violence in South Sudan.
- Launched a churchwide special appeal for South Sudan in the summer of 2017.
- Supported capacity building of Presbyterian Relief and Development Association (PRDA) and other partners responding to violence and its systemic effects in South Sudan.

Itinerated International Peacemakers from fifteen countries, including places with active conflicts and violence such as Myanmar, Palestine, the Philippines, South Sudan, and the Ukraine.

Produced and updated documentary resources that address trauma and the impact of gun violence:

- “Swords to Plowshares” episode of The Everyday Epidemic—A Gun Violence Response Series.
- “The Ripple Effects of Trauma” video clip with trauma specialist Dr. Eric Gentry.
- Updated the Trigger gun violence documentary for re-release.

Advocating for the Dispossessed

Ongoing advocacy with and for disadvantaged, marginalized, and oppressed communities:

- Provided advocacy trainings to interested Presbyterians and issued more than thirty action alerts related to legislation that impacts the poor, including tax reform, the federal budget, healthcare, disaster recovery funds, human trafficking immigration, climate change, payday lending, the North America Free Trade Agreement, the DREAM Act, and refugee resettlement.
- Advocated for criminal justice reform to reduce mandatory minimum sentencing, abuses of prosecutorial discretion, use of for-profit prisons seeking more inmates, and over-sentencing of nonviolent drug offenders.
- Provided grants that enable partner organizations to work on engaging investors, civil society organizations, and corporations on their work addressing environmental sustainability and work on global economic justice and human rights.
- Engaged in advocacy with Phillips 66, a lead operator in the Dakota Access Pipeline, to create a publicly disclosed human rights policy, which they did in fall 2017. There is ongoing dialogue and monitoring to determine the how well they implement the policy.
- Worked with the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance and the Interfaith Working Group and Trade and Investment and Jubilee USA engaging in direct advocacy as well as providing education and advocacy opportunities to Presbyterians on issues concerning foreign assistance, fair trade, and debt relief and corporate responsibility.
○ Published “Sanctuary Discernment Guide” for Presbyterians in collaboration with Office of Immigration Issues and consulted with many congregations as to their role in the Sanctuary movement.

○ Supported the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in promoting their call to action and the Wendy’s boycott.

○ Provided financial support to ecumenical partners as they addressed the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar and neighboring countries.

○ Engaged in advocacy with poor, marginalized, and oppressed communities in the Joining Hands Against Hunger as they work to change structures and systems that are unjust.

○ Worked alongside community leaders in Flint, Michigan, as they responded to the water crisis. Developed a documentary.

○ Worked in partnership with communities working toward fair wages and just labor practices in the U.S. and around the world.

○ Supported projects with street vendors, community garden organizations working in food deserts, workers’ rights organizations, low-income housing initiatives, job training initiatives, reentry programs for people leaving prison, including:

  — Popular Union of Street Vendors in Los Angeles, Calif., an immigrant-led group that fights to defend their rights in order to overcome poverty and homelessness through self-management and cooperative economy.

  — Southside Worker Center in Tucson, Ariz. This project was started by day laborers who gathered at Southside Presbyterian Church. The immigrant led organization has grown to such an extent that the members see a need to train emerging leaders. The project provided stipends for persons who led the training as well as provided food and childcare for the training sessions.

  — Alianza Agricola, which serves the needs of undocumented immigrant farmworkers in Western New York. Their primary aim is to advocate for legislation for access to driver’s licenses to provide greater mobility for undocumented residents of New York.

  — South Sudanese Bead/Basket Project, Minn. The project makes and sells culturally traditional beaded baskets to generate income for the economically poor Sudanese refugees.

  — Refugee Driver Education Program in Rochester, N.Y. To obtain driver licenses for refugees that have little or no access to a car or an instructor.

● Implemented engagement opportunities for Food Week of Action and World Food Day:

  ○ Developed actions and Food Week content after conversation with PHP staff, strategic and grantee partners, and with U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance; outreach in PHP Post, PNS, and social media.

  ○ Doubled the number of Co-Sponsors for Food Week with 68 total; reached more than 500,000 people with extended reach of co-sponsors.

● Campaign for Fair Food:

  ○ Participated in rally around Wendy’s shareholder meeting in Columbus.

  ○ Supported campaign with letters from PC(USA) leadership and PNS news articles.

  ○ Prepared leader letter and promoted Migrant Justice’s Milk with Dignity Program, modeled off of Fair Food Program, which had a huge victory with Ben & Jerry’s.

  ○ Ongoing coordination with Coalition of Immokalee Workers, including meeting with CIW member, Oscar Otzoy, and AFF members in Florida.

● Farm Bill Advocacy Strategy:

  ○ Developed Farm Bill platform in collaboration with partner organizations; presented platform to Interfaith Working Group on Global Hunger and Food Security, and circulated to various partners; Breakout at Presbyterians for Earth Care Conference.

  ○ Convened Kentucky Farm Bill group to develop a Voter’s/Candidate’s Questionnaire and Eater’s Guide to the Farm Bill for advocacy work at local, state and national level—and to serve as a model for Presbyterians and other groups; began with a farmer’s survey.

Response: This referral is answered by “The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty.” (See Item 10-13.)


Response: “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation” is included in the 2017–2018 Presbyterian Planning Calendar on September 1. Web links to resources (pcusa.org/earthday, pcusa.org/eco-journey) are also published in planning notes in the same calendar.


Response: Between July 1, 2016, [following conclusion of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)] and July 31, 2017, the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Communications has collected and disseminated across multiple agencies and channels 133 stories about congregations, mid councils, other organizations and individuals about dismantling racism. These stories have been shared and have appeared 928 separate times across a variety of platforms, including social media (Facebook, Twitter), print publications (Presbyterians Today, Mission Crossroads, Racial Ethnic Torch), Presbyterian News Service, web and blog sites (www.presbyterianmission.org, www.pcusa.org, facing-racism.pcusa.org), and through 19 separate e-newsletters. A complete listing of these stories is available upon request.


Response: Following the conclusion of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), directors of communications for the six church agencies began development of a communications plan to share antiracism resources with the church. A copy of the communications plan is available on request. The goal of the campaign was to equip the PC(USA) to work toward addressing and ending racial injustice by providing mid councils, congregations, and Presbyterian-affiliated institutions with free access to antiracism resources. Principal tactics included developing new PC(USA) resources or repurposing existing resources, creation of a new website to function as the repository for these resources and a series of bimonthly email installments sent to our primary audiences: congregations, mid councils, and Presbyterian-affiliated organizations.

With participation from all six agencies of the church, the electronic campaign was launched in March 2017 and continued through March 2018, leading up to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The plan called for themed communications utilizing multiple digital platforms to share antiracism resources. With support through social media, the campaign was delivered in a series of e-mails sent every two months for a total of seven installments with the following themes:

1. PC(USA) Policy: Facing Racism (March 21, 2017)
2. The Confession of Belhar (May 22, 2017)
3. Race, Reconciliation, and Reformation (July 17, 2017)
4. Doctrine of Discovery (September 21, 2017)
5. Immigration and Refugees (November 27, 2017)
6. Resources Throughout the Church (January 22, 2018)
7. Reparations (March 19, 2018)
Additionally, on August 16, 2017, an extra Facing Racism email installment was added in order to share resources in a timely way following violent protests in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Resources were made available in Spanish and Korean where possible.

This report—created in August 2017, about midway through the yearlong effort—uses statistics from the first three installments of the campaign.

The website www.FacingRacism.org, created especially for this effort, served as the hub for antiracism resources. All electronic communications linked back to this website.

The campaign delivered access to antiracism resources via e-mails sent to 6,700 congregations, 307 mid council representatives, and 19 Presbyterian-affiliated organizations. Analytics for the first five months of the campaign show an average mid council email open rate of nearly 50 percent (well above the industry standard of 27 percent). The open rate among emails sent to congregations averaged 30 percent.

The emails linked to the campaign website resulted in nearly 10,000 page visits over the first five months of this effort. The campaign picked up more than 500 “organic” subscribers through the website.

We expanded access to antiracism resources using each agency’s social media channels (Facebook and Twitter). Analytics for the first five months show the campaign delivered approximately 72,000 impressions with 300 shares.

News of each bimonthly theme was also shared in story coverage by the Presbyterian News Service. The promotional effort also included a story about the campaign in numerous e-newsletters among all six agencies.

Themes and resources for this campaign were developed by the six agency directors of communications with input from the coordinator for racial and intercultural justice, the manager for diversity and reconciliation, and other national church staff members.


Response: This referral was approved with a comment limiting its scope and directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency “to explore how translations can be produced utilizing volunteers from around the church.”

Since 2013, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has had two translators on staff (one Spanish-language, one Korean-language) whose jobs are to manually translate “essential documents,” principally for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly. Congregational Ministries Publishing (part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency) also has Spanish- and Korean-language translators on their staff who work exclusively on curriculum.

From time to time, requests come in to the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Communications for translations of specific documents or resources into languages other than Spanish or Korean. In some cases, native or fluent speakers who do other ministry work on staff, or volunteers, handle the translation work (such as translating Presbyterians Today’s Advent and Lenten devotionals into Taiwanese, Chinese, and other east Asian languages, or translating grant application request forms and agreements into French). In other cases, we have helped individual offices and ministries to contract with professional translators for specific assignments.

We recognize and concur that there is no substitute for human translation to capture the nuances of language, especially given the important and unique terminology specific to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the cultural subtleties of the many constituencies that we serve. In 2014, the Presbyterian Mission Agency responded to Referral Item 16-07, Recommendation 5, from the 2012 General Assembly. At that time, we answered that we lacked sufficient financial resources to translate all communications into numerous languages. The cost implications of that referral amounted to approximately $1.3 million per year for translations into just four languages: Spanish, Korean, French, and Portuguese. This was predicated on hiring, in addition to the one Korean and one Spanish translators already on staff, fifteen additional full-time translation staff: 3 Spanish, 3 Korean, 4 French, 4 Portuguese, a project manager, and one freelancer.

These financial constraints have not changed. Accordingly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Communications continues to explore ways to offer translations of more communications into different foreign languages, and test these options when possible. In 2017, for example, we added a free Google Translate button on presbyterianmission.org web pages, stories and blogs. While Google translations tend to be very literal and may be only 50–60 percent accurate, users can select from...
among more than 100 languages to instantly translate the entire web page. At present, Google’s system relies on a very large database of prior translations and statistical algorithms to determine a possible translation of a given text. We readily acknowledge that this is the leading edge of an emerging technology and that it is often useful to get only a general sense of the document in another language. Google Translate can fail (sometimes dramatically) to convey the underlying meaning that the writer is trying to get across. Yet, thanks to artificial intelligence and a community of fluent and native speakers who voluntarily edit and correct translated output, Google Translate continues to improve. While Google Translate in its present form is not ideal to meet our church’s needs, we have attempted to show good faith and respect to our non-English-speaking constituents by offering it as an interim measure.

At the July 2017 Big Tent, the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly worked together with software provider TheoTech to provide real-time translation services via its spf.io (pronounced “spiffy-oh”) online application to deliver real-time captions and translations of events to projection screens and mobile devices. Spanish, Korean, and English subtitles were offered to all Big Tent attendees. This tool displayed the text of prepared content like song lyrics and presentation slides, and it also translated the spoken word (as subtitle text or speech interpretation) in real time. Translations through spf.io rely on artificial intelligence technology and the latest tools from Google Translate and Microsoft Translate to process language, learning new idioms and voices along the way, in more than fifty languages. The Big Tent planning team was pleased with this first effort, and the Office of the General Assembly plans to use it again in St. Louis at the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

In response to this referral, the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Communications also consulted with Hispanic and Korean Presbyterian caucuses and the Advisory Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to ask specifically about their views on working with a network of volunteers. The consensus from these groups is that it would not be advisable to use volunteers to do translations. They reason that even though volunteers would be well-meaning and probably enthusiastic, it is more important to have culturally-sensitive translations that accurately convey the underlying meaning of the source text. In addition, they feel that language inclusiveness is important and therefore the church should make good, professional translation a priority. They also believe, especially regarding Spanish, that the variety of local vocabulary variations depending on the translator’s country of origin would create confusion. Finally, from a logistical perspective, we also feel that it could prove difficult (and possibly expensive) to manage a widespread network of volunteers, exercise control over deadlines, deal with a complex flow of documents for translation/review/proofreading, and maintain adequate quality control.

We have also explored the use of outside, professional translation services to supplement the work of our staff translators. For example, the Board of Pensions has worked successfully with a firm in Los Angeles that does translation from and to English from some fifty different languages. The Board of Pensions reports that the firm’s work improved significantly as they learned the church’s specialized terminology. This firm’s charges are based on English word count. Translations into Spanish (and other romance languages) cost 20 cents per word, Korean is 35 cents per word, and other languages range from 20 to 40 cents per word. Clearly, it would be very expensive to translate “all communications” into multiple languages, but a service like this if used judiciously to supplement the output of our staff translators might be considered. We plan to try this service as an alternative to contract freelancers who cover for staff translators when they are unavailable.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Communications is committed to actively exploring and testing, as financially feasible within existing budgets, alternate means of bringing quality translations to the church, but we submit moving to a volunteer model is not a good solution. There is still a need for translation services in the church.


They correlate to the longer response to another referral from 2012, 11-16, which led to the creation of a resource for all Sunday Schools and Child Care or Nursery Programs: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/pcan-child-safe-church.pdf.

*We Won’t Let It Happen Here: Creating a Child Safe Church*

A Project of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) & the Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network (PCAN), A Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA)


Response: The process of engagement has resulted in a December 2017 trip by leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), exploring partnering presently taking place, and opportunities for further partnership.


Response: The Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) also asked the General Assembly Standing Committee of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interereligious Relationships (GACEIR) to develop a theological rationale to support interfaith relationships in order to encourage Presbyterians to enter into interfaith relationships with confidence. The GACEIR has intentionally drafted a document that confesses the history of Christian Domination and Supremacy Over Other Religions referenced specifically in this referral. Their document, if approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), will provide the theological foundation to encourage all Presbyterians to enter into family relationships, friendships, local interfaith partnerships, regional advocacy efforts, and national and international missional efforts in a way that prepares them to be good partners in such efforts. This document will be presented to and acted on by the GACEIR at its January meeting, and if adopted will be available following that meeting. The staff person for Interfaith Formation consistently engages with interfaith partners to support grassroots organizing efforts. Examples include the interfaith clergy witness at Standing Rock, ND in the fall of 2016 (attended by Sara Lisherness and Rick Ufford-Chase) and interfaith relief work with the Muslim community in Puerto Rico in December 2017.


Response: PMA staff responsible for Interfaith Formation have been laying the groundwork for sharing best practices across mid councils, particularly as those practices relate to interfaith organizing efforts to respond to the dramatic rise in incidences of bias and hate crimes since the 222nd General Assembly (2016). By the meeting of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the staff expects to have a process in place to share resources and training among mid councils that wish to deepen their work on these issues. Recognizing that such resources are readily available in larger metro areas, but often are lacking in smaller cities and rural areas, this effort seeks to model the effective work in the Presbytery of Carlisle, where Presbyterians have been key partners in developing proactive, interfaith, volunteer-based responses to incidences of religious intolerance.

and Individual Churches. (We Request That These Resources Be from the PC(USA) and Not Just Direction to Other Denominational Resources)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.40, 43, 531–3; pp. 231–32 of the print copy 2).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency maintains a web page called Creating Safe Ministries that includes a variety of resources, including information on creating child/youth protection policies and procedures: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/.

Included on that web page is information about a Helpline that former Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency developed in partnership with the Insurance Board. The Helpline was announced and brochures were delivered to commissioners during the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Councils can contact the Helpline for assistance through Praesidium, a nationally recognized leader that provides advice to organizations concerning policies and procedures to protect children. The Safe Ministries web page includes a link to the Insurance Board’s Workbench where councils can get a free assessment and find a tool to help create child protection policies: https://www.insuranceboard.org/safety-resources/safeconduct-workbench/. All PC(USA) councils are eligible to utilize the Workbench through the partnership with the Insurance Board.

During the 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Item 3-NB, the assembly directed the Office of the General Assembly “to form a task force made up of representatives from mid councils and local governing bodies to work with congregations on implementing child/youth/vulnerable adults protection policies and appropriate responses.” The Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space was created in June 2017. Presbyterian Mission Agency staff are working with the Office of the General Assembly and the task force to help congregations implement child/youth/vulnerable adult protection policies: http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/222nd-general-assembly-2016/task-force-safe-and-sacred-space/

Presentations on how to create child/youth protection policies were made by staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly at the Big Tent in St. Louis (2017), and at the Mid Council Leaders Gathering (2017).


Response: The Office of Korean Intercultural Congregational Support in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries met with the Coordinating Committee for Korean American Presbyteries in March 2017, including Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of General Assembly staff. In August 2017, the Korean Intercultural Congregational Support office contacted the 16 synods to provide information on this G.A. referral and urge them to support and strengthen the existing system between the Korean non-geographic presbyteries, including educating and sharing cultures and customs with each other and engaging in community building with one another. The Office of Korean Intercultural Congregational Support in the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of Korean-Speaking Councils Support in the Office of the General Assembly shared with these mid-councils that they are able to serve as resources to assist synods and non-geographic presbyteries in strengthening relationships one another.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency lifted up the heritage and history of Korean Americans through joint worship services and events, such as the March 2017 meeting of the Coordinating Committee for Korean American Presbyteries in Louisville in March 2017, where the heritage of Korean Americans was lifted up in worship. PMA and OGA staff also traveled to Seoul, Korea, to participate in the 46th Annual Meeting of the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC), and joined in worships, meetings, wrote and posted news articles, and visited with denominational and mission partners. Approximately thirty other events and worship services with non-Korean were also held in 2017.

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, in consultation with the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness, has worked with the Israel-Palestine working group at the United Nations, highlighting especially the needs and well-being of children. Defense for Children International Palestine is a partner in the work. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations and the Working Group also hosted a listening lunch during the United Nations commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Occupation.


Response: Presbyterian World Mission continues to develop and strengthen its partnerships with churches in the Middle East, principally with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), the Presbyterian Church of Iraq, and the Presbyterian Church of Iran, as well as with the Lutheran and Anglican churches in Israel-Palestine (among others), the Middle East Council of Churches, and the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches. This is expressed through regular visits, including a leadership visit to the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon in March 2017 led by Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston and PMA Interim Executive Director Tony DeLa Rosa, and a leadership visit to Christian partners in Israel-Palestine planned for Advent 2017, led by the Stated Clerk.

Our embedded staff in the region, Steve Gorman, formerly in Cairo (until November 2016), Elmarie Parker in Beirut and working with NESSL, and Kate Taber, soon to be succeeded by Doug Dicks, in Jerusalem facilitate many of these visits, helping to make the region accessible to congregations, mid-councils, partnerships networks and interested individuals. They do this both practically (assisting with arrangements) and through interpreting the experience (helping people to understand the joys and concerns of our partners, and why Christians feel the way they do about their region).

Through our funding programs and with the generous support of Presbyterians, we have been able to expand our support for the Synod of the Nile’s new church development program and continue to contribute to the sustainability of the Presbyterian Church of Iraq, among other things working with them to plan an international partners meeting in 2018 focusing on rebuilding the church’s presence in society. With the Presbyterian Church of Iran, we are developing a program of financial support that will help sustain the presence and witness of their church. As things settle down in Syria and people return to their communities, Presbyterian World Mission (along with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) are working with NESSL on reconstruction efforts, enabling Christians to return to their homes and take up their lives again.

With our ecumenical partners in the U.S., we have re-launched the Churches Middle East Forum, bringing together the Middle East officers of our principal ecumenical partners to better coordinate our efforts as we journey with and support the churches of the Middle East.

At Big Tent in 2017, we ran a workshop that featured Hadi Ghantous, from NESSL introducing Christian-Muslim relations from a Middle Eastern perspective, highlighting both the opportunities for peaceful coexistence and the trials and challenges Christians in the region face. Building on this, and in cooperation with the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, we are running in July 2018, a two-week intensive course on Christian-Muslim relations that, among other things, will tackle the issue of religiously based radical thought and responses to it.

In 2017, World Mission’s Equipping for Mission Involvement group created a mission toolkit on Muslim-Christian relations that provides educational and liturgical resources for congregations to build bridges with Muslims locally and abroad.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations works to promote these goals with the Israel-Palestine Working Group. The Ministry at the United Nations has also encouraged the support and funding of activities that nurture civil society and strategies for economic development in the Middle East at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. It co-hosted an open forum for discussion of these issues with Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine.

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement, has been in communication with the proponent of the overture from the Presbytery of the Redwoods and has sent a letter to the chief executive officer, president, and general counsel of RE/MAX, LLC. The letter includes a commendation of RE/MAX, LLC, for responding favorably to discussions with representatives from the PC(USA) regarding its commitment to take action to ensure RE/MAX, LLC, will no longer receive any income from the sale of Jewish settlement properties in the West Bank or East Jerusalem. The letter also includes a call for RE/MAX, LLC and its franchisees to do everything in its legal and moral power to stop facilitating any sale or rental of properties in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.


Response: This referral will be answered by the report with recommendations titled “MRTI Report to Presbyterian Mission Agency and the 223rd General Assembly” (see Item 08-08).


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbytery Church Office of Public Witness, the Office of Immigration Issues in the Office of the General Assembly, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, has worked in coalition with Church World Service, as well as other denominations and members of the faith community, to advocate for improvement in refugee resettlement policies and related issues.

In January 2017, the president issued three Executive Orders that called for drastic changes to U.S. immigration and refugee policies with potentially disastrous consequences for refugees and our communities. The Executive Order on refugees called for the immediate 120-day suspension of refugee resettlement and a ban on all travel to the U.S., including humanitarian cases, for Iraqi, Iranian, Syrian, Somali, Sudanese, Yemeni, and Libyan nationalities and drastically reduced refugee admissions. (Iraqis were later removed from this list.) As a result of these Executive Orders, much of the attention of PC(USA) advocacy in 2017 has been to protect and defend the U.S. refugee resettlement program, including a call to end the travel ban, including joining an Amicus Brief in a lawsuit filed in the US District Court.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has issued action alerts for Presbyterians, signed on to coalition letters to congress and the administration, developed resources for congregations, provided leadership at rallies and protests, and provided leadership at strategy meetings of the interfaith coalitions in order to determine the best possible actions in order to improve the current climate around refugee resettlement, particularly for Muslim refugees. In addition, staff representatives have had meetings with members of congress and the administration in order to advocate for more just policies and increased funding.

The Ecumenical Declaration signed by PC(USA) in February included the call to:

- The president and his Administration to immediately rescind all three immigration-related executive orders, and to affirm the importance of welcoming policies and a robust refugee resettlement program that provides protection to the most vulnerable, regardless of their nationality or religion.
- Members of Congress to do everything in their power to rescind these three executive orders, prevent them from taking effect, and robustly support and fund the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.
- The Judicial branch to continue to uphold the decisions that block the implementation of these executive orders, including the travelban.
- Each of our communions to organize and facilitate meetings with local, state, and national policymakers to educate them about our collective support and action in solidarity with refugees and immigrants, and urge them to serve as champions by supporting policies that affirm welcome, meeting with their immigrant and refugee constituents, and appropriating adequate resources to serve refugees.

A letter from Stated Clerk on June 5th was part of an interfaith Letter a Day Campaign in honor of World Refugee Day sent to all members of U.S. Congress which included:
... we ask that members of Congress continue to do everything in their power to rescind the actions of the three refugee-related executive orders to prevent them from taking effect. Our desire is that the United States restore its commitment to refugee admission to the levels of more recent times with a minimum goal of 75,000 refugees in Fiscal Year 2018 and to robustly support and fund the U.S. Refugee admissions and resettlement.

... As a body, members of the PC(USA) continue to engage publicly, pushing for greater support locally and nationally for refugees and refugee resettlement. By choosing welcome, we understand our commitment to also challenge any legislation that creates unjust burdens on these populations or creates greater obstacles to seeking resettlement.

The “We Choose Welcome” campaign https://www.presbyterianmission.org/we-choose-welcome/ has continued, with new resources, including the development of a “We Choose Welcome” lawn sign and advocacy alert.

Family unity and reunification have been central messages as well as the need for a generously funded resettlement program.

In addition, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has recently released two new short documentary films, “Facing the Human Tragedy in Syria” and “To Breathe Free” as educational tools to support outreach to and advocacy by Presbyterians for the end of the Syria conflict and to support refugee resettlement.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness, is a member of the Syrian Refugee Working Group as well as the South Sudan Working Group. Through these working groups as well as broader refugee advocacy coalitions, the office has worked to increase financial support for internally displaced peoples, humanitarian agencies that are working in the Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps, and increased funding for refugees and IDPs in general. The Office of Public Witness has done this by both grassroots education and advocacy for Presbyterians as well as direct advocacy with congress and the administration through letters and visits. This work has been done in consultation with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Office of Immigrations Issues.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has been engaged with the Security Council Working Group and Committee of Religious Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to ask governments to increase refugee access and maintains a relationship with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF who work to support and deal with trauma of child refugees.


Response: Presbyterian World Mission has worked with its global partners to encourage and support them in their advocacy efforts for change to the systems and situations that cause peoples to be displaced. Some of these efforts cannot be discussed publicly because of the risks people face in this work; however, the following are some examples of the different ways we are working with our partners:

- Due to civil conflict and resulting famine, more than 1 million South Sudanese have been internally displaced or have fled to refugee camps in Uganda. World Mission partners with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS), the South Sudan Council of Churches, RECONCILE International, and South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church to advocate for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Our Africa Area Office works with partners on advocacy points and collaborates with the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN to use government influence for positive change; several OPW action alerts have been issued. The Africa Office has also resourced the South Sudan/Sudan Mission Network in preparing an overture on South Sudan for the upcoming General Assembly.

- We have urged the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar to speak up for the plight of the Rohingya, recognizing that they too, as tribal peoples, have been subject to displacement and forced removal by the military. However, because of their own vulnerability they are hesitant to speak out, which is the reality many of our partners face in such situations.

- In Syria, our partner church is against the violence that has decimated their country and displaced millions of people. However, as a minority community their advocacy only works on the local level, advocating for political solutions that keep their own neighborhoods safe and are now enabling people to return. We have heard of many courageous stories where their interventions have made a difference, and we continue to support these efforts, such as the ‘Space for Hope’ initiative that is enabling Muslims and Christians to rebuild their community in Homs.
strategize with national and international partners for climate mitigation, given the decision by the US administration to cease all participation in the Paris accords.

In 2016–17, World Mission was privileged to accompany the Presbyterian Church of Colombia as it advocated for peace from fifty-two years of guerilla war that displaced millions. Our sister denomination has been a persistent and courageous voice for peace. It recognized the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s faithful accompaniment by inviting World Mission and the Office of General Assembly to join a meeting with President Santos of Colombia to promote the proposed peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Also in 2017, mission co-worker Sarah Henken shifted her ministry in Colombia to focus on peace initiatives with the Presbyterian Church of Colombia in collaboration with its peace commission.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness, works through many different ecumenical, interfaith, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) coalitions to advocate for an end to conflicts around the globe and has educated and mobilized Presbyterians to engage in advocacy on numerous conflicts that are displacing people from their homes, particularly Syria, South Sudan, and Israel/Palestine by providing educational resources, action alerts, letters writing initiatives meetings with members of congress and their staff.

As a member and leader in the Steering Committee of the NGO Group on the UN Security Council, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations works with the United Nations Security Council to end conflicts so that refugees and internally displaced people can safely return home in Sudan, South Sudan, Colombia, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Iraq and other places impacted by human-caused disasters.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through The Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Hunger Program, continue to work closely with ecumenical organizations to protect creation, particularly with regards to natural resource extraction and pipeline construction.

In September of 2016, staff from the Office of Native American Intercultural Congregational Support, along with the Office of Public Witness, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Office of Racial and Intercultural Justice, turned their attention to the indigenous leaders’ social movement to protect the water and stop the Dakota Access Pipeline taking place at Standing Rock, North Dakota. The group worked with Elona Street Stewart and Fern Cloud, both from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, other Native American Presbyterian leaders engaged in the movement, and ecumenical partners concerned for racial and environmental justice. A working group that included staff from the named offices, as well as other Compassion, Peace, and Justice and Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministry staff was created to support the water protectors. An action kit of resources was developed and regularly updated. The kit included ideas for advocacy, action, and prayer. The working group supported a request from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies to help it raise funds that could provide basic needs legal and support for the Standing Rock community. The working group sent action alerts to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), helped facilitate multiple communications by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to President Obama and the Army Corps of Engineers, and elected officials in North Dakota, and made weekly calls to action to support the effort.

Work in ecumenical coalitions on the national level continues, primarily focused on the Green Climate Fund, the notice to pull out of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the preservation of newly named national monuments that will protect sacred sites from oil and gas exploration.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will have a delegate to the COP 23 in Bonn, Germany this upcoming fall to continue to strategize with national and international partners for climate mitigation, given the decision by the US administration to cease all participation in the Paris accords.

31. 2016 Referral: Item 09-12, On Advocacy Against Factory Farming. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Responsibly Advocate in Favor of Humane Treatment of Animals on All Size of Farms. Furthermore, to Promote Environmental Stewardship and Additional Public Regulations Within Reason, Such as CAFO, Which Encourage Minimizing the Impact That Modern Production Practices Have on God’s Beautiful Earth; Acknowledging That Large-Scale Farming Is
Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, consulted with the overture writers in the Presbytery of Monmouth, engaged in research, and discussion with several groups around the country to create a Factory Farming webpage (presbyterianmission.org/food-faith/factory_farms) on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Food & Faith Blog, and promoting the same on social media. The page provides background along with a variety of educational articles and analysis on the three areas of the resolution: (1) Humane treatment of animals; (2) Environmental concerns about animal agriculture, including the concerns of ‘fence line’ communities located near factory farms; (3) Support for farmworkers and processing plant workers, people of color farmers, and family farmers and ranchers. Readers are encouraged to subscribe to action alerts from our One Great Hour of Sharing partner, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, for advocacy on related issues.

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Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the efforts of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, encourages grassroots advocacy in collaboration with the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness to support of food chain workers, farmers of color, family farmers, and ranchers notably when called for by our partners, such as Coalition of Immokalee Workers, National Farm Worker Ministry, RAIFI-USA, Farm Labor Organizing Project, Familias Unidas por la Justicia, Migrant Justice, Food Chain Workers Alliance, US Food Sovereignty Alliance, and the National Family Farm Coalition.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Factory Farming webpage, provides a concise collection of background papers and reports, which specify ways that animal farming, when done poorly, negatively impact God’s creation including the climate. The educational material and calls for change from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition point us toward ways of producing meat using humane treatment and more sustainable practices.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, has facilitated several conference calls with PMA staff and the STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness & Resilience) program. This led to a face-to-face meeting in Washington, D.C., with representatives of STAR, PMA staff, and representatives of four of the five presbyteries named in the Freedom Rising Initiative. The purpose of the meeting was to explore ways that the STAR program might support the presbyteries in their effort to further the Freedom Rising initiative. Several options for STAR support will be offered to the five presbyteries.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Self-Development of People (SDOP), has been addressing this overture through engagement, resourcing, relationship building, and strategy. Some of the issues presented in Item 10-03 are centered around many of the maladies facing African American males such as mass incarceration at high levels, School-to-prison pipeline, and issues centered around unemployment and poverty—all of which are issues also addressed in SDOP’s work.

One example is recent work in Cleveland, one of the identified “Freedom Rising” cities. Self-Development of People staff in conjunction with members of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve’s Race Action Network, strategized, planned, and initiated presbytery- and synod-wide event to provide opportunities for education, conversation, and engagement in the issues surrounding Freedom Rising. The planning team, which consisted of members of both SDOP, Presbytery of Western Reserve, and the Race Action Network, created a four-day intensive event called Seasons of Justice (March 24–27th, 2017). The event was a combination of awareness-raising of many of the issues facing African American males and relationship building. The gathering included workshops that addressed race, poverty, education, and mass incarceration, a viewing and discussion of the film 1/3, panel conversations, and talkback conversations with educators, social workers, and leaders. One of the Co-Moderators, the Reverend Denise Anderson led one of the conversation sessions.

This work has created an ongoing generative relationship with the Presbytery of Western Reserve that addresses many of the key issues facing African American men and boys. Plans are underway to engage with mid councils in the five cities

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mentioned and other areas where African American men face challenges in living out futures of self-determination. In doing so, SDOP hopes to lift-up some of the work of its community partners to encourage and connect presbytery leaders, congregations, and others that are directly involved with issues that affect African American men and boys to the mission and development work of SDOP. Through community education events, workshops, and strategic conversations and planning with mid council leaders, we are working to be a resource for the church in addressing these issues.

SDOP has also lifted-up its community partner models that address these issues by:

- Creating awareness about restorative justice issues and mass incarceration.
- Conducting workshops and activities designed to help people learn more about the needs of those who are reentering society.
- Providing examples of community partners who are doing constructive and innovative work in addressing the issues of re-entry and recidivism connected to mass incarceration.
- Engaging with the Prison Partnership Program, which has worked in Sing Sing and other correctional facilities.
- Providing healthy examples of community partners that focus on ways that those reentering society can once again be useful and productive members of their communities (i.e. advocacy, job training skills, education etc.).


Response: Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries sponsored leadership institutes in the summer and fall of 2017, including a New Immigrant Clergywomen’s Leadership Institute, a Women of Color Consultation, and a Young Adult New Immigrant Leadership Institute. Racial ethnic & women’s leadership institutes were established as a ministry of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries in 2010. Several of the participants have assumed leadership roles with even greater responsibility, having been elected to General Assembly committees, become national agency staff, received national church awards, and called as pastors and heads of staff of congregations. Our goal is for the leadership institutes to impact more racial ethnic and women leaders in the church at large, so that they will have opportunities to serve fully in ministry and leadership.


Response: Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, through the office of Women’s Leadership Development & Young Women’s Ministries, provided and supported opportunities for women of color to attend events and conferences in 2016 and 2017, such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Ecumenical Advocacy Days, the Women of Color Consultation, and the Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Seminarians’ Conference. Women have also participated in racial ethnic & women’s leadership institutes. Though leadership institutes are a significant ministry in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, there are many leadership development opportunities each year for racial ethnic persons and women, including the Asian Leadership Study Program, antiracism and cultural humility Trainings, intercultural conferences, Presbyterian Intercultural Young Adult Network conferences, Hispanic/Latino-a Continuing Education Seminar, Racial Ethnic and New Immigrant Coaches Training, as well as other trainings and professional development event.


Response: A statement defining “missional” and outlining missional living has been drafted and will be posted on the PC(USA) website (to be put on the TFE page of the website; arrangements for that are being made). Initiatives to education members of this church in our call to participate in God’s mission in the world are underway in the Vital Congregations initiative, the 1001 New Worshipping Communities movement, the widely used Engage resources. The Office of Evangelism is developing new missional strategies in cooperation with Greater Atlanta and Pittsburgh presbyteries; it is launching new initiatives through the Vital Congregations program with Newark, Trinity, San Jose, Grand Canyon and de Cristo presbyteries. The Evangelism Office, working with Research Services, has also prepared a tool for congregational self-assessment on a variety of metrics, which is available here: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/vital-congregations-immediate-toolkit/.
38. 2016 Referral: Item 10-11. A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to Design, Create, and Bring to Fruition Four Annual Regional Gatherings of Clergywomen Across the United States to Address Reoccurring Themes Within the Women’s Listening Visits, Including, But Not Limited to, Leadership Development; Peer Support for New Clergywomen (Including Second-Career Clergywomen [Not Age-Specific]); Mentoring; Pay Equity; Call Process; and Networking—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 41, 44, 261 of the print copy, 614–15 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Office of Women’s Leadership Development and Young Women’s Ministries in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries held several events gathering clergywomen and other women, particularly women of color. We planned conferences and also determined that it would be beneficial and cost-effective to partner with groups in the church who held events for clergywomen in 2017. One event was the Women of Color Consultation on July 31 to August 2, 2017, in Daytona Beach, Florida, where women addressed reoccurring themes within the Women’s Listening Visits, including leadership development, peer support, mentoring, and networking. A joint event, also held in Daytona Beach, Florida, on August 1–3, 2017, was the New Immigrant Clergywomen’s Leadership Institute, which addressed navigating the call process, performance management, interviewing skills, as well as leadership development, peer support, mentoring, networking and pay equity. Additional women’s listening visits in 2017 include visits at the 2017 National Korean Presbyterian Women Gathering, Presbyterian Women’s 2017 Summer Gathering of the Synod of Mid-Atlantic, National Asian Presbyterian Council Meeting at the Big Tent, Intercultural Pre-Conference at the Big Tent, and the National Black Presbyterian Caucus 2017 Convention. A listening visit will also be held at the Presbyterian Women Churchwide Gathering on August 2–5, 2018, in Louisville, Kentucky.


Response: The Office of Women’s Leadership Development and Young Women’s Ministries in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries partnered with Research Services, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, and Presbyterian Women and extended women’s listening groups, including voices of racial ethnic women, in 2017. There were fourteen women’s listening visits held in 2017, including visits at the 2017 National Korean Presbyterian Women Gathering, Presbyterian Women’s 2017 Summer Gathering of the Synod of Mid-Atlantic, National Asian Presbyterian Council Meeting at the Big Tent, Intercultural Pre-Conference at the Big Tent, and the National Black Presbyterian Caucus 2017 Convention. Additionally, there were four listening visits held at the Women of Color Consultation and four held at the New Immigrant Clergywomen’s Leadership Institute. In the fall of 2018, additional women’s listening visits will be held in a rural setting, in the Midwest, on the west coast, and at the Presbyterian Women Churchwide Gathering on August 2–5, 2018, in Louisville, Kentucky.

40. 2016 Referral: Item 10-11. A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to Create a Virtual Work Group Comprised of One Member of the Women’s Ministry Staff, One Member of Research Services Staff, at Least Two Members of the Status of Women Team, and Two Members of ACWC to Review and Respond with Action Steps Addressing the Needs of Clergywomen Across the PC(USA) as Articulated Within the Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) Survey Conducted in 2015—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 41, 44, 261 of the print copy, 614–15 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Office of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries created a virtual work group comprised of the following persons: the Reverend Rhashell Hunter, director of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries and member of the Study on the Status of Women Team; Angie Andriot, research associate in Research Services and member of the Study on the Status of Women Team; the Reverend Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, Study on the Status of Women Team; the Reverend Susie Carter Wiggins, Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns; and Elder Wanda Beauman, Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and vice moderator for Justice and Peace Concerns for Presbyterian Women, Inc. The work group reviewed the Gender and Leadership/Study on the Status of Women research project and responded with action steps to address the needs of PC(USA) clergywomen. These action steps include Women’s Listening Visits planned by Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries that focus on the experience of women of color and women in different geographic areas in the nation; development of educational resources that are accessible to the church, including plans for a Theo Academy series in Korean, Spanish and English; an online Woman Church Syllabus and liturgical material; consideration of a theological resource on women’s experience and theology for the church. The overall target date for all resources to be developed is the 224th General Assembly (2024), which marks the 100th anniversary of women achieving the right to vote. Additionally, the Gender and Leadership Survey was the central focus of a workshop entitled What if the Women Left? Shattering and Reframing the Stained Glass Ceiling offered at the Big Tent 2017.
in St. Louis, Missouri. Nearly thirty women and men attended the workshop. Those in attendance discussed the best way to move forward to eliminate discriminatory practices in the church.


Response: A meeting of the six agencies occurred on October 27, 2017. Representatives from each agency envisioned collaboratively creating and sharing the expense of a new leadership development opportunity for PC(USA) clergywomen who are newly ordained, second-career, racial ethnic, and those who desire to serve at administrative and executive levels. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Racial Ethnic Leadership Development & Recruitment and the Office of Women’s Leadership Development & Young Women’s Ministries, will gather the agency representatives together in 2018 to continue the vision for creating and sharing the expense of a clergywomen’s leadership institute in the summer of 2019. Additionally, the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Foundation are working on expanding offerings to provide new opportunities specifically for clergywomen.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness, has continued to distribute and promote the update of “We Shall Not Be Moved,” a guide to election protection and action to advance voter rights. The Office of Public Witness also participated in the Jericho March for Voting Rights and Criminal Justice Reform at the Supreme Court Friday, June 23rd, 2017.

On June 23rd, just days before the four-year anniversary of Shelby v. Holder—the Supreme Court decision that gutted the Voting Rights Act—interfaith leaders gathered at the Supreme Court to protest voter suppression policies that seek to disenfranchise seniors, college students, and communities of color. Religious leaders also called on Attorney General Jeff Sessions to rescind his call for federal prosecutors to seek harsher sentences for drug-related offenses.

43. 2016 Referral: Item 11-16. On Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with HIV/AIDS. Recommendation 2. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Work with the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) to Coordinate a Development Strategy and Activities to Raise the Following Revenue to Support These Initiatives: $150,000 Over a Three-Year Period to Be Utilized to Operationalize This Initiative—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 53, 56, 276 of the print copy, 729–32 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency encourages congregations, mid councils, and concerned Presbyterians to use existing methods of fundraising to address this concern. Since 2006, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has encouraged congregations to use all or part of the portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering retained locally toward causes related to HIV/AIDS. This can be done by supporting the work of the Presbyterian AIDS Network or another HIV/AIDS ministry that is in a partnership relationship with the PC(USA). Materials produced for PC(USA) World AIDS Sunday, designated by the Stated Clerk in response to another action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and for World AIDS Day (December 1), encourage financial support for ministries engaged in addressing HIV/AIDS.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness, working in coalition with the Washington Interfaith Staff Community Working Group on Trafficking, has advocated on issues around child soldiers particularly addressing documentation in the State Department Trafficking in Persons report. The Office of Public Witness continues to advocate with congress and the administration for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on Children in Armed Conflict. The Optional Protocol aims to protect children from recruitment as soldiers and other forms of abuse in hostilities.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations continues to work with Presbyterians to participate in the Red Hands Campaign against the use of child soldiers. As part of the campaign, red hands are collected and sent along with an accompanying letter encouraging UN member states who have not yet ratified the Optional Protocol to take action.
Response: Since 2016, the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment has incorporated labor practices into its Guideline Metrics developed in 2017 and used to evaluate all engagements with corporations. The metrics include sections on “environmental, social, and governance” (ESG) issues that are high priorities for faith-based and values-based investors when engaging corporations. Some of the measurements include whether companies have human rights policies in place; how robust human rights policies are; how are human rights policies implemented and monitored and whether investors are aware of any human rights concerns involving the company in question. In fall 2016, MRTI successfully encouraged Phillips 66, a 25 percent joint venture minority stakeholder in the Dakota Access Pipeline, to create a publicly disclosed human rights policy, which they included in their fall 2017 sustainability report. While the policy is not as robust as MRTI would like to see, MRTI will continue to dialogue with the company and monitor how they implement the policy in the next year.

On the issue of human trafficking, MRTI has continued to address the issue primarily through its partnership the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) for whom human trafficking is one of the primary issues of focus for its membership. In 2017, MRTI participated in an engagement with American Airlines who agreed to adopt human trafficking prevention policy as result of productive dialogues with faith-based investors. MRTI also engaged Old Dominion Freight Line on their trafficking prevention efforts.

For the 2018 proxy season, MRTI was the lead filer on two shareholder resolutions with JetBlue Airways Corporation and Spirit Airlines, encouraging them to follow the lead of American and Delta and commit to training their employees on human trafficking prevention. As of December 2017, Spirit Airlines committed improving its internal human trafficking prevention training program for employees and providing additional disclosure on its website and SEC filings. As a result of this positive response, MRTI withdrew its shareholder resolution. MRTI has also co-filed a resolution with the Hershey Company specifically requiring reporting on its recruitment and labor practices and is involved in efforts to engage Coca-Cola, Macy’s, and Coach on their labor practices.

While MRTI’s primary focus since 2014 has been on environmental and climate change issues at the direction of the General Assembly, MRTI continues to incorporate human rights issues in its engagements. Most recently, this has included Chevron and Noble Energy. With Noble Energy, MRTI is discussing human rights and labor issues in their natural gas operations in Israel/ Palestine, which have been flagged as possibly out of compliance with the General Assembly’s policy on corporate activities in the region.

MRTI’s lead staff person, Rob Fohr (director for the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement), serves on the Board of Directors of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), and helped establish the Investor Alliance for Human Rights. This new initiative from ICCR aims to increase collaboration between investors focused specifically on human rights issues. Fohr also sits on a stakeholder’s team with Ford Motor Company and General Motors. Both teams meet in person with senior executives at least once per year. In 2017, responsible supply chains were a major focus and both companies have committed to improved monitoring and vetting of their Tier 1, 2, & 3 suppliers.

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency continues to advocate on a variety of issues across the globe in order to put policies in place that will protect the most vulnerable. In its coalition work and direct advocacy with congress and the administration as well as through grassroots education and advocacy with Presbyterians, the Human Trafficking Roundtable, (which includes staff from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, the Office of Public Witness, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program), has addressed issues related to protection of workers in free trade agreements, funding for internally displaced people and refugees, child soldiers, the protection of the dignity of trafficked persons in the United Sates as well as a advocating for peaceful resolutions to conflict that cause increased vulnerability.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Office of Public Witness, the Office of Immigration Issues, and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations have partnered with More Light Presbyterians and the First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York to convene a faith-based forum on supporting LGBTQ Refugees October 20–21, 2017.

This two-day symposium will address the challenges facing LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers and what congregations can do to make a difference. Participants will learn specific strategies to provide services to and advocate with LGBTQ asylum seekers.

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW), in partnership with End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) and the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) and our ecumenical and interfaith partners in Interfaith Working Group on Human Trafficking, has continued to advocate for legislation combatting human trafficking.


In partnership with the PC(USA) Human Trafficking roundtable, the Office of Public Witness sponsored a webinar that included representatives from the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, ECPAT USA, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Nearly 200 Presbyterians attended.

Through the Washington Interfaith Staff Community’s Working Group on Human Trafficking the Office of Public Witness has continued to monitor and strategize around possible opportunities to advance anti-trafficking policy with the administration. In February 2017, we met with senior staff in the Administration to discuss ways we could partner to combat trafficking. We have continued to be in contact with them.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations served on the Board of Directors of ECPAT USA and Partners for Just Trade. Additionally, we supported the ecumenical community in advocacy with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, continues to address justice issues in global supply chains in a variety of ways. This includes work around the importance of Fair Trade as it relates to global supply chains, including a Fair-Trade delegation to Nicaragua. The Presbyterian Hunger Program has also taken the opportunity to address these supply chain issues in the garment factory by facilitating workshops for Presbyterians in conjunction with our partners at the International Labor Rights Forum (IRLF). With the help of the IRLF the Presbyterian Hunger Program is also seeking to produce resource materials to use in churches to help them understand better their role in the global supply chain as well as raise awareness about supply chain issues and the human lives that get caught up in that chain. The Presbyterian Hunger Program has also collaborated with colleagues in the World Mission Ministry for brainstorming sessions for a Global Supply Chains trip. Finally, through an ecumenical partnership with the University of Minnesota, Continental Floral Greens, and the Rainforest Alliance in Guatemala, the Presbyterian Hunger Program also provides an option for sustainably sourced palms for Palm Sunday (Eco-Palms) which encourages Presbyterians to consider their choices when it comes to the greenery supply chains. Through this partnership the Presbyterian Hunger Program was also able to offer for the first time a fairly sourced Christmas wreath and garland program for churches.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency strongly supports anti-trafficking efforts and encourages all people traveling on behalf of the church to support businesses that have signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (http://www.thecode.org).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency also encouraged its travel agency Azumano to become a Code signatory, which it did. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly have recently contracted with a new travel agency,
Balboa, and have asked Balboa to sign The Code. The online reservation service also identifies “preferred” airlines, hotels, and rental car agencies that have adopted the Code.

50. **2016 Referral: Item 11-23. On Therapies Purporting to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity. Recommendation 2. Direct All Agencies of the General Assembly to Refrain from Supporting, Sponsoring, or Implementing Therapies or Ministries That Attempt to Alter a Person’s Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity; and Strongly Discourage Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, and Affiliated Educational Institutions from Sponsoring or Supporting Such Programs—From the Synod of the Covenant (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 53, 57, 299 of the print copy, 785–86 of the electronic copy).**

**Response:** The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, engaged in extensive research on resources available to educate about these therapies, and provide background for congregations and families to create a safe, welcoming community for LGBT youth. Staff conducted conversations with both former Covenant Network Staff and current More Light staff to assess the needs and gaps they saw in PC(USA) educational materials. These resources will be compiled and released as a part of a response to this overture. The Office of Public Witness is also tracking state and national legislation that would regulate these therapies, and is actively seeking opportunities to advocate for their illegality.


**Response:** The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, has drafted and has forthcoming a letter in support of the “Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act,” introduced in the House by Rep. Ted Lieu of California, and in the Senate by Sen. Patty Murray of Washington. This bill would prohibit, as an unfair or deceptive act or practice, commercial sexual orientation conversion therapy, and for other purposes.


**Response:** The study guide on the history of Presbyterian resistance to racism and structural inequality in the U.S. has been developed. It is an electronic resource and can be viewed on the racial and intercultural justice website: www.pcusa.org/racialjustice.

53. **2016 Referral: Item 11-24. Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report: Recommendation 1d. Direct All Agencies of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Board of Pensions to Host a Series of Regional Conversations on Race Utilizing the Study Guide “Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity” (Appendix I). Conversations Are to Be Held in Cooperation with Other Regularly Scheduled Events such as Polity Conference, Moderator’s Conference, Big Tent, or Other Gatherings and Conferences, and Included in Other Church Trainings and Events for Church Leaders—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 46, 57, 299–302 of the print copy, 787–801 of the electronic copy).**

**Response:** Staff in the Office of Racial and Intercultural Justice in the Presbyterian Mission Agency and staff supporting the General Assembly Committee on Representation in the Office of the General Assembly collaborated on creating discussion questions for “Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries” and hosted conversations at the 2017 Mid Council Leaders Gathering on October 13–17, 2017, in St. Louis, Missouri. This event included the following meetings: Association of Mid Council Leaders, Association of Stated Clerks PC(USA), Moderators’ Conference, and the Mid Council Leaders Gathering.


**Response:** The production of a film on race, ethnicity, racism, and ethnocentricity for churchwide study will be completed by December 2018, and the film will be available as a resource to the church.

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Asia-Pacific, has worked in collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly, the Peace Trip Delegation, the Peace Network for Korea, mission co-workers, and a contract person to accomplish items a.–e. under Recommendation 3:

a. Offer condolences to the approximately forty surviving victims of the events of No Gun Ri on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

b. Create a bibliography of resources about the events at No Gun Ri;

c. Create worship materials to remember the people impacted by the events at No Gun Ri;

d. Share the bibliography and worship materials and this overture and rationale electronically with the congregations and presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK);

e. Explore possibilities for joint prayer and witness regarding continuing tensions on the Korean peninsula, in the South China Sea, and other considerations for peace, world order, security, and meeting basic human needs that are currently before their congregations and members. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 854)

A PC(USA) delegation traveled to South Korea November 1–8, 2017. The delegation interacted with individuals representing the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK), the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), as well as the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK). The PC(USA) delegation, which included the Stated Clerk and several others, engaged in a day filled with ceremonies and a worship service held November 7, 2017, at No Gun Ri Peace Park. Months of planning finally culminated in a tour of the battle-site massacre during which U.S. troops fired upon Korean civilians, including women and children for three days. To apologize for this atrocity, the delegation dedicated flowers at the peace park memorial monument, planted a tree in the memorial garden, and offered confession, lamentations, and a proclamation of apology during a worship service with survivors and their families.

The contract person wrote the service of worship for November 7, 2017, and completed a bibliography. During the first quarter of 2018 World Mission will work with Communications to post these resources online. Once the bibliography and worship service are posted, World Mission will notify PC(USA) constituents and global partner denominations, and will work with Communications to make the resources widely and readily available to those interested in using them.

World Mission and other ministry areas of the denomination have been engaging with our ecumenical/global partners in ongoing conversations as we identify various ways in which to be in prayer together. It is always our goal to be partnered in intentional prayer efforts. We have identified a season of prayer for the Korean peninsula held yearly in July and August. PC(USA) is in the process of developing resources for this season of prayer including, but not limited to, invitations to various individuals to contribute their own prayers and litanies that will be made available for all who wish to access. We plan to post these during the first quarter of 2018.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, in consultation with the area coordinator for Africa, the regional liaison, our mission co-workers, and the Congo Mission Network continues to advocate for policies that would protect human rights, promote security, and support effective electoral participation. Because of the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), public advocacy on these issues may put church partners in danger. The Office of Public Witness, however, has continued to work with allies in congress, including Rep. Karen Bass, as well as the State Department, to promote free and fair elections in the DRC, as well as to condition aid and impose sanctions if steps towards the protection of human rights and collective security are not taken.

57. 2016 Referral: Item 12-05. On Affirming Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression. Recommendation 3. Create Resources That Teach the Church About Its Theology of Peacemaking and Nonviolence in Relation to Its Historical Decisions to Boycott Companies and/or Their Products, Divest from Holdings in Corporations That Profit from Non-Peaceful
and Violent Pursuits, and Otherwise Call for Sanctions by Entities That Have the Power to Effect Positive Change—From the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 66, 67, 312 of the print copy, 860–67 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry, has produced two resources that address the directive.

The first resource is the book, Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace, based on the report approved by the General Assembly, “Risking Peace in a Violent World” (https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000047). The book is published by Westminster/JohnKnox Press and was prepared particularly for congregations renewing their peacemaking commitments by staff of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Christian Iosso). While it does not focus on economic witness strategies, it affirms economic pressure as part of nonviolent social change at several points, such as:

“…the antiapartheid movement in South Africa, supported by international economic pressure, that brought an end to white minority rule.”

“Nonviolent direct action—the use of protest marches, strikes, boycotts, sit-ins, and more—is a means of wielding power and a technique for waging conflict, just as guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, and terrorism are also means of waging conflict.”

The other resource is another report approved by the 2016 assembly, Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of Just Peace (pc-biz: https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/567/business), which has now been printed and posted separately for free download: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/israel-palestine-human-values-absence-just-peace/

This report is quite clear that boycott, divestment, and sanctions approaches have been approved by the church precisely because they provide proven pressure for nonviolent change, and because, in the case of Israel’s fifty-plus year occupation of Palestine, all other violent resistance and official “peace processes” have failed. To quote briefly:

Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Mission Agency have sought to work with other peacemaking organizations to counteract the culture of resentment and militarization that drives violent interactions between Israelis and Palestinians. The PC(USA) has called on all parties to cease activities that worsen the prospects for a just peace… The limited success of years of “words-only” efforts is part of what has led the church to move toward nonviolent economic pressure on the settlement enterprise and to work with civic organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT).”

The report goes on to affirm and recommend actions consistent with the referral, including:

(1) The Presbyterian Foundation and Board of Pensions refrain from investments that support violence against Israelis or Palestinians, including finance and support for the economic activity and expansion of settlements outside of Israel’s internationally recognized borders, in accord with previous General Assembly actions.

(2) Appropriate agencies of the assembly support measures by the Internal Revenue Service (or related units of the United States government) to investigate and possibly revoke the 501(c)(3) status for organizations, and tax deductions for individuals, that promote and finance the development or operation of Israeli settlements, which are illegal under international law and obstacles to peace.

(3) The General Assembly affirms the traditional freedom of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other religious, civic, and private organizations in the United States to determine their own practices of investment or divestment, boycott or selective purchasing, in advocacy for peace and human rights, and therefore opposes efforts in state legislatures and elsewhere to limit or punish these exercises of freedom and nonviolent solidarity.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Peacemaking Program, brought one of its larger groups of International Peacemakers in 2017, with representatives of partner churches in many conflict areas. In each case, the peacemakers met with regional area liaisons from World Mission (some of whom had helped contact those peacemakers initially). For overall lessons, see the Peacemaking Program 2017 report on the program and its learnings. In general, however, the peacemakers affirmed the continuing need for a human rights emphasis in foreign policy that does not single out Christians, as this can lead to resentment and pressure from neighbors and charges that Christians are not indigenous people. International development aid that genuinely helps self-empowerment can also accompany better relations in countries that are seeking to recover from disasters, natural or human made.
The Second General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC, continuing the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council) met in Leipzig, Germany, in July 2017, and included much consultation and planning among member Reformed bodies looking at many world crisis areas.

In November 2016, a team of two PC(USA) World Mission representatives and the coordinator of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) were in Beirut for the meeting of the Fellowship of Middle Eastern Evangelical Christians, which brings together representatives of Protestant churches from across the Middle East. The agenda of that body focused on ways to emphasize the role of Christians as peacemakers seeking reconciliation within their societies while also representing small but historic groups. The ACSWP coordinator and the Middle East coordinator of the Mennonite Church met with an international affairs representative of the U.S. Department of State at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, to discuss both the Lebanese and Syrian situations. This conversation is an example of the overall ways PC(USA) staff has tried to bring the fruits of international church cooperation to U.S. policymakers and diplomatic representatives, in this case focusing on future peace talks that could include Iranian as well as Russian representatives (the PC(USA) has supported the multinational nuclear de-escalation agreement with Iran, reducing tensions between our countries).

Similar initiatives have continued with the Cuba Partners network and South America & Caribbean World Mission office, touching also on issues in Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia. Work on the updated Cuba policy approved by the 2016 assembly included meetings with the State Department and National Security Council, set up with the assistance of the Office of Public Witness. Colombia has a historic peace agreement, long advocated by the PC(USA) and our partners, with whom the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship has run an accompaniment program for congregations of people displaced by civil war and death-squads funded by wealthy landowners.

In Israel/Palestine, the PC(USA) continues to work with Christian and interfaith partners toward human rights for Palestinians, given the recognition by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and many observers that the “two-state solution” is politically and economically impossible as long as Israel continues settlements and colonizes “Area C,” the 60 percent of the West Bank that consists of the Jordan Valley.

With regard to the Korean Peninsula, PC(USA) representatives met with South Korean church representatives in early Fall of 2017, during a public apology for the wartime massacre of civilians at No Gun Ree (as also mandated by the 2016 assembly). The PC(USA) and all ecumenical churches seek ways to de-escalate tensions while also advocating for better conditions for North Koreans.

The Peacemaking Program has been encouraging congregations to recommit to an updated Peacemaking Commitment statement, coordinating with the publication and marketing of the book by Chris Iosso, Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace (Westminster/JohnKnox, 2017). That book contains a modified form of the Peace Discernment report approved by the 2016 assembly.


Response: World Mission staff, the IPRC, and the Cuba Partners Network have been working together to celebrate, strengthen, and put into action the partnership between the PC(USA) and the IPRC through:
● Convening an Encuentro (Gathering) in Matanzas, Cuba, October 5–8, 2016, to celebrate the partnership relationship between the IPRC and the PC(USA) and begin discussions of how we might strengthen our mutual mission. More than sixty people participated in the Encuentro: about half from Cuba and half from the U.S.

● Celebrating a joint meeting between IPRC leadership, the PC(USA) Stated Clerk, World Mission’s Latin America and the Caribbean staff, and Cuba Partners Network delegates in Cardenas, Cuba, May 8–11, 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to affirm our partnership relationship and, using the World Council of Churches’ latest statement on Mission and Evangelism (Together Towards Life) as a missiological tool, to envision directions for a renewed Mutual Mission Agreement between our two denominations. A writing team was commissioned to draft the new agreement based on the discussions.


● Holding a Cuba Partners Network meeting, including five representatives of the IPRC, to share the new Mutual Mission Agreement draft document and to explore other topics, towards the end of strengthening our partnership. This meeting was held September 12–15, 2017, in Chicago with the theme of “Deepening Mutual Mission.” The new Mutual Mission Agreement will be submitted to the Synod of the IPRC at their annual Synod meeting, February 1–3, 2018. Co-Moderator Denise Anderson will attend as part of the PC(USA) delegation. Upon its adoption, the agreement will be submitted to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA).

● Discussing with the IPRC leadership the matter of IPRC’s legal recognition as a church by the Cuban government, and the denomination’s exercise of religious liberty including the exercise of control over church properties. IPRC representatives expressed their gratitude for the support of the PC(USA) on this item, but affirmed that the legal recognition by the Cuban government of the IPRC as a church is a matter internal to Cuba and that they are taking steps with the government toward that end.


Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the work of the Office of Public Witness, has continued to advocate against the rollback of the recent openings in US-Cuba relations by the current administration. The representative for international issues at the Office of Public Witness chairs the Interfaith Working Group on Cuba and has coordinated interfaith advocacy with congress and the administration. The Office of Public Witness has had several meetings with the State Department on the issues around the tightening of travel restrictions and has worked to advocate for legislation in congress that would continue to advance more open relations. These bills are:

House Bills

✱ The Cuba Trade Act (H.R. 442)
*Introduced by Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN-6)*
This bill would allow businesses in the private sector to trade freely with Cuba, while prohibiting taxpayer funds to be used on promotion or development of a new market.

✱ The Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act (H.R. 351)
*Introduced by Rep. Mark Sanford (R-SC-1)*
The bill simply removes the current travel restrictions to Cuba.

✱ The Cuba Agricultural Exports Act (H.R. 525)
*Introduced by Rep. Eric A. Crawford (R-AR-1)*
This bill seeks to repeal financing restrictions, allowing firms in the U.S. to offer credit to Cuba in connection with exports of U.S. agricultural goods. It also seeks to eliminate restrictions on key federal funding used in agricultural export promotions.

Senate Bills

✱ The Agricultural Export Expansion Act (S.275)
*Introduced by Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND)*
This bill aims to lift the ban on private banks and companies offering credit for agricultural exports to Cuba, and to help level the playing field for exporters across the country and support American jobs.

✱ The Freedom to Export to Cuba Act
*Introduced by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)*
This bill would lift the current embargo and allow more U.S. goods to be exported to Cuba. The bill would also eliminate the legal barriers to Americans doing business in Cuba. It does not repeal provisions of current law that address human rights in Cuba or that allow individuals and businesses to pursue claims against the Cuban government.

🌟 The Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act
[Introduced by Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ)]
This bill would eliminate current restrictions on traveling to Cuba for tourist purposes. Additionally, ahead of the Trump Administration’s expected release of its U.S.-Cuba policy review, which will determine whether or not to continue policies that made it easier to travel to Cuba, this legislation would completely and permanently deregulate U.S. travel to Cuba.

The Office of Public Witness is hosting a delegation from the Cuban Council of Churches, including two from the Presbyterian Church of Cuba, who will meet with congress and the administration on these issues in January of 2018.

In addition, we have worked in partnership with the Latin America Working Group to offer opportunities for education and advocacy for Presbyterians including:

- A Twitterstorm to end the embargo,
- Calling for aid for Cuba after Hurricane Irma
- Monitoring the changes made to US policy toward Cuba by the current administration,
- Supporting legislation that would end the travel ban,
- Advocating for continued engagement and travel to Cuba.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations sent a letter to the president of the General Assembly of the United Nations advocating the end of sanctions against Cuba.


**Response:** The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights Office to address Presbyterians in the Love Welcome Conference at First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York. The Love Welcome Conference addressed ways that the faith community can respond to LGBTQI refugees.


**Response:** World Mission staff created a training entitled “Safety, Respect, Advocacy & More” with the following objectives:

- Creating awareness of the goals of the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination; and
- Providing an environment in which mission co-workers can learn about and share context-sensitive ways to address issues of safety and respect for LGBTQ persons both when in the U.S. and within their countries of service.
In 2017, this training was implemented at the following mission personnel events:

- Africa Regional Gathering (37 mission personnel attending, including 4 Young Adult Volunteers);
- Sharing Conference (12 mission personnel attending); and
- Orientation for new mission personnel (2 attending).

The same training will be shared at future mission personnel training events in order to share the goals of the report and to engage all PC(USA) mission personnel in understanding context-sensitive ways of protecting individuals from violence and discrimination.

- Additionally, the Young Adult Volunteer program incorporates training and reflection with all YAVs around antiracist, anti-oppression, and nondiscrimination. In 2017, this training was for all seventy active YAVs, and is reinforced at each site through ongoing training through the YAV site coordinators.


Response: As mandated by the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency communicated the goals of the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to Presbyterian World Mission. In turn, Presbyterian World Mission took two actions. The first was to modify its Mission Co-Worker Handbook to add language that avoided the perception of disparate treatment for LGBT candidates for mission service, who were being considered for appointment to global partners that do not accept such persons. These changes were made in collaboration with the Covenant Network of Presbyterians.

Second, Presbyterian World Mission developed a training program for mission co-workers to help them address issues of safety and respect for LGBT persons in their unique contexts, which vary from country to country. This training program will be offered at all training meetings for mission personnel. In 2017, it was used at the regional gathering of all mission personnel in Africa and at a sharing conference for mission co-workers who were in the United States on their interpretation assignments.

The training program includes a review of the goals of the 2015 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and an overview of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s policy statements on protections and human rights for LGBT persons. It then gave space for mission co-workers to share their experiences and any uncertainties about how best to address issues that arise. In the longer version of the program, we also included a section on bystander intervention.


Working collaboratively with First Presbyterian Church of New York City, the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN, the Peace-making Office, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Office of Immigration Issues, More Light Presbyterians and Covenant Network are organizing a regional conference to focus on congregational support and accompaniment of LGBTQ asylum seekers and refugees. “Love Welcome” Conference will take place October 20–21, 2017, in New York City. The conference will serve as a focal point for identifying, compiling, and (if necessary) producing new congregational resources to be made available in 2018.

66. 2016 Referral: Item 12-10. On Committing to Play an Active Part in the Global Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic. Recommendation 4.b. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through World Mission, to (1) Encourage and Accompany Global Partners Working to Raise Awareness of the HIV and AIDS Epidemic and to Promote Appropriate Responses to the Disease; (2) Educate PC(USA) Constituencies, Including Congregations and Mission Networks, About the Urgency of Action to Prevent a Resurgence of HIV Infections Through Media Such as Bulletin Inserts, Publications, and Social Media; and (3) Encourage Congregations to Use Existing Methods of Fundraising, such as the Portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering Retained Locally to Be Used Toward This Cause, Either by Encouraging the Support of the Presbyterian AIDS Network, or Another HIV/AIDS Ministry with Which the PC(USA) Is in Partnership. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Is Not

Response: Presbyterian World Mission was directed in Section 4(b) to undertake three activities.

**Encourage and accompany global partners:** Presbyterian World Mission encourages and accompanies global partners working on HIV and AIDS testing, prevention, and care through both monetary and human resources. In 2017, Ruth Brown was reassigned from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Zimbabwe. In partnership with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian—Synod of Zimbabwe, she serves as a resource, advisor, and colleague to the convener of the synod’s Chikondano (“Love”) HIV/AIDS and Vulnerable Children Committee, as the committee works to promote health and prevent diseases throughout the CCAP and the communities in which it ministers. The committee works particularly to reduce the incidence of HIV and AIDS and to improve conditions for vulnerable populations, including widows and orphans.

Further to the South, Doug Tilton and Janet Guyer have been working diligently with the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa on a proposal to Prevent AIDS Africa, an organization born out of a U.S. Presbyterian congregation. This effort has focused on identifying the training and educational needs of our partner in Lesotho, so that the curriculum developed by Prevent AIDS Africa can be tailored to the partner’s context. Lesotho has the second highest incidence of HIV in the world, so this effort meets a critical need.

We have been able to encourage our global partners’ ministries in Southern Africa with financial support, too. World Mission gave a grant to the Churchwide HIV and AIDS Committee of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar to assist three dispensaries with their care for HIV-positive persons and their families. Such care includes medicines and transportation to the regional care center for CD4-level testing. In some dispensaries, the number of cases of HIV-positive patients has doubled in recent years.

A continent away, Presbyterian World Mission was asked to fund a “training of trainers” by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, a partner denomination of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The UCCP General Assembly previously approved a policy statement on LGBT persons, which has raised questions among members about how to implement the policy. They are applying the Our Whole Lives curriculum of the UUA and UCC, which has a holistic approach to sexuality. It includes age-appropriate information on HIV and AIDS symptoms, treatment, and prevention. It stresses the importance of safe behavior and HIV testing. It promotes compassion for those infected with HIV and afflicted with AIDS. To roll this out, the UCCP wished to host a training for people to become trainers in their own communities, but could not afford the entire cost. Presbyterian World Mission made a grant to the partner to support this effort.

**Educate PC(USA) constituencies:** Within Presbyterian World Mission, the ministry area used the launch of its new blog, World Mission Connect, to focus on HIV and AIDS awareness, particularly the work of our global partners and mission co-workers. For seven weeks, World Mission brought news from around the world related to this epidemic and the risk of resurgence.

Working with EMPACT Africa and the Presbyterian AIDS Network, World Mission also is developing an online mission toolkit, containing liturgical and resources for congregations. These resources will be promoted in print publications and through postcard mailings to congregations interested in this type of ministry. In its electronic newsletter, we asked congregations for information about their efforts and provided links to need for diligence in the fight against AIDS.

**Fundraising:** The Presbyterian Mission Agency encourages congregations, mid councils, and concerned Presbyterians to use existing methods of fundraising to address this concern. Since 2006, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has encouraged congregations to use all or part of the portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering retained locally toward causes related to HIV/AIDS. The Leader’s Guide for this Special Offering (www.specialofferings.pcusa.org/peace-global) encourages donating to a program working with people living with HIV/AIDS, hosting a resource day or worship service to support, and praying for people living with AIDS and those who care for them.

In addition, the mission toolkit and materials produced for PC(USA) World AIDS Sunday, designated by the Stated Clerk in response to another action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and for World AIDS Day (December 1), encouraged financial support for ministries engaged in addressing HIV/AIDS.


Response: Presbyterian Mission Agency through Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corp, has implemented standards to ensure just compensation practices for those employed by third-party contractors. The standards are to protect the wages and fringe benefits of outsourced employees and are clearly documented within applicable contracts. Those employed by third party contractors of the Presbyterian Mission Agency will have similar and in some cases the same fringe benefits as employees of Presbyterian Mission Agency, such as access to healthcare insurance, and paid holiday and vacation leave. The Presbyterian Mission Agency contributes a portion of premiums annually per employee if the employee participates in the employer healthcare plan. The paid holiday leave mirrors the Holiday Schedule of the Presbyterian Mission Agency ensuring employees will not lose wages during that time. Wages for the employees of the third-party contractors are determined based on market rates. Annually employees will receive a percentage increase for cost of living, currently determined to be 3 percent.


Response: Completion anticipated prior to General Assembly. Actions taken by offices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are noted in the order of the directives from the 222nd General Assembly (2016). While the assembly approved these directives with amendments in 2016, it only approved funding to fulfill the directives starting in 2018. Thus, certain actions were only scheduled starting in January of 2018, though planned in advance. This response to referral addresses the first four directives of the General Assembly and are cited in italic type; the Office of the General Assembly has submitted a separate response to the fifth and last directive (see II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Office of the General Assembly, Referral 23).

1. Prayerfully study the call from Palestinian civil society for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel as well as resources that oppose this BDS movement (see “additional resources” after the Rationale section of this overture for full text of the call).

This action is invited from all members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This response outlines history and theology relevant to “prayerful study.” Item 08-07, originally an overture from the Presbytery of New Hope in North Carolina, cited the goals of the “BDS movement” announced by Palestinian civil society organizations in 2005:

[nonviolent economic] measures [that] should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;

Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and

Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 504)

The General Assembly Committee on Middle East issues that discussed this matter was aware of the historic Presbyterian policy and practice of engaging in boycott, divestment, and sanctions (and other nonviolent economic witness) on a range of issues, as noted in advice & counsel memoranda provided to all commissioners. Formal Presbyterian consideration of applying boycott and divestment measures to Israel for its occupation of Palestine began in 2004, prior to the civil society call, and General Assembly calls for sanctions against Israel (mainly reductions or halts in military aid) go back to the 1980s.

The rationale to this action in 2016 cites the particular note made in the assembly’s 2014 action approving divestment from three companies supportive of the occupation of Palestine: “This action on divestment is not to be construed or represented by any organization of the PC(USA) as divestment from the State of Israel, or an alignment with or endorsement of the global BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanctions) movement” (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 261). Thus, this prayerful consideration presumes that the economic practices of boycott, divestment, and sanctions are legitimate tools used by the church; the question is whether Presbyterians and their church should specifically align with or endorse a “the BDS movement.”
Presbyterian Mission Agency offices have provided materials to assist Presbyterians in prayerful study; both in reports of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and policy statements developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

MRTI developed criteria for divestment that were approved by the General Assembly in 1984 (prior to action on corporations supporting South African apartheid, though after divestment from nuclear warhead makers and major military contractors; see https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/5-divestment_strategy-1984.pdf ). Any action of economic witness (boycotts, divestment, and sanctions) should be based on consistency with the Gospel message of love and justice (integrity; practicing what we preach), effectiveness (that we actually get across the road to those who have “fallen among thieves”), and solidarity (being guided by Christian partners and others of prophetic purpose). From these bases in theological ethics, the divestment policy derives criteria for assessing divestment actions, and these criteria encourage doing action in concert with other concerned groups:

The decision should be taken after consultation with the ecumenical community, whenever possible.

The implementation of a divestment action should ordinarily be in solidarity with other Christian bodies.

This criterion is reflected in the second directive of the 2016 Assembly calling for “ecumenical and interfaith dialogue,” and in its rationale it cites the 2009 statement, Kairos Palestine, in which representatives of virtually all of the churches in Palestine joined in supporting the 2005 call for BDS (For the Kairos Palestine document: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/kairos-palestinestudy-guide-final-6-14-11.pdf).

A summary of boycott and divestment actions taken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) since 2004 is provided in the ACSWP study guide to the report approved by the 2016 assembly, “Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of A Just Peace,” https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/IS-PAL-STUDY-GUIDE-FINAL.pdf. The section on economic witness follows:

Economic pressure

In light of the limited success and frequent reversals of “words-only” efforts, the church has moved toward nonviolent economic pressure against the settlement enterprise. PCUSA, with its own funds and member purchasing, has tried to curtail its support for the occupation and settlements while making it clear that it is not divesting from or boycotting the State of Israel within the internationally recognized borders. This accords with our economic support for nonviolent social change in other cases where politics met an impasse. Maintaining the distinction in these actions between Israel within internationally recognized borders and the occupation and illegal settlements in the West Bank… aims to help keep open the option of a two-state solution. This is one reason why the General Assembly has not endorsed efforts of boycott, divestment, or sanctions that do not distinguish between settlements and Israel, although the Report does reveal how integrated these settlements have become with Israel proper.

Nonetheless, the 2016 Presbyterian General Assembly called for a prayerful study of whether the church should move from its current affirmation of certain boycott, divestment, and sanction actions only against the occupation to a broader endorsement of the Palestinian campaign for BDS against all the Israeli economy (for which we use capital letters). The Israeli government and its supporters in the US have made extraordinary efforts to oppose BDS. Some Jewish groups react to boycott movements of the Israeli state today in light of the earlier history of anti-Semitic boycotts. The government of Israel fears such economic pressure sufficiently to restrict public debate of boycott, divestment, and sanctions, and to restrict travel into and out of Israel-Palestine by those who advocate it. Both of these strategies are undemocratic and restrict freedom of speech not only for Palestinians, but also for Israelis, Americans, and other visitors.

Pro-Israel organizations in the U.S. also lobby Congress and state governments to penalize U.S. companies and organizations that publicly choose not to provide economic support to the government of Israel or its settlements. If these laws apply to U.S. religious bodies, those efforts to block our witness would also violate the separation of church and state and the free exercise of public speech and religious liberty.

The PC(USA) has repeatedly endorsed a democratic Israel with secure and internationally agreed-upon boundaries, living at peace with its neighbors and providing equal rights to all its citizens under one system of justice. Palestinians under occupation or exiled from their homes do not enjoy such rights, however, and therefore PC(USA) has taken several actions regarding corporate engagement in Israel-Palestine. The Presbyterian Foundation and Board of Pensions refrain from investments that support violence against Israelis or Palestinians, including finance and support for the economic activity and expansion of settlements outside of Israel’s recognized borders, in accord with previous PC(USA) General Assembly actions.

Thus, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has been providing materials that can help in prayerful discernment of whether or not to formalize and broaden the usage of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions as part of an international movement that includes Christians and many others.

2. Engage in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue with the authors and signatories of this document, including our historic church partners in Palestine and our interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement, in order to better understand and interpret the call for BDS that was issued in 2005.
In order to carry out this directive in a cost-effective manner, elected leaders and staff of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency combined this dialogue with a solidarity visit to Christian churches in Israel and Palestine in December 2017. That team, headed by the Stated Clerk, the Reverend J. Herbert Nelson and including staff from ministries of World Mission and Compassion, Peace, & Justice, met with leaders of seven partner communions, with primary authors of the 2005 call, and with leading Muslim and Jewish analysts of how the economic practices of boycott, divestment, and sanctions are viewed within Palestine and Israel. Video footage of interviews with most interlocutors was made (by prearranged permission) for use in assisting prayerful study back in the United States.

Among those with whom the Presbyterian church group met were Dr. Omar Barghouti of the organization originating the 2005 civil society call, Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi of a Palestinian academic research center, owners of a Palestinian-Israeli dairy products business, executives of an Israeli start-up business incubator, and Rabbi David Rosen, an international representative of the American Jewish Committee based in Jerusalem. Along with Dr. Rosen, the group was also able to make contact with an Israeli leader in joint Jewish and Palestinian Israeli cooperative social services and peace-building. The Presbyterian Mission Agency (particularly the Peacemaking Program and Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy) is currently developing interpretive material, both written and DVD, for use in webinars and other aids to prayerful study.

3. **Serve as a prophetic witness with a voice of humility and wisdom amidst the controversy and confusion around the BDS call.**

This is a directive to all Presbyterians as we recognize a “prophethood” as well as priesthood of all believers in the Reformed tradition. In other words, each of us is called by the Holy Spirit, the “inner Christ” speaking to our consciences, to discern how to make a difference for justice and peace in Israel and occupied Palestine, which is the overall goal of the BDS movement. The Middle East Office of World Mission ministries helps us appreciate the steadfast courage and sacrifice of Christians and others in the Holy Land in ways that can increase our humility.

4. **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to facilitate dialogue events regarding BDS, which would include the authors of the 2005 civil society call and our interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement and any interested Presbyterians.**

In addition to the dialogue events occurring from December 4–10, 2017, in Israel and Palestine, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations organized an event on January 25, 2018, at the Covenant Presbyterian Church in New York City. This event was to include video footage of discussion with BDS proponents and opponents taken in Israel and occupied Palestine, as well as U.S.-based proponents and opponents and interested Presbyterians, all invited at the same time in early January, subsequent to the December trip, Christian and Jewish holidays, and events such as the U.S. president’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

Two dialogue events ended up occurring on January 25, but they were not the full program initially intended. A representative of Presbyterians for Middle East Peace, an unofficial interest group in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), made contact with Jewish individuals and groups opposing BDS and dissuaded them from accepting the invitation from the denomination. Thus, the initial program was canceled and focused conversations were held with two groups of interested Presbyterians. Because of some potential for confusion by General Assembly commissioners, we describe these groups briefly.

A dialogue event was held in the morning of January 25 with representatives of the Israel-Palestine Mission Network, IPMN, one of a number of mission networks developed to advocate for, support, and promote the policy and program of the PC(USA). IPMN is unique among these networks in that it is the only one specifically created by action of the General Assembly (2004). Information on its finances and membership can be found at [http://new.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/ipmn-documents/IMPN_overview.pdf](http://new.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/ipmn-documents/IMPN_overview.pdf). All monies are donated by Presbyterians, resources are produced, and Presbyterian mission personnel are supported within a total budget of $60,000. The representatives of IPMN reaffirmed their support for economic engagement as well as other forms of witness to end the occupation of Palestine and defend human rights for all persons under Israeli control in East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank.

In the afternoon of January 25, a conference call was held between Presbyterian Mission Agency staff and representatives of Presbyterians for Middle East Peace (PMEP). While using a name similar to that of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP, an ecumenical group of which the PC(USA) is a member), PMEP is an advocacy group working within the PC(USA) but does not have official standing, so it is not required to disclose either its finances or its membership. The representatives of PMEP reiterated their opposition to the BDS movement, based in part on their belief that it alienates mainstream Jewish organizations and their supporters and hence is counterproductive to any peace process.

This year’s Mosaic of Peace, a Presbyterian Peacemaking conference in Israel and Palestine, will give participants the opportunity to engage in prayerful study of the BDS movement, and it is our hope that other opportunities will emerge using the materials that we are producing.
Future dialogue events will be coordinated with synod and presbytery partners and are expected to include video footage and webinars, as well as posted resources (some already noted). Copies of this communication will be updated with links provided to online posting of additional materials for on-going prayerful study.

5. Direct the Stated Clerk to distribute, for prayerful study, the text of the Palestinian call and documentation from interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement to all PC(USA) congregations.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency refers commissioners to the response of the Office of the General Assembly on this directive (see II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Office of the General Assembly, Referral 23). The Stated Clerk’s transmittal of the requested information will complete the tasks assigned to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency in fulfillment of this particular referral; Middle East related ministries will of course continue, as guided by the policies of the General Assembly and ongoing conversations with ecumenical and interfaith partners.

H. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation


Response: The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation takes seriously the report’s call for each agency of the church to evaluate its impact on people of color and racial diversity. Over the past several years, PPC has taken the following steps to evaluate its impact on staff as well as its potential to create positive change in the world:

In 2013 PPC developed a six-year cultural proficiency plan in response to the 2012 Climate for Change report. This report included several goals, including an increase in the publication of books written by women and people of color; the hiring of a senior staff person and an acquisitions editor who would both be people of color; and regular, mandatory training in cultural proficiency and antiracism for all staff. As a result of these goals and additional efforts taken in response to Item 11-24, we are pleased to say that we have taken the following steps:

- Mandatory, all-day training seminars were held for all PPC staff in April 2014, August 2015, and September 2016 in cultural competency and racial awareness. These seminars (the first two led by Susana Rinderle and the third by Stacy Kitahata and Valerie Norwood) included pre- and post-meeting staff surveys as well as the completion of an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) tool by each staff person. PPC also offered to pay for one-on-one follow-up training with Kitahata and Norwood for any staff persons who requested that.

- The Reverend Laura Mariko Cheifetz was hired in 2013 as PPC’s executive director of church relations, serving on PPC’s executive management staff. She held this position until she left in July 2017 to be deputy director of systems and sustainability for the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum. The Reverend Dr. Bridgett Green was hired in 2013 to be acquisitions editor for biblical studies for Westminster John Knox Press. Bridgett had previously served as a Bob Bohl Intern for PPC, a regular program that recruits seminarians who are people of color to work for the organization for a summer to determine whether a career in academic religious publishing is right for them.

- PPC has intentionally increased the publishing of books by people of color, as well as books on antiracism and related topics, over the last several years. The percentage of books contracted from people of color have doubled since 2013, to 21 percent. The sixteen-person editorial board for the new lectionary commentary series, Connections, includes seven people of color. More than one-third of the contributors to that series are people of color. Many of our key titles published in the last four years have been by people of color, or about topics of racial justice. These include:

  - Microaggressions in Ministry: Confronting the Hidden Violence of Everyday Church, Cody Sanders and Angela Yarber
  - Fearless Dialogues: A New Movement for Justice, Gregory C. Ellison
  - Race in a Post-Obama America: The Church Responds, David Maxwell, editor
  - Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair, Otis Moss III
  - Becoming Married, Staying Married: A Guide for African-American Couples, Marcus Small
  - Leading Wisdom: Asian and Asian North American Women Leaders, Jung Ha Kim and Su Yon Pak, editors
  - No Innocent Bystanders: Becoming an Ally in the Struggle for Justice, Shannon Craigo-Snell and Christopher Doucet
  - The Spiritual Biography of Jackie Robinson: The Faith of a Boundary-Breaking Hero, Chris Lamb and Michael Long
  - Neighbor: Christian Encounters with “Illegal” Immigration, Ben Daniel
An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation, Nyasha Junior

African American Theology: An Introduction, Frederick Ware

African-American Theological Ethics: A Reader, Peter Paris

The Genesis of Liberation: Biblical Interpretation in the Antebellum Narratives of the Enslaved, Emerson Powery and Rodney Sadler


- PPC launched a new children’s book imprint, Flyaway Books, in 2017 that will be intentionally diverse in content, authors, and illustrators. One of our first publications was praised by The New York Times for showing children the tremendous diversity in the world, and the beauty and strength that grows from that diversity. Future children’s books will examine the role of unsung women of color in America (Katie Yamasaki, author and illustrator), will help children understand the racial violence that affects young African American men (Michael Waters, author; Shane Evans, illustrator), and will show how the biblical story of the Tower of Babel is a story about God’s wish for a diverse world, where people speak different languages, look differently, and live in many different ways (Lib Caldwell and Ted Hiebert, authors; Katie Yamasaki, illustrator).

- PPC has begun publishing several of its most popular Presbyterian resources in both Spanish and Korean, including The Presbyterian Elder, The Presbyterian Deacon, and Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers.

- Future initiatives will include a fourth all-day mandatory training session for staff and the continuing growth of publishing on topics of race, including the beginning of a new academic series edited by Jonathan Walton titled A History of Race and Religion in America.

Item 01-03

[The assembly approved Item 01-03. See pp. 2, 3.]

Referrals of Business to Assembly Committees—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

00 Plenary
00-01 General Assembly Nomination Committee 2018 Nominations
00-02 Moderator’s Nominations to GANC
00-03 Committee Structure
00-04 A Corp Slate

01 Business Referrals
01-01 Proposed Docket
01-02 Referrals in Progress and Final Responses to Referrals
01-03 Referrals of Business to Assembly Committees—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
01-04 2018 Final Business List
01-Info Co-Moderators’ Report
01-Info Stated Clerk’s Report

02 Bills and Overtures
02-01 Saturday Minutes
02-02 Sunday Plenary Minutes
02-03 Bills and Overtures Report 1
02-04 Docket
02-05 Plenary Minutes: Sunday Evening Through Saturday

03 General Assembly Procedures
03-01 Joint COGA/PMA Budget Proposals for General Assembly Per Capita Budgets 2018-2020
03-02 Associate Stated Clerks
03-03 Amendment to Organization for Mission
03-04 2024 Site Recommendation
03-05 Approval of National Certifying Bodies
03-06 GA Committee on Representation Recommendations
03-07 Moved to 03-info (Advisory Committee on the Constitution Self-Study)
03-08 Moved to 3-info (Committee on Representation Self-Study)
03-09 Session Annual Statistical Report Update
03-10 Amending Standing Rule A.6.h. to Make Clear What Happens if Assembly Overturns Bills and Overtures Decision Not to Refer an Item of Business
03-11 Amending Standing Rule B.2.e. to Anticipate Need to Adjust Number of Advisory Delegates
03-12 Amending Standing Rule E.2.f.(3) Regarding Privilege to Speak
03-13 Amending Standing Rule E.5.a. Reviewing the Rules for Who Can Appropriately Use the Public Hearings to Address the Committee
03-14 Amending Standing Rule F.1.d. Reviewing Response to Requests for Docket Time to Address Assembly
03-15 Amending Standing Rule F.5.d. Review How ACC Is Consulted During Plenary Session
03-16 Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Regarding Commissions and Special Commissions
03-17 Amending Standing Rule A.4.b. Regarding Making Clear the Role of the Assembly in Reviewing Agency and Entity Minutes
03-18 Amending Standing Rule A.5. to Reflect Book of Order, G-6.04e
03-19 Amending Standing Rules A.3., A.3.c.(6), and A.3.e. Define Clearly Meaning of Concurrence and Role of Overture Advocate
03-20 Amending Standing Rule A.2.d. Regarding the Length of Reports to General Assembly
03-21 Amending Standing Rules by Deleting A.3.d. and Inserting a New A.1.c. Regarding Language on Distributing Overtures Reflecting PC-biz
03-22 On Directing the OGA to Develop a Plan for Cost Reduction Matters for Meetings of the PCUSA General Assembly
03-23 On Permitting Advisory Delegates to Have a Full Vote in Moderator Elections in Future General Assemblies
03-A Minutes, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
03-B Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society
03-C Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation
03-Info Appointment of Assistant Stated Clerks
03-Info GACOR Agency Summary
03-Info Advisory Committee on the Constitution Self-Study
03-Info Committee on Representation Self-Study
03-Info GACOR Report on Six Agencies Supplier Diversity
03-Info GACOR Report on Six Agencies: Employment (AAEEO)
03-Info General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Summary

04 The Way Forward
04-01 On Appointing a Team to Review the Current Per Capita Based System of Funding the Ministry of Councils Higher Than the Session
04-02 A Resolution on prioritizing Translation and Accessibility in the PC(USA)
04-03 Way Forward Commission Report
04-04 Report of the All-Agency Review Committee to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)
04-05 2020 Vision Team—Interim Report
04-06 Deliverance Dividing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation, Into Two Corporations
04-07 A Resolution to Require Race Audits of the Six PC(USA) Agencies
04-08 On Amending the Organization for Mission
04-09 Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Manual of Operations
04-Info Way Forward Administrative Action on Trust and Transparency

05 Mid Councils
05-01 On Realigning the Border Between the Synod of the northeast and the Synod of the Trinity so the Village of Waverly, New York, Shall Be Within the Synod of the Trinity and the Presbytery of Lackawanna
05-02 On Changing the Name of Eastern Korean Presbytery
05-03 On Establishing an Administrative Commission to Address Issues in the Synod of the Covenant
05-04 [This overture was not referred by the Stated Clerk upon advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution]
05-05 On Changing the Boundaries within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies
01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

05-06  Response to Item 05-03
05-07  On Changing the Name of Midwest Hanmi Presbytery
05-08  On Transferring Fruitland Presbyterian from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of Northwest Coast
05-09  On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC(USA)
05-A  Review of Synod Minutes
05-Info Synod Reports in Response to Item 05-01 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

06 Church Polity and Ordered Ministries
06-01  On Amending G-4.0203 to Resolve a Conflict Between the book of Order and the Laws of Some States
06-02  On Amending G-3.0307 to Clarify the Responsibility of the Presbytery
06-03  On Adding G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA)
06-04  On Amending D-2.0203b Regarding the Definition of “Offense”
06-05  On Amending G-2.0503 with Additional Language
06-06  On Amending G-6.04e to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote to Amend the Constitution
06-07  On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d When Former Ministers of the Word and Sacrament Who Renounced Jurisdiction While Being Accused in a Disciplinary Case Wish to Work for the PC (USA) Again
06-08  Amending G-2.0301 to Allow Congregations to Elect Individuals as Ruling Elders Without Requiring Them to Assume a Seat on the Session
06-09  On Amending G-2.0509 Regarding Renunciation of Jurisdiction
06-10  On Adding a New Section G-2.1104, “Administrative Personnel Association”
06-11  On Amending G-2.0401 Regarding the Composition of a Congregational Nominating Committee
06-12  On Amending G-3.0201, Composition and Responsibilities of the Session
06-13  On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as Part of the Benefits Package
06-14  On Amending G-2.0804, “Terms of Call,” to Include Paid Family Leave
06-15  On Amending G-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave
06-16  On Amending G-3.0104 to Prohibit Public Endorsement of Individuals Running for Public Office
06-17  On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
06-18  Moved to 06-info (ACL Agency Summary)
06-19  A Resolution to Amend the Book of Order, D-11.0403a
06-20  A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies
06-21  Advisory Committee on the Constitution Findings on Authoritative Interpretation Request 18-01
06-22  Advisory Committee on the Constitution Findings on Authoritative Interpretation Request 18-02
06-23  Advisory Committee on the Constitution Findings on Authoritative Interpretation Request 18-03
06-24  In Response to 06-16 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016)
06-Info Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary
06-Info ACL Self-Study
06-info General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission
06-Info Mid Councils’ Statements of Compliance with the general Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions.
06-Info ACC Agency Summary
06-NB To Create a Task Force on Family Leave

07 Ecumenical and Interfaith Issues
07-01  On America’s Interfaith Context and the Church’s Challenge
07-02  Churches to Invite to send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 224th General Assembly (2020)
07-04  Report of the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Dialogue
07-05  Prospectus for the Third Round of Dialogue Between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
07-06  Approve the Prospectus for the Ninth Round of Dialogue Between Reformed Churches in the United States and United States Conference of Bishops
07-07  On Covenant Agreement Between the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
07-A  Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations
07-Info General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Agency Summary
07-Info Christian Churches Together Report
07-Info National Council of Churches Report
07-Info World Council of Churches Report
07-Info World Communion of Reformed Churches Report

08 Environmental Issues
08-01 On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities that Focus on Renewable Energy
08-02 On Adding to the GA Divestment List All Companies That Meet Specific Listed Criteria
08-03 On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change
08-04 On Renewing Our Call to Promote Environmental Justice
08-05 On Responding to Environmental Racism
08-06 The Earth is the Lord’s—Not Ours to Ruin: Priorities for a new Moral Era
08-07 Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet
08-08 Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report
08-09 On Advocacy for Climate Change Action and a Thriving Low-Carbon Economy
08-10 On Engaging Environmental Investments
08-11 Regarding the Use of Products Made of Polystyrene
08-12 On Supporting Carbon Pricing

09 Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues
09-01 Was moved and is now 12-09
09-02 On Support and prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan
09-03 On Support of Peace Churches in the PC(USA)
09-04 On Endorsing Affirmations Regarding the Welfare of our Neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador
09-05 A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen
09-06 A Resolution on Global Order and National Purpose
09-07 On Promoting Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Madagascar
09-08 On Seeking God’s Peace Through Nuclear Disarmament in the 21st Century
09-09 Concerning Prayer and preparation for Peace on the Korean Peninsula
09-10 A Study of Socio-Economic and Political Realities of Central America
09-11 Designate September 2018 as Korean Mission Month-Was Not Referred Due to Lack of Concurrences
09-12 On North Korean Refugees
09-13 On Prayer for the People of Nicaragua
09-14 Stop the Separation of Families
09-15 On Denouncing Violence and Injustice in Nicaragua

10 Mission Coordination
10-01 On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the Churches and Properties in the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field of the PC(USA)
10-02 On a Collaborative Study of the Place and Purpose of the Humanities in the Teachings of PC(USA) Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities
10-03 A Resolution on Determining the Need for an LGBTQ+ Advocacy Committee in the PC(USA)
10-05 Institutional Relationship Agreement Between GA of PC(USA) and Historically Racial Ethnic Institutions
10-06 Institutional Relationship Agreement between Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. and the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
10-07 Moved to 04-08
10-08 Moved to 04-09
10-09 Concerning Small Churches
10-10 Approve List of Presbyterian Related Schools and Colleges
10-11 On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illnesses
10-12 Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery
10-13 The Doctrine of Discovery
10-14 Confirming the Election of the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett as President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency—From the Presbytery Mission Agency Board (PMAB)
10-15 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget
10-16 Cuba Mutual Mission Agreement
10-A Sam and Helen Walton Awards
10-B Women of Faith Award Recipients
10-C Minutes, PC(USA), A Corp.
10-D PC(USA), A Corp. Audit
10-info Report of Changes to the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
10-info Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on Current Task Forces
10-info Report of Changes to the PMA Manual of Operations
10-info Report to Committee 10 in Response to Item 10-03 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

11 Social Justice Issues
11-01 Moved to 10-11
11-02 On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions
11-03 On Recognizing the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet’s Prophetic Voice for Today
11-04 On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty
11-05 Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Name Change
11-06 Moved to 04-07
11-07 A Resolution to Respond to Disparities Experienced by Black Woman and Girls
11-08 A Report with Recommendations on Drug Policy: Putting Healing Before Punishment
11-09 A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)
11-10 A Gospel from St. Louis: Lessons from Congregations Seeking Racial and Economic Justice
11-11 “Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era”
11-12 On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities
11-13 On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church
11-14 On Praying for a Movement of the Spirit to Engage Presbyterian Congregations in Nation-Wide Action to Prevent Gun Violence
11-15 A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination
11-16 A Resolution on Honest Patriotism
11-17 Declaration on Where We Stand Regarding Concerns About Direction Towards Autocracy That This Country is Taking
11-18 Responding to Racist Nationalism
11-19 Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy Self-Study
11-20 Suicide Prevention Resolution
11-21 Responding to People Impacted by Opioids and Other Addictive Substances
11-22 On Advocating for the Citizens of Puerto Rico
11-23 On Appointing Commission to Consider Social Impact of Automation
11-24 On the Degradation of Civil Discourse
11-25 Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Special Committee
11-A Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy
11-Info Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary
11-Info The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns Agency Summary 2016-2018
11-Info Advocacy Committee on Social Witness Policy Agency Summary

12 Middle East Issues
12-01 On Opposition to Congressional and State Anti-BDS Legislation
12-02 On Advocating for the Human Rights of all Citizens of Israel
12-03 On Creating a Task Force to Examine NCCOP’s Call to Ecumenical Solidarity for Justice for Palestinians
12-04 On Responding to the Open letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) to the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Movement
01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

12-05 On Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Israeli Occupation of Palestine
12-06 For the Protection of the Children of Israel and Palestine
12-07 On Urging RE/MAX to Stop Facilitating the Sale of Property in Israeli Settlement Colonies
12-08 A Resolution on the Status of Jerusalem
12-09 On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis
12-10 On Gaza Violence
12-11 Resolution on Reconciliation Ministries in Israel and Palestine
12-12 On Ending the Classification of Israel as a Colonial Project
12-13 On Opposing and Disengagement from Iran

13 Board of Pensions, PILP, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Foundation

13-01 On Creating an Administrative Commission to Work with the Synod of the Northeast Regarding the Jarvie Commonwealth Endowment Fund
13-02 Confirm Individuals to PILP Board of Directors
13-03 Confirm the Director of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.
13-04 Affirm the Election of the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation
13-05 Moved to 13-info (New Covenant Trust Company)
13-06 Continue the Churchwide Gifts Program for the Benefit of Churches
13-07 On Commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the Launch of the Jarvie Program
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14-07 Approve New Trustees Elected by PC (USA) Theological Institutions
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14-09 Recognize Persons for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education
14-10 Committee on Theological Education Recommendations from Self-Study Report, Fall 2010–Fall 2017
14-11 Approval of Seminary President and Request for Docket Time for President-Elect to Make Brief Remarks
14-12 On Supporting the Reclaiming of Jesus Statement with prayer and Study
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Item 01-04

[The assembly approved Item 01-04. See pp. 2, 3.]

2018 Final Referral List.
Item 02-01

[The assembly approved Item 02-01. See pp. 7, 9.]

Minutes of the General Assembly, Plenaries 1 and 2.

In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for Plenaries 1 and 2 from Saturday, June 16, 2018, have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for Assembly Committee 02 (Bills and Overtures).

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Item 02-02

[The assembly approved Item 02-02. See pp. 7, 9.]

Minutes of the General Assembly, Plenary 3.

In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for Plenary 3 from Sunday, June 17, 2018, have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for Assembly Committee 02 (Bills and Overtures).

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Item 02-03

[The assembly approved Item 02-03. See pp. 7, 9.]

Referral of Commissioners’ Resolutions.

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Item 02-04

[The assembly approved Item 02-04. See p. 7.]

Proposed Docket.

[The assembly approved Item 02-04. See pp. 7, 20.]

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

9:30 AM Plenary 4
Ecumenical Worship Service
Stated Clerk Commissioner Orientation II
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
Report of General Assembly Nominating Committee
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Lunch

2:00 PM Plenary 5
Opening Prayer
Guest Speaker Chaplain Margaret Kibben
Consent Agenda
Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Issues (07)
Assembly Committee on Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions (14)
Announcements
Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts and PC(USA) Partnership
Closing Prayer
Dinner

7:00 PM Plenary 6
Opening Prayer
Kindom Time
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, and the Foundation (13)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination Committee Report (10)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess

Thursday, June 21, 2018

8:30 AM Plenary 7
Opening Prayer
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mid Councils (05)
Assembly Committee on Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues (09)
11:15 AM Worship
Lunch

1:30 PM Plenary 8
Opening Prayer
Memorial Minutes for Jack Rogers and Benjamin Wier
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on The Way Forward (04)
Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (11)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Dinner
Recess
Friday, June 22, 2018

8:30 AM  Plenary 9
Opening Prayer
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Environmental Issues (08)
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures Committee Report (03)
11:15 AM Worship

Lunch

1:30 PM  Plenary 10
Opening Prayer
Kindom Time
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues (12)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Dinner

7:00 PM  Plenary 11
Opening Prayer
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06)
Announcements
Closing Prayer
Recess

Saturday, June 23, 2018

9:00 AM  Plenary 12
Opening Prayer
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
YAAD Presentation to Co-Moderators
Office of the General Assembly—Thank you to the 2018 Committee on Local Arrangements
Presentation of the 224th General Assembly (2020) Committee on Local Arrangements
Thanks to Staff
Announcements
Worship
Adjourn

Item 02-05

[See p. 78.]

Minutes of the General Assembly, Plenary 4–12.

In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for Plenary 4 from Wednesday, June 20, 2018, through Plenary 12, Saturday, June 23, 2018, have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for Assembly Committee 02 (Bills and Overtures).
Item 03-01

[The assembly approved Item 03-01 as amended. See pp. 65–66, 79–80.]

*Joint COGA/PMA Budget Proposals for 2018/2020 General Assembly Per Capita Budget and the 2019–2020 Designated Budget.*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Approve the revised 2018 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling $14,214,859.

   [See 2018-2020-Summary-Budget-final.pdf, see p. 222.]

2. Approve the 2019 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling [$15,565,241] [$15,129,906, including $643,000 in new financial implications.] and the 2020 Per Capita Expense Budget totaling [$15,818,969] [$14,661,459, including $488,000 in new financial implications].

   [See 2018-2020-Summary-Budget-final.pdf, see p. 222.]

3. Approve a [requested]

   a. per capita rate of [$10.71] [$8.95 per active member] for 2019, which includes the .45 cents for new financial implications; [and a]

   b. per capita rate of [$11.45] [$8.95 per active member to be effective] for 2020, which includes .36 cents for new financial implications.

4. Approve an amount of $1,448,693 be designated from the 2019 Per Capita budget [(about half the cost of the General Assembly meeting), and be reserved] for [use for] the 224th General Assembly (2020).

5. Approve [Designated Budget expenditures of] [the attached allocation of designated funds for OGA and PMA task forces, totaling] $1,211,461 for 2019 and $1,731,808 for 2020.

   [See 2018-2020-OGA-Designated-Budget.pdf, see p. 223.]

   [Refer the following motion to the committee created by Item 04-03, Recommendation 3:

   | Instruct the Co-Moderators to appoint a Fiduciary Commission with the authority to:

   | Work with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the other agencies to determine where the mandates established by this General Assembly can be fulfilled by existing staff and structure and refer those matters appropriately.

   | To oversee cost containment of the implementation of those mandates ensuring that committees and task forces utilize available technology and cost-effective meeting strategies

   | To spend no more than $100,000 of per capita money and no more than $100,000 of mission money on meetings of task forces and committees.

   | To refer what cannot be accomplished to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

   | To work with the Leadership of OGA and PMA to identify mid council leaders who can serve as volunteer staff for task forces and committees.

   | To work with the leadership of OGA and the Moving Forward Commission so that the 224th General Assembly (2020) is aware of financial implications as these implications develop over the course of the assembly.]

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Item 03-02

[The assembly approved Item 03-02. See pp. 11, 66.]

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, with the concurrence of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018)
1. Reelect Thomas Hay, director of assembly operations; Robina Winbush, director of ecumenical relations; and Kerry Rice, Deputy Stated Clerk of the Office of the General Assembly, as Associate Stated Clerks of the General Assembly.

2. Elect Laurie Griffith, associate director of constitutional interpretation, and Tricia Dykers Koenig, associate director of mid council relations, to a first, four-year term as Associate Stated Clerks of the General Assembly.

**Rationale**

According to H.2.d. in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly: “The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.”

*Laurie Griffith*, currently OGA’s manager of judicial process and social witness policy, will assume a new role as associate director for constitutional interpretation. Griffith, a PC(USA) ruling elder, has served in OGA since 2002. In addition to her work in constitutional services, she has straddled the church and secular worlds, providing advice and counsel about Presbyterian polity, order, and history in secular litigation and to secular attorneys who have represented the church. She is a graduate of Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville, and attended two years at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Griffith is expected to be an articulate interpreter of theology grounded in Scripture and the Reformed tradition as reflected in the *Book of Order* and the *Book of Confessions*. In addition to providing support to those that have constitutional questions, the associate director will also manage a “constitutional table” made up of other OGA staff who often answer constitutional questions so that responses to constitutional queries from around the church will be consistent and coordinated.

*Thomas (Tom) Hay* serves as director of assembly operations at the Office of the General Assembly. He has been with the OGA since January of 2009. Before coming to work at the OGA, he served as the general presbyter for the Presbytery of Shenandoah in western Virginia and portions of West Virginia.

Ordained in 1979 in the PCUS, Tom has served pastorates in Buchanan (Va.), Wallace (N.C.), and Bristol (Va.). He is a graduate of St. Andrews Presbyterian College (BA) and Union Presbyterian Seminary (D.Min.). Tom is a third-generation Presbyterian pastor with deep roots in the church and the ministry. He brings this history into the current imperative to discover the unfolding future of Christ’s work in the world.

*Tricia Dykers Koenig* will be the new associate director for mid council relations.

Dykers Koenig, a teaching elder member of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve and graduate of Duke University and McCormick Theological Seminary, has served two pastorates and for the past seventeen years has served as national organizer for the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, which for twenty years has sought “to strengthen the church of Jesus Christ … by furthering the inclusion of LGBTQ persons and working for the unity of the PC(USA).”

Dykers Koenig will be expected to enable strong and effective communication and common ministry between mid councils, OGA, and other PC(USA) agencies. In addition, she will be charged to put her community organizing skills to work to connect mid council leaders with skills, resources, and each other in order to strengthen leadership across the church.

*Kerry Rice* has assumed the role of Deputy Stated Clerk of the Office of the General Assembly and is responsible for strategic planning, for coordination of meetings of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), for leadership team meetings, and for providing leadership and administrative oversight for all programs and services of the OGA.

Rice, a ruling elder in the Presbytery of Ohio Valley and long-time PC(USA) employee, has worked in many areas of the church. He served as staff in the Young Adult Volunteer program in the National Ministries Division of the former General Assembly Council, as director of admissions for the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, manager in General Assembly Meeting Service responsible for the General Assembly Exhibit Hall, Big Tent, and Polity Conference planning.

*Robina Marie Winbush* is director of ecumenical relations. Prior to assuming this position, she served as the pastor of Hollis Presbyterian Church in Queens, New York. A minister of Word and Sacrament, Robina has served congregations in Harlem, Long Island, the Bronx, Queens, New York, and Louisville, Ky.

Winbush has served on several national and international denominational and ecumenical committees and organizations including the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the national staff of Church Women United. She just completed a term as president of Churches Uniting in Christ. Winbush served as the moderator of the Justice, Peace, and Creation Commission of the World Council of Churches.
Winbush was co-editor of *Sisters Struggling in the Spirit: A Woman of Color Theological Anthology*. She appears in *African American Presbyterian Clergywomen: The First Twenty-Five Years*. Her work has also appeared in *Righting Her-story: Caribbean Women Encounter the Bible Story*.

**Item 03-03**

[The assembly approved Item 03-03. See pp. 11, 66.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Section IV.C.1. of the Organization for Mission by adding a new “d.” and renumbering current IV.C.1.d.–h. as IV.C.1.e–i. The new section “d.” shall read as follows:

“d. Persons who serve as staff on any of the six agencies of the General Assembly, committees or commissions of the General Assembly, or persons employed by agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may not serve as elected members of committees, commissions, or special committees and commissions unless otherwise designated by the General Assembly.”

**Rationale**

The General Assembly Nominating Committee recognizes that General Assembly level staff should not serve in elected positions on ongoing committees of the General Assembly unless otherwise designated. Employees of the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) cannot serve as elected members of ongoing General Assembly level boards, commissions, or committees. Members currently serving in elected service on General Assembly level boards, commissions, or committees who become employees of the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must submit their resignation to the Stated Clerk in accordance with IV.C.1.e, so that the position may be declared vacant.

**Item 03-04**

[The assembly approved Item 03-04. See pp. 11, 66.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) accept the invitation of the Presbytery of Utah to hold the 226th General Assembly (2024) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Salt Lake City, Utah, from June 29–July 6, 2024.

**Rationale**

In accordance with Standing Rule I.1.d., the designated region for the General Assembly in 2024 is Region A, which includes the Synods of Alaska/Northwest, the Pacific, Southern California & Hawaii, the Rocky Mountains, and the Southwest.

The committee concurs with staff of the Office of the General Assembly that Salt Lake City (Presbytery of Utah, Synod of the Rocky Mountains) will be a very good location for the General Assembly, offering competitive pricing for excellent convention center facilities and conveniently located hotels.

Salt Lake City and the Presbytery of Utah last hosted the assembly in 1990. Since then it has hosted the winter Olympics, adding more hotels, a light rail that connects the airport to downtown, and other downtown attractions.

The Salt Palace Convention Center has expanded and undergone other revisions since it last hosted the assembly, and has more than ample space for all the traditional assembly events and operations. Exhibit halls for plenary, exhibits, and offices are large and convenient to the main entrances. Assembly committees can all be accommodated in rooms on three floors of the one section, making them easy to find and support. There are plenty of additional meeting rooms for other needs and functions. The Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau and the convention center are offering discounts and concessions that bring the convention center rent to zero.

The Salt Lake City airport is located eight miles from downtown, and is a major hub for Delta. It currently has more than 700 daily flights serving more than ninety cities with nonstop service, offering good options for most participants traveling from across the U.S. and other countries.

Most other cities in this area capable of hosting an assembly would be much more expensive, offering much higher hotel rates and/or convention center rent. A few cities (Spokane, Reno, Albuquerque) were more affordable, but with much smaller convention center facilities and/or less convenient hotel packages.

**Item 03-05**

[The assembly approved Item 03-05. See pp. 11, 66.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends, per G-2.1101 of the *Book of Order*, that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the applications of the Administrative Personnel Association, the Educator Certification Committee, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians as national certifying bodies.
03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Book of Order calls for the General Assembly to approve national certifying bodies in order for those individuals achieving certification to be recognized in the church. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly approved, at its October 2015 meeting, the application process for organizations wishing to be recognized as national certifying bodies.

Approved national certifying bodies are approved for the period of time starting at the close of the General Assembly where the approving action was taken to the close of the next General Assembly. These organizations must apply every two years (for consideration at the biennial General Assemblies) to maintain their status as an approved national certifying body. All three of these bodies were approved as national certifying bodies by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Applications were due to the Office of the General Assembly by January 15, 2018. The OGA received three applications: the Administrative Personnel Association, the Educator Certification Committee, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly now recommends them to the assembly for action.

Attachments:

- Section G-2.11 from the Book of Order
- Synopsis* of the application from the Administrative Personnel Association
- Application form* from the Educator Certification Committee
- Narrative section* from the application from the Presbyterian Association of Musicians

*The full applications from these organizations include several supporting documents. A hard copy will be available during the COGA meeting and access to the electronic versions are available upon request (please contact Kerry Rice at kerry.rice@pcusa.org).

From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Book of Order

G-2.11 CERTIFIED CHURCH SERVICE

G-2.1101 Forms of Certified Church Service

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.

G-2.1102 Presbytery and Certified Church Service

The presbytery shall encourage sessions to make continuing education funds and time available to those seeking certification, and shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing a service of recognition at the time of certification. The presbytery may grant the privilege of voice at all its meetings to persons in certified church service.

G-2.1103 Christian Educators

a. Skills and Training

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. Presbytery Responsibility

The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

Item 03-06

[The assembly approved Item 03-06 as amended. See pp. 65, 66.]

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):
1. Add two at-large members to the General Assembly Committee on Representation, restoring its membership to sixteen persons.

2. Direct the two agencies that are under their six-year General Assembly review to:
   a. Assign at least one representative to attend one GACOR meeting per year in their two-year review cycle for the purpose of developing a collaborative working relationship.
   b. Invite one representative from GACOR to attend one meeting of that agencies’ board or comparable governing body per year in the two-year review cycle.

3. Direct all six agencies to apply Recommendations 2.a. and 2.b. above in the years when each agency is under review by the General Assembly.

4. Direct the General Assembly Nominating Committee to share representation data on all applicants for service on bodies for whom they nominate on a regular and timely basis.

5. Direct that each assembly receive information from GACOR of the representation of its commissioners and advisory delegates.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $3,848. Total—$7,696]

Rationale

Rationale for Recommendation 1.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) and 221st General Assembly (2014) assigned the responsibility of reviewing employment practices and addressing supplier diversity goals for all six Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies in a scheduled rotation (every six to eight years). These responsibilities have greatly increased the workload of the committee and stretched the members’ time commitments. Two additional members will enable GACOR to properly support agencies as they strive to uphold supplier diversity guidelines and affirmative action policies, educate and collaborate with synods as they apply knowledge from their SCOR reports, expand the committee’s presence and educational opportunities across the denomination, and supply additional liaison positions to various caucuses and committees. Sixteen members will better equip the committee to draw from the widest of the PC(USA) across the guides in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. When the denomination was actively debating the future of synods, having acted to reduce them to “no more than 10–12” (Item 05-04, Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 320, Recommendation 3.b.), GACOR asked its membership to be de-coupled from synods. We calculated that reducing our numbers would be helpful in changing the means by which geographic distribution was guided. It was a risk and it has proven a hardship in getting the work accomplished.

Historically, membership of GACOR was tied to synods designed to create wide regional representation. This made region the priority sought in the nominations process (when seeking one representative from each synod, a secondary or tertiary focus became the skills necessary to do this work and other aspects of diversity). Often this meant vacancies that were difficult to fill. As the guide from F-1.0403 is clear about including geography as a guide, the committee prefers the additional members have expertise prioritized. Regarding the make-up of the whole committee, emphasized needs include: cultural proficiency, data collection and analysis, theological training, and writing. Taking these skills and expertise into account after assessing those currently available within the existing committee allows the GACOR to best complete their work. It is the intention that the addition of these two positions will take into account this variety rather than privileging any one area of representation over another.

Impacting systems of thought, practice, and institutions is rigorous work and requires creativity and collaboration. A larger committee brings more resources to the difficult work ahead and allows for some specialization that would improve results.

Rationale for Recommendations 2.a., 2.b., and 3.

The GACOR completed a two-year monitoring cycle in 2016 with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). In 2017, GACOR found that both OGA and PMA were working towards compliance to the General Assembly (GA) mandates of supplier diversity and employment practices. We expressed our appreciation to both of these agencies because our work together helped us to identify and design a collaborative and productive process; this ensured that the whole process was mutually encouraging. The work of evaluating each agency in its own context and right-sizing the benchmarks to them, is highly technical work and requires solid communication. With Recommendations 2.a. through 3., the GACOR desires our collaborative efforts to result in a streamlined, user-friendly approach throughout each of the agency reviews. It will set a practice in place that will serve the agencies and GACOR well.

With this practice in place, GACOR’s work may be viewed as a resource in assisting the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in their commitment to comply with the directives and policies of the General Assembly. The committee strongly believes that a relationship between the bodies enhances the results of our work together.
Rationale for Recommendation 4.

The GACOR is a mandated partner in reviewing, advising, and assisting by recruiting underrepresented groups and providing additional nominees to all slates at the General Assembly. Both “Unity in Diversity” (F-1.043) and “Participation and Representation” (G-3.0103) of the Book of Order guide the work and ministry of the GACOR. Part of “advocating for diversity in leadership” (G-3.0103) is to review the nominations process and advise the committee. A slate can only be properly assessed in relation to its pool of candidates. The GACOR has followed GA recommendation to analyze data in disaggregated ways whenever possible. Part of this recommendation is about how data is shared. Identifying records but not persons, will allow the disaggregated analysis. Assessing the pools and determining where underrepresentation is most critical so attention and GACOR targeted recruiting efforts can be most effective.

To perform the work each General Assembly expects from GACOR, we must receive data on the finalized slates and the pools from which they are drawn so that the committee can review, analyze, and report all pertinent information to the body. It is challenging to do so when the GACOR does not receive the information in a timely manner. The GACOR looks forward to improved and deeper relationship with the GANC to serve this church well and advocate for wide participation in all its entities.

The GACOR is a mandated partner in advising on the selection of slates from nominating pools and in the appointment process between assemblies. In recent years, the GANC has notified the GACOR of finalized slates very shortly before submission (as little as 24–48 hours) and action. The GACOR cannot properly advise GANC in these circumstances. The data needs to be scrubbed of identifying information (names, emails, addresses) while still linked to individual records. In this way disaggregated analyses are possible, demonstrating the complexities of the pools and making gaps (and gluts) more apparent.

Rationale for Recommendation 5.

The GACOR does not currently have access to the assembly when it gathers to advise the body regarding representation and participation. There is currently no official process to inform the General Assembly body concerning its demographic representation.

Opportunities could include, but not be limited to: a report or presentation near the beginning of the meeting sharing disaggregated data of commissioners and advisory delegates and its implications for the work at hand; insights gained from process observation (experience) or knowledge of process observation in real time; a separate means in PC-biz to highlight the self-identified differences present (representation) within assembly committees and the General Assembly body as a whole; and/or an educational opportunity before the beginning of the assembly concerning the representation data (who’s present, how they get there, what identity groups are in majorities and/or underrepresented). Making provisions for the access to such data and education of its implications will enhance the awareness of potential biases, inequalities, overrepresented voices and/or participation, and lack of representation within the gathered body. It is the intention that such knowledge will shape and inform the actions of those present in their decision-making processes.

In the last two assemblies, GACOR has accessed registration data on a date just before the assembly begins and created profiles that appear under resources in PC-Biz. In 2012, the voter practice questions included demographic questions COR presented and disability in the room was reported at near 33 percent of commissioners and advisory delegates, while in registration system it was much lower (not above 8 percent). These insights inform leaders and participants and encourage sensitivities when awareness of rare perspectives is drawn.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 03-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 03-06. Given ACREC’s original recommendation for a self-study to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), we fully support GACOR’s recommendation and strongly agree that the make-up of the committee needs to take into consideration cultural proficiency. People of color bring different culturally norms and practices that need to be understood.

WFC COMMENT ON ITEM 03-06

Comment on Item 03-06—From the Way Forward Commission (WFC) with the Concurrence of the All-Agency Review Committee.

The Way Forward Commission (“WFC”), with the concurrence of the All Agency Review Committee (“AARC”), advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 03-06. In the work of both of our groups, we have seen the importance that the General Assembly Committee on Representation have adequate resources to carry out the important work of lifting up in measurable and useful ways our denominational commitment to diversity and inclusion in employment and contracting. Item
03-06 will further strengthen this important work and will assist GACOR in continuing to be a central voice in the review of each agency’s work.

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**Item 03-07**

Item 03-07 (Advisory Committee on the Constitution Self-Study) has been moved to Item 03-Info.

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**Item 03-08**

Item 03-08 (General Assembly Committee on Representation Self-Study) has been moved to Item 03-Info.

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**Item 03-09**

[The assembly approved Item 03-09 as amended and with comment. See pp. 65, 67.]

[Comment: The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) asks that the Office of the General Assembly, GACOR, ACWC, and ACREC continue to improve and expand the gathering of statistical information, especially in the areas of gender, race, and ethnicity, and report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Instruct the Office of the General Assembly to replace the current questions gathered as part of the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) with the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Membership XXXX</strong></td>
<td>Beginning membership shows your church’s active membership as of December 31 of last year (G-1.0402). This is the official membership figure that appeared in the xxxx Minutes of the General Assembly, Part II, Statistics. This figure cannot be changed. If the actual membership as of 1/1/xx is different than the displayed figure, enter a “New Starting Membership” to correct your beginning balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Starting Membership XXXX</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gains:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certificate</strong></td>
<td>Enter the number of persons received in xxxx into active membership by certificate of transfer from other churches (G-1.0303b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Professions of Faith</strong></td>
<td>Enter the number of persons age 17 or younger received in xxxx through profession of faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professions of Faith and Reaffirmations</strong></td>
<td>Enter the number of members received in xxxx through the (first-time) profession of faith (18 or older), or reaffirmation (G-1.0303a &amp; c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Losses:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certificate Losses</strong></td>
<td>Enter the number of persons dismissed in xxxx to other churches for whom certificates of transfer have been issued (G-3.0204).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deaths</strong></td>
<td>Enter the number deleted from the roll in xxxx because of death. (G-3.0204a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deleted from the Roll for Any Other Reason</strong></td>
<td>Enter all other reductions (G-3.0204a) in xxxx, reasons including persons temporarily excluded or removed from active membership (D-10.0300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Membership (or New Starting Membership, if corrected), plus Total Gains, then subtract Total Losses. This figure should equal the number of persons that</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Congregational Life</strong></td>
<td><strong>appear on the active member roll. (This is the figure presbytery per capita is based on.)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baptisms:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enter the number of infants and children presented for Baptism by parent(s) or others in xxxx.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented by Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Confirmation</td>
<td><strong>Enter the number of persons who presented themselves for Baptism in xxxx at the time of their confirmation.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td><strong>Enter the number of all others who presented themselves for Baptism in xxxx.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Weekly Worship Attendance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enter the weekly average of all regularly scheduled worship services.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Distribution of Members:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enter the number of active members in each category. This figure needs to be equal to or less than Ending Active Membership.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and Under</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56–70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 and Over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends of the Congregation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Persons who are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) who participate in the life and worship of this congregation.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Ruling Elders on Session</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enter the number of ruling elders serving on session as of 12/31/xx.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do You Have Deacons?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes/No</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Congregation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enter the number of active members in each category. This figure needs to be equal to or less than your Ending Active Membership.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American/African</td>
<td><strong>Persons originating from or descended from black Africa.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian</td>
<td><strong>Persons originating or descended from Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific or the Northern Marianas; Tibet, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino-a</td>
<td><strong>Persons originating or descended from any races, cultures, and nationalities from Latin American countries (Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous</td>
<td><strong>Persons descended from American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, and regarded as such by the community of which the person claims to be a part.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern/North African</td>
<td><strong>Persons originating from or having ancestry from these countries: Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Armenia, Kurdistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td><strong>A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td><strong>Persons descended from two or more racial groups listed.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>Financial gifts from donors; rents; fees; income from investments and endowments; special offerings; general</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Instruct the Office of the General Assembly to produce supplemental instructions and teaching tools to assist churches with the preparation and processing of the SASR.

[3. Include the collection of data in the Session Annual Statistical Report relating to gender, disability, and Christian Education enrollment.]

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $7,500. Total—$7,500]

Rationale


The 196th General Assembly (1984) created the Special Committee on the Statistical Needs of the Church. Its task was to examine and make recommendations about the statistics that are needed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), how they should be gathered, and how they should be reported. Thirty-four years later, there has been little change to the questions we ask or the things we choose to measure. As we move and grow in new directions and continue to implement the 2011 revisions to the Form of Government at every level of the church, the time is right to think about new statistical questions that can help guide churches, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly through this process of new growth.

In 2009, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly created a Statistical Revision Task Force to review the current Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) and to propose changes to be submitted to the 220th General Assembly (2012). The task force was composed of elected members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC, now called Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA)), staff of these agencies, and an outside consultant from the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies who works with another denomination’s statistics and data collection. This group developed a comprehensive new approach to the SASR, presented it to presbyteries and sessions for their feedback, and refined their work further. COGA heard concerns about this draft from constituencies and caucuses representing concerns of people of color, women, and people with disabilities, and COGA chose to enter a time of further discernment and conversation rather than present any proposed changes at that time.

Independent of this past work, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) considered two items of business related to the SASR and particularly the racial ethnic component of the report. These overtures were referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, which picked up the work of the Statistical Revision Task Force and extended it to include the matters referred in these overtures. A working group of COGA members (including current and former presbytery stated clerks who work directly with clerks of session to receive the SASR), Office of the General Assembly staff, and other diverse persons sought to complete the work begun in 2009 and incorporate further improvements, resulting in the proposal now presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).
In its consideration of potential revisions to the Session Annual Statistical Report, COGA sought to simplify and streamline the report for our changing church. With more than 60 percent of our congregations reporting under 100 members, our church and its congregations are smaller than they were when the SASR was originally designed, and the information we need about our membership is necessarily and appropriately different.

The 2009 Statistical Revision Task Force agreed on three fundamental principles that would guide its evaluation and formulation of questions for the SASR.

- **Information that is readily available**: The SASR should not be a task that creates work for its own end; rather, it should gather information already at hand for meeting other responsibilities of the church. Because churches have such a wide variety of internal reporting procedures, it is not possible to devise a set of questions that will exactly replicate other reports prepared for session and congregational purposes. The questions should, however, be crafted based on expectations of what churches will already know about themselves.

- **Statistically reliable**: Not even a comprehensive census could establish exact numbers that would precisely quantify demographic and other categories of information about the church. Yet even granting such issues as incomplete reporting across and within our churches, care needs to be taken to provide as accurate a picture as possible of who we are and the ministries in which we are engaged. Questions that are reasonable in their expectations and acknowledge imprecision in reporting can enhance overall accuracy.

- **Useful for ministry**: The purpose of the SASR is to gather information that can help guide churches, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly in assessing and planning their respective ministries. Simple curiosity is not sufficient reason for requesting information. The reasons for requesting information should be either immediately obvious or simply explained and have a clear relation to the ministry of the church.

These three principles guided the completion of this work as well. The COGA working group also considered several other factors in its revision:

- **Simplicity**: In recent years, the overall reporting rate for the SASR has remained generally steady. However, the more complex component parts of the SASR have seen significant declines in submission rates, suggesting that some sessions are choosing to leave certain sections requiring more extensive information incomplete. We believe that any reduction in the number of data points will be easily offset by an increase in submission rates and therefore data quality.

- **Context**: Throughout its work, COGA sought to keep in mind the various contexts in which this data is submitted and used. We are well aware that a great majority of those who submit the SASR are clerks of session who rely on “best guess” and “loose estimate” techniques to fill in gaps in data that is at times difficult to quantify exactly without receiving an extensive census-like questionnaire from each and every church member. Without the deep faith and commitment of these clerks of session, the SASR would be impossible! Therefore, we made it our goal to keep the SASR as simple and straightforward as possible so that clerks could complete it easily and without making too many “best guesses.”

- **Opportunity for supplemental questions**: As a required report, the form of and questions on the SASR require General Assembly approval. Recommendation 2 would provide the opportunity for the Office of the General Assembly to work with the broader church to create and distribute a supplemental questionnaire that would offer space for deeper reflection on issues of immediate importance to the church or respond to particular needs of General Assembly entities for statistical information regarding the congregations of the PC(USA).

Principles of diversity and representation: In accordance with the directive of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), COGA also consulted extensively with the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) regarding the racial ethnic categories to be used in the report. They asked us good questions about the intentions and use of the SASR and its questions that helped us to think more carefully about how it should be designed. We appreciated their advice and counsel on this and other segments of the report, and we believe that this instrument will be far better at helping us to understand the church that we are and believe that God is calling us to be because of their honest input into its new form.

**What Is Not Here**

The proposed revisions to the Session Annual Statistical Report omit several elements of the previous SASR. Several of these changes are significant and substantial enough to merit mention and explanation.

**Christian education enrollment.** An extensive section of the previous SASR requested a highly specific breakdown of the number of persons enrolled in various age groups of Christian education programs. These statistics are no longer used to guide the creation of curriculum at the General Assembly level and are of limited value for local congregations in planning contemporary faith formation efforts.
Number of giving units and other financial breakdowns. The proposal removes a number of outdated, overly complex, and confusing references to financial data that have little or no meaning beyond this report. They were replaced with simpler, shorter questions that seek to provide a straightforward picture of the average PC(USA) congregation’s financial health.

Number of deacons. The role of deacons in PC(USA) churches is very fluid at present. Many churches do not have deacons, opting to use Stephen Ministers instead or giving the responsibilities of deacons to the session. Among congregations that have deacons, many will have a board of deacons while others exercise the option for utilizing individuals in this form of ordered ministry (G-2.0202). As churches seek to make a determination as to whether or not to have deacons, the proposed SASR asks congregations only to identify whether or not they utilize this ordered ministry, not to assign a number of persons to it, with the goal of encouraging linkage between congregations as they consider possibilities for this form of ordered ministry.

Disability data. The definition of disability on the current SASR is consistent with that adopted by the World Health Organization, but feedback to the 2009 Statistical Revision Task Force and anecdotal reports from presbytery stated clerks made it clear that the data that was being collected usually was more of a “best guess” of clerks of session than any sort of actual self-reporting by individuals.

Gender breakdowns. Requests for data related to the gender of church members and leaders have been removed from the proposed SASR following careful consideration and review of these questions, the history behind them, the data being submitted, and emerging understandings of gender in church and society. The question disaggregating female members from overall membership was originally included to track the differences between the proportions of male and female members overall and the proportions of men and women serving in leadership positions; consequently, it was necessary to designate the numbers of male and female ruling elders serving on session and the numbers of male and female deacons. Yet in the past thirty-five years, there has been no significant change to the percentages for either of these categories.

We recognize the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) regularly requests detailed demographic information, recently with interest in increasing degrees of disaggregation (e.g., breakdowns by gender and age within racial-ethnic data). Yet churches have begun to ignore these more detailed questions or simply guess. The responses do not provide accurate information, and the process tends to fuel distrust concerning why the question is being asked and how the information is being used. Legitimate concerns for this more detailed information are more likely to be fulfilled through the Clerk’s Annual Questionnaire or studies commissioned through Research Services, where the questions can be more specific and immediately relevant to the constituencies making use of the data.

Finally, as church and society begin to recognize and honor a broader spectrum of gender identity, the binary categories of the current SASR are inadequate to express the church’s emerging understanding of God’s gift of gender in the life of the church and its members. The particular design of the SASR where clerks of session are generally asked to decide questions of identity for their members makes it difficult if not impossible to collect this data in ways that recognize the emerging, more expansive understanding of gender identity.

Overview of the New Session Annual Statistical Report

The proposed new Session Annual Statistical Report groups its questions into three categories:

- Membership Information
- Congregational Life
- Financial

Information about the reasoning behind the formulation of the specific questions follows.

Membership Information

The Book of Order requires that a church maintain membership rolls (G-3.0204a) and that it report this information to the presbytery and the General Assembly as requested (G-3.0202f). Very few modifications have been made to the questions asked in this portion of the SASR. The questions correspond to the categories listed in the 2017–2019 Book of Order.

One specific change is the way discrepancies are handled for differences in beginning membership. Occasionally a church that has audited its membership rolls may find it necessary to correct its beginning membership for a year from what was reported as the ending membership the previous year. Changes will no longer be handled by “other” gains or losses. Instead churches will be able to declare a new beginning balance and the difference will automatically be calculated and reported as an adjustment. This procedure will facilitate the identification of administrative changes to a church’s membership as distinct from actual gains or losses in a particular year.

Congregational Life

Baptisms: “Baptism is the sign and seal of our incorporation into Jesus Christ … [and] the bond of unity in Jesus Christ” (W-3.0402). As such, the administration of this sacrament is a key indicator of a congregation’s response to Christ’s commission to make disciples and to nurture them in the faith (Mt. 28:19). The reporting of these statistics should present no
difficulty in that each session is required to maintain a record of each baptism that it authorizes and that is administered by minister of the Word and Sacrament in service with the session (W-3.0403) and to maintain a roll that also includes those baptized elsewhere for whom the congregation has assumed the responsibility of Christian nurture to bring those persons to a profession of faith (G-1.0401).

The questions presented fall into two categories:

First, three questions relate to baptisms administered during the past year. They distinguish between those baptisms initiated by parents or others responsible for the nurture of the one baptized administered who intend to raise that person within the faith (“Presented by Others”) and those baptisms of persons who present themselves for baptism upon their own profession of faith either in the context of specific training of children and adolescents in Christian faith (“At Confirmation”) or other opportunities of appropriate instruction and examination (“All Others”).

Second, there is a question regarding the number of persons currently upon the roll of baptized persons (G-1.0401 and G-3.0204a). This number reports the total of all persons baptized within the particular congregation or elsewhere who have yet to make a profession of faith for whom the reporting congregation has assumed the responsibilities of care and nurture in the faith.

The definition of Average Worship Attendance has been clarified and simplified. Many churches have tended to include their special worship services in the count for Average Worship Attendance, and this reporting method skews the overall average. The new definition seeks simply the “weekly average of all regularly scheduled worship services.”

The Age Distribution question asks for the number of members in each of five broad age categories: youth/emerging adults (25 years and younger); young adults (26–40 years); younger middle-aged adults (41–55 years); older middle-aged adults (56–70 years); and older adults (71 years and older). These categories identify important and distinct groups in the church that can help congregations, presbyteries, and the denomination identify needs for age- or generation-specific activities and ministries and multigenerational needs and types of facilities and resources needed by the congregation; look for trends in aging within the membership; and understand how the age distribution of members compares with that of people in the neighborhood around the church and other congregations in the presbytery and with the PC(USA) as a whole.

Friends of the Church is an attempt to recognize and quantify those persons who are not members of a congregation who yet are participants in the life and worship of the congregation. While these persons may not have official standing to vote or hold office in a congregation, they nonetheless form an important part of the ministry and mission of PC(USA) congregations.

Number of Ruling Elders on Session is a figure that churches frequently request as they determine the size of their session vis-à-vis other churches of similar size.

The adjustments in questions regarding Deacons have been discussed above.

Congregation questions seek information regarding the racial ethnic identity of members of the congregation. The categories in this section have been reviewed and revised in light of several overtures to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and extensive conversation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

The racial ethnic categories used on the current SASR are the product of the original 1984 Special Committee on the Statistical Needs of the Church, with some changes approved by a later General Assembly. Feedback on these categories from clerks of session, presbytery stated clerks, and users of SASR data has been nearly universally negative, since the categories were created for a different time and include no option for persons who identify as multiracial. In addition, lack of clarity regarding the meaning of commas in the General Assembly action created three separate categories for African, African American, and Black that are often used interchangeably in individual reports and combined for use in the broader church.

To increase the usefulness of this information when churches seek to compare their membership to their surrounding communities, the task force and COGA working group initially considered adopting the racial ethnic categorization used by the United States Census Bureau. For historical reasons, that particular system proved to be both too highly specialized (e.g., in identifying specific subgroups among Asian-Pacific Islanders) and too general to represent historical trends within the PC(USA).

At the suggestion of GACOR, the COGA working group turned to the “Standard Definition for Supplier Diversity” approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) [Item 03-12], which included a set of “categories of difference” and accompanying definitions designed to identify diverse supplier groups. These categories were developed in consultation with the racial ethnic caucuses of the PC(USA) and reflected a long period of engagement of these groups by GACOR. COGA chose to adapt these categories only slightly by adding “White” and “Multiracial” so that they might capture the broadest spectrum of persons in our congregations.

These categories, like any listing of racial groups, are deeply constrained by the complex history and sociology of race and ethnicity. Since race and ethnicity are social constructs, we believe that self-identification is the most effective and appropriate way to collect this data. However, the constraints of the statistical reporting process make it impossible to allow each individual to directly identify their racial ethnic identity. Clerks of session have often made well-meaning assumptions regarding
individuals’ racial ethnic identity to fit the categories of the SASR that have the unintended consequence of suppressing this important identity further.

The temptation, then, is strong to eliminate collection of this data entirely. Yet our Constitution requires otherwise: “The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person” (F-1.0403). We hope that the proposed list of categories and the collection of this data, even in this imperfect form, will help the whole church to see a more complete vision of its wide diversity and help open space for greater conversation, learning, and understanding about these matters in congregations, presbyteries, and our whole denomination.

Finance

The current information collected on the SASR deals with specific, detailed financial questions. The main goal with the proposed questions is to gather information that develops a picture of a congregation’s financial health.

In the current SASR, there are approximately twenty questions regarding church finance; of those twenty, congregational and mid council leadership regularly requested and/or utilized data from only three. The task force incorporated data from the current SASR’s “Contributions” and “Expenses” lines into five simpler and yet more comprehensive questions that offer a picture of all income and expenses that a congregation expects to receive and use in a particular year.

Annual Income is summarized in a single line. With wide variations in definitions around various types of income, a shift to this single category is designed to simplify reporting and create more usable data that will help identify broader trends and clearly and easily track the difference between a congregation’s actual income and expenses.

Annual Expenses seeks a similarly simple overview of a congregation’s overall expenses as a point of comparison over time and in the larger church. Three subcategories here seek to help the church better understand how it is spending its money while keeping reporting simple.

- Mission Expenses focuses on those expenditures for mission not related to the PC(USA). Contributions to PC(USA) mission are already tracked on a per-congregation basis by presbyteries, synods, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and eliminating this duplicate reporting will both simplify the reporting process for clerks of session and increase the quality of the data.

- Personnel Expenses are a useful tool for councils at all levels. Currently the SASR does not collect this data; however, data on compensation of staff persons (particularly for churches of comparable size in comparable communities) is the most frequent request of the denomination by sessions and presbyteries.

- Facilities Expenses are an important measure of the church’s investment in buildings and grounds and other facilities used for mission and ministry. Councils will no doubt make use of this data in order to better understand the capacity of a congregation to determine program emphases and maintain facilities.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 03-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 03-09.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the General Assembly Committee on Representation’s request to the Office of the General Assembly that the COGA take into consideration the following comments and strongly advises further discernment on the proposed Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR). Grateful to our partners on GACOR, we cite below the entirety of their concerns, with which ACREC is in full support:

1. The document no longer solicits information concerning gender or disability, erasing the church’s ability to examine its inclusiveness in relation to the prevalence of persons with these identities in its membership. Lacking this information will further disenfranchise and renders invisible the needs of the individuals participating in congregational life. In addition, it will not allow for comparison to previous years’ SASR results to consider increasing or decreasing representation within the congregation. With respect to sessions, we will not have an ability to evaluate for gender. If anything, an addition of questions about active elders’ social identities would expand our understanding of inclusion and shed more light on effective power sharing.

2. Age continues to be distributed monolithically for those from 26–40 years old, despite representation of several different life stages within it. A more discrete breakdown would illustrate a fuller representation of young adults while still allowing for comparison to previous years’ data in the former designations. At the other end of the spectrum, current congregational membership includes many older persons and grouping these individuals in larger sets also obscures reality.
3. The language utilized in the race/ethnicity portion of the questionnaire continues to be problematic. When the choice to define categories was made, it added to the confusion. Problematic portions in this area of the questionnaire include but are not limited to:

a. “Hispanic” is not a category of race, but a designation of spoken language. Including one language and not others amplifies such a designation.

b. It is not clear what “black Africa” means as a category descriptor and can be perceived as negatively charged, racialized language.

c. “Multiracial” puts all individuals, despite diversity of identities, into one category. This does not assist the denomination in better understanding the unique needs of multiracial individuals in its pews.

d. The definition of “white” uses Europe as its descriptor, however, portions of this region are also included in the listing for “Middle Eastern/North African.” Whiteness is a category that changes over time as it seeks to claim power over other identities such as in West Asia, North Africa and Europe, as well as Australia and parts of Asia (Russia and the caucuses). To seek a definition of the category in this way illustrates a desire to make race more than a social construct.

e. The baseline data provided by SASR gives a context for understanding participation and representation evaluations. Understanding who is a Presbyterian and where they are located assists in efforts to widen participation, plants seed for power analyses, and broadens the meaning of difference in congregational and council life. ACREC believes that data is best at providing feedback on who is missing and who is overrepresented. That work often comes out of the questions a community asks when they see the mirror of SASR.

Finally, ACREC is in agreement with GACOR that the positional and defining power of the individual completing the SASR is an important consideration. He or she makes a determination and describes the identities of the individuals represented in the congregation that, unfortunately, often means guessing on behalf of marginalized members in the church. If constructed well, ACREC imagines that answering the SASR may prompt curiosity about how that difference matters in the community.

A completed SASR should lead to power analysis within our denomination, taking into consideration who is given the power to vote (or not) or the privilege to speak on the floor of mid-council meetings (or not) as well as the individuals or groups who determine such distribution of power. The changes to the SASR present the opportunity to transform the way the denomination approaches representation and equity. In the shadows of racialized violence across the country, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) possesses the distinct ability to revise how it understands its membership in the pews as well as its fellowships and new worshipping communities. ACREC acknowledges that there is hard work to be done within the denomination to ensure that representation promotes equity for all of God’s people. The SASR is important. It is difficult to construct in helpful ways. A race dominant church like PCUSA (still over 90% white) cannot afford to stop looking at itself, at race, language, gender, age, and ability. The prophets and Jesus remind the people again and again, that they have to have eyes to see and ears to hear. How, then, will you equip the church to understand itself across difference?

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 03-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 03-09.

Along with our sibling committee, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), and our partner in ministry, the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), ACWC raises major concerns over some of the proposed revisions to the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR).

As a committee called to hold the church to the highest standards of gender justice and equity, ACWC warns against the discontinuation of collecting information regarding gender in membership. Not counting women as such will render them and their particular contributions as well as needs invisible. We will no longer know how, when, and if they are represented. Years of minimal change in data do not warrant no longer counting, particularly in a church and society that still so clearly struggle with sexism. [Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA), https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcus/. Note: Gender data from the SASR was used throughout this report.]

Further, at a time when the world and the church are expanding their understandings of gender identity, as noted by the SASR Update, the data being collected on gender should continue to be broadened to include multiple gender expressions in order to remain relevant. This may mean a revamping of the methods whereby data is collected (which is also necessary with regards to the importance of self-naming racial and ethnic identities as well as disability), but this does not make the collection of such data less important. Data collection is essential to justice work as it reveals who we truly are and allows us to work directly toward becoming who we desire to be or say that we are. Being counted matters.
We would also direct the assembly’s attention to ACREC’s Advice & Counsel, as well as any comments submitted directly by the GACOR.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-09

Comment on Item 03-09—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) acknowledges that there is hard work to be done within the denomination to ensure that representation and inclusion promotes efforts to expand equity for all of God’s people. The Session Annual Statistics Report (SASR) is the tool that gathers basic membership information and is an important part of this work. Though it is difficult to do, changes to the SASR present opportunities to transform the way the denomination approaches noticing difference that matters, how it shows up in its practices, and when power is in play.

The GACOR lifts up The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity where the church makes plain several commitments that bear on this action. We urge you to consider them regarding whether and how the church counts as well as who and what we see in that counting:

1. F-1.0302.c.—“Because …the Church is catholic, it strives everywhere to testify to Christ’s embrace of men, women, and children of all…races, nations, ages, conditions and stations of life.”

2. F-1.0403—“the [church] shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership…” and lists areas of human life in which we fall prey to sin and discriminatory practice including “race, ethnicity, age, sex, [and] disability.”

3. F-1.0404—“a new openness in its own membership becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions … a visible sign of the new humanity.”

4. F-1.0404—“a new openness to see both the and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activity in the world. …”

GACOR envisions that answering the SASR might prompt curiosity about how these differences matter in the congregation, mid council, and the denomination as a whole. This instrument provides estimates that inform baselines of how we understand who is in the Presbyterian community every year. Completing a SASR should prompt leaders to ask about how power is wielded across these consequential differences in each context within our denomination. Natural questions might examine who (in their configuration) is: more frequently ordained and given the power to vote (or not), given the privilege to speak on the floor of mid councils (or not), automatically given more access for participation, and how group identities of leadership relate to the membership in their context while looking at the distribution of power.

Recent changes in how SASR statistics are available to the public have improved access to the data. An annual and five-year trend of denominational statistics can be found here: http://church-trends.pcusa.org. Providing broad awareness of differences in multiple contexts, SASR provides baselines for self-understanding of inclusiveness and power sharing, tracking identities that influence access and participation. The requirement of responding to SASR provides institutional power to the questions, noticing difference that impacts opportunities for members and leaders.

Systems, including the church, behave inequitably across these differences historically and presently: age, gender, race, and ability. Year-to-Year baseline information allows for comparative analysis to hold up a mirror to congregations, presbyteries, and synods concerning representation and accessibility, some of which is gathered through the SASR. Deleting any of these categories and questions removes information, silences or erases the church’s ability to recognize itself in these ways, and blocks evidence that would prompt questions about inclusion practices.

The Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity, approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) as Item 03-12, https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000031, contains definitions of racial group categories containing the federally recognized groups and expansions requested by actions of the assembly. They differ from the ones lifted in this action. The definitions proposed in the Supplier Diversity Definition are for internal use and written by caucuses themselves. The definition helps suppliers identify themselves as diverse in racial groups the church has claimed as impactful in its mission and ministries. It is not an approach suggested for church statistics.

The GACOR is a willing partner in exploring designs for church statistics that will improve self-understanding and equip the church to explore how access to power is differently experienced.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).
Item 03-10

[The assembly approved Item 03-10. See pp. 11, 67.]

Amending Standing Rule A.6.h. to Make Clear What Happens if Assembly Overturns Bills and Overtures Decision Not to Refer an Item of Business—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule A.6.h. as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“h. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may decline to refer proposed items of new business if it decides that the matters proposed are already before the assembly or that the purpose of the proposals can be reached by the process of amendment and debate. Proposed items of business not referred, whether declined by the Stated Clerk or the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall be identified in the first report of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures distributed to commissioners after the period docketed for committee meetings, with a brief description of the content and a statement of the reasons for declining the proposed business. Twenty-five percent of commissioners present and voting is required to overturn action of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to decline, take no action, or refer a commissioners’ resolution to a subsequent assembly. Should the assembly overturn a Bills and Overtures decision not to refer an item of business, the assembly committee who would ordinarily receive this item will be reconvened for the purpose of considering the business. If a commissioners’ resolution affects a substantial change in an existing social witness policy, the Stated Clerk should recommend to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures that it be referred to the next General Assembly.”

Rationale

All items of business that have been accepted by the Stated Clerk are considered in committee before they are presented to the assembly floor. Items of business are assigned to committees on the first day of the assembly. The appeals process for items not referred occurs after the first day. This addition lays out the process if the assembly decides to hear an item of business after committees have ceased to meet.

Item 03-11

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-11. See pp. 65, 67.]

Amending Standing Rule B.2.e. to Anticipate Need to Adjust Number of Advisory Delegates—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule B.2.e. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“e. There shall be a delegation of theological student advisory delegates each year, two from each of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and one each from three selected other theological seminaries. The selection process for these delegates is as follows: not to exceed fifteen. Any graduate theological student actively working toward a degree, with at least one year after the assembly remaining before graduation, may apply to the Stated Clerk for selection. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected. The Stated Clerk will present these names to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly for selection, ensuring if there are more than fifteen applicants, for diversity of region, race, gender, and theological institution with priority selection for students enrolled in the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Stated Clerk will then transmit the names of the students to be delegates to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

“(1) Each theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate three students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. Two of these students shall be designated by the institution as delegates and the other student shall be designated as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, or a student nominated by the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the names of the two students to be delegates to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.
“(2) Each theological institution in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate two students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. One of these students shall be designated by the institution as the delegate and the other student as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

“(3) All non-Presbyterian theological schools represented by corresponding members on the Committee on Theological Education and one additional non-Presbyterian theological seminary shall be asked to nominate one theological student advisory delegate and one alternate. The additional non-Presbyterian seminary shall be chosen on a rotating basis, descending alphabetically, from those that have at least twelve Presbyterian enrollees (either inquirers or candidates under the care of a presbytery) as of October 1 in the year preceding the assembly. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

“(4) Nominated students shall have at least one more year of study following the assembly remaining in their degree program. The Stated Clerk shall forward the name of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election and confirmation.”

Rationale

Figures from 2016—594 commissioners; 141 young adult advisory delegates (YAADs); 20 theological student advisory delegates (TSADs); 8 missionary advisory delegates (MADs); 14 ecumenical advisory delegates (EADs) (183 total advisory delegates, making up 24 percent of total).

The year 2016 saw a decrease of sixty-two fewer commissioners. The year 2018 will have 538 commissioners, a decrease of sixty-five commissioners.

Standing Rule B.2.b. says that “When the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners exceeds one to three, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be authorized to make changes to the Standing Rules to create a ratio of less than one in three.” The recommended changes bring the number of potential TSADs down from 28 to 15. It also allows students who are candidates for ministry but attending a theological institution not directly related to the PC(USA) to make application.

Item 03-12

[The assembly approved Item 03-12. See pp. 11, 67.]

Amending Standing Rule E.2.f.(3) Regarding Privilege to Speak—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule E.2.f.(3) as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“(3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities; when such experts advocating a particular point of view have spoken to the committee, the committee moderator shall offer to the committee the opportunity to hear from experts advocating a different point of view.”

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: 2016 Referral: Item 03-01. Recommendation 2. Amend Standing Rule E.2.f.(3)—From the Presbytery of Central Florida (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 28, 159 of the electronic copy).

Item 03-13

[The assembly approved Item 03-13. See pp. 11, 67.]

Amending Standing Rule E.5.a. Reviewing the Rules for Who Can Appropriately Use the Public Hearings to Address the Committee—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.
The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule E.5.a. as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. Each committee, with the exception of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall schedule at its convenience one or more public hearings on matters before it. Public hearings are the opportunity for the committee to hear from those who do not have other avenues for addressing the committee—including those who are not Presbyterian. For this reason, those who are given privilege to speak to the committee in E.2.f.(1–7) are not entitled to address the committee during public hearings.”

Rationale

For some items of business, the right to speak in public hearings must be limited because of the large number of people signing up. Current rules have allowed those who otherwise are entitled to address the committee to also take up space in public hearings. This change will alter this practice.

Item 03-14

[The assembly approved Item 03-14. See pp. 11, 67.]


The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule F.1.d. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. Requests During the assembly, requests for the privilege of communicating with the General Assembly shall be referred to this committee the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. This includes requests from assembly committees who wish to include reports or presentations that don’t relate directly to an item of business that is before the assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, which shall confer with persons making such requests about the time and the manner in which their concerns may be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall recommend to the General Assembly a response regarding any possible presentation to the assembly at the beginning of the plenary where the presentation will occur. At the time any such recommendation is acted upon, any commissioner may request that an opposing view be heard, and the assembly shall consider and act upon the matter.”

Rationale

Before and at each assembly, the Stated Clerk receives dozens of requests by people and institutions to address the assembly on matters that are related to the church but not related to business before the assembly. This change makes explicit the role of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to control the docket and make good choices about access to plenary time.

Item 03-15

[The assembly approved Item 03-15. See pp. 11, 67.]


The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule F.5.d. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. When the General Assembly is in plenary session considering an item of business, questions that touch upon arising in debate concerning constitutional matters, including rulings on questions of order involving constitutional matters requested by the Moderator, shall be handled by referred to the Advisory Committee on Constitution (ACC) present at the plenary (see Standing Rule B.4.). These questions shall be referred in writing by the Moderator to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall consider each matter referred and make recommendations directly to the General Assembly through the Moderator. In cases where the ACC cannot give an immediate response, the Moderator may entertain a motion to postpone the pending motion until the ACC is prepared to advise the assembly concerning the question that has been asked.”
Rationale

Current rules do not give guidance for those times when the ACC is not prepared to give an immediate answer to a question and allows for deliberations to be called to a stop by a dilatory constitutional question. This change allows the assembly to vote on whether the advice of the ACC is pertinent enough to justify postponing debate.

Item 03-16

[The assembly approved Item 03-16. See pp. 11, 67.]

Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Regarding Commissions and Special Commissions—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule K.1.b. as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. In considering the creation of a special committee or commission the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from relevant agencies, a representative from the General Assembly Nominating Committee, a representative from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, as well as from the assembly committee considering the proposal. Financial implications of special committees or commissions shall accompany any recommendation to the assembly.”

Rationale

For a variety of reasons, there has been difficulty appointing persons to serve on several commissions and special committees created by previous General Assemblies. The General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation can be useful resources to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures by providing well thought through recommendations for membership size and composition, skills, and requirements for service, and diversity needs, etc., as the assembly committee considers the necessity and viability of a special committee or commission.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-16

Comment on Item 03-16—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) looks forward to the collaboration called for in this Standing Rule change. The increasingly frequent practice of creating new bodies and to do so with detailed composition requirements has created difficulties in seating them. The committee has missed opportunities to consult regarding the recommendations for membership size and composition, skills, requirements for service, and demographic diversity available for commissions and special committees. Consultation regarding the pools of available persons to serve on commissions and special committees will equip assembly commissioners and committees with knowledge and data that predicts the impact of any proposed composition of appointed members before votes are finalized. For example, the GACOR can provide information on the representation within a given committee and the General Assembly body as a whole should participation be suggested from within one or both of those bodies.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 03-17

[The assembly approved Item 03-17. See pp. 11, 67.]


The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule A.4.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. The assembly committee to which it is assigned is authorized to approve minutes of the agencies and entities without referral to plenary unless discrepancies occur that call for reporting to the assembly. Minutes of General Assembly entities agencies will be reviewed in accordance with the ‘Guidelines for Preparation of Minutes of Agencies’ as printed
in the Manual of the General Assembly. Minutes of the synods will be reviewed in accordance with “Guidelines for Reviewing Synod Records” as printed in the Manual of the General Assembly.”

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**Item 03-18**

[The assembly approved Item 03-18. See pp. 12, 68.]

*Amending Standing Rule A.5. to Reflect Book of Order, G-6.04e—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule A.5. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“5. Each presbytery shall act upon all papers sent to the presbytery to be voted upon in ample time to permit the stated clerk of the presbytery to transmit the results to the Stated Clerk so that they are received no later than one year following the adjournment of the assembly responsible for the proposed amendments two weeks before the convening of the General Assembly. The response of the presbytery shall be mailed to the Stated Clerk by certified mail.”

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**Item 03-19**

[The assembly approved Item 03-19, Recommendation 1. See pp. 65, 68.]

*Amending Standing Rules A.3., A.3.c.(6), and A.3.e. Define Clearly Meaning of Concurrence and Role of Overture Advocate—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend the Standing Rules as follows:

1. Amend Standing Rule A.3. by adding a new “b.” and re-lettering current “b.” through “e.” as “c.” through “f.” New section A.3.b. reads as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

   “b. Concurrences are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery that recommend an action identical to that in an overture already received for that assembly. The first concurrence received by the Stated Clerk, fulfilling Book of Order, G-3.0302d, must be submitted by the deadlines appropriate for the overture and entitles the submitting presbytery to an overture advocate. Subsequent concurrences must meet the forty-five day rule for business.”

[The assembly approved Item 03-19, Recommendation 2. See pp. 65, 68.]

2. Amend Standing Rule A.3.c.(6) by striking the text:

   “In the event that the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly receives an overture similar to one already proposed (excluding the rationale), she or he shall inquire of the presbytery or synod in question whether it would be willing to concur with that existing overture or desires to withdraw the overture. A presbytery or synod concurring with an overture may submit additional rationale for its action, provided that it does not duplicate the rationale provided by the overturning body. The concurrence and any additional rationale will be printed with the original overture in the Reports to the General Assembly. Concurrences to any overture shall be received up to 45 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. Concurrences to any overture with constitutional implications shall be received up to 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly.”

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-19, Recommendation 3. See pp. 65, 68.]

3. Amend Standing Rule A.3.e. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

   “e. Each presbytery or synod that submits an overture and the presbytery whose concurrence was received first (SR A.3.b.) shall each notify the Stated Clerk of the name of an overture advocate who shall be available to provide information on the background and intent of the overture to any assembly committee to which the overture may be referred. Each council
who submits an overture or concurrence may appoint only one overture advocate. Only the originating council and the first
concurring council will have the right to appoint an overture advocate. (See Standing Rules A.3.c.(6) A.3.b. and E.2.)”

Rationale

With changes in the Book of Order requiring a concurrence to an overture, the Standing Rules needed to be updated to
reflect the new reality. This change accomplishes two things: (1) it sets a policy on what a concurrence is and what deadlines
are pertinent and (2) it clarifies the relationship between a concurrence and an overture advocate. Under current policy, every
concurring mid council has the right to send an overture advocate. This has created an imbalance in access to assembly
committees as a presbytery that concurs with every overture would have special privileges at the assembly when compared to
a presbytery that did not.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 03-19

Advice on Item 03-19—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that Recommendation 3 of Item
03-19 presents the following issues the assembly should consider:

Recommendation 3 of Item 03-19 would limit the opportunity for presbyteries and synods presenting or concurring with
overtures to the General Assembly to provide overture advocates to represent them before standing committees of the assembly.
Only the first presbytery or synod presenting the overture and the first concurring presbytery or synod would be entitled to be
so represented.

Item 03-19 seeks to address the tension between the right of presbyteries and synods to appeal matters of controversy or
concern to the General Assembly (and so to be decided by the voice of the whole church per F-3.0206—see footnote 6) and
the assembly’s right to determine the manner by which it conducts its business (F-3.0209, G-3.0102). The Constitution does
not specify the manner by which a lower council may petition the General Assembly to address a matter of controversy or
concern (except that requests for interpretation of the Book of Order and proposed amendments must be received “in writing”
per G-6.02 and G-6.04a).

However, a right to petition the General Assembly could reasonably be interpreted to include a right to address the
assembly on the matter of concern. This is currently provided through the identification of overture advocates per Standing
Rule A.3.e. While petitioning bodies may seek identical ends, their contexts and rationales may differ. Excluding the voice of
petitioning presbyteries and synods from being heard by the assembly (or the committee designated to make recommendation
on the matter) could be interpreted to violate the just exercise of their right to petition the assembly.

One might entertain the analogy that a concurrence to an overture is equivalent to “seconding” a motion under
parliamentary procedure. However, this analogy is unconvincing. Parliamentary procedure presumes an assembled body in
which those moving and seconding a motion are present and able to speak. This is not necessarily the case in standing
committees of the assembly.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution is not aware of any historic interpretation of the Constitutional provisions in
this matter to resolve these issues conclusively.

Item 03-20

[The assembly approved Item 03-20. See pp. 12, 68.]

Amending Standing Rule A.2.d. Regarding the Length of Reports to General Assembly—From the Committee on the
Office of the General Assembly.

In order to account for the new emphasis on translating every item into Korean and Spanish, the Committee on the
Office of the General Assembly recommends the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Standing Rule A.2.d. to read
as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. All reports shall be limited to ten five thousand words except the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency,
the length of which shall be determined by the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission
Agency. A request for an exception to the length of a report, up to ten thousand words, shall be submitted to the Stated
Clerk no later than forty-five days prior to the deadline for the submission of the report and shall include the anticipated
length of the report. The Stated Clerk may assess a fee of the entity or committee whose report exceeds ten five thousand
words for the costs incurred in translating, printing, and distributing the excess pages. Payment of the fee shall be
submitted to the treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. If the Stated Clerk and the
representatives of any body are unable to agree, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the length of the report.”

**Rationale**

A new emphasis upon making sure that all reports are translated in a timely manner has necessitated a reexamination of the place of lengthy written reports. While allowing for exceptions, this should aid in the work of the assembly.

### Item 03-21

[The assembly approved Item 03-21. See pp. 12, 68.]

**Amending Standing Rules by Deleting A.3.d. and Inserting a New A.1.c. Regarding Language on Distributing Overtures Reflecting PC-biz—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.**

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend the Standing Rules as follows:

1. Amend Standing Rule A.3.d by striking the text as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]
   
   “d. Overtures that do not propose constitutional amendment or interpretation, and that are postmarked at least sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be published (print or electronic) in the reports distributed by the Stated Clerk. Overtures received in the same manner, postmarked no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be distributed to the commissioners before the convening of the General Assembly.”

2. Amend Standing Rule A.1. by adding a new section A.1.c. to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]
   
   “c. It is the responsibility of the Stated Clerk to distribute the business of the assembly, with translations as appropriate, in a manner that allows the church to carefully discern the work of the assembly.”

### Item 03-22

[The assembly approved Item 03-07. See pp. 65, 68.]

**Commissioners’ Resolution. On Directing the Office of the General Assembly to Develop a Plan for Cost-Reduction Measures for Meetings of the PC(USA) General Assembly.**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directs the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to investigate adaptive and technical issues around cost-reduction measures for future meetings of the General Assembly and to report back with a plan to the 224th General Assembly (2020). These measures may include, but are not limited to,

1. finding new ways of managing overtures, resolutions, reports, and other business, reducing the number of days the assembly meets;

2. changing the venue to university campuses with conference capabilities that meet accessibility and safety needs for our diverse commissioners;

3. moving from a biennial to triennial or quadrennial meeting cycle;

4. evaluating the present committee structure;

5. examine the advisory delegate process and structure.

**Rationale**

Exploring who we are and what we do when we gather, including all possible ways to reduce the costs of the meeting of the General Assembly, is necessary in a time of vast denominational shifts and changing demographics. The work of the assembly is important work, and the efforts of those who tirelessly commit to pull it together should be celebrated. Yet, one of the most significant items in the OGA budget is staging the meetings of the General Assembly. At a time when the denomination is challenged by rising costs to coordinate ministry and resource congregations from a national level, while many mid councils
and members voice concern in significant increase to per capita, it is prudent to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of what we do.

The meeting of the General Assembly may be a place where shifts to how we meet can make our ministry together more effective and significantly reduce costs without impacting the function and purpose of the assembly. The PC(USA) must figure out how we still meet together and do the critical work supporting of Christ’s disciples within a more realistic structure and budget for the size denomination we now find ourselves.

A reduction in the per capita funds committed to the meetings of the General Assembly is not only necessary, it is also faithful in order to be able to direct resources to other crucial initiatives for mission, social witness, and support of mid councils in their work to equip congregations.

Because the OGA is already committed for contracts for assemblies several years in the future, plans to make shifts must move forward immediately. Any delay will result in yet another two-year cycle being added to the commitments that already exist. Doing so will help lead the way for our denomination in demonstrating our adaptive posture, our ability to imagine how we are a connectional church for generations to come, and our faithful response to the Spirit’s continued work among us, even in the midst of change.

Emily Chudy, Presbytery of Donegal
Dan Festa, Presbytery of Missouri Union

Item 03-23

[The assembly referred Item 03-23 to the Office of the General Assembly with comment. See pp. 65, 68.]

[Comment: Recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) refer Item 03-23 to the Office of the General Assembly, to be in consultation with the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and to bring a recommendation before the 224th General Assembly (2020) for full consideration, including the possibility of constitutional amendment.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Permitting Advisory Delegates to Have a Full Vote in Moderator Elections in Future General Assemblies.

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct that advisory delegates have full vote in Moderator/Co-Moderators elections in future General Assemblies.

Rationale

Advisory delegates currently have advisory votes in plenary sessions. Advisory delegates believe that their votes should be tallied as full votes in the election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator or Co-Moderators. The election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator or Co-Moderators sets the tone for what is to become of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) over two years. The Moderator(s) are the representation, as well as a model, of the embodiment of Christ in the PC(USA) and that decision impacts both commissioners and advisory delegates. The church is not dying; it is reforming. In order to reform, the church must embrace new perspectives and work to cultivate relationships. In order to create a more inclusive, diverse church, we must bridge the generational gap and work to understand each other in the light of Jesus Christ.

Dawn Neff, Presbytery of Central Florida
Debra Avery, Presbytery of San Frisco
Rebecca Wind, Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse
Jacqueline Laybourn, Presbytery of Sacramento (YAAD)
John Daniel DeBevoise, Presbytery of Central Florida (YAAD)
Walter Manuel, Presbytery of Southern New England (YAAD)
Kennerly Benraty, Presbytery of Eastern Virginia (YAAD)
Britton Walker, Presbytery of St. Andrew (YAAD)
Vadalyn Tayler, Presbytery of Muskingum Valley (YAAD)
Melissa Courtney, Presbytery of Baltimore (YAAD)
Angela Williams, Austin Theological Seminary (TSAD)
Taylor Wittman, Presbytery of Winnebago (YAAD)
Rachael Sutphin, Presbytery of the Peaks (YAAD)
Emily Costello, Presbytery of Northern New England (YAAD)
James Kim, Eastern Korean Presbytery (YAAD)
Shannon Simmons, Presbytery of John Calvin (YAAD)
Emma Gritsch, Presbytery of Newark (YAAD)
Emily Hartz, Presbytery of Redstone (YAAD)
Alexandra Hunt, Presbytery of New Covenant (YAAD)
Julia Prouty, Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys (YAAD)
Corrine Burch, Presbytery of the James (YAAD)
Ben O’Connell, Presbytery of Des Moines (YAAD)
Sophia Alecci, Presbytery of San Gabriel (YAAD)
Haley Walk, Presbytery of Wyoming (YAAD)
Karl Shaley, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (TSAD)
Casey Aldridge, Presbytery of Charlotte (YAAD)
Theodore Leavell, Presbytery of Milwaukee (YAAD)
Lily Ingle, Presbytery of Flint River (YAAD)
Advice on Item 03-23—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The recommendation was that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct that advisory delegates have full vote in Moderator/Co-Moderators elections in future General Assemblies.

Findings by ACC

The Standing Rules of the General Assembly (A.6.d) states that “Commissioners’ resolutions shall not contain business that requires an amendment to or interpretation of the Constitution (see Book of Order, G-6.04a).” Item 03-23 conflicts with and would require addressing the Book of Order, F-3.0202, “This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament).” In addition, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission found in MacKellar v. Synod of the Northeast:

It is not intrinsically discriminatory to require presbytery, synod and General Assembly commissioners to have prior experience in the government of local congregations, the “basic form of the church” (G-1.0101). To the extent the Synod’s Bylaws and Standing Rules fail to give proper weight to the requirements of F-3.0202 and G-3.0401 by giving vote to members who are neither ruling elders nor teaching elders, they are unconstitutional.1

Following Standing Rule A.6.d, Item 03-23 should be rejected and not heard by this committee or referred to the plenary session. The purpose of Standing Rule A is to provide for an orderly process for receiving and considering business at the meetings of the General Assembly. Standing Rule A.1. states:

1. Papers in General

Papers to Be Considered

a. The General Assembly shall consider only those papers delivered to the Stated Clerk in compliance with Standing Rule A. Ordinarily, such papers shall have been forwarded to the Stated Clerk postmarked, or electronically delivered, no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

Standing Rule A.3.c.(4) and (5) provide:

(4) Overtures not received within the designated time limits shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating council for reconsideration.

(5) Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) shall submit evidence that the affected entity(ies) has (have) been consulted. If such evidence is not submitted, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the overture be received and referred to a future session of the General Assembly so that consultation may take place.

The reasons for Standing Rule A include providing for an orderly and timely process for considering matters by the committees and commissions relevant to the subject matter at hand. The goal of this rule is to provide an informed basis for considering matters that come before a General Assembly. In particular, the deadline for submission of papers is intended to allow time for the General Assembly commissioners to receive advice and counsel from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on any proposal that would require interpretation or amendment of the Constitution. Commissioners do not have the benefit of advice regarding a resolution that proposes amendment of the Constitution when the resolution is presented outside those timeframes in the form of a commissioners’ resolution. Thus, the General Assembly’s Standing Rules do not permit consideration of such resolutions.

Item 03-23 illustrates the wisdom of following the Standing Rules. For example, the ACC has not yet provided any advice on the actual subject matter of Item 03-23. While the proposal may indeed be one that the General Assembly may wish to consider, allowing advisory delegates to vote on elections of a Moderator or Co-Moderator has constitutional implications for several provisions in the Book of Order, including certain Foundational Principles regarding governance at General Assemblies and the role of advisory delegates. It is unwise to consider such a significant change on a rushed schedule and without ACC (and other) advice. The correct and better process is to present the matter on a timely basis as an overture to the 224th General Assembly (2020) so that the matter can receive the full hearing it deserves.

If it is the decision of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures to consider Item 03-23 notwithstanding the Standing Rule, the ACC advises against approval of Item 03-23. Further consideration of Item 03-23 by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) shall require suspension of the Standing Rules by a vote of the assembly.

Endnote

1. With respect to the General Assembly, the reference to G-3.0401 is now G-3.0501.
ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-23

Advice and Council on Item 03-23—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) commends Item 03-23 in its effort to “center” younger voices, bringing them in as full participants in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 03-23, conditional on the following considerations being addressed:

1. Ecumenical advisory delegates are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). While ecumenical voices are an important contribution to the discourse at the General Assembly, it does not make sense for members of other denominations (ecumenical advisory delegates) to vote for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) leadership.

2. Proportionality. The current voting population for the Moderator election consists of commissioners proportionate to the population of presbyteries. While inclusion of theological student and missionary delegates may not significantly skew this ratio, one young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) is currently appointed per presbytery. Unless additional young adult advisory delegates were added from larger presbyteries, this would mean a significant increase in the influence of small presbyteries on Moderator/Co-Moderator elections.

3. Selection of young adult advisory delegates. The current process for selecting young adult advisory delegates varies by presbytery, and does not require ordination as a deacon or other position within a congregation. Setting a uniform minimum standard of local selection would be consistent with the polity of the church as applies to all other voting members.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) advises that these issues be taken into account prior to any blanket inclusion of advisory delegates in Moderator elections. If these items are adequately addressed, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness (ACSWP) supports Item 03-23, recognizing that the prophetic and intergenerational voices of advisory delegates are an important cue for how the church must grow and change.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-23

Advice and Council on Item 03-23—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 03-23.

Advisory delegates are present at General Assembly to offer differing perspectives on issues that impact and affect the PC(USA). This advice is not to be considered lightly, but reverently in the spirit with which it is offered. However, voting delegates do not have to accept the advice or counsel from our partners in ministry.

We continue to offer that the voices of people’s long silenced be heard and acknowledged, as our advisory delegates listen to the Spirit of God and advise the assembly.

See response to Advice & Counsel on Item 07-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

02 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS & OVERTURES COMMENT ON ITEM 03-23

Comment on Item 03-23—From the 02 Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures refers this commissioners’ resolution to 03 Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures with the following comment:

While Item 03-23 contains business that requires an amendment to or interpretation of the constitution; we enthusiastically suggest a referral to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly for further consideration and reporting to the 224th General Assembly (2018).

Item 03-A

[Approved. See p. 68.]

Minutes, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

Item 03-B

[Approved with Comment. See pp. 68–69]

Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society

[Comment: Approved with the following exceptions:
Item 03-C

[Approved. See p. 69.]

Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation

Item 03-Info

A. Appointment of Assistant Stated Clerks—From the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, with the approval of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has appointed Jihyun Oh, manager for call process support, and Flor Vélez Díaz, manager for judicial process, as Assistant Stated Clerks of the General Assembly.

Jihyun Oh joined Mid Council Ministries as manager of call support in January 2018. Oh, a minister of Word and Sacrament, will be responsible for providing support, resources, and training for committees on ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s presbyteries, including their call processes. She will also carry management responsibility for the Church Leadership Connection.

Oh has a wide range of experience in the PC(USA). She has held leadership positions in the Presbyteries of Greater Atlanta and Chicago and was a commissioner to both the 221st General Assembly (2014) and the 222nd General Assembly (2016), at both of which she served as a committee leader. She most recently served on the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. In addition, Rev. Oh has served as both an English- and Korean-language Standard Ordination Examinations reader.

Flor Vélez Díaz is joining Mid Council Ministries Division as manager of judicial process and social witness in constitutional interpretation. She replaces Laurie Griffith, who now serves as the associate director for constitutional interpretation.

Vélez-Díaz, a ruling elder, comes from a family that is multigenerational Presbyterian. She has served as a commissioner from the Synod of Puerto Rico on the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) since 2012, including as vice moderator (2015–2017) and as moderator since October 2017. She has also served on the committee on ministry and several administrative commissions of the Presbytery of San Juan.

B. GACOR Agency Summary

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29) (Book of Order, F-1.0403, Unity in Diversity).

Introduction

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) is a permanent standing committee of the General Assembly, mandated by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Book of Order (G-3.0103, Participation and Representation), The Manual of the General Assembly (including the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the Organization for Mission) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Since it was constituted at reunion in 1983, GACOR has a long history of leadership, training, and service to the denomination.
The GACOR helps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) become what God calls it to be, a church that includes diverse persons from the abundance God provides, an inclusiveness that represents the fullness God has created. We serve the denomination, keeping our attention on the quality of its community and always pointing toward a greater openness to voices not always heard, to leaders routinely overlooked, and to seek decision-making processes that enable full participation.

Assigned Responsibilities

The GACOR, in its constitutional mandate, promotes, reviews, advises, advocates, and consults with the General Assembly and its entities, committees, councils, and divisions in order to ensure that the principles of inclusiveness and diversity are implemented. How we function as the body of Christ is important both internally (structures, procedures, ways of interacting) and externally (social witness, mission, ministry). The church seeks to live into the abundance of the gifts given to it for its mission by helping it express that diversity and more fully accomplish our common ministries. To do this most faithfully, the church needs to have the widest possible participation. This rich diversity of membership and participation particularly includes “race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, [and] theological convictions (Book of Order, F-1.0403). At the national level, the church (as the body of Christ) is equipped with the widest possible diversity, by election and employment, for its life and it is called to select broadly from those leaders for its bodies.

Accomplishments

Since the close of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on June 25, 2016, in Portland, Oregon, the GACOR worked diligently to complete the functions assigned by the Book of Order, Organization for Mission, and in accordance with its Manual of Operations. The committee met face-to-face four times. The GACOR Executive Committee (GACORX) consists of the moderator, vice-moderator, secretary, and the two chairpersons of the two subcommittees—Gather, Advise, Translate, and Export (GATE) and Advise, Review, Report, and Recommend (ARRR). Subcommittees meet monthly by Zoom teleconference or in-person when GACOR is meeting for an in-person meeting.

The continued transition from more frequent face-to-face meetings to Zoom teleconference meetings has provided significant financial savings for the committee’s budget. Challenges remain to streamlining this process, but the utilization of Zoom has allowed more frequent interactions to do the work of GACOR leading to a greater continuity of individual projects.

Accomplishments over this two-year term included:

- Book discussions for GACOR study and training included *Racism in a Post Obama America*, edited by David Maxwell (WJK, 2016) and *Pre-Post Racial America* by Sandhya Rani Jha (Chalice, 2015).

- In October of 2016, GACOR held an orientation for new committee members in Ferncliff, Arizona, and a retreat for the full committee. Jessica Vazquez-Torres and Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers, with CROSSROADS Anti-Racism Training, facilitated training for all members of GACOR.

- The GACOR held consultations with committees on representation of various mid councils, where it met. These dialogues provided GACOR opportunities to learn of the ways that synods’ and presbyteries’ CORs conducted their work in their contexts. We also heard specific concerns and challenges. The GACOR listened, learned, and, where invited, consulted and advised CORs on ways to progress toward better representation and equity in the PC(USA).
  - February 2016—Synod of Southwest and Presbytery of Santa Fe.
  - March 2017—Synod of Boriquén, Noroeste Presbytery, San Juan Presbytery, and Suroeste Presbytery
  - October 2017—Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy

- The GACOR staff alerts the committee members when invited to local synods and presbyteries for additional training. Members sometimes attend to promote the GACOR, service beyond local and spread awareness of the work being done.

- Dropbox is now a central part of the work of GACOR. This has dramatically reduced paper waste, increased availability of documents, and reduced the time spent sending reports and comments between committee members.

- GATE hosted six meetings with synod leaders (executives and stated clerks) regarding the synod representation reports via Zoom. Feedback on the report is very positive so few changes have been made. Trending data is now available and useful for synods. The focus of conversations has been to clarify intent and process improvement.

- Initiated multiyear trending reports for synod COR leaders. Developing content to share information for the wider church.

- Completed first supplier diversity analyses for the six agencies of PC(USA) based on supplier diversity definition approved at GA222.
Increased engagement of synod leaders and agency leaders through education and awareness of the reporting process.

The GACOR regularly comments on overtures to the General Assembly. The GACOR proposed language sometimes is approved into final actions.

The GACOR engaged in conversations with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) concerning the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR). At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), a referral comment from the Item 03-02 requested that the “Committee of the Office of the General Assembly to work with the General Assembly Committee on Representation to determine the most effective and efficient way to achieve this outcome by the 223rd General Assembly (2018)” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 28, 161, electronic file). Three GACOR members joined on four video conference calls with a COGA subcommittee to explore options, discuss possible changes, and engage in conversation around the SASR.

The GACOR held conversations with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) regarding hiring practices and nomination processes.

In accordance with Standing Rules, a GACOR member participated in the Leader Selection process for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) assembly committees and for the 223rd General Assembly (2018) assembly committees on February 12, 2018.

In preparation for the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in St. Louis, Missouri, the committee reviewed General Assembly overtures and other business, preparing comments and marking items of interest to the committee for follow-up.

At the October 2017 meeting in St. Louis, GACOR met with the GA223 COLA team to discuss concerns from previous assemblies surrounding diversity and inclusion issues in worship and committee structures.

As part of our learning experiences and dialogues with mid councils, agencies, and multiple committees on representation across the denomination, we have come to the conclusion of the need to write a theology on representation for reflection and further study. Committee members—the Reverend Dr. Raj Nadella, assistant professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, and the Reverend Eric Thomas, Ph.D., student at Drew Theological Seminary—drafted a Theology of Representation that was approved by GACOR (see Appendix A). Rev. Nadella and Rev. Thomas presented a Bible study on the theology at the Mid Council Leaders Gathering in St. Louis, Missouri, in October 2017. They utilized resources and wisdom provided by other members of GACOR.

The GACOR members lead two workshops at the 2017 Mid Council Leaders Gathering in St. Louis, Missouri, on a theology of representation and the inclusion of those with disabilities.

Membership

Class of 2018: Ruling Elder Marvella Lambright, Miami Valley (COV); Member Chris Hopp, Homestead (LAK); the Reverend Martha Ross-Mockaitis, Chicago (LIN); Ruling Elder Mike Hauser, Southern Kansas (MAM); the Reverend Larissa Kwong Abazia, New York City (NE); the Reverend Clover T. Bailey, Palo Duro (SUN); Ruling Elder Maribeth Culpepper, Santa Fe (SW)

Class of 2020: Ruling Elder Aida Faris, Mission (SUN); Member Evelyn Pugh, San Francisco (PAC); the Reverend Rubén Ortiz-Rodríguez, Suroeste (BPR); Ruling Elder Treena Parvello, de Cristo (SW); Member Dr. Raj Nadella, Greater Atlanta (SA); Member Byron Elam, Mid-South (LW); the Reverend Eric Thomas, New York City (NE).

Liaison (ACREC): The Reverend Tom Priest Jr.

Member designates a church member.

Appendix: COR Theology of Representation

[See appendix-a-COR-summary-report-theology-of-representation.pdf for the text of this appendix. See p. 224.]
of Government and reflects the denomination’s experience with the new Form of Government in the General Assemblies since its approval (i.e., 220th General Assembly (2012), 221st General Assembly (2014), and 222nd General Assembly (2016)).

I: THE TASK

The task of self-study is a process of the General Assembly that occurs every six years. The ACC looks inward and evaluates its work based on review standards covering the previous six years and is required to file its report 120 days prior to the 224th General Assembly (2018). Simultaneously the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), in consultation with the ACC, develops a survey instrument by the Office of Research Services. Finally, the review responsibilities are vested in a designated assembly committee. The standards that are under review are covered under two broad headings: (1) Fidelity to Mission and Purpose; and (2) Effectiveness of Services. As presented this report provides a description of the ACC’s work and performance, as requested in the “Manual—Assembly Committee on Review” (Appendix 11) and addresses the self-study criteria indicated in the “Standards for Review of General Assembly Permanent, Advocacy, and Advisory Committee and Commissions” (Appendix 12). Thus, the study provides two things: (1) a firm and focused sense of the ACC’s mission in the life of church, and (2) clear and specific ways to improve the performance and effectiveness of the ACC.

The ACC moderator, Alyson Jahnke, appointed Mon Lee and Judy L. Woods to conduct the self-study project, and she assisted them as needed. They were supported by Laurie Griffith and Dianne Minter with the Office of the General Assembly Constitutional Services. The survey was conducted by Susan Barnett, Ph.D. We thank all those who participated in and assisted with this self-study. Finally, we thank the ACC predecessor self-study committees, on whose work this report builds.

A. A Brief History

The ACC was created with the reunion of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States in 1983. Prior to that, the predecessor denominations had relied upon the respective General Assembly Stated Clerks to do several of the functions now assigned to the ACC. In the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, it was the General Assembly’s Stated Clerk—who was charged with interpreting the denomination’s Constitution—who would draft the opinions and polity advice pertaining to any overture that sought to amend the Constitution. This overture counsel from the Stated Clerk was summarily presented to the General Assembly’s polity committee for assembly action at the time of the annual General Assembly meeting.¹ The Presbyterian Church in the United States utilized a different mechanism in regard to proposed overtures that sought to change the Constitution. Predictably, the Stated Clerk was the primary ecclesiastical officer; however, any overtures submitted to the Office of the Stated Clerk were duly presented to the Permanent Judicial Commission for action.²

The original 1983 formula for ACC membership, previously G-13.0112a, set the number of members at six; but this did not last long, undoubtedly because the number of overtures to the assembly was more than six persons could reasonably handle, and an amendment to the Book of Order, setting the number of members at nine, was approved by the assembly in 1985. The ACC, throughout its history, has had a commitment to remain within the parameters of its constitutional mandate and has not expressed a need to expand or alter its fundamental responsibilities to the General Assembly and the church.

B. Organization and Responsibilities

The ACC is established by the Book of Order, G-6.02 (previously G-13.0112):

The General Assembly shall elect an Advisory Committee on the Constitution composed of nine persons, ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be a member ex officio without vote. No person who has served on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until four years have elapsed after the expired six-year term. The General Assembly shall provide by its own rule for the qualifications of members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. (G-6.02) (See Appendix 1 for the Book of Order citations that outline the constitutional mandate for the ACC.)

The description of committee and member responsibilities is in the Manual of Procedures for the Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). (See Appendix 2.) The life-center of the ACC revolves around the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its role in the life of the church. For instance, any questions requiring an interpretation of the Book of Order are referred to the ACC by the Stated Clerk (G-6.02, previously G-13.0112c, d). It is the role of the Stated Clerk routinely to make decisions about referring matters that arrive at the Office of the Stated Clerk.³ (See Appendix 3 for the Standing Rules that describe the role of the Stated Clerk.) In many respects, the ACC is directly related to the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly, but is an independent entity of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk is an ex-officio member of the ACC, but the actions of the ACC are not subservient to the Stated Clerk. The ACC does not have the authority to interpret the Constitution regarding requests for interpretation of the Constitution, but rather it makes recommendations (advice) to the General Assembly for action, which may be to approve, disapprove, or modify the counsel of the ACC.

All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the Book of Order arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly, no less than sixty days prior to the General Assembly. (G-6.02)
Preceding the meeting of the General Assembly, the bulk of the ACC’s work involves overtures to the General Assembly, which chiefly are proposed amendments to the Book of Order (G-6.04b, previously G-18.0301b), and requests for interpretation of the Constitution. The ACC’s advice to the General Assembly on the typical flurry of overtures and requests to the General Assembly, many of them controversial, have only the authority of being recommendations from a special General Assembly entity.

C. The ACC’s Call to Mission

The ACC serves and supports the church’s mission by providing the General Assembly advice in matters of interpretation and amendment of the Constitution of the PC(USA). In this work, the ACC serves and supports the church’s mission by assisting the General Assembly to make choices about the interpretation and amendment of the Constitution, and more particularly, the Book of Order, with an understanding of the context of their choices and the consequences of proposed actions. To perform this function, the ACC prepares advice to commissioners at each assembly as to each item of business seeking an interpretation or amendment of the Book of Order. In light of this charge, exhibiting “a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role” has several aspects: (1) faithfully providing advice on each item sent to an assembly that suggest a constitutional interpretation or amendment; (2) providing such advice in a manner that is clear and understandable to its audience (i.e., General Assembly commissioners); and (3) providing such advice without becoming advocates for particular factions of the PC(USA). (See Appendix 4 for a full description of the duties of the ACC at the meetings of the General Assembly.)

Prior to any General Assembly meeting, the ACC expresses its partnership role by consulting with various entities that will be making significant reports to the General Assembly. The ACC expresses partnership in mission by regularly consulting with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC). Upon request and need, the ACC continues its servant function by working with various other entities, including governing bodies of the PC(USA).

During the assembly, the primary arena for the ACC’s advice is with the various General Assembly committees (assembly committees) that have business related to some aspect of the Constitution. Members of the ACC are assigned to the assembly committees that have business with constitutional implications. The role of the ACC members who staff assembly committees is very carefully sculpted: the ACC counsel should faithfully provide information on those items being designated for the assembly that require a constitutional interpretation or amendment. That advice is to be expressed in a manner that is clear and understandable to the General Assembly commissioners and any audience present at the assembly committee meeting. Most importantly, the ACC’s recommendations, because of its focus upon its understanding of the Constitution, shall be neutral in political tone and shall not advocate a position of any entity or group of the PC(USA).

The ACC’s role is constitutional and supports the mission of the church by guiding the assembly in the authoritative interpretation of the Book of Order to provide for order and justice in the common life of the church, “For God is a God not of disorder, but of peace” (1 Cor. 14:33a). In this way, we help shelter the children of God from injustice and abuse arising out of confusion and disorder and help exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven to the world (Book of Order, F-1.0304). The ACC consistently attempts neutrally to evaluate constitutional matters before the assembly. It takes great pains to give careful, constructive, critique to proposals. The ACC endeavors to be particularly sensitive to the sometimes volatile sentiments and beliefs expressed in our theologically diverse denomination. The ACC views these realities as an opportunity for further educating and reminding the church of the principles and beliefs expressed in our Constitution. The fundamentals of our polity continue to guide and inspire the church when they are applied in the decision-making process.

D. The ACC’s Faithfulness in Its Servant Role

The ACC’s faithfulness to and fulfillment of its servant role is vividly shown in its commitment to neutrality on difficult issues before the church. While sometimes goaded to be partisan, the committee has maintained and enforced within itself high standards of objectivity and neutrality, in order that its service to the church might be trusted. Further, the ACC has strengthened its service by increasingly seeing its role as educational and instructive. Most commissioners to an assembly do not come with a detailed knowledge and understanding of the inter-workings of different sections of the Form of Government or the Rules of Discipline. Former ACC moderator, Jim Wilson, stated in a prior survey response that “the advice the ACC gave during my tenure on the committee generally did a good job of helping commissioners understand those inter-workings, and thus make well-informed judgments about the alternatives offered them.” In preparing this advice, the ACC must be, and generally has been, sensitive to the distinction between advocacy and advice, while still offering its wisdom as to the unintended or less than obvious consequences of particular options being considered. The ACC’s advice given the past few assemblies regarding the options available with respect to the ordination of gay and lesbian Presbyterians, and its advice regarding approval of the new Form of Government are examples in which the ACC has done a good job of presenting the assembly with options and consequences, without stepping over the line into an advocacy position.

In sum, the ACC primarily acts in a servant capacity; it does not initiate its own agenda; rather it responds to requests from the church for interpretation of existing provisions of the Book of Order and provides counsel to the assembly regarding amendments to the Book of Order. In addition, the ACC serves the assembly in an advisory capacity when required. Members of the ACC often contribute hundreds of hours of volunteer service in preparation for a particular meeting of the General Assembly, and in service while the assembly is in session. Members of the ACC, much like the members of other committees
and commissions, boards and ministries in church councils large and small throughout our denomination, are grateful to the presbytery and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for affording us the privilege to serve.

E. The Interface Between the ACC’s Constitutional Mandate and Being Equipped to Respond to the Needs of the Church

Honoring the ACC’s historic charge does not easily lend itself to the notion of being a visionary entity. The ACC’s primary function is to be reactive and responsive to the business that is routinely placed before the committee. The Book of Order places some rather stringent parameters on what the committee can and cannot do. The committee has learned that one of the key components to being visionary in its work is to cherish the past and use it to reflect upon the future. Frequently, when the ACC has crafted its written response to an overture to the General Assembly (GA), the recommendation will cite (and remind the assembly) of historic events that shaped the denomination as well as drawing attention to past assembly actions and judicial decisions that are still relevant and helpful.

The ACC is keenly aware and concerned about emerging issues in the church—especially the issues that have a polemical and divisive nature. Ordinarily, the ACC addresses these issues in the context of an ACC response to an overture or a concern that arises in the assembly’s plenary session. And, the ACC continues to discipline itself not to take an advocacy position on any matter before the assembly.

II: SELF-STUDY STRATEGIES AND PROCESSES

A primary principle for this self-study is that there be a conspicuous alignment between the self-study strategy and processes if consistent results are to be obtained. Largely, there are two parties in this study: (1) ACC members and former members, and (2) persons who are “consumers” of the ACC’s advice. Because the intent is not only to provide a self-study, but also to solicit perceptions of the ACC from important others, several survey instruments were designed that would generate the information in an honest, objective, and fair manner. In addition, two sets of surveys were prepared and distributed. The survey was designed/modified and distributed by the ACC subcommittee based on a previous self-study of the ACC (2012) with assistance of the General Assembly Office of Research Services (GAORS) in designing, distributing, collating, and summarizing the results. Gathering clear, candid data was the goal of both of the survey instruments. The General Assembly Office of Research Services also compiled the responses, prepared a report, and submitted its findings to the ACC. A slide presentation prepared by Susan Barnett is attached to this report. (See ACC Permanent Committee Review 2017 Report October 23 2017.pptx.) This report summarizes the survey process and findings, as well as strengths of the ACC, areas for growth, and other comments.

III: EFFECTIVENESS

*Webster’s Dictionary* defines effective as, “… producing the intended or expected result.”

This self-study will explore the performance and role of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) within the context of the larger institutional environment of the General Assembly (GA) and the spiritual lives of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In a stringent effort to derive objective and honest information, the surveys targeted several levels and arenas of persons that have felt the impact of the ACC’s work. The harvest of the survey information provides a keen portrait of the ACC’s worth, precisely because the ACC is uniquely effective in the manifestation of its constitutional mandate. According to the description of the functions of the ACC in the *Book of Order* and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the primary orientation of the ACC is to the meetings of the General Assembly. However, the data are clear that the impact and effectiveness of the ACC is felt throughout the church in numerous ways, on multiple levels of governance, and in the daily lives of Presbyterians.

A. On the General Assembly Level

In preparation for a meeting of the General Assembly, the most conspicuous and common tasks before the committee are the preparation of the written responses to requests for interpretation of the *Book of Order* (G-6.02 previously G-13.0112c) and the committee’s advice to the assembly regarding overtures that seek to change the Constitution (G-6.04 previously G-13.0112d). The *Book of Order* requires that the ACC meet prior to each session of the General Assembly and submit its advice to the Stated Clerk no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the assembly (G-6.04b previously G-13.0112b). The ACC performs its work by initially assigning each item of business coming to an assembly (or in the more unusual case, items referred by an assembly to the ACC) to a drafting team. Each member of the drafting team prepares a draft comment or response to each item of business assigned it. Once the drafting team agrees on a proposed response, that draft is presented to the entire committee for discussion and revision. Only after several redrafts does an item generally receive approval from the entire committee for submission to an assembly. This process is effective in creating consensus among committee members as to the appropriate reasoning and conclusions to be submitted to the assembly, and forces discipline and rigorous writing and analysis. Fortunately, this work all occurs within an atmosphere of community and common mission that places the integrity of our responsibilities to the church above any personal interests, an approach that should be a model to the rest of the PC(USA) (James Wilson, ACC alumnus 2010). When the ACC’s recommendations are submitted to the Stated Clerk, they are the result of arduous toil, both by individual members of the ACC as well as the full committee. Some overtures, in particular, require extensive research and study that is labor intensive. These recommendations soon enter the public domain, initially as Reports.
to the General Assembly, and are distributed to elected commissioners prior to the General Assembly meeting. The ACC recommendations become part of the printed record of the General Assembly in the Minutes of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, which are available to every stated clerk and council in the PC(USA).

By the time the General Assembly convenes, the ACC has made extensive and thorough preparations for each item of business that requires ACC presence and assistance in General Assembly committees, such as the Church Polity Committee. Because the General Assembly committee structure is set months before the assembly convenes, each ACC member has been given his/her GA committee assignments, which may include several different committees. It is the responsibility of the ACC member to be fully prepared to interpret in full to the GA committee the rationale for the ACC’s recommendations and advice. Members of the ACC are not authorized to deviate from the ACC recommendations/advice to offer personal opinions. It is the responsibility of any ACC member assigned to a General Assembly committee to introduce oneself to the committee’s leadership team prior to the convening of that committee for business. At that time, ACC members will request a moment of time on the committee’s agenda to state briefly the role of the ACC. Comments from the survey underscore the importance of an early working relationship between the leadership team and the ACC member(s). In those committees with controversial business items, it is not uncommon for the ACC representatives to be called upon multiple times by the committee leadership, as well as by individual members of the committee. Members of the ACC, in preparation for the General Assembly, are trained to utilize those times in GA committees when questions arise for the ACC as “teaching moments” about our polity and Constitution.

Perhaps the best indicator of ACC effectiveness at the General Assembly meetings, whether it is regarding the written recommendations on business items or the oral interpretations in GA committees, is the relative absence of complaints or criticisms of the ACC. One of the most meaningful experiences for ACC members is to hear, during the GA plenary discussion, a commissioner echoing verbatim written recommendations/advice of the ACC. Surely the most important indicator of GA effectiveness is the esteem and appreciation of the ACC by the GA commissioners, and at each assembly there is considerable praise for the ACC.

B. The ACC as Communicator

The ACC’s constitutional responsibilities require it to be primarily reactive, not proactive in its communications. It is an advisory committee and should not initiate discussion of issues before the PC(USA). The constraints of the Book of Order and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly have successfully prevented the ACC from becoming tainted by or accused of having any political agenda. The ACC, therefore, is not charged with or expected to communicate to the church at large directly, and it has scrupulously avoided doing so.

Although the opportunities for communications are limited, the ACC’s primary communications with the church-at-large is through its advice to proposed actions of each assembly, which are posted on the denomination’s website prior to the assembly. The ACC has sought to bring its reports earlier each year to the assembly, and to structure them when they were posted to make them as clear as possible to anyone reviewing an assembly’s business online.

In addition, the ACC is literally on the record regarding constitutional issues that have come to the General Assembly for action. Not only do the Minutes contain the ACC recommendations but also the electronic version of each GA’s Annotated Book of Order contains ACC advice on overtures that sought to amend the Book of Order. At each meeting of the General Assembly, the ACC makes a formal entity report that is also included in the Minutes. Typically, the ACC report provides general information about the nature of the ACC and its constitutional mandate of service to the General Assembly and the church; and it also renders specific comments on the nature of the business before the assembly that has constitutional implications.

The ACC occasionally communicates in unseen and yet important ways typically within the context of General Assembly entities. “When directed by the General Assembly or when requested by an agency or committee of the General Assembly, the committee may consult with said agencies or committees on constitutional matters.” The ACC sees itself as having a small, yet significant role as being servant to the General Assembly and the church as well as being in partnership with various key GA entities. There is a strong “comfort zone” for the ACC members in its role as communicator because of the power and wisdom of the Constitution and the Scriptures, “Your decrees are my delight, they are my counselors” (Ps. 119:24).

C. Fidelity to Mission

The ACC has always strived to complete its work in a timely, but thorough and comprehensive manner. Of more significance is the ACC’s awareness of its responsibility in providing a high-quality of performance in every venue. Individually and corporately, the ACC has a strong sense of call and faithfulness to Jesus Christ in the fulfillment of its required work.

Conscious of its mission, the ACC is careful to function within the limits of the powers granted to it by the Constitution and the processes outlined in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly. The ACC often works closely with task forces and
commissions of the assembly that have been charged with addressing matters impinging on the Constitution to provide timely advice in matters that require constitutional interpretation. While ACC advice to the assembly on proposed amendments is transmitted through the Office of the General Assembly, the ACC on occasion has requested that some of its advice be released sooner than planned to provide increased understanding and transparency of its work.

In addition, the ACC’s work often attracts observers from interested parties or groups in the church. Provision for their observation is facilitated during both face-to-face meetings and on conference calls, except on the rare occasion when it is necessary for the ACC to meet in executive session. Lastly, while the newly adopted revision to the Form of Government no longer specifies that ACC members must be present whenever the assembly is in session, it has been the practice of the ACC that the full complement of ACC members is ordinarily present, rather than only the three whose presence was previously required.

IV: STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR GROWTH

A. Strengths

The primary source for information about the strengths of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) was from current and former members of the ACC and the comments of those who responded to the surveys, including mid council executives and stated clerks, as well as commissioners.

An extremely large number of survey respondents mentioned the people that populate the ACC as an enormous strength. Specifically, the caliber and wide diversity of persons was a key factor; the knowledge, skills, and unique credentials create a powerful dynamic when the committee is in action together, in particular. Another major strength is in the ability of the ACC to provide informed helpful advice without advocacy for a particular cause.

The following represent survey comments about the ACC:

- “[A person] from the ACC, was very helpful to the committee I was on most recently.”
- “Absolutely necessary. Should also be in middle governing bodies and others.”
- “I think the ACC has a thankless job and handles their duties very well. I think it is important to have people on the committee who will be fair, who do not have personal agendas, or who do not let their personal opinions get in the way of what is best for all in the Church. It is also crucial to have committee members who are comfortable with technology, and equally comfortable with critical thinking and discourse, as well as comfortable with criticism.”
- “In general, I think the ACC does excellent work. I know several people who have served on the ACC and it is primarily through knowing them that I understand the work of the ACC.”

Standards of performance for the ACC, especially in regard to the written recommendations of the ACC to the General Assembly, are both a daunting and challenging dimension of the scholarship expected and tacitly required. The history and continuity of ACC achievements are unquestionably of major significance. Whereas many would expect the ACC to perform in a rather orthodox, even wooden, manner because laws are perceived as rigid and conventional, in many situations the ACC purposely has endeavored to pursue creative solutions to complex issues. On every overture or issue that the ACC addresses, it is the ACC’s practice to point out the “upside” and “downside” for approving an amendment to the Constitution, for instance. It is the responsibility of the ACC to educate and elucidate the General Assembly with its recommendations.

B. Weaknesses and Areas for Growth

There was no clear consensus amongst active committee members as to actual or perceived weaknesses in the work of the committee. Everyone would likely agree that time devoted to discussing issues and ability to staff all of the General Assembly (GA) committees effectively were challenges with which the committee struggles. The occasional failure of members of the ACC to prepare drafts of advice in a sufficiently timely manner to allow adequate review was also noted as a weakness. Representation on the committee that balances diversity of the church as to racial minorities, women, theology, age, and constitutional underpinnings through attention in the nominating process was another issue raised. The following represent other survey comments:

- “Advisory Com on the Constitution gave confused comments when the AI on marriage came to the floor.”
- “It would be wonderful if somehow the ACC advice could be dispensed to the presbyteries as they are in the process of constructing their overtures. It's a shame when overtures are crafted and endorsed, and then when GA meets, we discover that they are not consistent with the constitution.”
- “The Advisory Committee on the Constitution presented one interpretation in the resources and verbally completely flipped at plenary. Showing the individuals bias not the committee’s advice.”
“The booklets on the Overtures were not sent to our Presbytery in time for being able to use them at our March meeting, and since we did not meet again until June, we did not get to vote until the day before the deadline for reporting.”

“While often helpful … there were a few cases … where the advice was ‘well we have never done it that way before’ which is never helpful.”

V: SURVEY LEARNINGS

A. Scope of the Surveys

The surveys utilized were intentionally designed to meet the criteria suggested in the self-study survey guide published by the Office of the General Assembly. Therefore, the scope was broad and yet specific. In the spirit of the criteria, the surveys endeavored to provoke in-depth, thoughtful, and candid responses. The scope of the surveys pinpointed key aspects of our life together as Presbyterians:

- PC(USA) Constitution
- Faith
- Polity
- Mission
- Theology
- Dedication to the PC(USA)
- Meetings of the General Assembly
- Welfare of the church

The intent of the surveys was to measure the ACC against these hallmarks. The ACC is at its best when its Christian humanness shines through when writing, presenting, and meeting; and the surveys tried to establish this with a somewhat clinical means.

B. Participation

Research Services uses Survey Gizmo, an online survey software for all surveys including the Presbyterian Panel. Commissioners and mid council leaders were surveyed separately; however, both received the survey followed by two reminders and an immediate thank you for their response. The online survey was sent via Survey Gizmo to 1,935 commissioners for the 220th, 221st, and 222nd General Assemblies (2012, 2014, and 2016), and it was also sent to 289 mid council leaders. The total response rate was 42 percent (932 of 2,224 surveyed), with 43 percent of commissioners (829 of 1935) and 35 percent (102 of 289) of mid council leaders responding.

The key findings of the survey are summarized as follows:

- Commissioners’ awareness of the ACC increased as a result of attending a General Assembly. This is evidenced by the 21 percent increase in familiarity from prior to, then following the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

- Commissioners report the quality of advice received on overtures for proposed changes to the Book of Order to be good (40 percent) or very good (28 percent).

- The ACC consistently receives good to excellent ratings on the quality of their work, advice offered in plenaries, fairness in their findings, knowledge of the Book of Order, and professionalism.

- Mid council leaders acknowledged that the ACC exhibits comprehensive knowledge of issues, is consistent in their interpretation of the Book of Order, and offers helpful interpretations and explanations.

- Forty-eight percent rated the ACC’s responses to questions raised during General Assembly plenary sessions as “good,” and another 30 percent rated the ACC as “excellent,” with only 18 percent rating the responses as “fair” or “poor.” The following graphically illustrates the overall positive view of the ACC from survey respondents:
G-6.02 INTERPRETING THE CONSTITUTION

The General Assembly may provide authoritative interpretation of the Book of Order, which shall be binding on the councils of the church when rendered in the manner described in this section or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case.

The General Assembly shall elect an Advisory Committee on the Constitution composed of nine persons, ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be a member ex officio without vote. No person who has served on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for a full term of six years shall be eligible for reelection until four years have elapsed after the expired six-year term. The General Assembly shall provide by its own rule for the qualifications of members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.
All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly, no less than sixty days prior to the General Assembly.

G-6.04 AMENDING THE *BOOK OF ORDER*

Amendments to the *Book of Order* shall be made only if all the following steps are completed:

a. All proposals requesting amendment of the *Book of Order* are communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly.

b. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such proposals to amend the *Book of Order* to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (G-6.02), which shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At least sixty days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, the advisory committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations, which may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the committee. The General Assembly shall not consider any amendment until it has considered the report and any recommendations from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

c. The same General Assembly approves the proposal to amend and transmits the proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their vote.

d. Presbyteries shall transmit their votes to the Stated Clerk no later than one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendments.

e. The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the *Book of Order* has received the affirmative votes of a majority of all the presbyteries. The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment.
III. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Moderator

1. The moderator shall preside at all meetings of the committee. If the moderator is incapacitated or absent, the vice moderator will carry out his or her responsibilities or the committee may elect a Moderator Pro Tem.

2. The moderator, vice moderator, secretary, and liaison staff person from the Office of the Stated Clerk shall determine prior to each of the committee meetings the work which will be considered by the committee and make assignments for preliminary study and recommendations by other members.

3. The moderator shall be responsible for the agenda of each meeting, while advance arrangements for the meeting include the sending of papers and assignments to the committee members shall be the responsibility of the Office of the General Assembly.

4. The moderator, secretary and liaison staff person from the Office of the Stated Clerk shall prepare the report of the committee to the General Assembly.

5. The moderator, or a member designated by him or her, shall be available to represent the committee at any orientation of the General Assembly Leaders and of General Assembly Commissioners upon invitation from the committee and the Office of the General Assembly and the Office of the Stated Clerk.

6. The moderator shall be responsible for presenting the report of the committee to the General Assembly. The moderator may request any member of the committee to speak on a particular item of business.

B. The Vice Moderator

1. In the absence of the moderator, or his or her incapacitation, shall call to order the meetings of the committee and preside until the arrival of the moderator.

2. In the event of the death, incapacitation or resignation of the moderator, shall become the acting moderator.

C. The Secretary

1. Shall be responsible for recording the proceedings of the committee.

2. Shall, in cooperation with the moderator and liaison staff person perform the duties outlined in Section III A-2-4.

3. Shall be responsible for maintaining this Manual.

4. Shall assist the moderator in the conduct of meetings so as to insure the completion in a timely manner of all the work of the committee.

D. Liaison Staff persons

1. Shall receive and assemble for transmission to the committee all papers requiring review and comment from the committee.

2. Shall make logistical arrangements for any and all meetings of the committee.

3. Shall assist the moderator and secretary in the preparation for and conduct of all meetings of the committee.

4. Shall serve as archivist for the committee.

5. Shall serve as the corresponding secretary of the committee in matters referred to the committee by governing bodies of the Church.

6. Shall in cooperation with the secretary develop forms and procedures to facilitate the work of the committee.

7. Shall perform such other services for the committee as may be assigned by the Office of the Stated Clerk or at the request of the committee.

E. Procedures for Handling Requests for Interpretation

1. The Office of the General Assembly receives a request for an authoritative interpretation.

2. The Office of Constitutional Services makes an initial judgment as to whether the request “requires an interpretation” by the General Assembly.

   a. If Constitutional Services believes that the provision is adequately interpreted by other provisions of the Constitution or past authoritative interpretations, it will respond to the request, with a copy to the moderator, vice moderator and secretary of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

      (1) If the moderator, vice moderator and secretary agree that the request needs no further response, they will recommend to ACC that the reply of Constitutional Services be affirmed. When ACC agrees, this is an ACC
determination that the provision does not “require interpretation.” The requesting entity is informed of this action and the request does not appear in the record of the General Assembly. If ACC does not agree, the request will be assigned to a writing team.

(2) If the moderator, vice moderator, and secretary do not agree with the judgment of Constitutional Services or its response, the request will be assigned to a writing team for the development of a recommended response for the General Assembly’s consideration.

b. If Constitutional Services believes that the request requires an ACC response, the moderator and secretary will assign it to a writing team for the development of a recommended response for the General Assembly’s consideration.

3. Once ACC approves a recommended response, it is included in its report to the General Assembly. Upon action by the General Assembly the provision will have been authoritatively interpreted.

GENERAL RULES FOR MEMBERS

1. All members are expected to be in attendance throughout each and every meeting of the committee.

2. All members of the committee shall be in attendance at the session of the General Assembly.

3. To insure their availability for the work of the Committee at the General Assembly meeting, members of the committee should be free of any other responsibilities at the General Assembly.

4. At the General Assembly the members of the committee will be expected to serve as resource persons to Assembly committees and especially those committees to which recommendations from the Advisory Committee have been assigned by the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

5. Members of the committee are not authorized to speak for the committee and thus are expected to show restraint in responding to any request for constitutional interpretation.

6. The actions of the committee have no authority until acted upon by the General Assembly. It is therefore improper for any committee member to disseminate any actions taken by the committee before they have been made public by the Office of the General Assembly.

7. In preparing responses to communications to the committee, those members assigned responsibility for review and recommendations should use the document identification number assigned to that document.

8. When directed by the General Assembly or when requested by an agency or committee of the General Assembly, the committee may consult with said agencies or committees on constitutional matters. The only authoritative interpretations of the Constitution are those recommended by the committee as a whole and approved by the General Assembly.

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS OF TERMS

Overture (O) A formal action by a presbytery, synod, or agency of the General Assembly seeking an amendment to the Constitution. (See G-18.0300 for requirements.) There is no required style. The signature of the stated clerk of the presbytery or synod certifying the action of the governing body makes a communication an overture from one governing body to another. The numbering of overtures shall be done by the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Request (R) Any request for an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution submitted to the Stated Clerk by a governing body or an individual. Those requiring an interpretation are submitted to ACC.

Reports (RGA) Material submitted to the General Assembly by its entities or Special Committees.

Referral (REF) An action referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution by the General Assembly for report to a subsequent General Assembly.

Commissioners’ Resolution (CR) A written resolution introduced by any two commissioners to the General Assembly in accordance with the Manual of the General Assembly.

NUMBERING OF PAPERS

Each of the above referenced papers shall carry an ACC Document Identification Number for easy reference by committee members. The Office of General Assembly staff shall maintain a summary chart of all business before the ACC.
Appendix 3

EXCERPT—Standing Rules of the General Assembly
(From the Manual of the General Assembly, 2012)

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Titles/Functions—

a. Title and Functions of the Stated Clerk at the General Assembly

(1) The title of the Stated Clerk is “The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office. [SR H.2.a.(1)]

(2) The Stated Clerk is accountable, through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, to the General Assembly for the performance of the duties of the office, and shall present to each meeting of the General Assembly a report on the state of the church. [SR H.2.a.(2)]

(3) The Stated Clerk is responsible for all matters related to the sessions of the General Assembly and all other matters relative to and arising from the General Assembly for which no other assignment has been made. [SR H.2.a.(3)]

(4) The Stated Clerk shall also be responsible for guidance of the procedures for candidates seeking the office of moderator, and for supervision of the election of each moderator. [SR H.2.a.(4)]

(5) In accordance with directives from previous General Assemblies and in consultations with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, and other General Assembly agencies, the Stated Clerk is authorized to decide on matters pertaining to facilities and special events that must be established before the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. [SR H.2.a.(5)]

(6) The Stated Clerk shall receive all reports, communications, overtures, and any other materials appropriate for General Assembly consideration. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for presentation to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, a referral of such items of business coming before the General Assembly. [SR H.2.a.(6)]

(7) The Stated Clerk shall prepare for consideration of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a proposed docket for the General Assembly’s consideration of its business (Standing Rule C.4.a.). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall present the proposed docket to the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures so that it may recommend a docket to the commissioners at the first business session. The docket presented to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall provide a time early in the General Assembly for a report by the Stated Clerk on the state of the church, and for a report by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. [SR H.2.a.(7)]

(8) The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly the number of assembly committees and a name for each committee after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities (Standing Rule C.1.). The Stated Clerk shall present the committee structure to the General Assembly for ratification at the first business session. Each commissioner and advisory delegate shall be assigned by random selection to one assembly committee at least forty-five days before the opening date of the General Assembly. [SR H.2.a.(8)]

(9) The Stated Clerk shall provide opportunity for orienting the commissioners, advisory delegates, and others taking part in the session of the General Assembly. The use of Robert’s Rules of Order, sources of parliamentary advice, and the availability of resource persons and materials to facilitate their work should be part of the orientation. [SR H.2.a.(9)]

(10) The Stated Clerk shall be the parliamentarian for the meetings of the General Assembly or arrange for the service of a professional parliamentarian. [SR H.2.a.(10)]

(11) The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the councils and agencies of the assembly, persons who presented business to the assembly, and others affected by the assembly’s actions, a report on actions of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to their concerns. The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the presbyteries all assembly actions on which the presbyteries are requested to take action. [SR H.2.a.(11)]

(12) As soon as practicable after the adjournment of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish the assembly’s proceedings and other documents as the assembly may direct in an appropriate format (i.e. print or electronic) to be determined by the Stated Clerk. [SR H.2.a.(12)]

Appendix 4

EXCERPT—Standing Rules of the General Assembly
(From the Manual of the General Assembly, 2012)

Advisory Committee on the Constitution

a. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report to the General Assembly its findings along with its recommendations on all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the Book of Order, including proposals for constitutional change. “The General Assembly shall vote on the recommendations, and may amend or decline to approve them” (Book of Order, G-6.02). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report any editorial changes made to the Book of Order since its last report to the General Assembly. (SR A.5.a.)
03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

b. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (Book of Order, G-6.04 and G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. (SR E.3.b)

c. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters (Book of Order, G-13.0112c) shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter so referred and report its findings and recommendations, which may include proposals for constitutional change, to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The assembly committee shall vote on the recommendations and may amend or decline to approve them. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee. (SR E.3.c)

d. Recommendations and reports to the assembly regarding such new business must be approved in assembly committees by three-fourths of the committee members voting on the matter. (SR E.3.d)

e. New business, other than that described in this standing rule, must be presented in accordance with Standing Rule A.8. (SR E.3.e)

f. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution (Book of Order, G-6.04) or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (Book of Order, G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters (Book of Order, G-13.0112c) shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter referred and report its findings and recommendations (which may include proposals for constitutional change) to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee. (SR E.3.f)

Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee. (SR E.3.f)

Appendix 5
Self-Study Survey #1

See ACC Permanent Committee Review 2017 Report October 23 2017.pdf for the text of this appendix. [See p. 235.]

Endnotes


D. General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) Self-Study 2012–2017

Introduction

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) continues to serve well in its call to facilitate work for full inclusion and wide participation across issues of race, age, ability, geography, gender, equity, power, privilege/advantage, oppressions/disadvantages, and impactful biases at the General Assembly level, with its constituent entities, agencies, committees, and councils. Through education and support, advocacy and data analysis, GACOR builds up the community of God so that reconciliation is made manifest and the principles of inclusiveness and diversity are implemented.

In preparing for review by the assembly, the GACOR has reflected upon our work since January 1, 2012, and produced this self-study. We have considered our faithfulness to our role and mandate to serve the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). During this review period (January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2017), there have been many accomplishments and much progress in the work of GACOR. There remain challenges as we have been set with generational work to assist the whole church in accomplishing. We completed this self-study with excitement and hope, as we consider the future of the GACOR and the PC(USA).
Supporting the Church’s Mission

The General Assembly Committee on Representation, a permanent standing committee of the General Assembly, seeks to uphold the denomination’s dedication to diversity and inclusion nationally and to influence all levels of the church. Never has the work of the committee been more apparent and important than in these difficult times of racial tension and deepened divisions in American society. The Book of Order declares at G-3.0103 in committing to this work that “the councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (F-1.0403). In fulfilling this commitment, councils shall give due consideration to both the gifts and requirements for ministry (G-2.0104) and the right of people in congregations and councils to elect their officers.” The GACOR seeks to serve in the fulfillment of this mission at the assembly level.

The GACOR seeks to dismantle the hold of systemic racism and all forms of oppression on, and in the structure of the denomination while provoking members and councils to ridding ourselves of biased attitudes and tendencies so we can faithfully share the full stories in our community and lift up the talents of those silenced in our midst, those missing in decision-making, the overlooked gifts available to serve God together. We experience it at the communion table, in the pews, at the meeting tables, in council gatherings, and in conference calls. We seek strategic partners in the agencies, councils, and caucuses to join us in this critical work to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion of all persons within the PC(USA).

Membership

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) is comprised of fourteen persons elected by the General Assembly (GA) through nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), in accordance with the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403, distributed as equally as possible in the four regions described in SR I.1.d., each residing in a different presbytery. The regions provide means for geographic distribution.

All members are nominated at-large and elected by the General Assembly in as nearly equal classes as possible, taking into consideration: age, race, gender, physical ability, teaching or ruling elder or church member, and theological diversity so that GACOR is equipped to represent the diversity of the PC (USA). Terms are four years and there are two classes of seven persons serving at any one time.

As directed by the Organization for Mission, every member “shall be an active member of a congregation, or a continuing member of a presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” within the geographical boundary of the region and a synod therein.

On December 31, 2017, members of GACOR ranged in age from under 25 to over 75. Members described their race identities as African-American, Hispanic/Latino/a, White, Asian, Middle Eastern, Native American, and Multiracial. Three members self-identify as living with disability. Four members are under 35. Four members are church members, 6 are ruling elders and 4 are teaching elders.

Staffing and Resourcing of GACOR

The Reverend Molly Casteel, manager, equity and representation, is the assigned staff person to the committee (her work is located in Mid Council Ministries in the Office of the General Assembly). Rev. Casteel brings a wealth of antiracism work and training, as well as experience in staffing GA committees. As a pastor, she has many excellent contacts with professionals in the areas of theology, antiracism work, committee functioning and support, etc. She brings these resources to the committee when appropriate and requested and this benefits the work. Rev. Casteel has developed good working relationships among the GA staff, which enables the work of GACOR to function smoothly. She provides seamless organizational guidance to the entire committee. Rev. Casteel faithfully serves the mission and values of GACOR.

Accomplishments

There have been many accomplishments in the review period that we want to share, in brief here are some:

● GACOR held training events in 2013 (Chicago, 67 persons) and 2015 (Portland, 51 persons) to equip members of synod CORs (and included proximate presbytery CORs). Funding from the GACOR budget provided registration costs, travel, room and board expenses for these designated participants.

● When possible, the location of a physical meeting also meant the GACOR consulted with local mid council committees on representation. These dialogues provided GACOR with opportunities to become informed of the contexts and practices of those synods and presbyteries in relation to COR work. We also heard their specific concerns and challenges. The GACOR consulted and advised CORs on ways that can continue to progress our goal of true representation and equity in the PC(USA). This approach became the norm after 2015. Highlights include:
  ○ March 2015—Presbytery of Grace and Synod of the Sun, committees on representation
○ January 2016—Meeting with the Presbytery of Santa Fe leader and Synod of the Southwest executive/stated clerk.

○ March 2017—Spending a day in consultation with the committees on representation from the Synod of Boriquén, the Noroeste Presbytery, the Presbytery of San Juan, and the Suroeste Presbytery.

○ October 2017—Meeting with the presbytery executive leader and members of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, committee on representation and nominations (CORN).

● In compliance with Standing Rule K.1.c, GACOR consulted with the GA Moderator/Co-Moderators on the principles of participation and inclusiveness and the great diversity of the church’s constituencies as these pertain to appointments made by the GA Moderator(s). The committee met with the Moderators of GA220 and GA221 consulting on appointments for special bodies created by those assemblies. The GACOR met three times with the GA223 Co-Moderators. We have brought a wish list of dreams for greater equity and inclusivity to the Moderators, along with strategies to implement on their part. We have emphasized the need to work with the racial ethnic caucuses and councils to improve the diversity of nomination applications to GANC. We have had positive responses and conversations with the Co-Moderators.

● In the review time, GACOR sent a liaison to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), which improved relations on collaborative work from the assembly. In 2017, ACREC reciprocated by adding a liaison to GACOR. These liaisons helped the committees consult on the six-year cultural proficiency plans of the six General Assembly agencies and other referred work.

● Synod COR report forms are now submitted online through a web portal, streamlining the process and making documents available to a wider audience. In 2016, we had enough data in the system to provide trending data on synods. We shared it with synods so they could compare their performance against themselves over time and will be presenting some data on the web going forward.


● Convened the Supplier Diversity Definition Table with representatives of the six PC(USA) agencies and developed a standard definition for supplier diversity (Item 03-12) approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

● Since 2012, the committee has engaged the six agencies in regular conversation regarding their employment practices. The 220th General Assembly (2012) restored this work to GACOR by approving the report, Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer (Item 11-17), and its recommendations.

● The GACOR leadership and committee met regularly with the Stated Clerk to advise him and to receive advice on issues of concern before the assembly.

● In the preparation for the Way Forward Committee at GA222 and Way Forward Commission of 2017–2018, committee members participated in PC(USA) Identity conversations led by COGA and surveys distributed by the GA221 Moderator.

● The GACOR moderator attended meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board regularly (2012 to present) as an observer and provided advice on issues before that body, as requested.

● A member of GACOR has attended and advised meetings of the COGA at least annually since 2012.

● Corresponded with the manager of assembly nominations and the designated liaison from the GANC, regarding GACOR needs and concerns.

● Communicated with the designated liaison from the GANC (changes every two years) to advise regarding the candidates needed by GACOR, to request reports on candidate pools and scheduling for consultation on slates for GA election.

● In accordance with Standing Rules, GACOR participated in the Leader Selection process, advising the Moderators of the 220th General Assembly (2012), the 221st General Assembly (2014) and the 222nd General Assembly (2016) as they selected GA committee leadership.

● The GACOR members read and discussed several books for its continuing education:
The book discussions opened committee members to share stories with one another. Members shared, and were listened to, and then engaged in substantive discussions. Reading and reflecting as a committee allowed participants to express experiences and thoughts about racial tensions, current events, and how racism and white supremacy are built into the denomination. Training events held in 2013 and 2015 were continuing education for the members.

One learning from the multiple experiences and dialogues with mid councils, caucuses, other committees, agencies, and committees on representation across the denomination, has been that there are new incarnations and realities of the work since constitutional reform in 2011. There is no longer one definition of how to do the work. The practices vary, in response to contexts and councils’ will. We decided after two years of consideration that we needed to look at the theology of why we do the work. We collected ideas and insights from members and then referred the work to designated members to write a theology on representation for reflection and further study. Committee members, Dr. Raj Nadella (assistant professor of new testament at Columbia Seminary) and the Reverend Eric Thomas (pastor Siloam Presbyterian Church, NYC and Ph.D. candidate (ABD) in New Testament at Drew University), were assigned the drafting task. The document was approved by GACOR in late 2017 and directed that it be supplemented with a study guide and other materials and included in this self-study.

The October 2017 meeting was in the same location as the Mid Council Leaders Gathering (what has replaced the Polity Conference of OGA and Regional Benefits Conferences of the BOP). The writers presented a workshop previewing this theology work, which was well received. The document is included in the appendix of this report (Appendix A).

Cooperation with Other Agencies & Committees

Councils

The Organization for Mission (last updated 2018) describes assigned work of the General Assembly Committee on Representation in IV.C.5. The scope of its partnerships spans all assembly entities [IV.C.5.b(1)] and committees on representation or functions at councils below the assembly [IV.C.5.b(7)] (synods at this reporting). The committee regularly reaches out to synods, communicates regarding reports, shares data analysis, and consults on effective ways to utilize reporting tools. After completing five years of data in the web reporting tool, GACOR approached all sixteen synods in 2017 to demonstrate the new trending data capacity and to review the annual Synod Committee on Representation (SCOR) report itself. The assigned subcommittee held five zoom calls hosting fifteen synod’s executives and/or stated clerks where they discussed the trending data from their synods and ways to implement the report in the council’s life and operations. Of primary importance to GACOR was moving the report from being an accounting tool to one that can assess the diversity and representation within the council; when utilized effectively, the tool reflects underrepresented voices and perspectives and points to actions to remedy concerns raised. These communications are a regular part of the committee’s work and allow GACOR to highlight the deep resources it provides.

Committees & Agencies

The committee continues to liaise with various denominational entities including, but not limited to: the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), Middle Eastern Caucus, Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC), Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA). In these relations, it is our intention to serve as a partner and collaborator throughout the denomination by extending our work outside of the members of our committee. Through strong partnerships, GACOR supports the denomination’s goal to maintain, “[a] new openness in its own membership, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions, made one in Christ by the power of the Spirit as a visible sign of the new humanity.” Reflecting this strategy, the GACOR Manual of Operations highlights the roles of the liaison relationship in detail.

The GACOR advised the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) concerning revision to the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR). At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), a referral with comment from Item 03-02 requested that the COGA work with the GACOR to determine the best way “to revise the survey instrument used in the Racial Ethnic Composition Component of the Sessions’ Annual Report of Church Statistics to more clearly reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity in our churches.” Three GACOR members met in 2017 on video conference calls with a COGA subcommittee on statistics to explore options, advise regarding possible changes, and engage in conversation around the SASR.

The GACOR received reports from and talked with human resources staff of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) regarding hiring practices and nomination processes. This work related to GA actions on benchmarks and the resulting shifts in practices for the agencies. In the review period the committee prepared for benchmark reviews in the next term of two additional agencies.

Responding to the General Assembly

As a standing committee of the assembly, GACOR reviews adjusted work or new work referred to it after every assembly. The following are examples of this work in the review period:
At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), GACOR presented recommendations for changes to employment and supplier diversity benchmarks for OGA and PMA. These were the first two agencies reviewed in the multiple year cycle that will see all agencies reviewed by GACOR (timelines adjusted in 2014). The 220th General Assembly (2012) approved the report, “Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer” (Item 11-17) whose recommendations include the larger referrals to the committee.

Promoted a new assessment of assembly business by experimenting with process observation to measure participation during committee business of the assembly and if there were affects when processes for decision-making changed. Constitutional reform allowed for different processes to be used.

The GACOR supported the development of the new measuring tool: in 2012, it used paper forms; in 2014, it used Google (web based) documents; and in 2016 there was a beta test for a fully online web application. Process observation records what happens in committee, who talks, who doesn’t and how that changes related to decisions made about process. It gives feedback about patterns of silence or participation.

The GACOR helped present an abbreviated version of process observation added to observer reports the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures used during assemblies 2012 to 2016, establishing the practice to today.

Committee members recruited volunteers, promoted the opportunities, and, when possible, participated in process observation during the assemblies. In 2016 when there was a training session on the use of the application, members led portions of the orientation and served as additional resources.

In 2012, GACOR advised the assembly about its constituent groups by leading in voter training by running the body through some demographic questions. Disability was reported significantly more in this way than it is in General Assembly registrations, which emphasize accommodation needs.

Since 2014, GACOR has supported the production of Assembly Representation Profiles of Commissioners and Advisory Delegates (describing the whole assembly and each constituent General Assembly committee) to advise the body about itself using self-identified social identity data (from registration) to show who is making decisions in each setting. In 2016, these were available to all via the resources tab of www.pc-biz.org for the assembly. This educational piece had the assembly’s profiles broken out by commissioner and advisory delegates. Graphs showed commissioners by race, gender and role, and age distribution.

The GACOR increased its using access to the assembly to comment on items of business to advise the body regarding representation, participation, diversity, and inclusiveness. In 2012, the committee commented on items regarding roles and responsibilities of various entities as they adjusted after constitutional reform in 2010 and new work referred by reports. In 2014, comments centered on synods. In 2016, structural considerations for church and council before the assembly attracted GACOR’s comments.

The GACOR advised the Moderator/Co-Moderators regarding the Leader Selection process for the General Assembly in 2012, 2014, and 2016, according to its role as outlined by Standing Rule C.1.c.

In October 2017 in St. Louis, GACOR met with the GA222 Co-Moderator and the Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) co-chairs of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to discuss concerns around worship at General Assembly regarding diversity and inclusion, additional plans for GA223, and how the COLA was reflecting diversity in its leadership and membership. The GACOR also shared its work of advising the assembly about who is present as commissioners and advisory delegates in the business meeting and in committees and described the process observation work.

Organization and Methods for the Work

Revisions to Manual

Since the last review by General Assembly in 2012, we evaluate our work regularly. We enacted a major structural adjustment in late 2013 to prepare for the 2014-2016 term. At that time the number of subcommittees decreased from three to two. Staff support changed in 2013 and the committee needed to take on its own minute recording beginning with the term starting after GA in 2014. The manual changes showed the shift in subcommittees and the addition of the new office of recording clerk/secretary to the executive committee. The executive committee changed from five members (moderator, vice moderator and three subcommittee chairs) to a five-person executive committee (moderator, vice moderator, clerk/secretary, two subcommittee chairs). The most recent revision to the Manual was in 2015. We added a member covenant (in 2013) that is recited at every meeting. The covenant helps us state our purpose and reminds us of our work and recommit us to our common purpose and its pursuit and practice. The Member Covenant is Appendix B to this report.
Executive Committee

The executive committee serves as the leadership body of the committee. The moderator, vice moderator, clerk/secretary, and both subcommittee chairs make up the membership of the executive committee. The executive committee acts on behalf of the full committee on those matters that require immediate action between meetings.

The executive committee met regularly via video call (Zoom). The executive committee monitored the work, related to other bodies, referred correspondence, received and assigned new business and made adjustments between meetings of the committee. It received reports from the moderator, staff, and subcommittee chairs at each meeting. Functions of the executive committee are in the manual.

Subcommittees

All members of GACOR are assigned to a subcommittee for specific work between meetings. The committee reviews the division of labor every two years. Midterm adjustments are made by the executive committee and sometimes the committee appoints smaller groups to do specific tasks (an example is the writing of this report). During the term of review the committee moved from three very small subcommittees, who did not prove to have enough members to accomplish the assigned work, to two larger subcommittees able to do the work more easily. Both subcommittees meet monthly via video call (Zoom).

Subcommittee A—Gather, Analyze, Translate and Export or “GATE” as it is known internally. GATE manages the data collection and analysis functions for the committee and provides interpretation of the data internally and externally, on request. They provided synod trending data for web interpretation, this work will post in 2018. They relate to synods and receive the synod representation reports. They consult the full committee on determining timing and frequency of changes to reports, data requests, and analyses. When the Supplier Diversity definition table was active, a member of GATE participated in it. GATE writes the General Assembly reports from GACOR on six agencies regarding employment and supplier diversity.

Subcommittee B—Advise, Review, Report, and Recommend, also known as ARRR within GACOR, primarily manages the “review and recommend” functions of the committee. Any relationship of the committee requiring reports or advice, providing written feedback to entities beyond GACOR are tasks of this subcommittee. They led the self-study process and report writing for the review of GACOR by the assembly. ARRR drafted comments to COGA, PMAB, ACREC, ACWC, ACSWP, the Stated Clerk, synod executives and stated clerks, among others during this reviewed period. Advice resulted in actions reflecting the advice in many cases. Meetings happened to clarify perspectives. They review all business before an assembly to determine items for comment of the committee and make recommendations.

Meetings

The full GACOR meets in person twice yearly, generally in the late winter/early spring and fall.

- In 2012, February and October in Louisville, Ky.
- In 2013, March in Louisville, KY, and October in Chicago, Ill.
- In 2014, February and October in Louisville, Ky.
- In 2015, February in Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX, and October in Portland, Oreg.
- In 2016, February in Albuquerque, N.Mex., and October at Ferncliff Conference Center in Little Rock, Ark.
- In 2017, March in San Juan, P.R., and October in St. Louis, Mo.

In meetings after an assembly, new members are oriented and new work is reviewed and assigned. Subcommittees are assigned, structures and plans are reviewed for fit and service, and the committee has opportunity to review the manual and its practices. In 2012 and 2104, new members spent an additional day to the first meeting being oriented by the executive committee. In 2016, the committee shifted this orientation meeting in style and made time for full committee training on topics of antiracism and racial justice.

Since 2013, the covenant (Appendix B) is read by the body at the beginning of every meeting. For most of the review period the committee has used Robert’s Rules of Order in decision making, but an emphasis is made to choose other processes to support greater participation and practice equity in our meetings. Most frequently, the alternative method preferred is consensus. Alternates in decision-making processes are selected by a majority vote of the body.

Meeting Evaluations for Internal Accountability

After each in-person meeting all GACOR members are invited to evaluate the meeting. Using Survey Monkey, the committee receives a quantitative and qualitative report. Logistical details concerning the meeting are assessed i.e. location, transportation, meals, and length. The evaluation permits members to provide their feedback regarding more meaningful aspects of the meeting such as worship, opportunities for fellowship, and whether or not the meeting was effective in accomplishing
the ongoing work of GACOR. Moreover, GACOR members are asked to respond as to whether or not their contributions were respected and valued. These questions ensure that the whole committee intentionally practices and demonstrates the principles of equity, representation, and inclusion in all that we do as committee. The purpose of the meeting evaluations is accountability of the committee to each other according to its covenant.

**GA Research Services Survey Data**

An evaluative research and data analysis was conducted with five groups who received the survey from the Presbyterian Research Services concerning GACOR, per Assembly Review of Standing Committee practice. The groups selected were: General Assembly commissioners and advisory delegates from assemblies within the review period, permanent committee members, members of the boards of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, mid council leaders, and National Racial Ethnic Caucus leaders. Angie Androit, Ph.D. of Research Services, PC(USA), led the research surveys and process. Learnings from the data are described below.

There were 843 responses and the overall feedback was exceedingly positive. The response results are noteworthy because it reflects a strong percentage of participation in the survey. We are heartened because it looks like responding to the survey reflects an increase in awareness of GACOR as a committee, and of the mission of GACOR.

Given that the “larger church” surveyed was primarily the denomination’s agencies and mid councils, the result of this survey must be acknowledged twofold. First, impacting the institutional church through the work of its agencies and mid councils provides a model that represents the mission of GACOR. The second result reflects unprecedented participation by the agency board members and mid councils. Impacting the agencies and mid councils demonstrates the denomination’s commitment to be inclusive and sets a real-life example of how to move beyond words into action. The GACOR does help the denomination live out “the kingdom to come.” The historical and social context for many individuals has perpetuated discrimination. Changing dynamics of participation for groups and individuals will raise awareness and encourage a change that moves the church from mere tolerance to true inclusion and increase desire to experience diversity throughout the denomination.

Broader issues considered regarding the mission of the GACOR included fidelity and effectiveness to its stated mission. There were six main findings from the survey data:

1. Of those responding 83 percent are familiar with GACOR. Members on permanent committees and boards are more familiar with GACOR than members of mid councils or General Assembly commissioners. This makes sense as they would have more regular interaction with the committee.

2. The most common way respondents encounter GACOR is through General Assembly. Mid council members are more likely than members of boards to encounter GACOR through General Assembly, and board members are more likely to encounter GACOR in every other situation listed.

3. Only 2 percent think GACOR is unimportant, and 3 percent feel it is not faithful to its mission. Thus, respondents felt GACOR is important. Ninety-one percent state that diversity is an important goal. Some quotes were notable:
   a. “Diversity could be what saves the church”;
   b. Seventy-one percent agreed that “Diversity is an important goal for PC(USA) governance, and a General Assembly Committee on Representation is an important part of achieving that goal.”
   c. Seventy-two percent of respondents “believe GACOR helps the General Assembly follow this instruction at least somewhat faithfully.”

4. An important note from the survey is “the responses do not differ by age, gender, race-ethnicity, or ability.”

5. Eighty-four percent of respondents said it was important to be intentional about including persons based on theological orientation. This category was not included in the survey but was the most frequent written-in “other” category (sexual orientation was second).

6. Reports of experiences of bias or discrimination were relatively low, but there were statistically relevant. Discrimination showed patterns by age, race, and gender. Some respondents felt comfortable expressing their opinions in meetings, some felt pressured to go along with decisions. Some were satisfied with the way decisions were made, and those who feel their participation makes a difference.

In conclusion, the survey results reflect that GACOR is highly effective in its current and missional commitment. The results also reflect the slow but steady progress that has been made to become a church where not only is ‘there is room at the table for everyone’, but one’s voice will now be welcome and heard.

**Effective Communication**

The GACOR has historically maintained a web page that shares information regarding the work of the committee as well as broader issues regarding representation. The website is a place to show historical materials and information. The committee
has raised concerns about challenges with the PC(USA) website that have impacted updates and communication from the committee. The committee held conversations and gained commitments for more regular updating and better maintenance moving forward. The limitations of the system are still a challenge. Work completed during the review period will lead to expanding how the website is used, which will include sharing synod level data. GACOR hopes to better use the website to engage the larger church in the work of representation, equity, and diversity. As online training continues developing, GACOR hopes to expand what it can contribute to mid councils. It is the hope that the website will be a place to host conversations, trainings, include blog posts and reflections, and provide a fertile ground for learning and resources. Subcommittees have met with communications staff over the review period to explore options within the constraints of the pcusa.org website.

In 2012, GACOR debuted a new logo to reflect the new expression of the work and the larger areas of concern. The previous logo dated from reunion in 1983 and emphasized the original racial justice focus and de-emphasized gender. Disability concerns, while added in the early 1990s, did not show in the logo used at the time. The new logo promotes the committee and provides a more attractive and accurate presentation getting away from presenting each difference and allowing for future changes the assembly may make (for example in F-1.0403). To respect councils below General Assembly that also have this work, it was designed so that mid councils would be able to use it if they retained committees on representation. The committee shares its logo in the form of temporary tattoos for continued promotion and designed giveaway rulers with the logo on them to highlight parity of ruling elders to help raise awareness of GACOR. Those items have been distributed since 2012. A blog, *In Spirit and Truth*, was maintained by the committee from 2012–2015 to highlight issues of concern. It proved too much to maintain as an elected committee. The GACOR may contribute to it at any time.

The GACOR has been more intentional about getting its work covered by denominational journalists. Multiple stories were published by the Presbyterian News Service, and other outlets, on the work of GACOR in the review period. Examples include:

- The 2013 Synod COR Training Event was covered in three articles, one in particular, highlighting the opening, contextual Bible study led by the Reverend Dr. Margaret Aymer (now of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary).
- In July and August of 2016, news stories featured the Process Observation Web Application first utilized during the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

*Utilizing Technology*

In 2012, the committee primarily met in person and had phone conferences. In the review period, GACOR transitioned smaller meetings previously held by conference call or in person to Zoom, an online video conference meeting tool. The committee preferred it to GoToMeeting. Zoom has provided “face-to-face” discussions options allowing a greater continuity of work. The executive committee and two subcommittees meet monthly via Zoom. Any working groups to complete particular tasks also take advantage of Zoom to meet and do their work. The capacities for the technology allow for small group discussions, document sharing, video playback, and more. We used Zoom to facilitate our book discussions. GATE hosts meetings with synod execs regarding the synod COR reports via Zoom. When Zoom is not available, phone conferences are the alternate method used.

In 2012, the committee still used some paper in its meetings but was looking for solutions that were good for the environments and accessible for the members. Dropbox is now used for all documents, meeting packets, and communications. This has drastically reduced paper waste, increased availability of documents, and reduced the time spent sending reports and comments between committee members. Google Docs is also frequently used as the committee, particularly subcommittees, co-author and edit documents and reports. These tools are useful and foster collaboration and cooperation as tasks are completed.

*Vision, Plans, & Emerging Issues*

1. Since 2014, minutes have proven challenging to maintain. As records of the General Assembly, they are submitted for review by assemblies and deposited into the archives in Philadelphia. Maintaining current and accurate minutes of all meetings of the committee and its executive committee has been a challenge, particularly in the last two-year term. Minutes are often not ready to be voted on and approved at the subsequent meetings. This delay in sharing records further complicates the work of GACOR. Only one member has limited experience and this task is different in kind. Due to the workload for this person, effectively one member has to be recruited for this skill. This task reduces the membership able to do work by one.

2. Racial ethnic caucuses, councils, and consulting committees have the potential to be invaluable resources. Not all underrepresented groups and communities have these bodies. They do provide leadership and voice to historically marginalized communities in the denomination. We seek to strengthen our relationships with racial ethnic caucuses, councils, and consulting committees. The GACOR will benefit because it can better utilize the networks of the councils and caucuses to expand the diversity of nominating pools. Collaboration and open dialogue will lead to new understandings and reinforced effort towards our goals of true representation and equity throughout the PC(USA). Expanding the GACOR membership will allow more liaisons to be identified for caucuses and councils. This effort will positively impact the denomination’s work by increasing the diversity within the nomination pools, employment searches, suppliers, and more.
3. The GACOR wants to expand its impact and raise its visibility. We realize that many throughout the denomination are not familiar with the work and impact of GACOR. Going forward, we will continue to seek out opportunities to increase our visibility and opportunities for education. Communications efforts will include submitting articles to the Presbyterian News Service, Presbyterian Outlook, and/or Presbyterians Today. The GACOR is employing creative means to highlight the missing voices within our church, while we continuously raises issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity as a deep need in the denomination. We seek more visible presence and conspicuous voice as we help the PC(USA) eradicate systems of power and privilege at work in the denomination.

We will continue to expand on ways we educate about the important roles of representation and equity work in all councils of the church. With goals to equip the mid councils and presbyteries, exploring new media for sharing tools and resources, we hope to lead by example and impact. Collaborating strengthens the bodies, sharing work and training one another reinforcing and building on the ministries.

4. Worshiping communities are expanding and infusing their councils with energy and vitality throughout the PC(USA). However, new worshipping communities are not given opportunity to share power in councils to have a presence and voice with vote in the church. The GACOR seeks to add its voice to dialogues regarding representation, polity, and power with worshipping communities. The GACOR wants to ensure that all worshipping communities are fully integrated into the life of the PC(USA), not deprived of representation and access to decision-making tables. Those communities are mostly absent in the halls of power and they must be heard. We cannot presume to know their expression, experiences, and wishes.

5. The GACOR seeks to improve the relationship we hold with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC). The GACOR sees possibilities for collaboration that provides helpful assistance to the GANC from the beginning of the process and ensuring leadership positions within the church are filled by qualified and diverse candidates. Consulting with adequate time on slates of nominees from GANC would go a long way in improving relations. The GACOR does not feel it has had adequate access to give advice and counsel in the process in the review period. The GACOR works with all its partners to increase the candidate pools, when they are aware of a concern. Over the last four years, our coordination with GANC has been too limited. The GACOR has not been able to advise the nomination committee in a timely manner. We did not have access to the slates until very late, 24–48 hours ahead of submission to the assembly (and did not get candidate pool information). We are not able to target our recruiting to diversify applicant pools in this time so we recruited generically and in response to constituent concerns. When this is the case, we cannot adequately advise the nominating committee. We recognize that GACOR must be more intentional with GANC as both committees seek for more diversity and representation in the leadership of the denomination. In this light, we have made a recommendation to this assembly for action.

6. The GACOR wants to give its attention to broader cultural work in line with the Organization for Mission description at IV.C.5.b.(8) and “assist the church to build an ethos of inclusion and involvement of all persons” in this church. We seek to be a force within the PC(USA) that works for the dismantling of systemic racism (sexism, ableism, ageism, etc.), rooting out harmful biases, making plain how power and privilege operate throughout our denomination. We seek to equip the church to contest the powers of these evils. We seek to dispel the notion that committees on representation simply count the level of apparent diversity. We want to work for the transformation of this church in all its settings. Through its work, GACOR hopes to nudge the whole church to adopt a culture of deep inclusion and wide participation.

Our goal is to be a body that pushes the church towards a new reality of navigating difference without discrimination, affirming diversity, finding unity and connection. The work of GACOR should not be mere accessory, but a central point of transformation. Transformation is required for the PC(USA) if the unity of the people of God is to ever be made evident throughout the denomination. We realize that such a pursuit will be difficult, but this is where we are called to go. We endeavor to hold the church accountable as we journey together towards full participation and representation.

The GACOR seeks to explore various ways that the denomination can approach its work while lifting up the variety of voices, both those at the table as well as those seeking a seat. We acknowledge that this may mean that the approaches to accomplishing work and supporting councils, congregations, and new worshipping committees will look very different than what has always been. We have hope, rooted in an experience of the Divine we touch when we are in diverse and complex community. We believe this will allow the PC(USA) to be a more complete reflection of the kindom of God here on earth.

Endnotes


Appendix A

GACOR Theology of Representation

[For the text of this appendix, see GACOR 02a-appendix-a-COR-summary-report-theology-of-representation.pdf. See p. 224.]
Introduction

The GACOR thanks the six agencies of the PC(USA) for providing annual Diverse Suppliers reports in the reviewed period. This new reporting is informed by the establishment of the Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity (Item 03-12), and the benchmarks for OGA and PMA (Item 03-10), passed by action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The data was analyzed through a lens of anticipation for the agencies’ witness to God’s abundance demonstrated by the stewardship of representation becoming manifest in our denomination. Just as the diverse array of nations participated in Pentecost (Acts 2, pericopes in appendix), a diverse array of suppliers can participate in executing the work of the PC(USA). The early Christ-following communities who “distributed their proceeds to all, as any had needed,” have modeled the Spirit in which our denomination can share its resources among a varied array of suppliers This approach moves efforts for diversity beyond “bean counting” and “box checking” toward more fiscal parity with agency resources as expressions of doxology.

The assembly set benchmark (all agencies) for Diverse Suppliers is 10 percent.

Summary Across 6 Agencies

- Generally, the agencies are achieving the 10 percent benchmark: four out of six agencies met or exceeded the 10 percent goal of total expenditures to diverse suppliers, with the exception of PMA and OGA (who report together).
- Women-Owned Suppliers were the highest contributor to supplier diversity (especially in BOP) followed by Black/African American/African Suppliers. Opportunities for contracting with other racial ethnic and persons with disabilities abound. Businesses owned by women of minoritized racial groups is a statistic lost in the individual women-owned and minoritized racial group categories. Women of Color suppliers is a category of opportunity for stewardship of representation.
- Considerations for further conversation:
  - Given that the 10 percent benchmark is easily possible, raising the goal to 20 percent can both more realistically represent actual results based on 2014–2016 reports, and create opportunity to find additional diverse suppliers to fill empty categories.
  - Several agencies have increased expenditures to diverse suppliers while lowering the number of diverse suppliers. An optimal balance should be found to maximize both dollars spent and number of diverse suppliers relative to the needs and goals of the agencies.
  - More conversation is indicated when reviews of these benchmarks happen with agencies.

Agency Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOP</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency</td>
<td>$6,200,000</td>
<td>$8,500,000</td>
<td>$9,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency with Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>$979,055</td>
<td>$721,914</td>
<td>$1,258,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>8.49%</td>
<td>13.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Suppliers for Agency</td>
<td>#350</td>
<td>#300</td>
<td>#300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>#15</td>
<td>#20</td>
<td>#13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>4.29%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>4.33%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

After a decrease in 2015, the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [BOP] significantly increased the total expended with diverse suppliers, raising its percentage from 8.49 percent to 13.53 percent (2015 to 2016). Over three years, the agency average is 12.6 percent. The increase in expenditure also occurs with a decrease in the number of total diverse suppliers (from 20 to 13). The categorical array of diverse suppliers as a percentage of total suppliers for the agency has potential to expand. Women-owned business contributes 98 percent of the reported 13.53 percent of Diverse Suppliers.
The Presbyterian Foundation [FDN] has decreased its total expended by agency from 2015 to 2016. However, the percentage of funds spent with diverse suppliers has increased from 11.09 percent to 12.25 percent as the agency increased the total number of suppliers year over year. Black/African American/African Suppliers (10) and Women-Owned Business (16) comprise the entire group of diverse suppliers (26).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FDN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency</td>
<td>$3,446,462</td>
<td>$3,881,168</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency with Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>$414,177</td>
<td>$430,608</td>
<td>$464,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.02%</td>
<td>11.09%</td>
<td>12.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Suppliers for Agency</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.17%</td>
<td>16.42%</td>
<td>21.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. [ILP], showed an increase in percentage expended with diverse suppliers that is attributed to an increase in total expended by agency. There is also a decrease in the total number of suppliers for agency. This may create a “false increase” by virtue of an increased budget for a decreased supplier pool. The constraints of this smaller agency may require more creativity in supporting supplier diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency</td>
<td>$228,334</td>
<td>$194,852</td>
<td>$236,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency with Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>$10,776</td>
<td>$24,393</td>
<td>$32,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.72%</td>
<td>12.52%</td>
<td>13.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Suppliers for Agency</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Presbyterian Mission Agency [PMA] and the Office of the General Assembly [OGA] submit a joint report that reflects their shared services and record-keeping. Based on data from 2015 and 2016, PMA/OGA did not reach the 10 percent benchmark of funds spent with diverse suppliers (the percentage decreased in 2016). While the benchmark is based on percentage of expenditures, it is of note that PMA/OGA accomplishes the largest array of diverse suppliers across all categories (with opportunities for the Multi-Racial and Persons with Disabilities). Women-Owned Business represents 75 percent of Diverse Suppliers (314 of 424 in total).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PMA/OGA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency</td>
<td>$18,715,303</td>
<td>$48,569,268</td>
<td>$44,437,629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expended by Agency with Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>$938,841</td>
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<td>$3,405,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.02%</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>7.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Suppliers for Agency</td>
<td>NOT REPORTED</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>1,029</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverse Suppliers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>29.53%</td>
<td>41.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Presbyterian Mission Agency [PMA] and the Office of the General Assembly [OGA] submit a joint report that reflects their shared services and record-keeping. Based on data from 2015 and 2016, PMA/OGA did not reach the 10 percent benchmark of funds spent with diverse suppliers (the percentage decreased in 2016). While the benchmark is based on percentage of expenditures, it is of note that PMA/OGA accomplishes the largest array of diverse suppliers across all categories (with opportunities for the Multi-Racial and Persons with Disabilities). Women-Owned Business represents 75 percent of Diverse Suppliers (314 of 424 in total).
The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation [PPC] shows the strongest percentages of all agencies in Total Expended. It is important to note that PPC includes authors in their reported suppliers. These numbers from PPC demonstrate that certain factors prevent “apples to apples” comparison between and among agencies. Women-owned businesses represent 85.6 percent of diverse suppliers. It is encouraging that the number of total diverse suppliers increases from 2014–2016 (especially from 2014 to 2015) with minoritized racial groups presence in the array. Suppliers owned by minoritized racial groups remain the growing edge of supplier diversity across all agencies.

**Conclusion**

With the exception of PMA/OGA, which submitted a combined report, the remaining four agencies demonstrate reaching the benchmark in this reporting period. GACOR will continue to review the benchmarks and consider recommendations to increase the Supplier Diversity during agency reviews.

**APPENDIX**

*F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity*

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29).

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

*W-1.0304 Culture*

God has poured out the Holy Spirit on all flesh; Scripture promises that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The book of Acts and the New Testament epistles record the challenges and controversies of an emerging Church that would be “no longer Jew or Greek” (Gal. 3:28), but one in Jesus Christ. As the Church has grown and spread over two thousand years, it has taken root and flourished in cultures and lands all around the globe—bearing witness to the love of God for all the world and Christ’s sovereignty in every place. Finally, from the book of Revelation, we know that the company of the redeemed will be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, and people, singing praise to the Lamb of God.

Christian worship is contextual—emerging from a particular community and incorporating the words, images, symbols, and actions that best convey the good news of Jesus Christ in that gathering of God’s people. It is also cross-cultural—reflecting the diversity of traditions and cultures within and beyond the community of faith. Christian worship is transcultural—proclaiming the universal message of God’s grace in Jesus Christ and rooted in common elements of human life that transcend all cultures. It is also countercultural—asserting the scandal of the gospel and anticipating God’s reign of righteousness, justice, and peace. Finally, faithful worship should be an intercultural event—fostering mutuality, dialogue, and equality among all people.

Whenever and wherever we gather in Jesus’ name, we join the praise and prayer of the people of God in every time and place. Therefore, it is fitting that we share stories and sing songs from cultures other than our own as we pray for and with the Church throughout the world.

*Acts 2:5–13, NSRV*

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

*Acts 2:43–47, NSRV*

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food
with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Endnote

1. Benchmark of 10 percent diverse suppliers spend, approved in the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for OGA and PMA (Item 03-10), unchanged from previous assembly action for all agencies. Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity, Item 03-12, approved by action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

F. GACOR Report on Six Agencies: Employment (AAEEO)

Introduction

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) is thankful to the agencies of the PC(USA) for their timeliness of reporting employment data to the committee.

The GACOR reports to the General Assembly on agencies regarding their employment in response to the report and recommendations from “Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer,” as approved by the 220th General Assembly (2012) as Item 11-17 (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 45, 1103–05 of the CD; pp. 33, 250–251, 1091–93 of the print copy). The 221st General Assembly (2014) revised the action by requiring the six agencies to report annually to GACOR. This report contains an overview of achievements by each of the six agencies in the 2015 and 2016 fiscal years.

The GACOR performs an annual review of data received from all six agencies regarding the employment of personnel and supplier diversity. The six agencies are the (1) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (ILP), (2) Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), (3) Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), (4) Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (BOP), (5) Office of the General Assembly (OGA), (6) the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). That 2012 action can be found in Item 11-17, Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer, Recommendation 2 (Minutes, 2012, Part I, p. 1091).

Investment and Loan Program

The Investment and Loan Program (ILP) reported in a timely manner. The GACOR made the following observations:

The ILP reported a total of thirteen employees. Employment by gender was 15 percent male, 85 percent female. This is a change since 2015 where the ratio was 31 percent male and 69 percent female, which exceeds the benchmark requirement of 40 percent female employment.

There was an improvement of racial ethnic employment since the last review, with this category moving from 23 percent racial ethnic employees to 31 percent racial ethnic employees in 2017, which meets the requirement of 20 percent or better for racial ethnic employment.
In reviewing salaries, for female employees (11), 45 percent were at or above $75,000 while 45 percent were below the $65,000 mark. In comparison, 100 percent of salaries for male employees (2) were above $65,000.

Presbyterian Foundation

The Presbyterian Foundation (FDN) reported in a timely manner. The GACOR made the following observations:

The FDN reported a total of sixty-four employees. Employment by gender was 36 percent male, 64 percent female. There has been no change since the last review in 2015 and continues to exceed the benchmark of 40 percent female employment.

The racial ethnic employment since the last review with this category has shifted from 24 percent racial ethnic employees to 20 percent racial ethnic employees in 2017. While this is a reduction, it continues to meet the 20 percent benchmark for racial ethnic employment.
In reviewing salaries, the top third of earning employees are comprised of nine women and thirteen men, while the bottom two-thirds of earning employees are comprised of 32 women and 10 men. While the agency employs significantly more women, the majority of these are in lesser earning roles.

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) reported in a timely manner. The GACOR made the following observations:

The PPC reported a total of twenty-seven employees. Employment by gender was 30 percent male, 70 percent female. This is a change since 2015 where the ratio was 39 percent male and 61 percent female. The benchmark for employment of 40 percent female has been met. The PPC has reported that this number includes authors.

There was a change in racial ethnic employment since the last review with this category moving from 26 percent racial ethnic employees to 22 percent racial ethnic employees in 2017. While this is a reduction, it continues to meet the benchmark for racial ethnic employment of 20 percent.
In reviewing salaries, for female employees (11), 45 percent were at or above $75,000 while 45 percent were below the $65,000 mark. In comparison, 100 percent of salaries for male employees (2) were above $65,000.

In reviewing salaries, it is noted that while females comprise 70 percent of total employees, they make up 77 percent of those in lesser earning pay scales. Of those earning $90,000 or more, two are female (40 percent) with the top tier at $105,001–$125,000 while three are male (60 percent) with the lowest tier also at $105,001–$125,000.

Board of Pensions

The BOP employment is 35 percent male and 65 percent are female. The benchmark of employing 40 percent females has been exceeded. Whites have the largest exempt status, 72 percent, white African American/Blacks have the largest nonexempt status, 59 percent. There were no identified people with disabilities employed.

When looking at employees by race: African American/Black 21 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders 6 percent, Hispanic/LatinX 4 percent, Native American/Alaskan Native 1 percent, White 66 percent, Multiracial 3 percent, there were no Middle Eastern people employed. The benchmark of employing 20 percent racial ethnic people has been met.
In reviewing salaries, females represent 65 percent overall (127 of 196), with the largest group earning $45–$75,000 annually (68 of 127). While there are fewer males, 30 percent of males peak in the same salary range (21 of 69). Females (21 percent) also see a spike again in the $75–105,000 range (27 of 127) while males (28 percent) spike again in the $105,000 to 165,000 range.

Office of the General Assembly

The Office of General Assembly (OGA) completed and submitted their reports. The GACOR recognized the following observations.

The gender is comprised of 71 percent female and 29 percent male. Of the seventy employees, 69 percent are in an exempt position, and of that 69 percent, females represent 40 percent. With a female employee population of 71 percent, OGA exceeds the 50 percent benchmark established by GA222, with 48 percent of these females holding an exempt position. The percentage of females in exempt positions more than doubled from 22 percent in 2015 to 48 percent in 2017.

Of the seventy employees, 66 percent identify as white. The remainder of the employee pool is represented in African American/Black at 14 percent; Asian/Pacific Islander at 14 percent; Hispanic/LatinX at 3 percent, and Multiracial at 3 percent. In total of racial ethnic representation measured at 34 percent, which is nearly at the 40 percent benchmark.
While the number of females exceeds the number of males employed by OGA, there is a disparity in salary ranges. It is of note that 96 percent of females earn less than $95,000 and 80 percent of males earn under $95,000.

**Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA)**

Of the 311 PMA employees, 64 percent are female while 36 percent are male. This exceeds the 50 percent established benchmark. Females account for 59 percent of the exempt positions and males account for 41 percent of the exempt positions. In the nonexempt categories, females account for 75 percent and males account for 25 percent.
Of employees reported by PMA, 72 percent identified as white. The racial ethnic percentage observed at 28 percent in 2017 is a one-point increase from 2015, which does not meet the benchmark of 40 percent. The racial ethnic spread among exempt employees showed at 26 percent while 74 percent of the exempt positions were filled by white employees. In the nonexempt position, the racial ethnic breakdown measured at 31 percent and 68 percent white.

Most females employed by PMA are compensated at levels below $55,000 (59 percent), while the largest percentage of males (54 percent) are compensated in the $55–85,000 range. At the highest end of the salary scale, $85,000–195,000, 10 percent of those employed are female and 16 percent are male.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis by GACOR found increases in female employment in three agencies (ILP, BOP, OGA), decreases in two agencies (PPC, PMA), and flat movement at FDN. Each agency did meet or exceed this benchmark. Additionally, GACOR found increases in employment of racial ethnic persons in four agencies (ILP, BOP, OGA, PMA) and decreases in two agencies (FDN, PPC). Each agency did meet or exceed this benchmark. The GACOR is encouraged by the efforts of the agencies of the PC(USA) to provide data in a timely manner and positively engage in the process.

G. General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) Agency Summary 2018

“This is the heart of the church’s connectionalism!”—A member of a General Assembly entity responds to a question about how their service on the elected body has impacted their faith.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to the full participation and representation of the rich diversity of the church in its governance. Through the General Assembly Nominating Committee’s comprehensive nominations process, all Presbyterians have the ability and access to be considered for elected service on more than thirty General Assembly boards, commissions, committees, and councils. The nominations process ensures that the General Assembly is afforded the opportunity to select, from the varied gifts and services of Presbyterians, the most qualified persons to serve on General Assembly entities with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.
The General Assembly nomination process is application based and is open and accessible to the broad membership of the church. Persons who wish to be considered for nomination must complete and submit an application form and solicit personal references. In addition to providing a way to gather consistent demographic data, the application form allows for personal and creative narrative responses to a variety of questions about the applicant’s sense of call to service, qualifications, and experience. Applicants can be confident every application is reviewed during the nomination process.

**Accomplishments**

The General Assembly Nominating Committee had the benefit of using for the first time its new online nominations portal for all application forms submitted during the 2018 nominations cycle. Although the nominations portal was operational during the 2016 nominations cycle, it was not fully functional and many of the application forms were still submitted electronically via Word document in addition to those submitted through the portal. The General Assembly Nominating Committee celebrates this movement and looks forward to continued work in the months ahead. Work has begun to enhance the database interface and provide reliable reporting functionality and output.

Because this is the first cycle where information about all applicants has been entered into the nominations database, reliable reports cannot yet be generated. Thus, some of this information must be analyzed and processed manually. The General Assembly Nominating Committee looks forward to the next cycle of nominations when the nominations database will be fully functional and data and statistical analysis, other simple queries, and reporting functions will be fully automated.

Like our siblings in presbyteries, synods, and secular organizations, the General Assembly Nominating Committee is aware of the changing tide of volunteerism and the impact on the pool of applicants who feel called to serve in elected service. At the close of the initial nomination deadline, only sixty-eight persons had applied to be considered for service. With continued active recruiting by the affected entities, the General Assembly Nominating Committee increased the number of new applicants it has received to just under 100 applications as of February 16, 2018. That is down from approximately 230 at the same time in the last nomination cycle. The General Assembly Nominating Committee continues to work with the entities to which it makes nominations to find ways to invite Presbyterians to be involved in the governance of the church through the ministry of elected leadership.

The GANC continues to connect with Presbyterians corporately and individually—through meetings of presbytery and synod nominating committees, participation and attendance at national and regional conferences, engagement and correspondence with leaders at all councils of the church, and other official Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) groups—in order to inform Presbyterians of the many and diverse opportunities for service.

In addition to face-to-face engagements, individuals, congregations, presbyteries, and synods can find a listing of positions open for election on the General Assembly Nomination website www.pcusa.org/nominations.

In the Fall of 2017, the GANC emailed to each presbytery and synod the list of vacancies to be filled. Additionally, the GANC website (pcusa.org/nominations) provides instructions, information about the nominations process, and committee descriptions. These descriptions contain information on the skills and expertise needed and time requirements for service. The descriptions are a useful tool for candidates as they determine whether or not their particular gifts and abilities are a match with the identified needs of a specific entity.

Persons interested in being considered for service on a General Assembly level committee must do so by submitting an application for nomination form via the General Assembly Nominating Committee online application system. In the 2018 nomination cycle, applications remain active for one cycle. This is a change from past cycles where applications were valid for two cycles—four years. This change was made recognizing many applicants have changed calls or occupations, locations, and developed their sense of call in new ways. Applicants who applied to a particular entity in Cycle A might have a different interest or developed skills that point to service elsewhere in Cycle B. Therefore, all applicants who were not nominated in 2016 were required to update their application form and resubmit it if they wished to be considered for nomination beginning with the General Assembly 2018 cycle.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee continues to further its efforts to deepen cultural competence and proficiency by providing educational opportunities for its members. Its March 15–17, 2017, meeting included a two-day seminar on “Interrupting the Impact of White Cultural Dominance in the PC(USA),” led by Jessica Vazquez of Crossroads Antiracism and Organizing and Training.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee works in concert with the General Assembly Committee on Representation to ensure that membership on all General Assembly entities is broadly representative of the membership of the whole church.
The General Assembly Nominating Committee notes that many applicants do not identify themselves as persons with disabilities even when a disability does exist. Thus, we believe that the number of persons with disabilities serving the church on committees at the General Assembly level is actually higher than reported. In an effort to encourage persons to self-identify, the GANC sought the advice of Presbyterians for Disability Concerns in 2013. As a result, the GANC revised a question on its form from, “Are you a person living with a disability?” to “Are you living with a disability? If yes, please describe the accommodations needed for your participation on this entity.” The General Assembly Nominating Committee will continue to seek ways to encourage persons living with disabilities to make this information available including adding an introductory sentence, “The General Assembly Nominating Committee encourages persons living with disabilities to apply” as an invitation for persons with disability to identify themselves.

Through participation at conferences, conversations, and engagement with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, racial ethnic caucuses, affinity groups, individual contact at all mid council levels, as well as with pastors and ruling elders across the denomination, the General Assembly Nominating Committee strives to increase the number of racial ethnic persons and persons with differing theological perspectives in its pool of applicants.

The application form includes the following question to its nomination form: “Which of the following terms best describes your theological perspective?” Applicants are provided with the following categories (listed in alphabetical order on the form): Conservative, Evangelical, Liberal, Moderate, Orthodox, Progressive, and prefer not to answer. Applicants are encouraged to check all that apply and a space is provided for comments. In addition, the GANC has removed a question on its form, “To assist the General Assembly Nominating Committee in addressing the Presbyterian Church’s commitment to theological diversity, please briefly describe your theological perspective,” replacing it with, “Please name one key theological/faith issue facing our church today and explain your perspective on this issue.”

For the 2018 nominations cycle, the GANC added the question, “Please describe a key issue of the community from which you come.”

The General Assembly Nominating Committee form has been expanded so that applicants may select “self-describe” for their gender identify and/or self-identify outside the gender binary. Applicants may now share their preferred personal pronouns.

Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee relate actively to mid councils and General Assembly entities throughout the year. Each General Assembly Nominating Committee member serves as a liaison to the nominating committee of the synod in which the member resides. Each member attends at least one synod or synod nominating committee meeting every other year to explain the nominations process.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee invites all General Assembly entities to send a written report biennially concerning the specific needs of the entity regarding nominees presented to the General Assembly. In addition, the General Assembly Nominating Committee’s liaison member is available to meet with the entity or be in contact by telephone or mail at the entity’s invitation, so that the nominating process may be explained and that the skills and expertise needed by the entity are identified. This information, along with advice and counsel received from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, assists the General Assembly Nominating Committee in its work.

Since the 222nd General Assembly (2016), there have been three meetings of the General Assembly Nominating Committee: March 15–17, 2017, in Prairie Village, Kansas; November 4, 2017, via video-conference call; and February 28–March 3, 2018, in Chicago, Illinois. An orientation for new members was held on September 28–29, 2016, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

There are sixteen members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee—one member residing in each of the sixteen synods. The General Assembly, upon the nomination of the General Assembly Moderator, elects the members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee; members serve a six-year term. The following officers were elected and served from June 2016 to June 2018: Danny C. Murphy Sr. (teaching elder), Synod of the South Atlantic, moderator; Yena Hwang (teaching elder), Synod of Mid-Atlantic, vice-moderator; and Lindsey Anderson (teaching elder), Synod of the Covenant. Other members of the committee are: Steven Aeschbacher (ruling elder later ordained a teaching elder), Synod of Alaska-Northwest who tendered resignation July 2016 upon his move to a different synod; Greg Bolt (teaching elder), Synod of Lakes and Prairies; Eva O. Carter (ruling elder), Synod of Living Waters; Douglas Howard (ruling elder), Synod of the Northeast; Judy Lussie, (ruling elder), Synod of the Pacific; Mary Paik (teaching elder), Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; Marta Rodriguez-Fonseca (ruling elder), Presbiteriano Boriñiquen en Puerto Rico; vacant Synod of Mid-America; Judith Trabue (ruling elder), Synod of Lincoln Trails; John M. Willingham (teaching elder); Synod of the Trinity; Mary Lynn Walters, (ruling elder), Synod of the Southwest; Gene Wilson (teaching elder) Synod of the Sun; and Will Zandler (ruling elder), Synod of the Rocky Mountains. The synod of the Mid-Atlantic remains vacant.
The office of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is located in the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396. Assistant Stated Clerk Valerie Kiriishi Small, ruling elder, serves as the manager for General Assembly Nominations.
## PER CAPITA

### Revisions to Proposed 2018-2020 Budget

With Financial Implications

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Approved</th>
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<th>Proposed</th>
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<tr>
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### SOURCES OF FUNDING

1. Apportionments
2. Income Formula
3. Manley Fund
4. Miscellaneous
5. Unrealized/Realized Gain (Loss)

### TOTAL REVENUE

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<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$11,851.95</td>
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<td>$13,237.679</td>
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### Per Capita Rate Increase 10%

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### ADJUSTED PER CAPITA

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$8.95</td>
<td>$8.95</td>
<td>$8.95</td>
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### CHURCH WIDE MINISTRIES

1. Assembly Operations
   - 2018: $2,750,900
   - 2019: $2,671,248
   - 2020: $2,894,667
2. Assembly Support
   - 2018: $600,838
   - 2019: $634,079
   - 2020: $682,234
3. Permanent & Special Committees
   - 2018: $603,387
   - 2019: $622,601
   - 2020: $480,624
4. Records & Historical Services (Philadelphia)
   - 2018: $1,607,970
   - 2019: $1,712,654
   - 2020: $1,910,574
5. Innovation & Engagement
   - 2018: $1,870,699
   - 2019: $1,851,788
   - 2020: $1,910,574

### ECCLESIAL & ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES

1. Ecumenical Allocations
   - 2018: $961,000
   - 2019: $926,000
   - 2020: $916,000
2. Ecumenical Support
   - 2018: $466,560
   - 2019: $415,944
   - 2020: $421,620
3. Communications
   - 2018: $359,910
   - 2019: $691,265
   - 2020: $710,323

### MID COUNCIL MINISTRIES

1. Constitutional Interpretation
   - 2018: $645,358
   - 2019: $299,529
   - 2020: $311,208
2. Ordered Ministries
   - 2018: $812,359
   - 2019: $1,259,869
   - 2020: $1,324,623
3. Mid Council Relations
   - 2018: $257,598
   - 2019: $396,980
   - 2020: $452,661

### OFFICE OF THE STATED CLERK

1. Administration
   - 2018: $698,605
   - 2019: $773,461
   - 2020: $883,728
2. Human Resources
   - 2018: $25,000
   - 2019: $92,000
   - 2020: $74,500
3. Moderator
   - 2018: $81,000
   - 2019: $79,600
   - 2020: $129,600
4. Common Office Expenses
   - 2018: $181,500
   - 2019: $125,500
   - 2020: $120,500
5. Initiatives
   - 2018: $218,300
   - 2019: $316,300
   - 2020: $306,300

### OTHER EXPENSES

1. Presbyterian Mission Agency/Board
   - 2018: $1,219,259
   - 2019: $1,183,915
   - 2020: $1,316,821
2. Other Expenses
   - 2018: $1,800,869
   - 2019: $1,915,736
   - 2020: $1,915,736

### NET TO OR (FROM) RESERVE

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<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<td>($2,513,162)</td>
<td>($1,892,227)</td>
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### NET TO OR (FROM) RESERVE

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### OGA Reduction from Proposed Budget

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### COMMITTED FOR SUBSEQUENT ASSEMBLIES

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### TOTAL EXPENSES & COMMITMENTS

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### Net to or (from) Reserve

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<th>2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>($1,442,447)</td>
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## OGA/PMA DESIGNATED BUDGET 2018-2020

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<td>(12,423)</td>
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<td>105,176</td>
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<td>1,731,808</td>
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Appendix A – GACOR Theology of Representation

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) agreed that in the spirit of G-3.0103 and F-1.0403, there needed to be extended reflection on a theology of representation. We have a lot of well-meaning Presbyterians that get the need to be diverse and inclusive but do not possess the language or tool kit to do it effectively. A theology of representation creates a foundation for why we must do this work.

Beyond diversity, a theology of representation decentralizes systems of whiteness that historically normalize power structures in church and society based on the mythical norm “usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure.”¹ To this list we add: American-born, able-bodied, and cis-gendered privileges that must be recognized, mitigated, and dismantled to honor the multiplicity of God’s creation. A theology of representation is inspired by the God who calls us to do justice and is enacted in and embodied through the work of God’s people.

**Toward a theology of representation**

Remembering that God’s blessed people are as numerous as the stars in heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore,² we believe that God’s promises are compelling and effective upon a vast array of persons whom God calls and God loves. God’s promises surpass human differences of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexuality, and the multiple identities shaped by those differences. This is the work of God, and it is marvelous in our sight.³ God’s spirit is poured out on all flesh, empowering daughters and sons to prophesy, empowering our elders to dream dreams and our youth to see visions; God’s spirit is poured out on all flesh, including the most marginalized and subjugated among us – even and especially those who are to us like female and male slaves.⁴

The same Spirit that calls us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God,⁵ is the Spirit that equips us with unique gifts and talents, making us the body of Christ, and each of us its members⁶ - in all of our particularities and variabilities. Therefore, we cannot say to any of our members “I have no use for you.”⁷ Rather, we are empowered, like the many people from the many nations who were together on the day of Pentecost, to speak with each other in our own languages and to be understood.

In the story of Pentecost, Luke is recalling the image of wind and fire in the context of multiple languages being spoken and, more importantly, understood by everyone that was present in

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² Genesis 22:16-17
³ Psalm 118:(22,)23
⁴ Joel 2:28
⁵ Micah 6:8
⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:27 (cf. Romans 12:5)
⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:21-26
Jerusalem. A possible implication of this story is that Luke is associating communication in multiple languages with the presence of the divine. It is interesting that Luke is comparing the presence of multiple languages and ethnicities to fire and violent wind. This image takes on a new meaning in light of the extreme devastation caused by the recent wild fires in California and the destructive winds during recent hurricanes.

Luke’s readers would have known that fire and wind are two vital elements of nature that are powerful and crucial to sustaining life. But that fire and wind can also be deeply destructive when they are not put to good use and nurtured carefully. Luke’s point in using the imagery of fire and wind to characterize heteroglossia—multiple languages—might be that diversity—whether in terms of languages or race and ethnicities—can work either way too. Diversity can be put to good use with care and attention but can also be dysfunctional when not celebrated and appreciated fully.

The Roman empire learned it hard way. It was Rome’s mishandling and a superficial celebration of diversity that, in part, brought the empire down. Rome invested a great deal of time and resources promoting a monolithic culture. It undertook an extensive propaganda to insist that smooth and efficient functioning of the empire necessitated promotion of linguistic and cultural homogeneity at the expense of marginal languages and identities. The story of Pentecost showcases a seemingly impossible phenomenon in which communication across disparate languages happens smoothly and people(s) of diverse nationalities share a space—literally and figuratively— with little difficulty. In doing so, Pentecost undermines Rome’s case for cultural and linguistic homogeneity.

One of the central ideas that underlie Pentecost, one that was also at the center of vernacularization during Reformation, is that God can be expressed in multiple languages (2:11). And that precisely because God is often expressed in multiple languages, no single language can articulate the divine fully. Similarly, no single identity can capture or express the fullness of humanness. Luther recognized vernacularization as a necessary precondition for a fuller realization of life in the spirit. For him, accessibility was an essential aspect of democratization of the Church and for dismantling spiritual elitism. In this way, both Pentecost and Reformation decenter and deprivilege the dominant language and identity and affirm humanity in its various expressions.

Prior to reformation, the Church’s approach to vernacular languages was influenced by the story of Babel that saw multiple languages as a manifestation of God’s judgment. Reformation allowed people to move past that paradigm and embrace vernacular languages in the spirit of Pentecost. Just as Pentecost reversed Babel, Reformation took theology and scriptures to marginal languages. But it also brought those marginal languages to the center of theological discourses, with the result that the vernacular languages and identities are no longer tokens at the table but essential elements in theological discourse.
Luke tells us that when the unlettered Galileans spoke, everyone heard them in their own language. When did these Galileans learn so many languages? The Greek word Luke uses for multiple languages is heteroglossia: Heteroglossia is about each seeking and acquiring an ability to speak the language of the other. It is also about making an effort to enter the spaces of the other. It is equally about seeking and acquiring an ability to understand the other. In enabling people to speak in other tongues (2:4), the spirit makes them cross linguistic boundaries and learn, on a deeper level, languages whose presence and worth they would not have acknowledged hitherto. The Spirit equips us to work together, share resources in common, and demonstrate our witness as followers of Jesus Christ who is God’s love enfleshed deeply abiding with-in-through us, all the way to the ends of the earth.

Indeed, it is to the ends of the earth and to all nations that Jesus Christ, our Savior and our friend, entrusted us with the commission to spread the gospel and model discipleship, baptizing in the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Comforter, teaching by our own examples the love of God and of each other. In the sacrament of baptism, we are claimed by the Holy Spirit into the priesthood of all believers, descending into the waters as Jesus Christ descended into death, rising into new life as Jesus Christ was raised by God on the day of his resurrection. We practice this worshipful remembrance in anticipation of God raising us on the day of Christ’s return. In the sacrament of Communion, we give thanks (eucharistō) for Jesus Christ’s willingness to allow himself be given over to the Empire that his resurrection would be proof that the forces of evil hegemony will never prevail. We give thanks that our Savior and our friend trusted us with the memory of his body broken and his blood shed, that we would recognize his death, in the broken bodies and shed blood of other human beings. We do the work he entrusted to us, looking forward to the great heavenly feast where all are welcome at the table, when Jesus is its host.

We believe that by God’s divine pleasure, we are intentionally and uniquely called, gifted, prepared, and ready to participate in holy reconciliation with a broken and fearful world. Jesus Christ, our Savior and our friend, modeled compassion for the marginalized, courage to challenge imperial powers on behalf of the least of these, and love toward one another. The yet-still-speaking-and-moving Spirit continually indictus and inspires us to recognize the intrinsic value of those who are different from us, and to respect our many members who co-create the body of Christ.

Glory be to the Creator, to the Christ, and to the Comforter. Amen.

8 John 1:14; 15:1-11
9 Acts 2, Acts 6, Acts 1:8
11 Brief Statement of Faith, 11.4
**INSERT Glossary**

**Additional Scripture Identified by Committee Members as Relevant to the Work**

- **Genesis 1** – *imago dei* and all creation’s goodness, fall is corruption, peoples substituting their authority for God’s, creating distorted structures, false meanings, hierarchies, etc.
- **Leviticus 19**—v.10,14-15, 32-34 in following God, church must witness against the powerful and privileged, not act against those with disability, aged, poor, alien
- **Jeremiah 29** – seeking welfare of city under occupation, peoples’ well-being matters, disrupting empire
- **Isaiah 56** – house of prayer for all peoples
- **Psalm 146** – God protects strangers, lifts downtrodden, helps widows/orphans, blocks path of ungodly
- **Amos 7** – the plumb line, God’s order is not ours and measures our rightness
- **Matthew 5** – turning cheeks, carrying two miles, etc., resisting empire and subverting oppression, turning tables using law of oppressor against it
- **Luke 4** – jubilee, anointed for liberation ministry, power disruption, justice...
- **Luke 8** – Gerasene demoniac, legion of oppressions and alienation created by possession, needing exorcism, restored and sent to his peoples, not allowed to stay in Christ’s and the disciples’ company
- **Luke 18** – No one is good but God alone, what is impossible for mortals is possible for God
- **Acts 6** – power sharing with marginalized placed in power over all community including the dominant
- **Acts 10** – Gospel without borders, God’s clean is wider than humanity’s – Spirit led 180° change in Peter’s attitude/actions of how converts come to the community – visions on both sides bring connection

**Citations from the Confessions.**

- A Brief Statement of Faith: 11.4 (lines 65-71)
- Confession of Belhar: 10.3 – 10.8

**Suggested Readings**


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12 For full texts from the excerpts, see Appendix. For full confessions excerpted see *The Book of Confessions* (Presbyterian Church USA, 2016).


Appendix – Relevant Excerpts from the Book of Confessions of the PCUSA

Confessions: The committee’s work is one way the PCUSA lives its confessions of faith...


I. God’s Work of Reconciliation, A. The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1. Jesus Christ

9.12 The reconciling act of God in Jesus Christ exposes the evil in men as sin in the sight of God. ...

I. God’s Work of Reconciliation, B. The Communion of the Holy Spirit

9.25 The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of man in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God’s purpose rather than man’s schemes will finally prevail.

II. The Ministry of Reconciliation, A. The Mission of the Church, 2. Forms and Orders

9.34 The institutions of the people of God change and vary as their mission requires in different times and places. The unity of the church is compatible with a wide variety of forms, but it is hidden and distorted when variant forms are allowed to harden into sectarian divisions, exclusive denominations, and rival factions.

9.37 ...[Members’] daily action in the world is the church in mission to the world. The quality of their relation with other persons is the measure of the church’s fidelity.

9.40 ...A presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition. Every church order must be open to such reformation as may be required to make it a more effective instrument of the mission of reconciliation.

II. The Ministry of Reconciliation, A. The Mission of the Church, 4. Reconciliation in Society

9.43 In each time and place there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations. ...

9.44 a. God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, he overcomes the barriers between brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. ...the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize their fellowmen, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess.
9.46  c. The reconciliation of man through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God’s good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world’s poor is the cause of his disciples. ...A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.

9.47  d. ...The church, as the household of God, is called to lead men out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ. Reconciled to God, each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons; ... The church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection by man when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time.

II. The Ministry of Reconciliation, B. The Equipment of the Church

9.48  ...the church is obliged to change the forms of its service in ways appropriate to different generations and cultures.

III. The Fulfillment of Reconciliation

9.53  God’s redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of man’s life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes man’s natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. It is the will of God that his purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ and all evil be banished from his creation.

9.54  Biblical visions and images of the rule of Christ, such as a heavenly city, a father’s house, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast, and an unending day culminate in the image of the kingdom. The kingdom represents the triumph of God over all that resists his will and disrupts his creation. Already God’s reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in men and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption.

9.55  With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

A Brief Statement of Faith: 11.4 (lines 65-71, excerpted)

In a broken and fearful world
The Spirit gives us courage...
...to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work for justice, freedom and peace.
Confession of Belhar: 10.3 – 10.8 (excerpted)

10.3 We believe

• that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
• that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God’s Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;
• that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted;...

10.4 Therefore, we reject any doctrine

• which absolutizes either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people in such a way that this absolutization hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church, ...
• which professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace while believers of the same confession are in effect alienated from one another for the sake of diversity and in despair of reconciliation;
• which denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin;
• which explicitly or implicitly maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church.

10.5 We believe...

• that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and ... will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world; ...

10.7 We believe ...

• that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

10.8 Therefore, we reject any ideology

• which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.


I. God’s Work of Reconciliation, A. The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1. Jesus Christ
9.12 The reconciling act of God in Jesus Christ exposes the evil in men as sin in the sight of God. ...

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General Assembly Advisory Committee on the Constitution Permanent Committee Review 2017

Susan Barnett, PhD
October 9, 2017
Every six years, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) must undergo a review.

This review includes a self-study, undertaken by the committee itself. As part of the review, ACC and the General Assembly committee that will review ACC have asked Research Services staff to assist by conducting evaluative research and data analysis.
Interpreting the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) is a permanent committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is an elected body that advises the General Assembly on matters related to interpretation and amendment of The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
Process

The Office of Constitutional Interpretation provided the names and contact information of the Commissioners to the three most recent General Assemblies. Research Services maintains a Mid Council contact database.

Research Services uses Survey Gizmo, an online survey software for all surveys including the Presbyterian Panel. Commissioners and Mid Council leaders were surveyed separately; however, both received the survey followed by two reminders and an immediate thank you for their response. The online survey was sent via Survey Gizmo to:

1935 Commissioners for the 220th, 221st, and 222nd General Assemblies
289 Mid Council leaders

Response

43% (829 of 1935) Commissioners
35% (102 of 289) Mid Council leaders
42% (932 of 2224) Total response rate
Findings...

✓ Commissioners’ awareness of the ACC increases as a result of attending a General Assembly. This is evidenced by the **21% increase in familiarity** from prior to, then following the 222\textsuperscript{nd} General Assembly.

✓ Commissioners report **the quality of advice** received on overtures for proposed changes to the *Book of Order* to be good (40%) or very good (28%).

✓ The ACC *consistently receives good to excellent ratings* on the quality of their work, advice offered in plenaries, fairness in their findings, knowledge of the *Book of Order*, and professionalism.

✓ Mid Council leaders acknowledged that the ACC **exhibits comprehensive knowledge of issues, is consistent in their interpretation of the Book of Order, and offers helpful interpretations and explanations.**
How many responding Commissioners attended each of the last three General Assemblies

Respondents were asked which of the last three General Assemblies they had both attended and served as a commissioner.

Not all responding commissioners (111) reported the GA that they attended.

269 Commissioners Attended the 220\textsuperscript{th} General Assembly

192 Commissioners Attended the 221\textsuperscript{st} General Assembly

257 Commissioners* Attended the 222\textsuperscript{nd} General Assembly

*Of those respondents who attended the 222\textsuperscript{nd} General Assembly, 142 (37\%) were Elder Commissioners and 135 (35\%) were Minister Commissioners. This information was not gathered for the 220 and 221 General Assembly Commissioners.
Commissioners were asked to recall the 222\textsuperscript{nd} General Assembly then to indicate their degree of familiarity with the ACC’s work and purpose prior to and after the assembly. Following the 222\textsuperscript{nd} GA, the Commissioners report a significant increase of 21\% in familiarity with the ACC’s work and purpose. Most of this change is reflected with those who were unfamiliar prior to the General Assembly becoming familiar as a result of attending the meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Before 222\textsuperscript{nd} GA</th>
<th>After 222\textsuperscript{nd} GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly familiar</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mid Council leaders were asked about their general familiarity with the ACC. They were not asked how it had changed (before vs after) the 222\textsuperscript{nd} General Assembly.

- 42\% familiar
- 25\% slightly familiar
- 17\% very familiar
- 12\% not familiar
Since 2012, how well has ACC...

- Responded to leaders of GA Committees during General Assembly plenaries: 48% Well, 40% Very well, 11% Not so well
- Responded to the Stated Clerk during GA plenaries requiring interpretation of the Book of Order: 47% Well, 42% Very well, 11% Not so well
- Exhibited fairness in its findings and recommendations: 51% Well, 39% Very well, 10% Not so well
- Evaluated proposals to amend the Book of Order: 57% Well, 35% Very well
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the responses of Advisory Committee on the Constitution members to questions that General Assembly commissioners asked them during General Assembly plenaries, when you attended?

48% say the committee members gave good responses in plenaries

- Excellent: 30%
- Good: 48%
- Fair: 13%
- Poor: 5%
Every two years the Office of the General Assembly supplies presbyteries with a booklet titled Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), that includes the Committee's advice on each of the proposed amendments.

How helpful to your presbytery was the booklet (produced and distributed) in 2016?

- 42% find it very helpful
- 36% find it helpful
38% (278) of Commissioners indicated that they represented a presbytery or synod that submitted an overture proposing amendments to the Book of Order.

36% of reporting presbyteries submitted one overture with another 20% submitting two.

Of those, they were asked to rate the quality of advice provided by the ACC...
Mid Council leaders who submitted interpretation requests of the Book of Order to the ACC since 2012 report ...

28 Requests submitted

20 Responses received

15 Remember reading response

The Committee’s Response:

- Demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the issues: 40% A fair amount, 53% Quite a bit
- Identified additional issues: 53% A fair amount, 20% Quite a bit
- Provided a response consistent with the Book of Order: 20% A fair amount, 73% Quite a bit
- Offered helpful explanation and interpretation: 27% A fair amount, 67% Quite a bit
- Stated that the Book of Order sufficiently addressed the issue requiring no interpretation: 7% Yes, 87% No
- Suggested an amendment to the constitution addressing the issue: 43% Yes, 57% No
Four questions asked about the faithfulness, description of work, importance, and helpfulness of ACC:

- **45%** say the ACC is **faithful** in fulfilling its purpose.
- **85%** say the **description** fits the committee's purpose and work.
- **56%** say the ACC’s work is **very important** to PC(USA).
- **51%** say most of the opinions found in the Reports to the General Assembly helped to identify and interpret the constitutional issues involved in overtures.
195 (53%) of 370 respondents said that an ACC member resourced their 2016 General Assembly committee. Some 30% did not remember an ACC member at their meetings.

Those who remembered ACC members, found them to be quite professional (80%) and:

- Helped my committee interpret ACC recommendations: 32% not sure, 41% only a little, 15% a fair amount, 11% quite a bit.
- Clearly articulated the principles of the Constitution and polity with regard to issues before my committee: 42% not sure, 33% only a little, 11% a fair amount, 3% quite a bit.
- Demonstrated competence in his or her interaction with my committee: 56% not sure, 28% only a little, 28% a fair amount, 11% quite a bit.
Individual comments about the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Strengths...

➢ [a person] from the ACC, was very helpful to the committee I was on most recently

➢ Absolutely necessary. Should also be in middle governing bodies and others.

➢ I think the ACC has a thankless job and handles their duties very well. I think it is important to have people on the committee who will be fair, who do not have personal agendas, or who do not let their personal opinions get in the way of what is best for all in the Church. It is also crucial to have committee members who are comfortable with technology, and equally comfortable with critical thinking and discourse, as well as comfortable with criticism.

➢ In general, I think the ACC does excellent work. I know several people who have served on the ACC and it is primarily through knowing them that I understand the work of the ACC

Areas for growth...

➢ Advisory Com on the Constitution gave confused comments when the AI on marriage came to the floor.

➢ It would be wonderful if somehow the ACC advice could be dispensed to the presbyteries as they are in the process of constructing their overtures. It’s a shame when overtures are crafted and endorsed, and then when GA meets, we discover that they are not consistent with the constitution.

➢ The Advisory Committee on the Constitution presented one interpretation in the resources and verbally completely flipped at plenary. Showing the individuals bias not the committees advice.

➢ The booklets on the Overtures were not sent to our Presbytery in time for being able to use them at our March meeting, and since we did not meet again until June, we did not get to vote until the day before the deadline for reporting.

➢ While often helpful... there were a few cases ...where the advice was “well we have never done it that way before” which is never helpful.
Appendix B  

Member Covenant of the General Assembly Committee on Representation

As members of the General Assembly Committee on Representation called to this ministry of advocacy in the name of Jesus Christ, we covenant with one another to:

Worship and pray together to seek God’s direction for our work, being open to the movement of the Holy Spirit and the direction of our leadership to fulfill GACOR’s mission “to assist the church to move, to transform, and to support full participation and representation to include all people to enjoy the gifts of God as a community.”

Remain mindful that our work is difficult, to respect each other’s insights, to listen when another is speaking, to work diligently, with kindness and humility.

Open ourselves to transformation personally, as a committee, and as a church, always looking for what God may be teaching us. Respect one another’s viewpoint and worldview, and seek to find common ground and connection.

Work for a fully inclusive and whole church in partnership with a variety of liaisons and councils, using new technologies when possible to meet efficiently, ensuring that all persons have equal access to materials and tools.

Focus on the issue under discussion in our meetings and deliberations and support the moderator to bring us back to the topic if we stray away.

Seek the advice and or guidance of the GACOR Moderator or GA Staff during our face-to-face meetings.

Respect and acknowledge the planning process, be active participants before and during our meetings and trainings so that the work of GACOR is advanced.

Agree that equity pertains to all people with NO exceptions.

Spring 2013

1 GACOR Mission Statement
GACOR Permanent Committee Review 2017

Angie Andriot, PhD
Research Services
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

September 19, 2017
Every six years, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) must undergo a review. This review includes a self-study, undertaken by the committee itself. As part of the review, GACOR and the General Assembly committee that will review GACOR have asked the Research Services team to assist by conducting evaluative research and data analysis.

The two main areas covered are: (1) fidelity to mission, and (2) effectiveness of service.

In order to examine these areas, five groups were surveyed:

1. GA Commissioners and Advisory Delegates
2. Permanent Committee Members
3. Members of the boards of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly
4. Mid Council Leaders
5. National Racial-Ethnic Caucus Leaders
31% of respondents completed the survey (843 total)

Below are the response rates and number of respondents for each group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GA commissioners</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid council leaders</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent committee members</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial ethnic caucuses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the Racial Ethnic Caucus Response rate is so low, they are not included as a separate group when comparisons of groups are done in the report. Their answers are, however, included in any report of overall responses (provided they were asked the question).
### Demographics of respondents

Below are some demographic details for the respondents overall. For more details regarding respondent demographics by respondent group, see Appendices A-D.

#### Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern or North African</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Age

- 20-39: 9%
- 40-75: 80%
- 75-91: 11%

#### Other

- Speak English as a second language: 7%
- Male: 51%
- Has disability: 7%

Since there are not enough responses from respondents of color to do detailed comparisons by race-ethnicity, as such all racial-ethnic analyses in the report use a binary comparison of white respondents and respondents of color.
What are the views of GACOR?

In this section, we examine:
(1) Familiarity with GACOR
(2) Perceptions of GACOR’s importance
(3) Beliefs regarding GACOR’s fidelity to its mission
**fidelity to Mission**

83% are at least somewhat familiar with GACOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not familiar</th>
<th>Somewhat familiar</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent committees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boards</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid councils</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA commissioners</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Members on permanent committees and boards are more familiar with GACOR than members of mid councils or GA commissioners.
The most common way respondents encounter GACOR is regarding GA

Whereas mid council members are more likely than members of the boards to encounter GACOR during or regarding GA, board members are more likely to encounter GACOR in every other situation listed.
**most consider it important to be intentional about including people based on:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex or gender</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or ethnicity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordination</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological perspective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability or disability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only differences by group are that board members are *less* interested in being inclusive regarding ordination status, and mid councils are *more* interested in being inclusive regarding place of residence.
In addition, 3% have no opinion, and 4% provide an “other” opinion. Other opinions include the belief that diversity should happen naturally, that focusing on diversity distracts us from other goals, and that seeking diversity comes at the expense of “finding the best people.”
fidelity to mission

The Book of Order instructs that each Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) council, including the General Assembly...

“shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices. . . . Councils shall establish committees on representation to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with principles of unity and diversity.”

72% believe GACOR helps the GA follow this instruction at least somewhat faithfully

Responses do not differ by age, gender, race-ethnicity, or ability

In addition, 25% have no opinion.
Is GACOR effective in its mission?
We examine this by measuring levels of representation, participation, and access to decision-making. In addition, a few other outcomes of interest to GACOR are assessed.
effectiveness of mission

Attempts are being made to increase diversity

Individuals from underrepresented groups are 5% more likely to have been recruited to their position.

Here are the specific percentages of each group that reports having been recruited to their position:

- Men: 50%
- Women: 55%
- White: 52%
- People of Color: 57%
- No disability: 53%
- Has disability: 60%

Also, the average age of those recruited is 4 years younger than those who were not recruited (not shown).

GA commissioners have the greatest percentage of recruited individuals from underrepresented groups.
effectiveness of mission

Most respondents felt comfortable expressing their perspective in meetings; however 1 in 4 sometimes felt pressure to go along with committee decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt comfortable expressing my own perspective in committee meetings</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had sufficient access to the moderator and vice moderator</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was satisfied with the way the committee dealt with problems that came up</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been comfortable with the process for placing an item on the agenda</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My participation affected decisions made in committee</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes felt pressure to go along with decisions made by the committee</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The seating arrangement in committee meetings made it difficult for some people to fully participate or be seen</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The meeting organizers relied too much on complicated technologies that were difficult to access/understand</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Responses differ by demographics, which will be covered later in the report. Percentages will not add up to 100 because not all response options are shown.*
65% feel that their opinions are just as valued as the opinions of others.

Responses do not differ based on race ethnicity, age, or ability or disability. However, they do differ by gender. Men are more likely than women to feel their opinions are valued about the same or more (see page 19 for more).
19% report having witnessed bias or discrimination based on one or more of the following:

- Age: 9%
- Sex or gender: 8%
- Race or ethnicity: 8%
- Ordination (minister or elder): 7%
- Sexual orientation: 6%
- Fluency in English: 5%
- Marital status: 2%
- Ability or disability: 2%

People were most likely to witness age-based bias or discrimination.
8% report having experienced bias or discrimination based on one or more of the following:

- **Age**: 4%
- **Sex or gender**: 3%
- **Ordination (minister or elder)**: 3%
- **Race or ethnicity**: 2%
- **Fluency in English**: 2%
- **Marital status**: 1%
- **Sexual orientation**: <1%
- **Ability or disability**: <1%

Peasants were most likely to experience age-based bias or discrimination.

It is important to note that ALL respondents were asked this question; so, 3% of all respondents report having experienced bias or discrimination based on gender—including men. Subsequent slides report experiences of bias or discrimination specifically felt by members of traditionally marginalized groups (for those categories in which we have the relevant information.).
**20% of those under 40 have experienced age-based bias or discrimination**

In addition, those under 40 are less comfortable expressing their perspective in meetings, are more likely to feel pressure to go along with decisions, and are less likely to be satisfied with the way the committee deals with problems.

- **I felt comfortable expressing my own perspective in meetings**
  - under 40: 81%
  - 40-74: 84%
  - 75+: 89%

- **I sometimes felt pressure to go along with decisions**
  - under 40: 38%
  - 40-74: 22%
  - 75+: 27%

- **I was satisfied with the way the committee dealt with problems that came up**
  - under 40: 69%
  - 40-74: 78%
  - 75+: 87%

**Witnessed Discrimination**

Respondents who report witnessing age-based bias or discrimination by other members of the committee.

- 9%

**Experienced Discrimination**

Respondents under 40 who report experiencing age-based bias or discrimination by other members of the committee. (Only 1 respondent over 75 reported experiencing age-based discrimination.)

- 20%
effectiveness of mission

6% of people of color have experienced race-based discrimination

In addition, respondents of color are less likely to feel their participation affected decisions, are more likely to feel pressure to go along with decisions, and are less satisfied with their level of access to the moderator.

People of color are:

- 4% less likely than white individuals to feel that their participation affected decisions made in committee
- 4% more likely to say they sometimes felt pressure to go along with committee decisions, and
- 9% less likely to say they had sufficient access to the moderator

Witnessed Discrimination

Respondents who report witnessing race-based bias or discrimination by other members of the committee

Experienced Discrimination

Respondents of color who report experiencing race-based bias or discrimination by other members of the committee
6% of those with a disability have experienced ability-based bias

31 of the 50 respondents had a disability which affected their ability to travel to meetings at GA

81% (27 of the 31) communicated their needs. They are most likely to communicate their needs to the committee or board leadership.

Of these, 82% say adequate steps were taken to ensure they were able to fully participate in meetings.

Witnessed Discrimination
Respondents who report witnessing ability-based bias or discrimination by other members of the committee

Experienced Discrimination
People with disabilities who report experiencing ability-based bias or discrimination by other members of the committee

6%
5% of women have experienced gender-based discrimination

Men are 6% more likely than women to feel that other committee members value their opinions about the same as or more than those of others.

Women are also 4% less likely than men to agree that their participation affected decisions made in committee (not shown).

Also, this differs by age: 21% of women under 40 report experiencing gender-based discrimination, compared to 3% of women 40 and over.
Main findings

On interpreting findings

This research makes the use of tests for statistical significance.

- If a difference between groups is reported, this means that a significance test (e.g., t-test, ANOVA, chi-square) shows that it was significantly different (p<.05).

- If no breakdown by group is shown, it means there were no significant differences to show.

For further details about how each group responded to all survey questions, see Appendices A-D.

1. 83% of respondents are familiar with GACOR. Members on permanent committees and boards are more familiar with GACOR than members of mid councils or GA commissioners.

2. The most common way respondents encounter GACOR is regarding GA. Whereas mid council members are more likely than members of the boards to encounter GACOR during or regarding GA, board members are more likely to encounter GACOR in every other situation listed.

3. Only 2% think GACOR is unimportant, and 3% feel it is not faithful to its mission. The fact that responses do not differ by gender, race, age, or ability indicate that those groups GACOR is trying to help are just as satisfied with the work of GACOR as majority group members. In addition, the more a person is familiar with GACOR, the more likely they are to say GACOR is very faithful to its mission.

4. Although most consider it important to be intentional about including people based on all the categories we asked about, the most important categories to respondents were gender, race, and ordination.

5. Theological orientation requires more attention. Although 84% said it was important to be intentional about including people based on theological orientation, this was not one of the categories we asked about regarding experiences of discrimination in the survey. This was the most frequent written-in “other” category (sexual orientation was second).

6. Although overall reports of experiences of bias or discrimination are relatively low, there are still reports. In addition, there are patterns by age, race, and gender in who feels comfortable expressing their opinions in meetings, who feels pressured to go along with decisions, who is satisfied with the way decisions are made, and who feels their participation makes a difference.
Appendix

Permanent Committee Members Review of GACOR

Response Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Rate:</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Partial</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 81
1. How familiar are you with the work of the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 77
2. How important do you think it is for permanent committees to be balanced when it comes to the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex or gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or ethnicity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological perspective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability or Disability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordination (minister or</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elder)</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(region of the country)</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. What is your opinion about this instruction and the importance of having a General Assembly Committee of Representation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The PC(USA) should be concerned about inclusion and diversity, but a GA committee on representation is not needed to achieving this goal</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity is an important goal for PC(USA) governance, and a GA committee on representation is an important part of achieving this goal</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 77
4. How faithfully does the General Assembly Committee on Representation help the General Assembly follow this instruction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not very faithfully</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat faithfully</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very faithfully</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 77
5. How did you come to be nominated to serve on a GA permanent committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-nomination to the GA Nominating Committee</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-nomination to a commissioner of GA</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was recruited</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 75
6. Who first contacted you about the possibility of serving on a GA permanent committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A member or staff person of the GA Nominating Committee</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of the permanent committee to which I was subsequently elected</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of my synod’s committee on representation</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of my presbytery’s committee on representation</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teaching elder or ruling elder from my synod</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teaching elder or ruling elder from my presbytery</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A racial-ethnic caucus, council, or committee (e.g., National Black Presbyterian Caucus, National Asian Presbyterian Caucus, National Korean Presbyterian Caucus, Presbyterian Middle Eastern Network, New Immigrant Congregational Support Office, National Hispanic Presbyterian Caucus, Native American Coordinating Committee)</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend/acquaintance</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify):</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 35**
7. After your election, did you complete or attend any orientation as a new member of your GA permanent committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't remember</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 75
8. How helpful was this orientation in preparing you for service on the permanent committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat helpful</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly helpful</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 59
9. Do you think that, looking back, it would have been helpful for the committee to have had an orientation for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 10
10. Did your committee assign you a mentor when you began serving on it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't remember</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 75
## 11. How clear to you was each of the following before your committee service and now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Before your committee service</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of your permanent committee</td>
<td>★★★★★☆</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count: 70</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The results that your permanent committee was supposed to deliver</td>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count: 69</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your role and responsibilities on the committee</td>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count: 70</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The time commitment needed to fulfill your permanent committee ...</td>
<td>★★★★★☆</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count: 70</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How your skills matched with the committee’s needs and tasks at that time</td>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count: 69</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The procedure for decision making used by the committee</td>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count: 69</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. How often are/is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agendas distributed sufficiently in advance of meetings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting materials distributed in an accessible manner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other meeting material distributed sufficiently in advance of meetings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate information on the topics to be discussed/addressed distributed prior to each meeting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The purpose/business of each meeting made clear</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate minutes kept for meetings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting minutes distributed in a timely manner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals
Total Responses 78
13. To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable expressing my own perspective in committee meetings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes feel pressure to go along with decisions made by the committee</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been satisfied with the way the committee dealt with problems that came up</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My participation has affected decisions made in committee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neutral or unsure</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have had sufficient access to the moderator and vice moderator.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been comfortable with the process for placing an item on the agenda.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. How do you think that other committee members value your participation relative to those of others on the committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value my opinions more</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value my opinions about the same as others</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value my opinions less</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed—some value my opinions more, while others value my opinions less</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 62**
15. Do you believe any of the following played a role in how much your opinions are or are not valued in the committee?

### Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your sex or gender</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your race or ethnicity</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your fluency in English</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any physical limitations/disabilities you may have</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your ordination (minister or elder) or lack thereof</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. How would you rate the amount of direction provided by the staff to the committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too much</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the right amount</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too little</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 62
17. How satisfied are you with the support and service provided by staff to the committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral or unsure</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 62**
18. At any time during your committee service, have you had a disability that could have potentially affected your ability to travel to or otherwise participate in meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 61
19. Did you communicate your needs to the committee on which you served?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. Were adequate steps taken to ensure that you were able to participate fully in committee meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 12
21. Have you witnessed or experienced any bias or discrimination by members of the committee based on the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Witnessed</th>
<th>Experienced</th>
<th>Total Checks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex or gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Check %</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Check %</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race or ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Check %</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Check %</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Check %</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability or disability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Check %</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordination (minister or elder)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row Check %</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 75

23. In what year were you born?

Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1,955.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. With which of the following do you most closely identify?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 74
25. What is your native language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 73
26. Do you have any of the following long-lasting conditions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical abilities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

Board Member Review of GACOR

Response Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Rate:</th>
<th>82.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```
1. Are you:

- A member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board? 37.7% 20
- A member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly or the Board of the Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment & Loan Program, or Presbyterian Publishing Corporation? 67.9% 36
2. How familiar are you with the work of the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals: 48*
3. In what context have you encountered GACOR?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During or regarding General Assembly</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regarding our membership or recruiting/nominating</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received advice and council</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received data or analysis that was requested</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponded via email or phone</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting members/liaisons</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Write In</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. How important do you think it is for agency boards to be intentional about including people based on the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex or gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race or ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theological perspective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability or disability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordination (minister, elder, or member)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of residence (region of the country)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. What is your opinion about this instruction and the importance of having a General Assembly Committee of Representation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The PC(USA) should be concerned about inclusion and diversity, but a GA committee on representation is not needed to achieving this goal</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion and diversity are important goals for PC(USA) governance, and a GA committee on representation is an important part of achieving this goal</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 49**
6. How faithfully does the General Assembly Committee on Representation help the General Assembly follow this instruction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not very faithfully</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat faithfully</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very faithfully</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 49
7. How did you come to be nominated to serve on a GA agency board?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-nomination to the GA Nominating Committee</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was recruited</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 49
8. After your election, do you feel you received sufficient orientation as a new member of your GA agency board?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 49
9. How clear to you was each of the following before your agency board service and now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before your committee service</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of your agency board</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 49</td>
<td>Count: 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The results that your agency board was supposed to deliver</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 48</td>
<td>Count: 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your role and responsibilities on the agency board</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 46</td>
<td>Count: 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The time commitment needed to fulfill your agency board</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibilities</td>
<td>Count: 48</td>
<td>Count: 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How your skills matched with the agency board's needs and tasks at that time</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 48</td>
<td>Count: 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The procedure(s) for decision making used by the agency board</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 47</td>
<td>Count: 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable expressing my own perspective in board meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes feel pressure to go along with decisions made by the board</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been satisfied with the way the board dealt with problems that</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>came up</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My participation has affected decisions made in board</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have had sufficient access to the moderator and vice moderator</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Neutral or unsure</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have been comfortable with the process for placing an item on the agenda</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. How do you think that other agency board members value your participation relative to those of others on the board?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value my opinions more</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value my opinions about the same as those of others</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value my opinions less</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed—some value my opinions more, while others value my opinions less</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 37
12. Do you believe any of the following played a role in how much your opinions are or are not valued in the committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your age</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your sex or gender</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your race or ethnicity</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your fluency in English</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your ordination (minister or elder) or lack thereof</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. At any time during your committee service, have you had a disability that could have potentially affected your ability to travel to or otherwise participate in meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 37
14. Did you communicate your needs to the agency board on which you served?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 3
15. Were adequate steps taken to ensure that you were able to participate fully in board meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 2
16. Have you witnessed or experienced any bias or discrimination by members of the board based on the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Witnessed</th>
<th>Experienced</th>
<th>Total Checks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>1 (50.0%)</td>
<td>1 (50.0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex or gender</strong></td>
<td>1 (50.0%)</td>
<td>1 (50.0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race or ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>4 (80.0%)</td>
<td>1 (20.0%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fluency in English</strong></td>
<td>2 (66.7%)</td>
<td>1 (33.3%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual orientation</strong></td>
<td>2 (100.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability or disability</strong></td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordination (minister or elder) or lack thereof</strong></td>
<td>2 (66.7%)</td>
<td>1 (33.3%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. What is your gender?

Value | Percent | Responses
---|---|---
Female | 45.5% | 20
Male | 54.5% | 24

18. In what year were you born?

Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,954.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. With which of the following do you most closely identify?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern or North African</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. What is your first or native language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 45
21. Do you have any of the following long-lasting conditions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical abilities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mental condition such as bipolar, depression, or PTSD</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GA Commissioners Review of GACOR

**Response Counts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Rate:</th>
<th>84.8%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 717**
1. Which of the following General Assemblies did you attend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Assembly</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>220th General Assembly in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221st General Assembly in Detroit, Michigan</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222nd General Assembly in Portland, Oregon</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Were you a commissioner to the following General Assemblies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Assembly</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>220th General Assembly in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221st General Assembly in Detroit, Michigan</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222nd General Assembly in Portland, Oregon</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Were you an elder or minister commissioner to the 222nd General Assembly?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elder commissioner</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister commissioner</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - write in</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 319
4. How familiar are you with the work of the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 609
5. How important do you think it is for GA committees to be intentional about including people based on the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex or gender</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or ethnicity</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological perspective</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability or disability</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordination (minister, elder, or member)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of residence</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(region of the country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. What is your opinion about this instruction and the importance of having a General Assembly Committee of Representation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The PC(USA) should not be concerned about diversity, and there should be no GA committee on representation</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The PC(USA) should be concerned about diversity, but but a GA committee on representation is not needed to achieving this goal</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity is an important goal for PC(USA) governance, and a GA committee on representation is an important part of achieving this goal</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 608
7. How faithfully does the General Assembly Committee on Representation help the General Assembly follow this instruction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not very faithfully</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat faithfully</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very faithfully</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 606**
8. How did you come to be nominated to serve as a GA commissioner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-nomination</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was recruited</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic process based on seniority or other criteria</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation by congregation within presbytery</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals:** 603
9. Who first contacted you about the possibility of serving as a commissioner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The presbytery executive or stated clerk</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of the presbytery’s nominating committee</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else in the presbytery</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pastor or other leader in my congregation</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify):</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 275
10. After your election, did you complete or attend any orientation on serving as a commissioner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, through my presbytery</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, through the Office of the General Assembly materials (video orientation modules, webinars)</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, other:</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 600
11. How helpful was this orientation in preparing you for service as a GA commissioner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat helpful</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly helpful</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 545
12. Why didn’t you attend an orientation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was not offered</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not know about it</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t need it</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 44
13. How clear to you was each of the following before and after GA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before your first committee meeting</th>
<th>After the conclusion of GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of the committee</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 586 Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 580 Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The results that the committee was supposed to deliver</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 574 Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 576 Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your role and responsibilities on the committee</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 574 Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 573 Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The function or purpose of PC-Biz</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 577 Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 574 Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to use PC-Biz</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 579 Not Applicable: 0</td>
<td>★★★★★☆ Count: 576 Not Applicable: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. What seating arrangement was used at your committee meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long tables set in a u-shape</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of round tables</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lecture hall with rows of tables</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater seating</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Write In</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 564
15. To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral or unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt comfortable expressing my own perspective in committee meetings</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes felt pressure to go along with decisions made by the committee</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was satisfied with the way the committee dealt with problems that came up</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My participation affected decisions made in committee</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had sufficient access to the moderator and vice moderator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The meeting organizers relied too much on complicated technologies that were difficult to access/understand</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The seating arrangement in committee meetings made it difficult for some people to fully participate or be seen</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. How do you think that other committee members valued your participation relative to those of others on the committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valued my opinions more</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valued my opinions about the same as others</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valued my opinions less</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed—some valued my opinions more, while others valued my opinions less</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 560
17. Do you believe any of the following played a role in how much your opinions were or were not valued in the committee?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your age</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your sex or gender</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your race or ethnicity</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your fluency in English</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any limitations/disabilities you may have</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your ordination (minister or elder) or lack thereof</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 547
18. At the time of the General Assembly, did you have a disability that affected your ability to travel to or otherwise participate in meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 561
19. Did you communicate your needs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To committee leadership</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To GA meeting planners</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In travel arrangements</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. Were adequate steps taken to ensure that you were able to participate fully in committee sessions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 14
21. Did you witness or experience any bias or discrimination by members of the committee based on the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Witnessed</th>
<th>Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex or gender</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or ethnicity</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability or disability</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordination (minister or elder)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0
22. What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 601

23. In what year were you born?

Statistics

| Average | 1,953.4 |
24. With which of the following do you most closely identify?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern or North African</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 598
## Appendix

### Midcouncil Review of GACOR

#### Response Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Rate:</th>
<th>92.6%</th>
<th>Complete: 100</th>
<th>Partial: 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES
1. How familiar are you with the work of the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 102
2. In what context have you encountered GACOR?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During or regarding General Assembly</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regarding our membership or recruiting/nominating</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received advice and council</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received data or analysis that was requested</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponded via email or phone</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting members/liaisons</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Write In</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How important do you think it is for midcouncils to be intentional about including people based on the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Somewhat unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex or gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race or ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theological perspective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability or disability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordination</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(minister, elder, or member)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(region of the country)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. What is your opinion about this instruction and the importance of having a General Assembly Committee of Representation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The PC(USA) should not be concerned about inclusion and diversity, and there should be no GA committee on representation</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The PC(USA) should be concerned about inclusion and diversity, but a GA committee on representation is not needed to achieving this goal</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion and diversity are important goals for PC(USA) governance, and a GA committee on representation is an important part of achieving this goal</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 101
5. How faithfully does the General Assembly Committee on Representation help the General Assembly follow this instruction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not very faithfully</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat faithfully</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very faithfully</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 102
6. What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 99

7. In what year were you born?

Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Min</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1,955.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. With which of the following do you most closely identify?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. What is your first or native language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 99
10. Do you have any of the following long-lasting conditions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blindness, deafness, or a profound vision or hearing impairment</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abilities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carrying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A learning disability such as ADD or dyslexia</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mental condition such as bipolar, depression, or PTSD</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 04-01

[The assembly approved Item 04-01 as amended. See pp. 12, 45.]

On Appointing a Team to Review the Current Per Capita Based System of Funding the Ministry of Councils Higher Than the Session—From the Presbytery of Newton.

The Presbytery of Newton respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to do the following:

1. Direct the Moderator(s) of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk and the General Assembly Committee on Representation, to appoint a team of no less than [six] [twelve] and no more than* [ten] [fifteen] elders and ministers to review the current per capita based system of funding the ministry of councils higher than the session, for financial sustainability into the next ten years. The team will accomplish this by identifying the adaptive and technical challenges of sustainability in funding the ministry of councils higher than the session, consulting and receiving feedback/input from the leadership of the presbyteries, synods, and the Office of the General Assembly, as well as the Presbyterian Foundation.

2. Direct the team to make a final report of their work, along with recommendations and suggestions of potential experiments for changes to the system that funds the ministry of councils higher than the session, to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [If the work requires more time, the team is directed to report to 225th General Assembly (2022), with an interim report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $38,240. Total—$76,480]

Rationale

Super Brief History

The earliest use of per capita was 1734. In 1857, the General Assembly adopted a plan to help defray the cost of travel and hosting the annual General Assembly. Each presbytery would contribute 5 cents per member of their presbytery to assist with the overall costs. Over the decades this basic structure has been our means of sharing the cost of being a community of missional ministry together.

Originally, per capita only funded the costs of the General Assembly meeting—particularly, providing a commissioners’ travel fund, so presbyters of modest means could afford the sometimes weeks-long trip on horseback to serve as General Assembly commissioners.

Over the decades, since that time, the use of the per capita has funded administrative costs of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly, and synod and presbytery work. Per capita (literally each head) has been based on the number of members per church so that all paid an equal proportional share of the cost of ministry together.

Through various authoritative interpretations and PJC rulings*, per capita apportionment has been seen as a voluntary benevolence for congregations. Yet, as faith communities, there is an ethical and high moral obligation to participate fully in the community.

Present Situation

Over the last few decades, the overall membership of our congregations/presbyteries has declined. Recently, with the loss of congregations to other denominations, the decline of membership is very steep. The cost of doing ministry has not decreased even though presbyteries may have fewer congregations and members. Presbyteries have had to make, and are continuing to make, difficult and challenging choices of doing ministry together.

The Per Capita System of Funding Is Not Flexible Nor Adaptive

The Book of Order allows presbyteries to make their own determination of funding and methods of raising funds. However, because many of the synods and the OGA financial structure is based on per capita assessments, it is awkward, clunky, and difficult for a presbytery not to utilize the same structure. The per capita apportionment funding system, alone, is antiquated, and a financially defeating way to fund our ministry together through our higher councils.

The per capita system was a specific tool, with roots from a time when technical solutions, on their own, worked. We need to take a serious look at the adaptive challenges that face the future financial sustainability of our higher councils. The financial sustainability landscape of mid councils in our current context is multilevel and complex. We live in a time that calls us to address adaptive challenges with both adaptive and technical solutions.
Technical problems are those that have a clear cause as well as a clear process or procedure for “fixing” the problem. Adaptive problems or challenges are not clear. New learning or understanding of the context is required to address adaptive challenges. In such cases, many issues lie behind the presenting problems. Therefore, it takes consideration of many different possibilities to adjust, reframe, or shift the challenge.

Values and Ideals Reflected in Per Capita

We recognize and celebrate that the congregations and worshipping communities are, and should be, the leading edge in our missional ministry of announcing the Kingdom of God. We value the community nature of the per capita apportionment because all share in both the cost and the support of missional work. Sharing the cost of being the church is part of being a community. We appreciate having the different mid councils that provide support to the congregations and presbyteries in a variety of ways. We also understand that dismantling, changing, or supplementing the system of per capita apportionment is not a simple nor linear process but one that will take time, conversation, experimentation, and diverse recommendations. It is our hope that the team convened to study this issue can engage councils at all levels in a robust discussion of the challenges they face in achieving financial stability. From that conversation, we hope that a pathway will emerge that upholds the values of shared missional ministry, strong support for congregations and higher councils, and addresses broadly the sustainability challenges beyond the one tool that has historically been used.

Concurrences to Item 04-01 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Giddings-Lovejoy, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Missouri River Valley, Pittsburgh, Santa Fe, Upper Ohio Valley, Wabash Valley, and from the Synod of the Northeast.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that in response to Item 04-01, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following alternate resolution:

“The 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Directs the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) to review the current per capita based system of funding the ministry of councils higher than the session, for financial sustainability into the next ten years. A team of elected members and staff will accomplish this by identifying the adaptive and technical challenges of sustainability in funding the ministry of councils higher than the session, consulting and receiving feedback/input from the presbyteries and synods, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Presbyterian Foundation, and ecumenical partners, utilizing Research Services as appropriate.

2. Directs COGA to make a final report of their work, along with recommendations and suggestions of potential experiments for changes to the system that funds the ministry of councils higher than the session, to the 224th General Assembly (2020). If the work requires more time, they are directed to report to 225th General Assembly (2022) and provide an interim report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).”

Like the proponent presbyteries, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) sees the per capita system as an important form of solidarity and loyalty among all the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Thus, it makes a social witness, and when withheld for non-financial reasons, sends a clear message. The use of per capita also signals an understanding of the structural or institutional aspect of the church’s “embodiedness.” Hence ACSWP supports per capita as a voluntary system and believes that it needs to be strengthened at all levels of the church.

Likewise, ACSWP appreciates the brief historical background provided in the overture. More can be found in Clinton A. McCoy Jr.’s “How This Mustard Seed Grew: The Origin and Impact of the Per Capita Apportionment as a Means of Financing the General Assembly,” American Presbyterians 66:1 (Spring 1988). More options for flexibility and adaptability may be found in the traditions of other churches, with our Full Communion partners’ traditions most comparable.

While recognizing that the Office of the General Assembly is almost entirely dependent on General per capita (as are some mid councils), ACSWP nonetheless believes COGA is the most appropriate body to do the consulting and exploring new thinking desired by the proponents. Their work might also be shared in draft form for comment prior to submission to the General Assembly. Overall, this would also save the church the expense of creating a separate study team. The problems of per capita are inextricably bound to the viability of our current presbytery and synod structure, even if the issue comes to a head when (after a surprising period of no increases) a catch-up in GA per capita is proposed. Thus, ACSWP holds that an ecumenical dimension to the study is important for comparison not only of giving traditions, but of coordination and organization in the face of changing demographic and cultural trends.
Advice & Counsel on Item 04-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 04-01.

Churches with majority people of color, whether immigrant or black churches, may not have the funds to support an increase of per capita, yet need the monies to sustain their churches. As the church of Jesus Christ, we are called to support one another and reiterate the rationale of this overture: “Sharing the cost of being the church is part of being a community. … We also understand that dismantling, changing, or supplementing the system of per capita apportionment is not a simple nor linear process but one that will take time, conversation, experimentation, and diverse recommendations.”

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 04-01.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns agrees that the current per capita system is neither flexible nor adaptive, and there is therefore a great need to begin a conversation regarding the challenges and future financial sustainability of our shared missional ministries. ACWC also lifts up the reality that women are too often left out of conversations regarding financial concerns. Indeed, the suggested leadership list for consultation may already reflect a gender imbalance. ACWC therefore advises that the two advocacy committees, ACWC and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), also be included as consultants in the conversation.

Comment on Item 04-01—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to approve Item 04-01.

As the Rationale for the overture states, the Per Capita funding source has been in place since the earliest form of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Through our understanding of being a “connectional church,” we realize a shared responsibility for the vitality of our beloved denomination, as has been the case for nearly 300 years. While the requirements of how to function as a denomination have changed in those 300 years, very little about the apportionment nature of our shared responsibilities, per capita, has been altered.

COGA believes now is the time for a new age of Presbyterians to discern the Spirit’s guidance to fund the work of the denomination for the next several generations. It seems underwhelming to note that we still are funding aspects of the work of the church similarly to the 18th century Presbyterian church when it comes to the work of the General Assembly, while so much around us has evolved in many nuanced and streamlined ways surely there is another way for us to finance the ministry of the 21st century church.

Ergo, COGA believes that there is merit in exploring other ways of funding the necessary work of the OGA, and commends the formation of a task force to look into that possibility.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk …” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

Comment on Item 04-01—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) advises that commissioners consider that a team of “no less than six and no greater than ten elders and ministers” is a very small sample of the rich diversity of the church. It is important that the team represent a breadth and depth of the church while acknowledging that a six- to ten-member team cannot fully embody such diversity on its own.

Per capita funding is an issue of participation, representation, and equity. It is a crucial aspect of our connection as a denomination. To ensure that the review is fully representational of the denomination, including underrepresented communities, GACOR encourages the team to capture voices and perspectives from as wide of a spectrum within the denomination as possible. The committee encourages the team to be intentional and effective in seeking many voices from across the church.
04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-01

Comment on Item 04-01—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), along with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), is a recipient of General Assembly per capita revenue. Over the years, our agencies have operated with a shared understanding of what General Assembly per capita is and how it may be used, reflected in a joint agreement (see Appendix 10 in PMA’s Manual of Operations at http://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/PMA-Manual-Of-Operations-September-2016.pdf).

Item 04-02

[The assembly approved Item 04-02 as amended. See pp. 44, 45–46.]

A Resolution on Prioritizing Translation and Accessibility in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Direct all six of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies to be intentional and proactive in prioritizing the hiring and retaining of people from Presbyterian communities and other historic Presbyterian “Communities of Color,” preferably with theological training and fluency in languages other than English, in [every one] [each] of their program areas or departments so that resources, as well as theological, ecclesiological, and other pertinent documents, if applicable, will be written from the cultural, methodological, and linguistic worldviews of those communities. The agencies will report back on their progress to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

2. Direct all the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to create an “Office of Translation and Interpretation” that will develop and share resources with other agencies and mid councils to create a systematic approach to language accessibility for the entire church. The translators should have direct interaction with the associates in the Racial/Ethnic and Women’s Intercultural Ministries as well as the Racial Ethnic Caucuses and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (proposed recommendation to change name to Racial Equity Advocacy Committee) to ascertain the actual needs of their constituencies and prioritize the documents, articles, and new items that are important and relevant to these communities.

3. [2.] Encourage all councils of the church to conduct all meetings related to the ministry of the church in their respective jurisdiction in languages common to their constituencies and to offer simultaneous interpretation in those languages as well as American Sign Language (ASL) [and provide captioning services for the deaf and hard of hearing community]. All pertinent documents should be sent ahead of time in the proper languages in a format accessible to [the blind and vision impaired] [people who are blind and vision impaired]. [This will allow those church members and leaders of immigrant, deaf, and blind communities who are not proficient in the English language or are unable to hear or see to participate and have a “place at the table.”]


Rationale

Our reformed theological and constitutional affirmations of the creation of a community of all languages and tongues has biblical foundations:

“And I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory,” (Isa. 66:18b); “After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages ...” (Rev.7:9); “all together were in one place ...” (Acts:2:1) [as] “...a house of prayer for all peoples...” (Isa. 56:7).

Demographers predict that by the middle of this century, or even before, there will not be a racial or ethnic majority in this country, due mostly to immigration from the Global South and birth rates amongst communities of color.

Many immigrants desire to affiliate with our church, since some are indeed Presbyterians, the product of our missionary activities in their countries of origin. They are ready to share with the United States’ church their unique gifts of culture, music, and language, as well as their faith and commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
Contrasting with the way things are going around us in society, our church presently is mostly homogeneous: white Anglo and English-speaking. If the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is going to fulfill her calling to be a reflection of the kingdom of God and God’s creation in all of its colorful glory, then the new immigrants and their descendants present a wonderful challenge as well as an opportunity for ministry.

In an article and commentary on Acts 2:1–31, the Reverend Jill Duffield, editor of *The Presbyterian Outlook*, wrote the following:

Translation requires careful attention to context, both that of the speaker and the hearer. The implication, the tone, and even pauses and filler words must be considered and translated if the meaning is to be correctly conveyed. Confusion abounds when a literal word-for-word transcript is given and, as the phrase goes, something important is “lost in translation.”

Translation from one language to another is more of an art than anything else, especially in the church context. It involves knowledge of “terms of art” and of the theology, ecclesiology, and ministry of the church, as well as the context in which the “target” communities live and minister. It requires paid, trained professionals in the field so that the translations are both faithful to the spirit of the message as well as contextual to each language community. Furthermore, the translators must work closely with the constituency, who are the ones who should prioritize the documents to be translated and not some rule, guidelines or mandate from someone who may not understand intercultural dynamics. Simply translating documents from a white, middle class cultural context contributes to the colonization and forced assimilation of other cultures. English as a language and worldview would then continue to be the “normative” or dominant way of thinking and acting.

Recently, General Assembly commissions and committees, such as the Way Forward Commission, have challenged our denomination to be more intentional about hiring multilingual and culturally proficient staff at all levels that will develop resources in the native tongues of new immigrants and publish important statements and documents in languages other than English.

If the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) really seeks to become a multicultural/intercultural/cross cultural denomination, as publicly announced and prioritized, it needs to invest major resources in providing culturally sensitive materials for its Global South constituency as well as making outreach more effective to the “emerging majorities” we still hope to welcome into our denomination.

Endnotes
1. “Global South” is a term that has been emerging in transnational and postcolonial studies to refer to what may also be called the “Third World” (i.e. Africa, Latin America, and the developing counties in Asia), “developing countries,” “less developed countries,” and “less developed regions” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_South](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_South).

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-02**

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 04-02.

Accessibility “to the table” has always been a concern of women. Language accessibility can/has limited the access of women, especially women of immigrant communities as they navigate the structures within the PC(USA), as well as members of the deaf and blind communities.

**GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-02**

Comment on Item 4-02—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation supports the full inclusion of diverse persons at all levels of the denomination. This openness requires a commitment to effective translations, ideally written by native speakers of each language so that documents are accurate and culturally sensitive.

The *Book of Order*, F-1.0404 states: “… As it participates in God’s mission, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks: … a new openness in its own membership, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions, made one in Christ by the power of the Spirit, as a visible sign of the new humanity.”

Translation and interpretation are significant ways that the denomination ensures equitable access across, and participation in, the whole body.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).
Item 04-03

[The assembly approved Item 04-03, Recommendation 1., as amended and with comment. See pp. 44, 46.]

[Comments:

We believe that there is potential for equity and inclusion that is not fully realized by the current configuration and lack of organizational clarity regarding Shared Services.

We believe that by engaging all agencies in determining the constitution of Shared Services and how services are administered, in a transparent and holistic process, that greater buy-in will be accomplished across the six agencies and Presbyterian Women, giving the General Assembly as a whole greater bargaining power, opportunities for cross-agency collaboration, and shared accountability.

We believe that areas identified in “Ongoing Commission Administrative Action”: Partnership of six agencies to identify solutions for the cultural, cost, and efficiency issues within Shared Services, property usage, institutional culture, communications, and equity all directly have great potential to be addressed through improved collaboration and shared establishment of a pool of resources that benefit our whole body.

1. There is lack of clarity around what is meant by Shared Services—these should be readily defined with a clear understanding of who is delivering the services. Additionally, it is possible that an agency separate from A. Corp might be more equipped to deliver particular services with greater quality and cost benefit than the Office of Shared Services. We should explore how we can best leverage the skills of our different agencies for the good of the whole.

2. In order for agencies to commit to participation in Shared Services, they must be given enough data to comparison shop and to know and trust that their fees are paying for the services they receive. Currently there is a lack of transparency regarding how service fees are calculated, which leads to distrust and desire to pursue other options.

3. Is the A. Corp Board, as established at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), constituted in a way that encourages all agencies to engage enthusiastically in the opportunity to participate in Shared Services? Trusting that we will learn a lot about what is actually needed for governance of this body during its first two years of implementation, the Moving Forward Commission may realize a different configuration benefits the whole.

4. How might we further partner to create cohesive messaging and bargaining power through Shared Services? Would we benefit from housing some other services such as communications, Human Resources Support, IT, etc. within Shared Services?

5. It seems that there is potential for Shared Services to benefit our denomination beyond the General Assembly level. How can we better resource our congregations and mid council bodies and their work on the ground?

1. Composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp.”)

The Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

a. Approve the joint recommendations of the Way Forward Commission and All Agency Review Committee to restructure the governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, (“A Corp.”) as outlined in their reports and below and, consistent therewith, direct that the following actions be taken within thirty days after the adjournment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) so that the newly constituted board of directors can hold its initial organizational meeting within ninety days of this action:

(1) That the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, consistent with Section 6.06 of the current Amended Bylaws of “A Corp.,” approve the amendments of such bylaws as indicated in the attached Appendix 10 (see p. 487).

(2) That the Board of Directors of “A Corp.” adopt the amendments to the Amended Bylaws of “A Corp.” as indicated in the attached Appendix 10.

(3) That the current Board of Directors of “A Corp.” upon adoption of such amendments, tender their resignations as directors to be effective at the [conclusion of the meeting, or upon execution of the unanimous consent] [constituting of the new board], adopting such amendments.

b. In the expectation that the actions in Recommendations 1.a. above and 1.c. below will be carried out in a timely fashion, elect eleven nominees, selected as described in Recommendation 1.c. below, to the Board of Directors of “A Corp.” to fill the vacancies to be created by the resignations of the then-current Board of “A Corp.” as described in Recommendation 1.a.(3) above.
c. Direct the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation ("A Corp.") to amend the current Amended Bylaws of "A Corp." to change the number and composition of the board, beginning as of the day following the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), as indicated in the attached Appendix 10. (see p. 487) [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

d. Direct the respective governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to change their respective bylaws or standing rules, as appropriate, to provide that the president of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, or such president’s designee pro tem, shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of such boards or committee of each of such agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and such additional or successor agencies as may be created by the General Assembly.

e. Direct the governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to make all such changes as may be necessary and permitted in their governing documents and policies to recognize the changes in the structure and composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

f. Appoint to an existing or special committee or commission of the General Assembly, or delegate to the proposed Moving Forward Implementation Commission in Recommendation 5, the task of reviewing and ensuring the effectiveness of the changes to the Amended Bylaws of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, revising the membership of its board of directors and selection of president, with a direction (1) that such committee report to the current “A Corp.” board any additional recommended changes to such Amended Bylaws within one year, and (2) that the committee described above make itself available for a year following the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to consult with such governance committees, standing rules committees, and other committees and councils of the church as may wish for advice in conforming their bylaws or manuals of operations as necessary to the changes in board governance of “A Corp.” If any member of this committee or commission is a representative of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or of the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly shall ensure that both such agencies are represented among the committee or commission members.

g. Request the appointment, in each of the two General Assemblies following the election of the new board of directors of “A Corp.,” a committee for review of “A Corp.” and that the 225th General Assembly (2022) determine, after the second such review, if additional separate reviews are needed and, if so, the schedule and method for such ongoing review of “A Corp.”

h. Amend Chapters V, VI, and X of the portion of the Manual of the General Assembly known as the Organization for Mission, as indicated in the attached Appendix 11 (see p. 515), to confirm the scope of authority and relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and to recognize the changes in governance of “A Corp.” [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

i. [Rescission of prior inconsistent action.] Declare that all prior enactments inconsistent with these recommendations, including enactments of the General Assemblies of either of the reuniting churches, are hereby rescinded to the extent of such inconsistency.

[The assembly approved Item 04-03, Recommendation 2., as amended and with comment. See pp. 44, 46–47.]

2. Role of the Stated Clerk

The Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

a. Amend the Manual of the General Assembly called the Organization for Mission, Chapter IV.B.2. with a new section “a” and renumber the current a–p as b–q. The new section IV.B.2.a. shall read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

   “a. In partial fulfillment of his/her role as the continuing ecclesial officer and Head of Communion for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Stated Clerk will offer constitutional and spiritual leadership for the life and witness of the church and exercise pastoral authority over concerns of the church in times of crisis. The Stated Clerk is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.’s) chief ecumenical officer and its primary representative in national and international interchurch and interfaith organizations and speaks to and for the church in matters of faith and practice [except as the General Assembly directs otherwise] [in accord with the beliefs, policies, and actions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]”
b. Amend the *Organization for Mission*, Chapter IV.B.2.n., as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The Stated Clerk shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions. The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees, and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve ex-officio on the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and other agencies (identified in Chapter VIII of the *Organization for Mission*) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate’s name is brought to a board for election as the agency executive (chief officer) or interim agency executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).”

c. Amend the *Organization for Mission*, Chapter IV.D.1., so that it reads as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The Way Forward Commission recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) create a twelve-person committee (to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) after consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the General Assembly will elect two committees, each to review the work of one of the agencies of the General Assembly. Each committee will be composed of twelve members: four commissioners from the previous three General Assemblies, four who have served on the board of a General Assembly entity other than the one being reviewed, and four at large. The at-large members may include ecumenical partners. The committee will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. The committee will report to the Stated Clerk who will present the report, along with any additional recommendations from the Stated Clerk, to the next General Assembly following its election the results of the review and make recommendations based on its findings.”

d. Instruct the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Mission Board, Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to amend their by-laws and manuals to be in compliance with the provisions of paragraphs 3.02 and 3.03 above. These agencies may continue to speak within their own realm of responsibility pursuant to already existing policies that will remain unchanged.

[The assembly approved Item 04-03, Recommendation 3., with comment. See pp. 44, 47.]

3. **Financial Sustainability of the National Denomination**

The Way Forward Commission recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) create a twelve-person committee (to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) after consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and to include two presbytery executives and one synod executive) with a deadline of 12/31/2019, to provide a comprehensive resource projection analysis and summary assessment—in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and representatives of all other agencies—of national church assets and income for financial sustainability review. Such analysis/report will be forwarded to each of the six agencies, the 2020 Vision Team, and the ongoing Moving Forward Implementation Commission proposed in Recommendation 5 below.

[The assembly approved Item 04-03, Recommendation 4., as amended and with comment. See pp. 44, 47–48.]

4. **Inclusion and Equity**

The Way Forward Commission recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

a. [Diversity and Reconciliation.] Require that all six agencies participate [and invite Presbyterian Women to participate] in the Diverse Voices Table being established (described under Ongoing Commission Administrative Actions below); and similar to what has been undertaken by the PMA’s Office on Diversity and Reconciliation, create a process to examine issues of equity and inclusion particular to their own agencies.

b. [(Completion of Audits.)] [Require that the prior 222nd General Assembly (2016) mandate for personnel audits from each agency be completed by January 1, 2019, and to recur every four years (see Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 788, GA 222 Item 11-24 (Recommendation 1.b., “Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report”)).] [Require that the previous mandate originating from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for personnel audits from each agency must be completed by January 1, 2019. Further, direct that all agencies incorporate “race audits” occurring at least every four years, utilizing an external professional auditor, who can objectively report systemic bias and prejudice, as well as suggesting actions to becoming more racially just and equitable employers. The same external auditor shall be utilized by all agencies in order that the same standards are applied. The results of these]
audits will be reported to respective agency boards and committees and to the next General Assembly. We further recommend that the members of the Diverse Voices Table and the ‘Chairs & Chiefs’ group of agency executives and board chairs collaborate to select the external auditor. (See Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 788, GA 222 Item 11-24 (Recommendation 1.б., “Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report”).]

c. [Translation Services.] [Require that all translation services of the six agencies be moved to shared services under “A Corp,” and be staffed appropriately in order to provide translation services to all six agencies for translation of all materials going forward and historical/existing records upon request. Prioritization and exceptions of translation services is to be discerned and directed by an inclusive group, such as the Diverse Voices Table being established (described under Ongoing Commission Administrative Action below). Translations services shall include websites and the translation into English of materials originally written in other languages. Translations services will be one more service residing within Shared Services in “A Corp.” The total cost of these services shall be allocated to and paid for by each agency as a percentage of work completed. Specific funding sources and budgets used by each agency shall be determined by their respective board(s)/committee(s) and/or executive leadership.][Understanding that we desire to create a systematic approach to language accessibility for the entire church, require that translation services be staffed appropriately in order to provide translation services to all six agencies and be centralized in Shared Services. We recommend that our existing translation staff spread across several agencies be coordinated within Global [Communications] [Resources]. Global [Communications] [Resources] would translate all materials going forward and historical/existing records upon request.

[Prioritization and exceptions of translation services is to be discerned and directed by an inclusive group, such as the Diverse Voices Table, in consultation with associates in Racial Ethnic and Women’s Intercultural Ministries, as well as the racial ethnic caucuses and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

[Translation services shall include websites and the translation into English of materials originally written in other languages. Translation services will be one more service residing within Shared Services in “A Corp.” The total cost of these services shall be allocated and paid for by each agency as a percentage of work completed. Specific funding sources and budgets used by each agency shall be determined by their respective board(s)/committee(s) and/or executive leadership.]]

[The assembly approved Item 04-03, Recommendation 5., as amended and with comment. See pp. 44, 48.]

5. Moving Forward Implementation Commission

The Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) create a “Moving Forward Implementation Commission” [to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) after consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and to include four members of the 2016 Way Forward Commission, four members of the 2016 All-Agency Review Committee, and four members to be appointed from the commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (including one young adult advisory delegate)], for a term ending at the 224th General Assembly (2020), with the mandate and authority to (1) ensure compliance and implementation of 2018 assembly action on recommendations from the Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee, (2) ensure continued implementation of collaborations and commission administrative actions underway as outlined in this report and the report of the All-Agency Review Committee, (3) coordinate with the 2020 Vision Team, (4) report findings and make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [5] working together with the Stated Clerk and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, may secure an outside consultant to address the issues raised in the June 12, 2018, Administrative Action Regarding Trust and Transparency, (6) direct an evaluation of Shared Services and report to the 224th General Assembly (2020). The report is to include:

(a) An itemized list of all services shared through the Office of Shared Services and services that might be contracted with other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies to provide.

(b) Assessment of transparency by which rent and all other fees are calculated and charged.

(c) Commission may direct appropriate denominational agencies or corporations to provide financial documents, billing data, fees lists, etc.

(d) A Corp Board Composition.

(e) Recommendations, in consultation with the A Corp board, of additional services that should or could be shared by the agencies and Presbyterian Women.

(f) Recommendations regarding potential for mid councils, congregations, and other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) organizations to contract for any or all Shared Services.
Take any and all administrative action necessary to accomplish the Moving Forward Implementation Commission vision with respect to the Way Forward Commission initiatives and the June 5, 2018 Administrative Supplement.

If any of the four members to be appointed from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is a representative of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or of the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly shall ensure that both such agencies are represented among those four members. The Moving Forward Implementation Commission is to be appointed by October 1, 2018.

6. [Note from the Way Forward Commission: The Way Forward Commission concurs with and urges approval of the recommendations of the All-Agency Review Committee with respect to agency reviews.]

Rationale

Introduction

The Way Forward Commission was created by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). We celebrate that our birth occurred in the same assembly that ratified The Confession of Belhar and remembered the 50th anniversary of The Confession of 1967. We acknowledge the Holy Spirit at work and we believe it is our task to live into the promise and hope these confessions proclaim.

Living into that promise requires that we act boldly and collaboratively. We capitalize on this unique opportunity to assist the church in living out its call to Christian witness and service in and for the world. We are, by God’s grace, ever reforming. We claim that truth with a spirit of openness and possibility.

The commission began its work by

- reviewing in detail all historical documents and recent resources,
- understanding the current context, and
- declaring a set of values that would guide us.

Appendix 1 sets forth our meeting schedule. Appendix 6 sets forth the commission’s Affirmation of Approach outlining the values that informed our work. Appendix 7 sets forth the commission’s Mid-Term Report that details our process of discernment.

We then talked with and heard from people all across the denomination. We engaged ecumenical partners. We partnered with the All Agency Review Committee and the 2020 Vision Team, and although we were given distinct mandates, we discovered significant commonalities and discernments as we embarked in our work. We are grateful for the encouragement we received and for the honest, thoughtful, faithful, and creative feedback provided. And that reinforced our discernment that indeed we were a denomination ready for change. Appendix 2 lists some of those groups with whom we have collectively conducted thousands of hours of conversations across the church.

We give thanks for those who labor within the structures of our church—for their ongoing commitment to the church and their work during this time of questioning and scrutiny, and for their collaborative spirit in moving us forward. Appendix 4 illustrates the embodiment of this willingness to change in a summary of the initiatives, both internal and collaborative, for improvement in each of our agencies.

Within our denomination we believe there is

- a willingness to let go of things that no longer serve the mission and vision of the church;
- a commitment to inclusion and equity as a key part of who we are;
- a new energy, enthusiasm, liveliness, and vitality;
- an openness to change, collaboration, and partnership, acting together as one body;
- an understanding that we must be responsive and nimble; and
- a renewed sense that God is present and active in our midst.

Thanks be to God.

We work with confidence that our triune God gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit as our God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end. (Confession of Belhar, 10.1)
The rationale for our recommendations follow along with additional context and information regarding work that will continue. The appendices include more detailed information. We encourage you to review this document in its entirety to better understand the process and recommendations of the Way Forward Commission.

Themes of Change

We have not understood our charge to be one of finding ways to manage decline, or to tinker with existing structures in the hope of assuring institutional survival. Rather, encouraged by our calling through the voice of the General Assembly, the counsel of the Stated Clerk, and words of admonition and encouragement from thousands of Presbyterians, we have set a bolder course.

We believe we are a changing church in a changing world and that our ways of work and witness must reflect the dynamism of our contemporary lives.

We strongly affirm the good work happening in our church, and the dedication and hard work of those in ministry at the local, regional, and national level. The lack of clarity as to how we as a denomination see ourselves in the changed and changing world of the 21st century, both in terms of how we intersect with the world and how we act together as one body in Christ, has forced us to face the realities of falling short of being all we can be. This is a time for radical improvement, collaborative creativity, and dramatic innovation. We are all invited to ask ourselves and one another: What are our strengths as a denomination? What does the present moment call us to do and to be? How can we better help congregations and local ministries thrive and grow? What are we not doing or able to do differently?

Three broad themes emerged from our conversations throughout the denomination, and reflect the “why” behind our recommendations and our collaborative work:

1. the core of who we see ourselves as “church”;
2. our unity in our diversity; and
3. embodying relationships as we live our calling together as Presbyterians.

We believe that, taken together, the recommendations we are making and the administrative actions we are taking weave together a new way of functioning together as one body in Christ that will strengthen our internal life, our external witness, our inclusiveness, and our nimbleness.

For background and context, we have included a summary of the current structure of our national denomination in Appendix 8.

Functioning as Church

Rationale for Recommendation 1

Ecclesial and Missional Focus. At the core of who we are as “church” lie the two primary and unique functions of ecclesial and missional work. Yet a common theme in our conversations and analysis is that it is critical to shake off the 20th century forms, eschewing the corporate structure, model, and mindset that often allow the support functions to drive decision-making rather than the ecclesial or missional visions. Our recommendations, with respect to the role of the Stated Clerk (Recommendation 2) and the composition of the board of the church corporation (Recommendation 1), are designed to return our focus to our ecclesial and our missional core—that is, our unique witness and service to the world.

It has become clear that the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of General Assembly need to be freed from administrative burdens to fully define the role of the church in ecclesial and missional work. In strengthening the missional aspect of that call, innovative models of mission delivery, not corporate or administrative responsibilities, should be the central, critical role of the national agencies. We believe that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, especially, has been saddled for far too long with corporate responsibilities that create barriers for gifted staff and hinder their full focus on mission and coordination with congregations, mid councils, and global ecumenical partners. Recognizing the importance of these requirements as well as the stewardship obligations inherent in the funding and work of the national church, we are striving for the most transformative methods of mission engagement.

As a result of our recommendation on the composition of the “A Corp.” Board, the Board of PMA and COGA would—as they do now—determine the priorities and directions of the church, how we witness the Gospel in the world, yet would be newly liberated from the support tasks that have given rise to the tensions, distractions, and dysfunctions that gave rise to the creation of our commission. Our proposals do not add any new powers to “A Corp.” or change its deliverance from the General Assembly. Nor do they change the existing powers of the Board of PMA or Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Our proposed amendments to denominational documents such as the Organization for Mission are designed to make it clearer
that the purpose of PMA, for example, is to make and carry out the mission decisions of the church, and that the role of “A Corp.” is to assist and support those decisions.

Fundamental to our approach is the concept that the decision-making role about what our national ecclesial and missional work is, and how best to do it, resides in COGA and the Board of PMA, exercising authority derived from the General Assembly. Those entities are not, nor should they be, corporate in nature. In contrast, “A Corp.,” as we view it under our recommendations, functions like a corporate “utility” to assist and support the decisions of these ecclesial and missional agencies (and other parts of the church); its role is not to second-guess or change such decisions.

And to promote a church culture reflective of our vision to live as “one body in Christ,” we also make it clear in changes in our Organization for Mission, our ecclesial document—which takes priority over our corporate ones—that even when acting in our corporate or individual agency contexts, all officers, directors and employees must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to an individual agency. We recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of our organizations has any authority but in Him, and they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in all respects.

The creation of our commission was due to significant and longstanding issues involving the agencies of the church, particularly PMA. We are recommending these changes because they are the least intrusive way to encourage people to work together as one body in Christ, to lift a heavy burden off one agency that has distracted it from its primary task, and to provide greater equity in our structure among our agencies.

Recommendation 1.a. and Recommendation 1.b. set forth the process for implementation of the change in composition of the “A Corp.” board.

Recommendation 1.c. amends the Bylaws of “A Corp.” to reflect the rationales outlined above. To ensure diversity in the “A Corp.” board, nominations and filling of vacancies will be done in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation—the current standard used by the General Assembly for ensuring diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation 1.d. allows the president of “A Corp.” to have voice but not vote at the board meetings of the six national agencies. This recommendation would help emphasize the cooperative nature of the relationship between “A Corp.” and the church’s six current agencies, while also underscoring (by the absence of vote) that “A Corp.” does not control those agencies.

Recommendation 1.e. directs the boards of the six agencies to make conforming changes to their own governing documents. This implementing resolution would simply require the existing agencies of the church to recognize the new governance structure for “A Corp.” The agencies are in the best position to define the particular language they may need to manage their own recommendations for who should serve on the Board of “A Corp.,” for example.

Recommendation 1.f. provides for a General Assembly committee or commission to oversee and assist in implementing the “A Corp.” transition. To the extent the General Assembly believes that it would be useful to ensure on a comprehensive basis that any changes in form necessary to implement the substance of its changes in the governance of “A Corp.” are accomplished prior to the selection of a new board, this recommendation would accomplish that.

Recommendation 1.g. provides for a General Assembly review in each of the 2020 and 2022 General Assemblies of the effectiveness of the “A Corp.” changes. While “A Corp.” already exists, is not an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and already provides audit information to the General Assembly, it would be appropriate to make sure that the changes proposed for its governance receive review to determine their effectiveness. This recommendation would accomplish this consistent with the practices used by the General Assembly in other contexts.

Recommendation 1.h. amends the Organization for Mission to better reflect the roles of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and “A Corp.” to reflect the rationales outlined above. This includes the fundamental concept in Section VI., critically important, that all officers, directors, and employees must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to an individual agency, recognizing that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of our organizations has any authority but in Him, and they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in all respects.

Appendix 5 outlines some important considerations and additional rationales that went into this joint recommendation by the Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions. The Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee plan to work further on the logistics and implications of our recommendations over the months ahead so we can provide June’s assembly with the benefit of the best transition thinking, and have invited the Board of PMA and COGA to participate in that process (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 9 below).
In addition, our continuing work in the area of shared services reflects our conviction that there can and should be better and more cost-effective ways to deliver corporate and administrative services that positions the functions as supportive to the missional components of the national agencies (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 1 below).

**Rationale for Recommendation 2**

*Stated Clerk.* The church is called to speak Gospel truth to the world today; indeed, it is critical to both mission, evangelism, and worship. Nonetheless, we grew to believe we could strengthen the voice of the church by clarifying who represents the church in public witness on behalf of the denomination and who serves as a central voice within the denomination. The present ambiguity is not an issue about an individual but rather an issue of structure, roles, and responsibilities.

Our constitutional documents make it clear that the Stated Clerk has a unique role on behalf of the denomination, articulating the hope, ministry, and direction both internally for us and externally on behalf of us, bound in all cases by the General Assembly, while maintaining our Reformed polity of “shared power ... exercised jointly” (*Book of Order*, F- 3.0208). Our recommendation with respect to the Stated Clerk recognizes the uniqueness of his/her leadership role within the church and will serve to assure greater institutional coherence making explicit the role of the Stated Clerk in interpreting and fulfilling the will and policies of the General Assembly.

Recommendation 2.a. provides further clarity that the Stated Clerk speaks for and on behalf of the church in times of crisis. At the same time, we acknowledge the appropriate role of each agency to speak to the issues under its purview, and leave existing policies with respect to such statements in place. We also continue to encourage collaborative conversations to ensure coordinated messaging.

Recommendation 2.b. provides for the Stated Clerk to be present ex officio at the boards of the national agencies and to be consulted when changing agency executives.

Recommendation 2.c. provides for the Stated Clerk to serve as the conduit for the General Assembly for agency reviews.

Recommendation 2.d. directs the boards of the six agencies to make conforming changes to their own governing documents.

**Rationale for Recommendation 3**

*Financial Sustainability.* The financial sustainability of our national church funding patterns continues to be a central source of anxiety for churches, mid councils, and the six agencies, and has been the subject of an overture to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) from the Presbytery of Newton. Our recommendation to create a committee to provide a comprehensive projection and analysis of the financial realities will assist the church in understanding and planning for any changes that may be required to ensure financial sustainability.

**Unity in Diversity**

**Rationale for Recommendation 4**

*Inclusion and Equity.* As Presbyterians we value the gift of the richness of our diversity, recognize that the Good News belongs to all of God’s creation, and that inclusion and equity are central to our identity, our mission, and our growth. In order to be authentically the church, we also recognize that this work cannot be compartmentalized to one office or group, but instead should be an organized effort that permeates the entire denominational structure. Our recommendation on inclusion and equity is designed to improve the way we live our values in these critical areas.

Recommendation 4.a. Our denomination’s commitment to antiracism and inclusion places us in an ideal position to engage in conversation to prevent the perpetuation of practices that are unjust and prejudiced. We believe that we, as a church, now have the capacity to address these issues with honesty and grace. Each agency is invited to identify within themselves best practices for equity and inclusion—whether it be employment practices, curriculum selection, or leadership development. The formation of the Diverse Voices Table with representation from all agencies will allow for coordination and collaboration around these efforts to take place on a wider, denominational level, and serve as a model for mid councils and congregations.

Recommendation 4.b. directs that the personnel audits mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) be completed by January 1, 2019, and that they recur every four years.

Recommendation 4.c. directs that the translation services of the denomination be centralized and staffed appropriately, and that prioritization of translation services be discerned and directed by an inclusive group. The work of translation is an underused portal to being the diverse body we claim to be. It provides us with the fullness of our faith and identity and a cross-cultural vehicle. Full translation services will also provide the church with resources written in their original non-English language. Access to resources that equip and enable the church to do its work is also a matter of justice, provides the church to speak to each other, and firmly states our commitment to full inclusion.
Because of the centrality of inclusion and equity for the identity, mission, and growth of our denomination, the commission continues work in the following areas (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 5 below):

- **Leadership Development for Underrepresented Populations.** Greater effort needs to be made to coordinate opportunities for leadership development for underrepresented groups in our denomination. We urge the consolidation of all denominational efforts around leadership inclusion with clear communication and networking with various representative and advocacy groups to tap into new leaders. This will require both the Office of General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to comply with regular communication with racial ethnic caucus leaders as delineated in the Covenant of Understanding Regarding the Role and Relationship of Racial Ethnic Caucuses within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [Appendix 9]. We need to prepare leaders for the church we will be, and consider innovative ways of providing leadership development events, programs, and training. This includes nurturing leaders—ordained ministers, ruling elders, and commissioned ruling elders—of emerging minorities. It also includes a willingness to encourage and support alternative pastoral leadership patterns best suited to the church we are becoming.

- **Shared Standards & Expectations.** We need a fuller understanding of our current intercultural realities in order to establish future goals for greater inclusion. Rather than meeting the current racial ethnic presence in our churches, we should be addressing the social reality of changing demographics of our world. Not only would this be an expression of our hopefulness in God’s creative fullness, but also help us live into our commitment to diversity and hospitality. This would include, but not be limited to, race audits of all agencies in our concerned effort to be one church, intentional inclusion of resources created by people of color and in original languages other than English.

The Way Forward Commission commends the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office on Diversity and Reconciliation and encourages the other five agencies to also make self-studies on equity and inclusion a priority.

**Embodying Relationships**

**Rationale for Recommendation 5**

Moving Forward Implementation Commission. This recommendation reflects the desire to maintain the hopeful momentum of the collaborative spirit that has been moving throughout the six agencies of the denomination, and to ensure follow-up on actions approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and the ongoing commission administrative action already in process. The commission, with both finite mandate and lifespan, has been able to put into place significant collaborative dynamics these past two years, overcoming usual inertia that frustrates needed change. For these reasons, an implementation commission will be far more effective at moving forward continuing work than would an implementation committee.

**Rationale for Recommendation 6**

Concurrence with All-Agency Review Recommendation on Reviews. The recommendations of the All-Agency Review Committee regarding the timing and scope of the periodic reviews of the six national agencies and the denomination as a whole are welcome refinements to a process for improvement that has been very effective over the past decade.

Additional critical themes in this area of embodying relationships that have emerged during the commission’s discernment have included the following:

- **Congregational Focus.** The vitality of our congregations is of high importance to the church. With the strong conviction that the local church is the locus of ministry for the PC(USA) but “... is not of itself a sufficient form of the church” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0101), yet congregational support is an essential priority of the national church, we believe all agencies of the denomination are presently considering innovative ways to collaborate both with each other and with mid councils to provide local churches with adequate, contextual support that is nimble and responsive. Although this can take many forms, what is central and should be central to our national structure is to continually view our activities through the lens of congregational focus and how to be responsive to the question: How can we best partner with churches in order for them to fully live into their missional call in their communities?

- **Mid Council Relationships.** Presbyteries have been described as the linchpins of our denomination. They partner directly with congregations, particularly in times of transition, redevelopment, or crisis. And yet we are witnessing a sea change in the structure, staffing, funding, and responsibilities of these councils, as these bodies have borne the brunt of the significant changes within the church such as congregations departing the denomination, aging properties, and dwindling resources. The role of synods is also in transition. There is a lack of resources affecting paid staff at the presbytery level and a reconfigured mid council ministry department within the Office of General Assembly. The national church must find additional tangible ways to partner with presbyteries and synods in support of congregations. This can be best accomplished by closer and more intentional connections between the national staff and mid councils to together explore best practices and mutual resourcing. Our ongoing commission administrative action with respect to mid councils (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 6 below) strives to build, maintain, and foster strong relationships with mid councils so that a nation-wide support community may be formed. The creative, lifegiving work already ongoing in many congregations and mid councils need to be lifted up
and shared by the national church, allowing for greater fellowship, sharing of best practices and experiences, and growing together as church.

- **Communications.** Great communication flows from strong vision and good strategic planning, and is the central mechanism for relationship. Each of the six PC(USA) agencies has a vision and strategy for communicating its vision to its constituents in the Church and in the world; however, the national church as a whole lacks a clear, coherent vision and comprehensive strategy for communication at the denominational level. We have observed a lack of unity in branding, voice, and consistency among the myriad of communication channels, the most obvious example are the denominational websites and their many iterations. We have clearly heard a desire for clear, user-friendly, and varied platforms, including everything from print to social media, to effectively communicate the work the church is doing locally and around the world. The continuing collaborative work of the commission in the area of communications, described below and already producing results, shows great promise for working together as one body (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 4 below).

**ONGOING COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

Under its authority granted by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the Way Forward Commission continues to work in the following areas that we hope will be generative and provide insights that will be reported in an update at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

1. **Shared Services (joint activity with the All-Agency Review [AAR] Committee).** The commission has partnered with AAR to engage with all six agencies to identify solutions for the cultural, cost, and efficiency issues within Shared Services. Goals for change include prioritization of program activities, proper policies and procedures, cost savings, and efficiency gains. In its continued work, the commission will use its administrative authority to clarify authority, responsibility, and delivery of shared services by (i) conducting a review of policies and procedures with program directors and Shared Services leadership to refine, simplify, and amend procedures and policies to enable more nimble and responsive action and to affirm the decision-making power at the ministry/program level; (ii) convene work groups to complete a thorough cost and efficiency analysis to prepare recommendations for the insourcing, outsourcing, or sharing of payroll processing, legal, information technology, and mail/printing/distribution services; (iii) identify other areas of partnership and cost-sharing as they may present themselves; and (iv) explore the logistics of integration of Translation Services under the Shared Services umbrella.

2. **Property and facilities usage.** Executives and selected board leadership from all six agencies have gathered for a series of meetings regarding the building at 100 Witherspoon Street and all other facilities of the national church. Topics under continued discussion include the costs and feasibility of remaining within the building at 100 Witherspoon Street, possible use of facilities to promote mission, and hospitality within each denominational building.

3. **Institutional Culture.** The commission continues to engage in ways to improve institutional culture within and among the Presbyterian Mission Agency and all six agencies. Specific areas of engagement include: (i) engaging in conversation with the PMA Executive Director search committee to assist full understanding of the vision for function and structure of the agencies as developed by the Way Forward Commission, (ii) refining the scope of work and engaging a consultant on implementing institutional culture changes, including strategies to incorporate institutional identity into training and ongoing staff development, (iii) convening conversations with PMA’s Leadership Cabinet regarding changes to policies and procedures that interfere with healthy institutional culture, and (iv) convening conversations with PMA’s Leadership Cabinet regarding HR policies and whether any particular positions must be filled by a person with one of the following requirements: by a person of faith, by a Presbyterian, or by a ruling elder or teaching elder.

4. **Communications (joint activity with the All-Agency Review Committee).** The commission continues to engage with communication staff and agency executives to refine a process to guide changes to denominational communication plans and vehicles. Related projects include (i) agency-wide communication plan, (ii) unified style/brand guide, (iii) unified and updated web-presence and use of social media, (iv) clarification and definition of roles, responsibility, and authority within the communication departments.

5. **Inclusion & Equity.** The commission continues conversations with OGA and PMA to create and seat a Diverse Voices Table group with equal staff representation from all agencies. This group will convene to meet regularly to review and update each other on the work of denominational inclusion and equity, including translation services. This group will consult with caucuses and networks in accordance with the existing agreements, including annual consultations (see Appendix 9).

6. **Mid Council Ministries.** In ongoing collaboration and partnership with the Stated Clerk, the commission will continue efforts to (i) restructure the Office of the General Assembly’s Mid Council Ministries organizational chart to establish the position of associate clerk for mid council ministries and adjust the mid council ministry areas under the new position, (ii) create a Mid Council Visioning Team to help explore the considerations, possibilities, and opportunities of mid councils in order to maintain a robust relationship among and between presbyteries, synods, and the national church, (iii) explore a pilot program for two deployed mid council staff in partnership with mid councils in selected regions.
7. **Seminary Relations.** In a series of conversations with the presidents and board chairs of our twelve PC(USA)-affiliated theological seminaries and with the Committee on Theological Education, it has become clear in our changing times that further discernment is needed with respect to the nature, scope, and opportunities in the relationships among and between our seminaries and our denomination. These collaborative conversations are continuing with enthusiasm and openness.

8. **Financial Development Analysis.** The commission will convene a working group of stewardship/fundraising staff from all six agencies to engage in conversation about stewardship activities, including fundraising and identify areas for further collaboration and cooperation. Specific topics of engagement will include (i) clarification of what stewardship (fundraising/funds development) activities are occurring within each agency currently including cultivation, solicitation, receipt, and acknowledgment of gifts, (ii) identification of duplicated efforts and develop a strategy for cohesive and/or centralized stewardship activities, (iii) review of the policies, use, and budget impacts of specific giving opportunities across the agencies, (iv) review communication and interpretation of administrative costs and use of funds received, (v) review events and activities that engage mid councils and congregations (i.e. Kaleidoscope), (vi) review of dedicated funds held at the Foundation and collaborative refinement of strategies, including cy-pres actions, to free-up available funds.

9. **“A Corp.” Transition Logistics (joint activity with the All-Agency Review Committee).** The commission and the All-Agency Review Committee will continue their collaborative conversations, in consultation with representatives from the board of PMA and from COGA, regarding an implementation and transition plan to assist the 223rd General Assembly (2018) if the “A Corp.” recommendation is approved, in an effort to discern and resolve as many unintended consequences as possible, including any possible further refinements to the proposals contained in Appendixes 10 and 11.

**Conclusion**

We give thanks for the commitment and heart of the General Assembly and for all of those we have engaged as they express a call for change, growth, and increasing faithfulness. We give thanks for the collaborative spirit and energy we encountered throughout the denomination, especially our national staff, as we went about our work. We give thanks for God’s steadfast love and guidance as we have approached this task with faith and hope. In this same faith and hope, we remain open to the Spirit’s prompting through the wisdom of the wider church. We give thanks to the General Assembly and the PC(USA) for this tremendous opportunity to serve the church as the Way Forward Commission.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Commission Meeting Dates and Commission Membership**

**Meeting Dates of the Commission**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Meeting Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>December 11–13 In-Person Meeting (Auburn Seminary, New York)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>December 12 Conference Call @5:00–8:00pm Eastern</td>
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**Class of 2018**

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<td>NE</td>
<td>Commissioner/2016 Way Forward AC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily Marie Williams</td>
<td>WFR 25–</td>
<td>SUN</td>
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04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

3. Raymond (Cliff) Lyda  WMT  56–65  St. Augustine  SA  OGA Review Committee

4. Eliana Maxim  HFT  46–55  Seattle  ANW  PMA Review Committee

5. Eileen W. Lindner  WFT  56–65  Palisades  NE  COGA Member

6. Jo Stewart  WFR  56–65  Charlotte  MAT  PMAB Member

7. Sara Dingman  WFT  36–45  Missouri River Valley  LAK  Mid Council Staff Person

8. Julie L. Cox  WFR  46–55  New Harmony  SA  At-large

9. Mathew Eardley  WMR  26–35  Boise  PAC  At-large

10. Mark Hostetter, Moderator  WMT  56–65  New York City  NE  At-large

11. Adan A. Mairena  HMT  36–45  Philadelphia  TRI  At-large

12. Patricia Rarumangkay  AFR  26–35  National Capital  MAT  At-large

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Short Biographical Information—Members of the Way Forward Commission 2016

Samuel L. Bonner (Presbytery of New Brunswick) serves as a member of session and co-chair of the Finance Committee for Covenant Presbyterian Church of Trenton, New Jersey. He is also a member of the presbytery Task Force on Mass Incarceration. Sam is a commissioned national bank examiner with large organization risk analysis expertise.

Julie L. Cox (Presbytery of New Harmony) serves as associate executive presbyter & associate stated clerk. Her portfolio includes resourcing New Harmony’s Camping, Congregational Development, Education & Nurture, Mission, Worship & Spiritual Formation ministries, committee on preparation for ministry, committee on ministry, and its program & administrative councils. Julie has served as clerk of session at First Presbyterian Church, Hartsville, South Carolina, and will be teaching children’s Sunday school this autumn.

Sara Dingman (Presbytery of Missouri River Valley) serves the eight presbyteries of the Synod of Lincoln Trails as their synod executive. Prior to this Sara served as an interim executive presbyter in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Ordained a teaching elder in 1998, Sara has served the 21st century church in a variety of congregations and contexts.

Mathew Eardley (Presbytery of Boise) serves on session and as chair of the Mission Committee at First Presbyterian Church in Boise, Idaho. He also serves on the Committee on Ministry and Financial Review Committee for the Presbytery of Boise. Mathew fills his days working for Jitasa, a company that provides bookkeeping and accounting services to the nonprofit sector.

Mark Hostetter, Moderator (Presbytery of New York City) is the associate pastor for mission to the Corporate World at The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, and for the past twenty years has also been CEO of a large money management firm. Mark is the current board chair of Auburn Theological Seminary and Strategic Planning chair of New York Theological Seminary, recent board chair of the Ghost Ranch Governing Board, strategic consultant to the Presbyterian Foundation, and has just been elected to the board of directors/trustees of Montreat Conference Center.

Eileen W. Lindner (Presbytery of the Palisades) is pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Tenafly and serves the presbytery as a member of the committee on ministry and as president of the board of trustees. She was editor of The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2000–2013.

Cliff Lyda (Presbytery of St. Augustine) has recently retired as a teaching elder and has relocated from greater Chicago to Gainesville, Fla. While in the Presbytery of Chicago he served as moderator, and as a leader in renewal and restructuring efforts in the presbytery. Most recently he served as moderator of the Review Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Adan A. Mairena (Presbytery of Philadelphia) serves as the pastor of the West Kensington Ministry and the Yeardon Presbyterian Church. Adan is also a member of the P.C.U.S.A. Urban Ministry Team and was a director of the Board of the Board of Pensions for the denomination. Adan serves on presbytery committees, local nonprofit boards, and collaborates with city government, law enforcement, and other agencies to address quality of life issues in Philadelphia.
Eliana Maxim (Presbytery of Seattle) has served as the associate executive presbyter for the Presbytery of Seattle for the past seven years. Her primary focus areas include church redevelopment and revitalization, new and immigrant worshiping communities, and mission partnerships. Eliana serves on the PC(USA) Hispanic/Latino National Caucus as vice moderator. She has previously served on the 220th General Assembly (2012)’s Committee on the Belhar Confession; the Committee on Church Wide Conversation on Race, Racism, Ethnicity, and Ethnocentrism; and the 221st General Assembly’s (2014) Review Committee for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Patricia Rarumangkay (Presbytery of National Capital) is a ruling elder at Emmanuel Indonesian Presbyterian Church in Rockville, Maryland, where she has served as the Mission Committee coordinator and currently serves as co-coordinator of the Education Committee. She is part of her presbytery’s Immigrant Ministry Network (IMN), and she is passionate about helping to develop programs and initiatives that will further empower the young adult and new immigrant groups. Patricia currently works at an international financial institution based in Washington D.C. Patricia was very involved and provided important insights at early portions of the commission’s work. However, an unexpected illness prevented her from continuing her work on the commission. She resigned from the commission in early July 2017. She remains in our prayers.

Jo Stewart (Presbytery of Charlotte) is a member of Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, where she has served in numerous roles over the years—including chair of the Global Relations Team. She just ended a four-year term on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and was vice-chair for the last two years; as vice-chair, she also served as the PMAB representative for the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Jo is currently a member of the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board. She is retired from Towers Perrin (now Willis Towers Watson) where she was a principal and senior consultant.

Emily Marie Williams (Presbytery of Grace) is a junior intercultural communications major at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas. She has served on a plethora of committees and planning teams at her church, presbytery, and synod level. Emily hopes to one day go to seminary, be a journalist, or do public relations for a National Hockey League team.

### APPENDIX 2
Consultations & Conversations

**Broad Surveys on Needs and Directions:**
- January 2017
- July 2017

**Seminary Presidents, Board Chairs, and Faculty**

**Committee on Theological Education**

**Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association**

**National Conference Centers: Montreat, Ghost Ranch, Stony Point**

**Staff of all six national agencies**

**Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA)**

**Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) (and its Governance Task Force)**

**Board Chairs & Chief Executives of the Six National Agencies**

**Previous Stated Clerks and Previous General Assembly Moderators**

**Ecumenical Partners**
- United Church of Christ
- The Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- United Methodist Church

**Mid Council**
- Polity Conference 2016, 2017
- Mid Council Leaders Survey July 2017

**NEXT Church**

**National Hispanic/Latino-a Presbyterian Caucus**

**National Black Presbyterian Caucus**

**National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches**

**National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus**

**Native American Consulting Committee**

**National Asian Presbyterian Council**

**Advisory Committee Racial Ethnic Concerns**

**Presbyterian Women**

### APPENDIX 3
Mandate of the Commission

“The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recommends that the Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), together with the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), name a Way Forward Commission to study and identify a vision for
the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA). That vision shall take into account the ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), but shall not be bound by the current configuration of those ministries, except where mandated by the church’s Constitution. The mandate of the commission is to engage_contract a qualified, examination team that may include some or all of the All Agency Review team, with the requisite skills and abilities to assess institutional performance, both internally among the agencies and externally as they interface with the congregations. This examination team is charged with conducting a comprehensive, detailed analysis that will provide clearly detailed, measurable recommendations for improvements to the commission for implementation by the agencies. The commission shall further describe and implement a General-Assembly level staffing pattern that will accomplish its vision. The commission shall be guided in its development and articulation of this vision and structure by Reformed ecclesiology as expressed in our Constitution.

“In the discharge of its responsibilities, the commission shall:

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

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

   b. The commission will monitor implementation across the agencies

2. Visit with and explore

   a. the best practices of other national church bodies,

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

3. Consult with

   a. seminary faculty and presidents,

   b. presbytery and synod leaders.

4. Explore other resources they deem helpful and prudent

   And shall be empowered to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rationale for Alternative Resolution

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

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

“We have limited the size of the commission in response to studies, and in consideration of our own process, which indicate that the decision-making abilities of committees is diminished as size increases. The inclusion of a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) is a direct response to the insightful, articulate input our committee has received from its YAAD participants. We believe their involvement is an
important component in achieving greater inclusivity and broadened perspective as we make our way forward.” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 38–40, 226–27)

APPENDIX 4
Agency Collaborative Initiatives

Through collaborative conversations and internal initiatives, many opportunities for improvement have been undertaken by the national agencies and encouraged by the commission, living into the commission’s affirmation that we as a church must live into a sense of urgency that we must move to a new openness, a new way, and in words and actions promote a sense that we are one body in Christ, collaborating not only for the benefit of one agency alone, but for the whole church and its ministries.

Presbyterian Foundation

• With its financial support to the church of approximately $60 million per year and its experienced staff, the Foundation is exploring how their financial counsel, better amplified, could provide substantially more support to the denomination.
• Project Regeneration—working with churches and presbyteries on sale of excess property, to use the proceeds from such sales to better fund mission that the congregation or presbytery believes is worthwhile. The Foundation, in conjunction with PILP, is working to develop a more robust collaborative infrastructure to expand this project to support mid council challenges regarding real estate.
• Work together with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to complete the transfer of the remaining areas of the Church Loan Program to PILP for purposes of streamlining the loan process, reducing duplicative efforts, reducing costs, and improving response time, including implementation of any needed logistical changes involving loan funding sources.
• Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact, and interaction objectives with the denomination’s mid councils, based on periodic planning sessions with mid councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist mid councils in developing critical funding objectives based on mid council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation and joint approaches.
• Continued collaborative conversation to clarify the several agencies’ activities in fundraising, and to develop additional efficiencies resulting in a streamlined process that reduces duplication, improves responsiveness, and leads to expanded ministry.
• Continued collaborative conversation regarding the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP)

• As PILP has been servicing and administering the Church Loan Program for seventeen years, for purposes of streamlining the loan process, reducing duplicative efforts, reducing costs, and improving response time, the remaining areas of this ministry (mainly board oversight and policy determination and all loan and building grant approval) will be transferred to PILP. PILP will work together with the Presbyterian Foundation to complete this transfer of mission, including implementation of any needed logistical changes involving loan funding sources.
• Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact, and interaction objectives with the denomination’s mid councils, based on periodic planning sessions with mid councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist mid councils in developing critical funding objectives based on mid council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation and joint approaches.
• Explore developing a unit able to assist mid councils as they work to manage their physical assets.
• Continued collaborative conversation concerning the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

• Complete the consolidation of Congregational Ministries Publishing (CMP), currently housed in PMA, into PPC, as recommended by the 2009 CMP Study and encouraged by the General Assembly, with the goal of CMP becoming a self-sustaining part of the publishing enterprise within three years. This also includes the Spanish and Korean curriculum publishing programs that will continue to receive funding indefinitely as the General Assembly mandates.
• Explore the consolidation of marketing, ordering, and publishing processes currently in multiple agencies offering publishing services.
• Explore establishing formal, periodic meetings with mid councils for the express purpose of providing publishing/communications assistance responsive to the needs of the denomination.

The Board of Pensions

• Continue follow-up analysis of the 2017 initiative (offering more “a la carte” benefit packages) for effectiveness and further possibilities, reflecting the importance of this issue to congregations and mid councils who reflect the concern that existing packages/policies may be problematic for encouraging new worshipping communities.
• Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact, and interaction objectives with the denomination’s mid councils, based on periodic planning sessions with mid councils and documented assessment
of needs and risks. Assist mid councils in developing critical funding objectives based on mid council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation, and joint approaches.

- Continued collaborative conversation to clarify the several agencies’ activities in fundraising, and to develop additional efficiencies resulting in a streamlined process that reduces duplication, improves responsiveness, and leads to expanded ministry.
- Continued collaborative conversation regarding the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).

Presbyterian Mission Agency

- Complete the consolidation of Congregational Ministries Publishing (CMP), currently housed in PMA, into PPC, as recommended by the 2009 CMP Study and encouraged by the General Assembly, with the goal of CMP becoming a self-sustaining part of the publishing enterprise within three years. This also includes the Spanish and Korean curriculum publishing programs that will continue to receive funding indefinitely as the General Assembly mandates.
- Encourage and affirm the work of the Governance Task Force and the PMA board to analyze and improve PMA effectiveness through proposed changes to the PMA board composition and PMA board organization.
- Continue work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact, and interaction objectives with denomination’s mid councils, based on periodic planning sessions with mid councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist mid councils in developing critical funding objectives based on mid council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation, and joint approaches.
- Continued collaborative conversation to clarify the several agencies’ activities in fundraising, and to develop additional efficiencies resulting in a streamlined process that reduces duplication, improves responsiveness, and leads to expanded ministry.
- Continued collaborative conversation regarding the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).
- Continued collaborative conversation with all six agencies regarding the missional use and hospitality at the Presbyterian Center, 100 Witherspoon Street in Louisville.

Office of General Assembly

- See Recommendations.
- Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact, and interaction objectives with denomination’s mid councils, based on periodic planning sessions with mid councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist mid councils in developing critical funding objectives based on mid council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation, and joint approaches.

APPENDIX 5

Recommendation on Changes to the Composition of Board of “A Corp.”

Additional Considerations and Rationales for Recommendations from the Report of the All-Agency Review Committee

Section F-1.0404 [of the Form of Government] reminds our denomination that “[a]s it participates in God’s mission,” the church should seek “a new openness to see both the possibilities and the perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activities in the world.” This openness to the work of the Spirit has inspired this recommendation concerning “A Corp.”

In every generation, Presbyterians have wondered whether the church was becoming too corporate. As we addressed the concerns lifted up by previous reviews and as we did our own analysis regarding “A Corp,” we also heard this concern. The Book of Order, at G-4.0101, requires each council above the congregation, to incorporate if it is legally possible. Indeed, as discussed below, the denomination has had a corpora tion to support its work since the 18th century. In evaluating the faithful operation of the denomination and its agencies, therefore, it is simply not possible to act as if the corporate form of the General Assembly does not exist. Rather, the focus must be on whether the form of the corporation is faithfully serving the church. We concluded that the current form of the corporation, and particularly its complete control by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, is not serving the work of the whole church, and in fact is one of the sources of inefficiencies and at times problematic functioning within the PMA.

The Review Committee for the PMA in 2016 summarized its findings as follows: “Though the PMA has produced good work, it is evident that there are significant weaknesses in a number of areas, including: strategic decision-making and priority-setting; organizational culture and work environment; and collaborative efforts with other General Assembly agencies.” We found that these significant weaknesses remain. We have observed that one of the sources of these significant weaknesses is a board that is not effective at handling corporate governance functions and that focuses far more of its energy on corporate matters than on implementing the mission direction of the church. Many of the distractions that have directly hindered the mission work of the denomination—the lack of transparency regarding the termination of employees involved with 1001 Worshiping Communities, the long absence of a permanent executive director, the opaque use of reserve funds, and disputes regarding shared services—have arisen because of the collision between the role members of PMAB as directors of the corporation and their more important function of implementing the mission directives of the General Assembly.

We have been transparent in our work regarding “A Corp.” Discussions of “A Corp.” in open session began at our meeting on May 2nd and were publicly reported. Representatives of our committee and the WFC reached out to representatives of the Governance Task Force of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in October 2017 to discuss “A Corp.” with them. We had several subsequent discussions with PMAB representatives exclusively focused on “A Corp.” issues. The moderator and vice moderator of our committee met with and discussed “A
Corp.” issues both with the chair of PMAB and with other PMAB representatives as well. In addition, we discussed “A Corp.” issues with COGA and its leadership several times in 2017, as we did with the leadership of each of the other agencies of the church—and others, both in 2017 and at the beginning of 2018. We reviewed a large number of documents, including the history of “A Corp.” (which dates to the late 18th century), its formation and governance documents and the changes in them from 1983 forward, the audited financials of “A Corp.” for multiple years, the budgets submitted by PMA, minutes of PMAB and “A Corp.” meetings and committee meetings for a number of years, to the extent they existed. We retained independent legal counsel to help us with Pennsylvania law issues and to advise us on issues such as whether a “deliverance” was needed to change the board of directors of the corporation (we have not proposed one) and whether “A Corp.” could delegate to PMA daily control of its own functions, such as personnel activities (we proposed such delegation).

From all of this, our conclusion is clear: the best way to move past a corporate mentality in the mission agency is to free the mission agency to do mission, and reconstitute the board of “A Corp.” with broad agency representation to ensure sound oversight of the existing corporate entity.

“A Corp.” itself is a direct successor (along with the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Foundation”) to the original 18th century corporation of our denomination. Its articles of incorporation direct “A Corp.” “[t]o be an integrated auxiliary and a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to act as the principal corporation which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has caused to be formed pursuant to ... the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to receive, hold and transfer property and to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as affirmed and declared by the 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."

In this role, “A Corp.” holds almost all of the property and assets of the denomination not held by the Foundation. (Assets held by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Board of Pensions”) are not denominational assets, but assets for the benefit of members of the benefit plans offered by that Board). In general, the Foundation holds long-term assets. “A Corp.” holds beneficial interests in some Foundation assets, handles the denomination’s current operating funds, and owns the denomination’s operating assets (such as 100 Witherspoon Street in Louisville, Kentucky). “A Corp.” provides the secular support—such as employment, contracting, and handling of funds—needed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) and the Office of the General Assembly (“OGA”), which are unincorporated ecclesiastical entities (as is the General Assembly). “A Corp.” also works with the four other PC(USA) agencies: the Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

There is a great deal of history behind “A Corp.” But we believe its appropriate role is clear. The General Assembly, directly representing all the people and councils of the church, should discern and announce theological positions, define mission, set mission priorities, and approve targets (both of income and expense) to accomplish those things. The six agencies of the General Assembly should implement these high-level decisions and support the people and councils of the church in carrying them out. “A Corp.” should help support the agencies in these efforts, particularly the two most ecclesiastical of them, PMA and OGA.

We believe the governance of “A Corp.” should reflect this role. Its governance structure—its board of directors and officers—currently does not.

- The “A Corp.” board currently has 40 voting members. Although its own governance task force has recommended reducing that number over time, even if that occurs, the number would remain 20 or more, perhaps reflecting the multiplicity of PMA mission roles.
- All 40 are from the PMA board of directors—in effect, the boards are the same.
- The Executive Director of PMA is automatically the President of “A Corp.”
- There is confusion between PMA’s mission role and the operation of “A Corp.” by PMA’s board members.
- There is distrust over whether services provided by “A Corp.” are provided fairly for the benefit of other agencies, particularly OGA, because of this confusion.
- The opportunity for coordination of agency activity through “A Corp.” has not been realized.
- The “A Corp.” board is far too large to carry out its duties effectively.

Our joint recommendation with the WFC represents a better way to govern “A Corp.” It would allow “A Corp.” to carry out its corporate functions to support the agencies of the church, not to control those agencies’ own missions, or favor only one agency’s preferences. “A Corp.” would receive no additional powers from these changes in board composition and selection of president. (“A Corp.” would, for example, still have no authority to prescribe mission for PMA.) Importantly, however, these changes would eliminate the confusion between “A Corp.” and PMA. They would allow PMA to focus on mission. They would allow “A Corp.” to manage itself efficiently. They would reduce mistrust over the fair provision of “A Corp.” services to agencies, particularly as between OGA and PMA. They would provide a better platform for inter-agency cooperation.

Finally, we have sought to ensure that the smaller board of “A Corp.” will still be broadly representative of the diversity of our denomination. We recommend the following three steps to achieve this goal: (1) nominating members by existing, already diverse agencies assuring not only expertise, but diversity; (2) provide seats nominated by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns; and (3) provide for three, at-large seats selected with input from the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

These changes would also not be unduly disruptive. They would not require any change in the ownership of any assets or liabilities. They would not require—although they could lead to—any personnel changes other than a new determination of who should be the President of “A Corp.” They would not preclude other changes that this committee or the Way Forward Commission might want to recommend or pursue in other areas.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. If you had to write a “problem statement” for “A Corp.,” what would it be?
We did not approach “A Corp.” with the preconceived notion that it was a problem or embodied a problem. In listening to different perspectives across the denomination (and particularly from its six principal agencies), however, it became clear that a central question is “how can the agencies (and the General Assembly) work together better to accomplish the ends of the church”? Viewing “A Corp.” as an entity with a designated role in disbursing money, managing personnel, and providing services in implementing the mission not just of PMA, but of OGA and the denomination as a whole—sort of a “utility” for some of that work—the logical next question was to ask “how can ‘A Corp.’ reflect and carry out the desire that we work better together”? The current recommendation is one answer to that question.

2. Why not create an entity separate from PMA?

“A Corp.” is separate from PMA. Neither PMA nor OGA has a corporate form: PMA is an ecclesiastical mission entity and OGA is an ecclesiastical governance support entity. To the extent PMA or OGA needs to do something secular (such as enter into a contract), “A Corp.” does that for them.

3. Would this proposal change the ownership of any funds or property?

No. The funds and property owned by “A Corp.” (or any other agency or entity) would still be owned by them. This proposal would not change that.

4. Would this proposal require the expenditure of additional money for staff for “A Corp.”?

No. Whether the board of directors of “A Corp.” believes the corporation needs more or less staff would remain a question for that board, as it is today.

5. Would this proposal mean that the Executive Director of PMA would no longer be the president of “A Corp.”?

Maybe, but not necessarily. The proposal envisions that the Executive Director of “A Corp.” would no longer automatically be the president of “A Corp.” He or she could be elected to that position by the board of directors of “A Corp.,” but would not be required to seek that role. Nor would the board of directors of “A Corp.” be required to elect the Executive Director of PMA the president of “A Corp.,” even if that person wanted to be considered for the job.

6. Wouldn’t this proposal lead to fights between “A Corp.” and the Foundation?

No. Disputes arise from time to time with respect to gifts made by donors to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in which there can be disagreement about where the donor wanted the gift to go, or for what purpose. These problems (for which there are now good processes for resolution) do not occur because of how the board of any agency (or “A Corp.”) is structured. Because this proposal would not change any of the current ownership of funds and property as between “A Corp.” and the Foundation, there is no reason to believe it would lead to new disputes of this kind.

7. To whom would the Executive Director of PMA report—the A Corp. board or the PMA board?

The proposed changes would not change the reporting structure inside any other agency. The Executive Director of PMA would continue to report to the PMA board.

8. Would the current PMA board remain a board, or become a committee (similar to COGA)?

The proposed changes would not change the PMA board, or its current responsibilities. We expect that the PMA board would continue to propose budgets for the work of PMA, for example. It is important to understand that the “A Corp.” board today is not the PMA board. It is—and should act as, whether it always does—a different board than the PMA board. At the moment the two boards just happen to have, by rule embodied in the bylaws of “A Corp.,” exactly the same members. This proposal would change the membership of the “A Corp.” board and eliminate the automatic appointment of the Executive Director of PMA as the president of “A Corp.” While we believe this can have great benefits, and does require care in the details, it is not fundamentally a complex idea.

9. Won’t the new Executive Director of PMA feel like he or she has “lost power” by not automatically being the president of “A Corp.”

We seriously doubt it. Persons involved in the current Executive Director search have told us that candidates are more concerned about being able to focus more intensely on mission, rather than having to split their focus across a mission agency and the details of a corporation managing funds and support services.

10. Why not just make the informal “Chairs and Chiefs” meetings of the agencies into the board of “A Corp.”?

We think that it is not good governance (and inconsistent with our polity) to make employees of the agencies (the “chiefs”) automatically board members of “A Corp.” We also think that, while it may well make sense for the heads of the other agency governing boards (the “chiefs”) to serve on the “A Corp.” board, that decision should be left to the governing boards of those agencies. They may prefer to focus the efforts of their own chairs differently. In addition, we think it is a good idea to provide for a few “at large” members on any board.

11. Doesn’t this recommendation add another layer of complexity to an already complex system?

We think not. It would reduce the size of the “A Corp.” board. It would decrease the barriers to coordination among all the agencies. It would also not (for example) add any new agency to the denomination.

12. Who would fund “A Corp.” under the new proposed governance structure?

The source of funding of “A Corp.” would be the same under the proposed structure as it is today.

13. Why is “A Corp.” more important than the other national entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

It is not more important—it is just important. We are focusing it on it in this proposal, but others are focusing equally hard on the other agencies and entities of the denomination.
14. How does this proposal fit with the other proposals that will be made by the Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee?

To the extent we know right now what those proposals are likely to be, we do not see any conflict between this proposal and any of them. The All Agency Review Committee believes that this is a time for the church to remember the directive in Section F-1.0404 of the Book of Order, Form of Government, that, “[a]s it participates in God’s mission”, the church should seek “a new openness to see both the possibilities and the perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activities in the world.” The committee also believes that, as its 2010 predecessor noted, “collaboration among agencies is a priority ... ” Similarly, the Way Forward Commission is committed to “identify[ing] a vision for the structure and function of the church’s agencies, as it was directed to do by the General Assembly, and not to “be bound by the current configuration of those ministries, except where mandated by the church’s Constitution” in “provid[ing] clearly detailed, measurable recommendations for improvements ... for implementation by the agencies.”

APPENDIX 6
Commission Affirmation of Approach—March 2017

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAY FORWARD COMMISSION
AFFIRMATION OF APPROACH
MARCH 2017

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are twelve servants of the church established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the PC(USA) to discern the way forward for the PC(USA) in the 21st century, in collaboration with the All-Agency Review Committee and the 2020 Vision Team.

The Way Forward Commission strives to model the change it seeks, in collaboration and communication with both elected representatives and staff throughout the denomination. The commission intends to act swiftly, creatively, and boldly in the desire to take advantage of this unique God-given opportunity to help the church once again return its full focus to the work of the church in the world. The time is now.

We are not starting from scratch in this task. Most recently, resources, such as the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) survey, the Moderators’ and NEXT Church Conversations, the periodic agency reviews, and the agency strategic plans, have all pointed to societal realities that confront the church.

We also reflect the belief that this work of identity and structure, although important, must not distract or divert us from our call for Christian witness and service.

The commission unanimously adopts this affirmation in the hope of engaging the church in conversation about a common set of underlying assumptions and values. It is intended to provide insight into the approach and values of the commission as we engage with the church in our continuing discernment to study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA).

CALL TO ACTION AND INVITATION TO COLLABORATION

We strongly affirm the good work happening in our church, and the dedication and hard work of all those in ministry at the national level. We firmly believe that the values reflected in this affirmation might well apply to all national agencies and staff and recommend consideration for their adoption and application. We recognize that we stand at a Kairos moment both in our church and in the world and are called to be both bold and creative in this next season of Christian witness and service.

This is a time for radical improvement, collaborative creativity, and dramatic innovation. We are all invited to ask ourselves and one another:

- What are our strengths as a denomination?
- What does the present moment call us to do and to be?
- How can we better help congregations and local ministries thrive and grow?
- What are we not doing or able to do differently?

We have engaged the agencies and groups within the church and encouraged them to collaborate with us about how to best utilize the time-limited opportunity that the General Assembly’s empowerment of the Way Forward Commission uniquely provides.

For consideration:

- What can the commission help you accomplish that you cannot implement on your own?
- How can the spirit of urgency reflected in the General Assembly’s action creating the commission be harnessed to assist you to overcome inertia that hampers helpful change?
- As the commission discerns its recommendations for structural change in the national denomination, what might be some approaches that help to ensure our acting as one body in Christ even as we start off from the perspectives and bias inherent to our individual roles?

OUR CURRENT CONTEXT

- Now more than ever, the church must continue to play an important prophetic role for justice and service to the marginalized.
- The growing diversity of our denomination presents a vital new landscape for ministry and witness.
- At least for the present, overall PC(USA) membership—like all mainline denominations—is declining.
● Funding sources increasingly prefer designated giving to particular ministries.
● Unrestricted funding for the national church will continue to decrease, with resulting complications for administrative costs.
● National staff will continue to decrease under status quo.
● Planning for financial sustainability for ministries will need to be a higher priority.

VALUES THAT GUIDE OUR WORK

● Our Reformed theology and heritage offers us gifts—among other things, we are connectional, ever-reforming, and committed to engagement with the world.
● What we do and how we do it must reflect on the realities of our context, culture, and societal needs.
● We are committed to a denominational structure that nurtures and empowers all voices to Christian witness and action.
● We recognize that our fundamental core is rooted in our identity as a church; it is our ecclesial identity that informs what we do, how we do it, and how we speak of our work.
● We undertake our work with a posture of humility and invite the same of all working with our national agencies. Understanding our roles, listening with an open mind, and maintaining trust are central to our call.
● We support integrated inclusiveness and support for nontraditional voices—the growing center of our church.
● We believe in the value of hospitality as a means of extending welcome to all.
● We welcome an openness to change and a willingness to try new things.
● We invite all to live into our connectional church polity, avoiding compartmentalization and modeling (in our actions and in our recommendations) the collaborative working approach we want to see within and among our national agencies. We are one body in Christ, and our loyalty is to Christ and the PC(USA) rather than to a particular agency.
● We commit to frequent and real-time communication delivered in multiple languages.
● We promise to be available and to respond promptly (within a day or two) to questions and concerns. We may not always agree or have the resources to satisfactorily address individual concerns, but we will listen and answer.
● We recognize local ministry level is most qualified and informed about ministry, and must be empowered and included from the outset in all decision-making while affirming the significant role of witness in the national and regional structures of the church.
● Ministry and mission must drive decision-making. The role of support services is to help get it done, not to serve as a stumbling block.
● We seek evaluations based on how much we help, not on how much we do.
● We approach all suggestions with the belief that there is always a kernel of truth that can lead to improvement.
● We are committed to a structure that provides flexibility and non-rigidity.
● We seek to outsource functions where the church does not uniquely have expertise.

God calls the PC(USA) to a faithful and exciting future. In the bold, confident hope of God’s grace, we journey together toward that future. We solicit your prayers for this movement of the Spirit.

APPENDIX 7
Commission Mid-Term Report—July 2017
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
General Assembly Way Forward Commission
Mid-Term Report
June 27, 2017

I thank my God every time I remember you; Constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, Because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.
Philippians 1:3–5

These words of the Epistle to the church at Philippi might well have been spoken by each of us, the members of the Way Forward Commission. Individually and corporately we hold deep and abiding affection for the faithfulness of all the members and congregations of the PC(USA).

As we have taken up our responsibilities, we have had before us the urgent calling of our church under the Lordship of Christ to proclaim the Good News in a weary world. With great joy, hope, and confidence in God’s steadfast grace, we have begun to dream of the 21st century church we see emerging.

We have not understood our charge to be one of finding ways to manage decline, or to tinker with existing structures in the hope of assuring institutional survival. Rather, encouraged by our calling through the voice of the General Assembly, the counsel of the Stated Clerk, and words of admonition and encouragement from hundreds of Presbyterians, we have set a bolder course.
We believe we are a changing church in a changing world and that our ways of work and witness must reflect the dynamism of our contemporary lives. Midway into our task we are eager to share our thoughts and progress with Presbyterians throughout the church. We covet your thoughtful reflection, feedback, and prayer for our continued effort.

For we believe “… the One who began a good work among you will bring it to completion … in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:6–7)

Coordination with Agencies and Committees

We continue to gather, review, and incorporate the abundant information available from agencies and ministries throughout the church. Recognizing that we have been given a unique opportunity to reform our church for more effective service, and reflecting our desire to act as one body in Christ in common mission, the Way Forward Commission has taken the following steps:

- Affirmation of Approach. How we relate to each other within our church and the attitudes of our corporate “culture” is critical in setting the tone, approach, and common underlying values of the national church as we go about our work. The commission has issued its discernment in an “Affirmation of Approach” that can be found at http://www.pcusa.org/resource/way-forward-commission-affirmation-approach/.

- Agency Initiatives. We have established ongoing conversations with all six national agencies to mutually identify and implement recommended improvements. A summary of these initiatives is being compiled and will be released as soon as it is available.

- Coordination with All-Agency Review and 2020 Vision. We continue our work in conjunction and conversation with the two committees established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to examine the identity, function, and structure of our denomination for our current reality.

Major Themes Emerging

“Our primary mission as church is to transform the world for the good in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

In our work of discernment, these seven areas are the first identified in need of attention and revisioning as we think about an adaptive and effective structural change for the agencies of the General Assembly.

1. Congregational Focus. With the strong conviction that the local church is the locus of ministry for the PC(USA) but “is not of itself a sufficient form of church” (Book of Order, G-1.0101) (yet congregational support is an essential priority of the national church), we believe all six agencies of the denomination are presently considering innovative ways to collaborate both with each other and with mid councils to provide local churches with adequate, contextual support that is nimble and responsive. Although this can take many forms, what is central and should be central to our denomination is to respond to the question: How can we best partner with churches in order for them to fully live into their missional call in their communities?

2. Mission Priority. At the forefront of our discernment is an appreciation for the faithfulness and hard work of our national staff in our common service to Jesus Christ and the PC(USA), making a profound difference in the church and the world. In strengthening the missional aspect of that call, innovative models of mission delivery, not corporate or administrative responsibilities, should be the central, critical role of the national agencies. We believe that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, especially, has been saddled for far too long with corporate responsibilities that create barriers for gifted staff and hinder their full focus on mission and coordination with congregations, mid councils, and global ecumenical partners. Recognizing the importance of these requirements as well as the stewardship obligations inherent in the funding and work of the national church, we are striving for the most transformative methods of mission engagement.

3. Diversity and Leadership. While denominational demographics continue to reflect the traditional majorities of our past, the full diversity represented in our culture is central to who we are as a church. With regard to identity, mission, and growth, we must incorporate that diversity into our function and structure. We need to prepare leaders for the church we will be, and consider innovative ways of providing leadership development events, programs, and training. This includes nurturing leaders—ordained ministers, ruling elders, and commissioned ruling elders—of emerging minorities. It also includes a willingness to encourage and support alternative pastoral leadership patterns best suited to the church we are becoming.

4. Mid Council Relationships. Presbyteries have been described as the linchpins of our denomination. They partner directly with congregations particularly in times of transition, redevelopment, or crisis. And yet we are witnessing a sea change in the structure, staffing, funding, and responsibilities of these councils. The role of synods is also in transition. There is a lack of resources affecting paid staff at the presbytery level and a reconfigured mid council ministry department within the Office of General Assembly. The national church must find additional tangible ways to partner with presbyteries and synods in support of congregations.

5. Functioning as “Church.” The church is called to speak Gospel truth to the world today. Nonetheless, we perceive a lack of clarity in both who represents the church in public witness on behalf of the denomination and in who serves as a central voice within the denomination. The present ambiguity is not an issue about an individual but rather an issue of structure, roles, and responsibilities. We are reviewing the Stated Clerk’s responsibilities and clarification of how this office, the highest elected office required by our Book of Order, speaks on behalf of the denomination, and also examining the roles of the voices of the General Assembly Moderator(s) and various agency executives. Additionally, the lack of accountability of all parts of the church to our ecclesiastical center and the need to affirm the primacy of the church as “church” (above functions, operations, executive, support, etc.) is leading us to further examine the potential role of the Stated Clerk. We seek to strengthen this function while still maintaining our reformed polity of “shared power ... exercised jointly” (Book of Order, F-3.0208).

6. Reconceptualized Administrative Support. We believe, as noted in the second theme, that there can and should be better ways to deliver corporate and administrative services that positions the functions as supportive to the missional components of the national agencies. In moving forward in our discernment, there are questions that need to be examined. For instance: What administrative services can and
should be centralized across all agencies; what is the most efficient and effective way of delivering corporate and administrative services; should some functions be outsourced; and how can we make these services accountable to the end user?

7. **Effective Communication.** We have observed a lack of cohesion in branding, voice, and consistency among the myriad of communication channels throughout the denomination. The most obvious example is the denominational websites and their many iterations. There exists a desire for clear, user-friendly, and varied platforms, including everything from print to social media, to communicate the work the PC(USA) is doing locally and around the world.

**Feedback Invitation**

And, now we would like to hear from you to determine if we are on the right track.

- What rings true for you in the themes we’ve identified?
- What is missing in these themes?
- We’ve presented the themes in one order, attempting some prioritization; what changes would you make? What theme or themes should take priority?
- If you could give the commission one piece of advice as we continue our work, what would it be?

You can respond to these questions and provide other comments at the following link: [link no longer active]. The link will be open from July 1–15, 2017.

We hope to hear from you!

In closing, we share a few verses from a poem that provided inspiration to the commission at our May meeting, and we hope it also resonates with you.

> This is no time to reminisce of the past.  
> It is a time to reflect on the present.  
> This is no time to think of what could have been.  
> It’s a time to plan what is to be.  
> This is no time to be haunted by doubt.  
> It is a time to be uplifted by hope.

—Martin L. Yonts, “A Meditation on Life”

With great hope, we will continue to move forward. We ask for your continued prayers that we can all see the new thing God is doing.

**APPENDIX 8**

**Current Structure of PC(USA)**

**Current Structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as Outlined in the Organization for Mission**

Chart provided by Presbyterian Mission Agency  
The 2nd page of this appendix is the All Agency Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)
Office of the General Assembly

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Office of the General Assembly encourages the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be a people of hope — seeking together the mind of Christ, working for justice and mercy, and participating in God’s continual reformation of the Church. Under the leadership of the Stated Clerk, the Office of the General Assembly carries out its mission through three ministry areas: Churchwide Ministries, Ecclesial and Ecumenical Ministries, and Mid Council Ministries.

The duties of staff include supporting and interpreting the PCUSA Constitution; publishing the GA Minutes, the Book of Order, and the Book of Confessions; keeping annual PCUSA statistics; serving as the PCUSA archivist through the Presbyterian Historical Society; organizing and managing Assembly Assemblies; and other national meetings; overseeing mid councils and the ministries of teaching and ruling elders; preparing, administering, and grading ordination exams; communicating with the larger Church on immigration issues; and partnering with ecumenical bodies worldwide.

Presbyterian Mission Agency

The Presbyterian Mission Agency serves as the mission and ministry arm of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The agency coordinates and leads the mission program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), working in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions. It also advises and responds to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for PCUSA ministries.

Governed by a Board of Directors whose members are elected by the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has four ministry areas:

- Compassion, Peace and Justice
- Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries
- Theology, Formation and Evangelism
- World Mission

pcusa.org/moa

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

With a publishing heritage spanning more than 175 years, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is the denominational publisher of the PCUSA. It contributes to the spiritual and intellectual vitality of the Church by publishing approximately 60 to 75 new titles each year and selling more than 2,000 titles throughout the world. Its Geneva Press imprint is for a specifically Presbyterian audience.

The agency also issues materials under the Westminster John Knox Press imprint. These works, which cover the spectrum of modern religious thought, are by scholars and popular authors of various religious affiliations. In addition, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation operates three online marketplaces: TheThoughtfulChristian.com, PCUSAStore.com, and FeastingWithTheHost.net.

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is self-sustaining: it receives no funding from the denomination.

ppcbooks.com

The Board of Pensions

The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) upholds the commitment made by congregations of the Church — to care for those who nurture the understanding of what it means to follow Christ. To that end, the Board administers the church benefits plan, including pension, medical, and death and disability programs, and provides financial assistance to PCUSA church workers in need through the Assistance Program. It also manages the funds needed to support these programs. A not-for-profit corporation, the agency is governed by an independent Board of Directors, elected by the General Assembly.

The Board traces its roots to the Fund for Pious Uses, established by Presbyterians at the inaugural meeting of the first synod in the American colonies in 1717. The agency will celebrate 300 years of caring for ministers, other church workers, and their families in 2017. As the Board enters the next 300 years, it does so with optimism to ensure, serve better, and serve the Church.

pensions.org

The Presbyterian Foundation

Established by the General Assembly in 1799, the Presbyterian Foundation gathers, stewards, and distributes funds for mission. It strengthens congregations and related mission and ministry efforts by developing gifts and managing funds on their behalf. The agency helps churches develop online giving systems, conducts stewardship and generosity training seminars, administers planned giving programs, and provides a full range of trust services for Presbyterian churches and other institutions.

The agency is governed by an independent Board of Trustees elected by the General Assembly. It manages more than 7,000 permanent endowment funds, which provide ongoing funding to thousands of congregations and related mission and ministry organizations.

As it provides charitable expertise and services to the Church, the Foundation strives to do so in a trustworthy, clear, and accessible manner, reflecting the rich faith tradition of the PCUSA.

pcusa.org/pfp

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program

A nonprofit corporation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program provides low-cost loans to congregations and church entities for the construction or purchase of buildings, renovations, and refinancing of existing debt. Loans are available for a variety of capital projects — to reshape a space to meet the needs of a changing congregation, install energy-efficient products and renewable energy sources, or expand mission and outreach efforts by reducing the amount of funds necessary for debt service.

The Program raises the funds for lending through its annual giving campaign. The agency is governed by a Board of Directors independent of the church corporation, although the work and mission of the Program are affiliated with the PCUSA.
Covenant of Understanding Regarding the Role and Relationship of Racial Ethnic Caucuses within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Racial Ethnic Caucuses, in varying forms, have been a significant part of the history and ethos of the Presbyterian Church at least since the 1800s. The first known recorded caucus was organized in New York City by black clergy in 1856. The caucus was organized to advocate for racial justice in the church and community, and to maximize black participation in the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church, along with other goals. (Adapted from a paper by Dr. Gayraud S. Wilmore, entitled The Black Presbyterian Caucuses-Passing on the Heritage—1998)

As our church and society became more racially diverse, the development of racial ethnic caucuses increased in the church during the early 1970s to include Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and more recently Middle-Eastern Presbyterians. These caucuses had an advocacy and programmatic role, strengthened by a working relationship with the General Assembly, through its Racial Ethnic Office, as well as other judicatories (now mid councils). In many instances, the Synod was a primary link for the caucuses in relating to and working with their constituencies at the congregational level.

With the continuing changes taking place within the life of the denomination, the racial ethnic caucuses are experiencing a serious sense of having lost both their relationship and a clear role within the church. While the caucuses are related to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Office on Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, there is no clear understanding of what that relationship means and the expectations of that relationship.

Since the reunion in 1983, which created the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), there has been a lack of clarity about both the advocacy and missional role of the caucuses and their relationship to the denomination at all levels.

PURPOSE OF “THE COVENANT OF UNDERSTANDING”

This “Covenant of Understanding” is an attempt to reestablish a proactive, trusting relationship built upon collaboration, shared beliefs, complementary visions, and mutual respect. It is also the intent of the Covenant to bring clarity to the appropriate role and relationship of racial ethnic caucuses within the PC(USA), particularly with the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Mid Councils at this time in our changing life together.

It is the desire of the racial ethnic caucuses to partner with the PC(USA) in its commitment to “guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.” (F-1.0403).

BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES RE: RACIAL ETHNIC CAUCUSES SINCE REUNION

1. ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT (Book of Order 2013-2015) – Article 8.2 – 8.3 Racial Ethnic Representation, Participation and Organizations – includes the following statement: “Racial ethnic members in the United States (Presbyterians of African, Hispanic, Asian descent and Native Americans) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision-making of the church, and SHALL BE ABLE TO FORM CAUCUSES.” 8.2 “Consistent with the principles of diversity and inclusiveness as set forth in 8.2, The General Assembly Council (now the Presbyterian Mission Agency) shall consult with and receive input from the racial ethnic caucuses of the church, and shall make provision for the expenses necessary to such consultations. The purpose of such consultation shall include:

• determining the priorities for assisting racial ethnic churches and ministries,
• developing a denominational strategy for racial ethnic church development,
• finding ways to assure the funding and operational needs of schools and other institutions which historically have served Black Americans and other racial ethnic groups.” 8.3

CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF RACIAL ETHNIC CAUCUSES

A Definition:

The word caucus comes from a Native American verb in the language of the Algonquin nations, which means, “to gather”. Caucuses are entities where people of similar characteristics or concerns come together to affirm their identity and to pursue collective goals.

Racial Ethnic Caucuses in the PC(USA) are support communities seeking to overcome inequalities, injustices, paternalism, and racism while vying for full partnership in the mission of the church. They assume the risk of challenging the church when it fails to heed to the “voices of peoples once silenced” including the poor and oppressed. Racial Ethnic Caucuses are self-determining fellowships, ordinarily created not by official ecclesiastical action but by their own constituencies to whom they are primarily accountable. (Adapted from the article, The Purpose of Caucuses by Rev. Helen Locklear, 2003).

Historic Role of National Caucuses:

The following are historic roles undertaken by racial ethnic caucuses within the Presbyterian Church. Many of these roles continue today though altered based on denominational changes that have occurred since reunion.

1. Monitoring—Acting as a conscience of the church, working for racial ethnic / and multi-cultural congregational transformation, and racial justice.

2. Advocacy—Acting as an advocate for program development and funding on behalf of related congregations and communities across the denomination which includes: mid councils and other decision making bodies at all levels of the church; matters related
to new congregational development and congregational transformation; racial ethnic women, youth, young adults, and matters of justice for all ages; as well as concerns of emerging countries.

3. **Programmatic**—Working with congregations, mid councils and appropriate General Assembly agencies to address congregational concerns, historical research, assisting appropriate entities at all levels of the church regarding recruitment and enlistment of racial ethnic persons interested in ministry vocations, and equipping persons for leadership roles in program areas, councils, and staff positions. (Adapted from article by Rev. Helen Locklear)

4. **Educational**—Serving as a primary resource for enabling all members of the PC(USA), and racial ethnic persons in particular, to better understand and relate to the unique cultural nuances of racial ethnic Presbyterians and their communities in order to be more effective partners in the mission of Jesus Christ.

The caucuses relate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly through the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), which has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. ACREC’s primary responsibility is to advocate for policies that impact racial ethnic individuals. ACREC’s mandate does not include programmatic ministries. However, ACREC may advocate for policies related to racial ethnic congregations and communities, which are of major interest and focus for racial ethnic caucuses.

It is understood that the General Assembly’s “Shape and Form” process, approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993), officially assigned to ACREC the advocacy role of the caucuses, as well as the role of monitoring, at the General Assembly level. However, there continues to be an appropriate advocacy role for the caucuses at the mid council level relative to programmatic and community issues which are of concern to constituent congregations related to the caucuses. Some of these issues may not require the advocacy of ACREC because of their local focus.

The five current racial ethnic caucuses (African American, Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and Native American) select one member from each caucus to be elected to ACREC through the General Assembly Nominating process to serve a four-year term with eligibility for one additional term.

The racial ethnic caucuses are committed and prepared to assist the General Assembly in its constitutional responsibility to “Nurture the covenant community of disciples (G-3.0501c)” which includes the racially diverse congregations who relate to the caucuses.

**PROPOSED RELATIONSHIP OF RACIAL ETHNIC CAUCUSES WITHIN THE PC (USA)**

1. **Racial Ethnic Caucuses will relate to the General Assembly through the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) in matters related to policies that impact racial ethnic individuals.**

2. **The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly may consult and receive input from the Racial Ethnic Caucuses in matters such as:**
   - determining the priorities for assisting racial ethnic churches and ministries,
   - developing a denominational strategy for racial ethnic church development / transformation,
   - determining the future financial support and operational needs of schools and other institutions which historically have served Black Americans and other racial ethnic groups. *(Adapted from Articles of Agreement, Article 8.2-8.3)* By action of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on September 19, 2014, “may” is to be interpreted as “will” by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

   The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), in consultation with the Office of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, is requested to develop a process that will enable recommendations from caucuses regarding programmatic ministries to be considered by the PMA Board, as appropriate.

3. **Mid councils of the church will be encouraged to utilize the consultative resources of racial ethnic caucuses in developing and implementing strategies for mission with racial ethnic congregations and communities, and the recruitment of persons for ministry vocations, with a particular focus on racial ethnic clergywomen.**

4. **Racial Ethnic Caucuses will continue to be related to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) in matters of advocacy.**

5. **Racial Ethnic Caucuses will continue to be related to Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries through the respective Congregational Support Offices in matters consistent with the role of these offices.**

   In order to help facilitate the assigned task of the Congregational Support Office, it is recommended that allCongregational Support Offices have a functioning Advisory Committee. Each Advisory Committee should consist of at least two members appointed by the respective caucus.

6. **In order to develop an ongoing relationship with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the leaders of the five caucuses (chair/moderator/president) will convene for at least two (2) scheduled conference calls with the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director each year. The scheduling of these calls should be held at such times to provide input from the racial ethnic caucus leadership regarding appropriate items going to the General Assembly, or as needed by the caucus leadership or the Stated Clerk / Executive Director.**

7. **Racial Ethnic Caucus leadership may hold telephone conference calls at least twice each year to maintain good lines of communication between the caucuses. It is encouraged that these calls include the caucus representatives from ACREC to broaden the sharing of information and input. The calls could also serve a preparatory purpose for planning and developing agendas for the**
conference calls with the Stated Clerk and Executive Director. Staff may be invited to participate on these calls, as appropriate, with the caucus representatives given the prerogative of meeting without staff.

**SUGGESTED FUNDING FOR CONSULTATIONS**

1. Funding for consultations requested by an agency of the General Assembly will be provided by the agency.
2. Funding for conference calls with the Stated Clerk and Executive Director will be provided by these offices.
3. Funding for conference calls between the Racial Ethnic Caucuses will be funded by the caucuses.

**CONCLUSION**

The Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Ephesus said, in the words of *The Message*, “(God) handed out gifts . . . to train Christ’s followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ’s body, the church, until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God’s Son . . .” (*Ephesians 4:11-12*)

We believe this proposed Covenant of Understanding will enable racial ethnic caucuses in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- to be full contributing partners with the General Assembly and Mid Councils,
- to enrich the life, ministry, and mission of our racial ethnic / multi-cultural congregations and communities, and
- to share our rich gifts, cultures, and commitment to Jesus Christ with the whole church, as together we seek to be “fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ”, while faithfully serving God in this time and place. (*Ephesians 4:13*)

**APPENDIX 10**

AMENDMENTS TO “A CORP.” BYLAWS

[The first part of this appendix shows the bylaws with the amendments incorporated into the document. The second part is a link to a PDF file showing the amendments (see p. 487). Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline.]

01/17/87 Adopted
09/12/87 Revised
11/19/88 Revised
02/17/90 Revised
06/19/93 Revised
02/19/00 Revised
09/27/03 Revised
03/16/07 Revised
09/23/11 Revised
02/07/14 Revised
02/27/18 Revised After PMAB 02/09/18
Revisions

**BYLAWS**

of the

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“Corporation”), is the principal Corporation of and established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the “General Assembly”) to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as provided in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and was originally formed on March 28, 1799 by Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**ARTICLE I**

Office and Fiscal Year

Section 1.01. Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such places within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the Corporation requires.

Section 1.02. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January in each year.

**ARTICLE II**

Board of Directors

Section 2.01. Selection and Term of Directors.

(a) The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be eleven in number. Any vacancies in such number between General Assemblies shall be filled promptly, pursuant to the procedures of Section 2.03 of these bylaws, subject to the person
or persons filling such vacancy or vacancies having been first recommended by the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with respect to the Directors in Section 2.01(b) below, and subject in all cases to the Board of Directors of the Corporation first consulting with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) The governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the following councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee, each recommend to the General Assembly Nominating Committee a person (not an employee of such council, agency, or office), to serve as a Director of the Corporation:

1. The Office of the General Assembly: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;
2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;
3. The Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;
4. The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;
5. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc.: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;
6. The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;
7. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (not also to be a member of any of the councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (1) through (6) or above or (8) below): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation; and
8. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (not also to be a member of any of the councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (1) through (7) above: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation.

(c) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall nominate as Directors the persons recommended through the process of Section 2.01(b) of these bylaws unless, as to any person recommended, such person fails to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or these bylaws. In such case, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall immediately request, and the governing board of directors or trustees of the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall immediately provide, a new recommendation to the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(d) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall, in addition, nominate three at-large Directors to the Board of the Corporation. For nominees for election at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), one such nominee shall be proposed by and selected from the members of the Way Forward Commission appointed by the 222nd General Assembly and one such nominee shall be proposed by and selected from the members of the Committee for the Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “All Agency Review Committee”).

(e) Nominations from the floor of the General Assembly shall be permitted only as to the three at-large Directors of the Corporation.

(f) Each Director of the Corporation shall serve a term of four (4) years, except that:

1. A Director shall be eligible, if recommended, nominated, and elected, to serve a second four (4) year term as a Director of the Corporation; and
2. No Director shall serve as a Director of the Corporation for more than eight (8) years in total.

Section 2.02. Directors of the Corporation’s Constituent Corporations. The persons from time to time serving as Directors of the Corporation shall, by virtue of their offices, constitute the directors or trustees of each corporation listed in Annex A hereto (which corporations so listed are referred to collectively in these bylaws as “Constituent Corporations”).

Section 2.03. Resignations of Directors; Other Vacancies.

(a) Resignation. Any Director of the Corporation may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation, to be effective upon receipt or at a later time stated therein.
(b) Disability. If a Director is unable to perform substantially all of his or her duties and responsibilities by reason of illness, injury, or incapacity for a period exceeding six months, such Director shall tender, or shall be deemed to have tendered, his or her resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation. As soon as practicable thereafter (but in any event not later than at its next regularly scheduled meeting), the Board of Directors shall determine whether to accept such resignation.

(c) Vacancies. In case of a vacancy on the Board of Directors by death, disability, or resignation, a successor to fill the unexpired term shall be nominated by the entity which nominated the former Director in the same manner as provided in Section 2.01 of these bylaws for the selection of Directors, subject to approval by the General Assembly at its next meeting, but with full authority as a Director pending such meeting.

Section 2.04. Meetings of Directors. Every meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be, without further notice or action, a meeting of the board of directors or trustees of each of the Constituent Corporations as to matters concerning such Constituent Corporation.

Section 2.05. Powers; Liability.

(a) The Board of Directors shall have full power to conduct, manage, and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation. All powers of the Corporation are hereby granted to and vested in the Board of Directors.

(b) A Director of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as may be defined under applicable law and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Director for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or Federal law.

Section 2.06. Organization. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall elect from among its members a Chair of the Board. The Chair shall serve a term of two years and may, at the discretion of the Board, be re-elected to up to two more two-year terms during such Director’s tenure on the Board of Directors, for a maximum of six consecutive years. The Board of Directors may elect from among its members a Vice-Chair of the Board, subject to the same term limitations as the Chair, to serve as Chair in the absence of the Chair, but not to succeed the Chair automatically upon the expiration of the term of the Chair. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, or in the absence of the Vice-Chair, a Chair pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of Directors then present, shall preside. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Secretary of the Board, which may be the Secretary of the Corporation, to serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. The Secretary or, in the absence of the Secretary, a Secretary pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of the Directors then present, shall act as secretary of the meeting and shall record the minutes of the meeting.

Section 2.07. Place of Meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such place within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint, or as may be designated in the notice of the meeting.

Section 2.08. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time as shall be designated from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors. One such meeting each year shall be designated as a meeting for organization, election of officers, and election of members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee and officers may also be elected at any other meeting of the Board of Directors. At every regular meeting, the Board of Directors shall transact such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws.

Section 2.09. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held whenever called by the Chair of the Board or by three or more Directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be given in person, by telephone, by email, or by mail to each Director at least 24 hours (in the case of notice in person, by telephone, or by email), or 48 hours (in the case of notice by telephone or email with respect to any Ohio corporation), or five days (in the case of notice by mail) before the time at which the meeting is to be held. Every such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting.

Section 2.10. Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment. Two-thirds (66%) of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote. Directors may not vote by proxy. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting by unanimous written consent, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the Secretary in person, by mail, or by electronic communication.
Section 2.11. Executive and Other Committees.

(a) The Board of Directors shall, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors then in office, establish an Executive Committee of not less than five members, one of whom shall be the Chair of the Board. By like action the Board of Directors may establish one or more other committees or “other bodies”, as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§ 5103 and 5721, with each such other committee or other body to consist of two or more Directors. The Chair of the Board may be, ex officio, a voting member of each such other committee or other body except a nominating committee, and shall designate or appoint the chair of each particular committee or other body. The Board of Directors may designate one or more Directors as alternate members of any such committee or other body, who may replace any absent or disqualified member at any meeting of the committee or other body. In the absence or disqualification of a member and the alternate or alternates, if any, designated for such member of any such committee or other body, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not the member or members constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another Director to act at the meeting in the place of any such absent or disqualified member. Each committee or other body of the Board of Directors shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Any member of such committee or other body may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors.

(b) The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall have and exercise all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Corporation, except that the Executive Committee shall not have any power or authority as to the following:

1. The adoption, amendment or repeal of these bylaws, or the adoption of any amendment of articles or plan of merger, division or consolidation or the approving of the sale, lease or exchange of all or substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or of the dissolution of the Corporation.

2. The amendment or repeal of any resolutions of the Board.

3. The filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

(c) No committee of the Board of Directors, other than the Executive Committee, shall, pursuant to resolution of the Board of Directors or otherwise, exercise any of the powers or authority vested by these bylaws, or other applicable law in the Board of Directors as such, but any other committee of the Board of Directors may make recommendations to the Board of Directors or Executive Committee concerning the exercise of such powers and authority.

(d) A majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee, or Directors designated to replace them as provided in this section, shall be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the acts of a majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee or their replacements shall be the acts of the committee.

(e) Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report such proceedings periodically to the Board of Directors. Sections 2.07, 2.08 and 2.09 shall be applicable to committees of the Board of Directors.

(f) One half (50%) of the Directors of the Corporation in office assigned to a committee shall be present at each committee meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the doing of business.

Section 2.12. Compensation and Expenses. Except as permitted by Section 4.15 of these bylaws, no compensation of any kind shall be paid directly or indirectly by the Corporation to, and no loan or other extension of credit shall be made for the benefit of, any Director, as such, or as an officer or employee of the Corporation. Directors may be reimbursed for expenses in a manner consistent with any applicable policy approved by the General Assembly for the Corporation or any other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and thereafter adopted for such purpose by the Board of Directors.

Section 2.13. Authority to Delegate Powers to Other Body. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint a specific person or persons, agency, or entity other than of the Board of Directors to act on its behalf as an “other body”, as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§ 5103 and 5721, and to assume such governing body powers and responsibilities, and such other duties and responsibilities, as may be delegated to such other body by resolution of the Board of Directors, provided that such delegation shall be consistent with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. Such delegation of governing body powers and responsibilities shall not be exclusive and the Board of Directors shall continue to have the authority and power to act in lieu of such other body or to remove or limit the powers and authority granted to such other body, as necessary to fulfill the Board of Director’s fiduciary duties to the Corporation. Unless otherwise provided in the delegation by the Board of Directors, when acting on behalf of the Corporation, such other body shall be governed by and subject to the applicable provisions of these bylaws, including without limitation provisions relating to fiduciary duties and conflicts of interest. Such other body shall report to the Board of Directors upon request and the report shall be recorded in the minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors.
ARTICLE III
Notice - Waivers - Meetings

Section 3.01. Notice, What Constitutes. Whenever written notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, it may be given to such person, either personally or by sending a copy thereof by first class mail, postage prepaid, or by email, to his or her address appearing on the books of the Corporation, or in the case of Directors of the Corporation, supplied by the Director to the Corporation for the purpose of notice. If the notice is sent by mail or by email, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the United States mail or upon transmission to such person. A notice of meeting shall specify the place, day and hour of the meeting and any other information required by law or these bylaws. When a meeting is adjourned, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting, other than by announcement, recorded in the minutes, at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.

Section 3.02. Waivers of Notice. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section and by Section 6.06 of these bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 3.03. Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice. Whenever the language of a proposed resolution is included in a written notice of a meeting, the meeting considering the resolution may without further notice adopt it with such clarifying or other amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

Section 3.04. Conference Telephone Meetings. One or more persons may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors or of a committee of the Board by means of conference telephone or other electronic communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in the meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. Conference and electronic meetings will follow procedures approved by Board of Directors from time to time.

ARTICLE IV
Officers

Section 4.01. Number, Qualifications and Designation. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Chief Financial Officer, one or more Vice Presidents, (including but not limited to Executive Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents), a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Controller, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.02 of this Article. Any number of the offices may be held by the same person. Officers may, but need not be Directors, and shall be natural persons of full age. The Chair of the Board elected under Section 2.05 shall also be an officer of the Corporation.

Section 4.02. Selection and Term of Office. The officers of the Corporation shall be selected and their terms of office shall be determined as follows:

(a) The President shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and shall be eligible for reelection. Other officers of the Corporation shall be nominated by a nominating committee of the Board of Directors in consultation with the President and elected by the Board annually.

(b) The Board of Directors may from time to time elect such other officers as the business of the Corporation may require, including a Secretary and one or more Assistant Secretaries, each of whom has such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee of the Corporation the power to elect subordinate or other officers and to retain or appoint employees or other agents, or committees thereof, and to prescribe the authority and duties of such subordinate or other officers, committees, employees or other agents.

Section 4.03. Resignations. Any officer or agent may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, or to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice, or at any later time specified therein, and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4.04. Removal. Any elected or appointed officer may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors or other authority which elected or appointed such officer. The term of any offices held by an employee ends the earlier of the employee’s last day of employment or last day in the office.
Section 4.05. Vacancies. A vacancy in any elective office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board of Directors (where appropriate, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly) or by the authority to which the power to fill such office has been delegated, pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article, as the case may be, and if the office is one for which a term is prescribed by or pursuant to these bylaws, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term. The refusal of the General Assembly to confirm an election, where such confirmation is required by these bylaws, shall result in the creation of a vacancy in the office affected.

Section 4.06. General Powers. All officers of the Corporation, as between themselves and the Corporation, shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be determined by resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, as may be provided in these bylaws.

Section 4.07. The Chair of the Board. Generally, the Chair of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.

Section 4.08. The President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors. The President shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. In the event of an extended absence of the President and the Chief Financial Officer, the President shall assign one of the other senior officers of the Corporation to fulfill the duties of the office during the absence of the President. The President, or the President’s designee pro tem, shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of the boards or governing committees of each of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and such additional or successor agencies as may be created by the General Assembly. The President shall not, while holding such office, be a Director recommended pursuant to Section 2.01(b) or (c) above from any of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or the president, executive director, stated clerk, or similar principal leader of any of those agencies.

Section 4.09. Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer shall be the chief financial officer of the Corporation responsible for corporate, financial and accounting functions. The Chief Financial Officer shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President or as otherwise assigned by the Board of Directors or the President. The Chief Financial Officer shall sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, all deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the President.

Section 4.10. The Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents shall perform the duties of the Chief Financial Officer in the absence of the Chief Financial Officer and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to them by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Vice Presidents to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.11. The Secretary. The Secretary or an Assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall cause to be recorded personally or by an Assistant Secretary, or by the person designated by the chair of the Board as secretary pro tem or secretary of the meeting, all votes of the Directors and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of committees of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall ensure that notices are given and records and reports properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal. In general, the Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of secretary, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Secretary by the Board of Directors, or the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Secretary to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.12. The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have or provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Corporation and shall keep a separate book account of the same to his or her credit as Treasurer. The Treasurer shall collect and receive, or provide for the collection and receipt of, moneys earned by or in any manner due to or received by the Corporation; shall deposit all funds in his or her custody as Treasurer in such banks or other places of deposit (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (hereinafter the “Fiduciary Corporation”) as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an account showing his or her transactions as Treasurer, and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Treasurer to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

Section 4.13. The Controller. The Controller of the corporation shall be responsible for maintaining the chart of accounts, accounting records, and accounting procedures of the Corporation; shall, whenever so required by the Board of
Directors, render an accounting of the results of operations and financial condition of the Corporation (at least annually) and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Controller by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Controller to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

Section 4.14. Officers’ Bonds. Any officer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office held by such officer in such sum, if any, and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall require, the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

Section 4.15. Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors, a committee of such Board, or any other body to which power to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been assigned or delegated pursuant to Sections 2.3, 2.11, or 4.02 of this Article. The establishment and annual review of a consistent compensation structure for all such officers, employees, and other agents shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors, or a committee of such Board (in either instance, in consultation with any other body or bodies to which a delegation of authority for retention or appointment of employees and agents has been made), which shall also annually review and approve the specific compensation of the five most highly-compensated such officers and employees. No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board as an officer shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.12 of these bylaws.)

Section 4.16. Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, shall be covered by personnel policies reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors, or any committee of such Board, or any other body or bodies to which a delegation of such authority has been made, which policies shall be set forth in an Employee Handbook.

ARTICLE V
Indemnification of Directors, Officers, etc.

Section 5.01. Scope of Indemnification. (a) The Corporation shall indemnify an indemnified representative against any liability incurred in connection with any proceeding in which the indemnified representative may be involved as a party or otherwise, by reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in an indemnified capacity, including without limitation any liability resulting from any actual or alleged breach or neglect of duty, error, misstatement or misleading statement, negligence, gross negligence or act giving rise to strict or products liability, except:

(1) Where such indemnification is expressly prohibited by applicable law;

(2) Where the conduct of the indemnified representative has been finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to constitute willful misconduct or recklessness as may be defined by applicable law or any other conduct sufficient in the circumstances to bar indemnification against liabilities arising from the conduct;

(3) To the extent the liability is finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to be based upon or attributable to the indemnified representative gaining any personal pecuniary profit to which such indemnified representative was not legally entitled; or

(4) To the extent such indemnification has been finally determined in a final adjudication pursuant to Section 5.06(d) to be otherwise unlawful.

(a) If an indemnified representative is entitled to indemnification in respect of a portion, but not all, of any liabilities to which such person may be subject, the Corporation shall indemnify such indemnified representative to the maximum extent for such portion of the liabilities.

(b) The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the indemnified representative is not entitled to indemnification.

(c) For purposes of this Article:

(1) “Indemnified capacity” means any and all past, present and future service by an indemnified representative in one or more capacities as a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation or a Constituent Corporation, or, at the request of the Corporation, as a Director, officer, employee, agent, fiduciary or trustee of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other entity or enterprise;

(2) “Indemnified representative” means any and all Directors and officers of the Corporation, including any and all officers elected or committee members, employees or other agents appointed under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” also means any and all officers, committee members, employees and other agents elected or appointed under the power delegated to the General Assembly, or to any General Assembly agency...
under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” shall include any other person so designated by the Board of Directors.

(3) “Liability” means any damage, judgment, amount paid in settlement (provided, in the case of settlements, that the Corporation shall have given its consent to such settlement in advance of the payment thereof), fine, penalty, punitive damages, excise tax assessed with respect to an employee benefit plan, or cost or expense of any nature (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees, costs, and disbursements); and

(4) “Proceeding” means any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, appeal or other proceeding of any nature, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, whether formal or informal, and whether brought by or in the right of the Corporation, a class of its security holders, if any, or otherwise.

Section 5.02. Proceedings Initiated by Indemnified Representatives. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Corporation shall not indemnify under this Article an indemnified representative for any liability incurred in a proceeding initiated (which shall not be deemed to include counter-claims or affirmative defenses) or participated in as an intervenor or amicus curiae by the person seeking indemnification unless such initiation of or participation in the proceeding is authorized, either before or after its commencement, by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Directors of the Corporation. This section does not apply to reimbursement of expenses incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending an arbitration under Section 5.06(d) or otherwise successfully prosecuting or defending the rights of an indemnified representative granted by or pursuant to this Article.

Section 5.03. Advancing Expenses. The Corporation shall pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by a Director or officer and may, by act of the Board of Directors (including the votes or consents of interested Directors), pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by any other indemnified representative in advance of the final disposition of a proceeding, described in Section 5.01 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified representative to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation pursuant to this Article. The financial ability of an indemnified representative to repay an advance shall not be a prerequisite to the making of such advance.

Section 5.04. Securing of Indemnification Obligations. To further effect, satisfy or secure the indemnification obligations provided herein or otherwise, the Corporation may maintain insurance, obtain a letter of credit, act as self-insurer, create a reserve, trust, escrow, cash collateral or other fund or account, enter into indemnification agreements, pledge or grant a security interest in any assets or properties of the Corporation, or use any other mechanism or arrangement whatsoever in such amounts, at such costs, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Directors shall deem appropriate. Absent fraud, the determination of the Board of Directors with respect to such amounts, costs, terms and conditions shall be conclusive against all security holders, if any, officers, and Directors, and shall not be subject to voidability.

Section 5.05. Payment of Indemnification. An indemnified representative who is entitled to indemnification shall be entitled thereto within 30 days after a written request for such indemnification has been delivered to the Secretary.

Section 5.06. Indemnification Procedure.

(a) An indemnified representative shall use such indemnified representatives’ best efforts to notify promptly the Secretary of the commencement of any proceeding or the occurrence of any event which might give rise to a liability under this Article, but the failure so to notify the Corporation shall not relieve the Corporation of any liability which it may have to the indemnified representative under this Article or otherwise.

(b) The Corporation shall be entitled, upon notice to any such indemnified representative, to assume the defense of any proceeding with counsel reasonably satisfactory to the indemnified representative, or a majority of the indemnified representatives involved in such proceeding if there be more than one. If the Corporation notifies the indemnified representative of its election to defend the proceeding, the Corporation shall have no liability for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) of the indemnified representative incurred in connection with the defense of such proceeding subsequent to such notice, unless (i) such expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) have been authorized by the Corporation, (ii) the Corporation shall not in fact have employed counsel reasonably satisfactory to such indemnified representative or indemnified representatives to assume the defense of such proceeding, or (iii) it shall have been determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) that the indemnified representative was entitled to indemnification for such expenses under this Article or otherwise. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the indemnified representative may elect to retain counsel at the indemnified representative’s own cost and expense to participate in the defense of such proceeding.

(c) The Corporation shall not be required to obtain the consent of the indemnified representative to the settlement of any proceeding which the Corporation has undertaken to defend if the Corporation assumes full and sole responsibility for such settlement and the settlement grants the indemnified representative an unqualified release in respect of all liabilities at issue in
the proceeding. Whether or not the Corporation has elected to assume the defense of any proceeding, no indemnified repre-
sentative shall have any right to enter into any full or partial settlement of the proceeding without the prior written consent of
the Corporation (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), nor shall the Corporation be liable for any amount paid
by an indemnified representative pursuant to any settlement to which the Corporation has not so consented.

(d) Any dispute related to the right to indemnification as provided under this Article shall be decided only by arbi-
tration in the metropolitan area in which the principal executive offices of the Corporation are located at the time, in accordance
with the commercial arbitration rules then in effect of the American Arbitration Association, before a panel of three arbitrators,
one of whom shall be selected by the Corporation, the second of whom shall be selected by the indemnified representative and
the third of whom shall be selected by the other two arbitrators. In the absence of the American Arbitration Association, or if
for any reason arbitration under the arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association cannot be initiated, and if one of
the parties fails or refuses to select an arbitrator, or the arbitrators selected by the Corporation and the indemnified representative
cannot agree on the selection of the third arbitrator within 30 days after such time as the corporation and the indemnified
representative have each been notified of the selection of the other’s arbitrator, the necessary arbitrator or arbitrators shall be
selected by the presiding judge of the court of general jurisdiction in such metropolitan area. The party or parties challeng-
ing the right of an indemnified representative to the benefits of this Article shall have the burden of proof. The Corporation shall
reimburse an indemnified representative for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in successfully
prosecuting or defending such arbitration. Any award entered by the arbitrators shall be final, binding and nonappealable and
judgment may be entered thereon by any party in accordance with applicable law in any court of competent jurisdiction, except
that the corporation shall be entitled to interpose as a defense in any such judicial enforcement proceeding any prior final
judicial determination adverse to the indemnified representative under Section 5.01(a)(2) or(3) in a proceeding not directly
involving indemnification under this Article. This arbitration provision shall be specifically enforceable.

(e) Upon a payment to any indemnified representative under this Article, the Corporation shall be subrogated to the
extent of such payment to all of the rights of the indemnified representative to recover against any person for such liability, and
the indemnified representative shall execute all documents and instruments required and shall take such other action as may be
necessary to secure such rights, including the execution of such documents as may be necessary for the Corporation to bring
suit to enforce such rights.

Section 5.07. Discharge of Duty. An indemnified representative shall be deemed to have discharged such person’s
duty to the Corporation if he or she has relied in good faith on information, advice or an opinion, report or statement prepared by:

(a) One or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom such indemnified representative reasonably believes
to be reliable and competent with respect to the matter presented;

(b) Legal counsel, public accountants or other persons as to matters that the indemnified representative reasonably
believes are within the person’s professional or expert competence; or

(c) A committee of the Board of Directors on which he or she does not serve as to matters within its area of designated
authority, which committee he or she reasonably believes to merit confidence.

Section 5.08. Contract Rights; Amendment or Repeal. All rights to indemnification under this Article shall be
deed a contract between the Corporation and the indemnified representatives pursuant to which the Corporation and each
indemnified representative intend to be legally bound. Any repeal, amendment or modification hereof shall be prospective only
and shall not affect any rights or obligations then existing.

Section 5.09. Scope of Article. The indemnification of indemnified representatives, as authorized by this Article,
shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be
entitled under any statute, agreement, vote of the General Assembly or disinterested Directors or otherwise, both as to action
in an official capacity and as to action in any other capacity. The indemnification provided by or granted pursuant to this Article
shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an indemnified representative in respect of matters arising prior to such time,
and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators, and personal representatives of such a person.

Section 5.10. Reliance on Provisions. Each person who shall act as an indemnified representative of the Corpora-
tion shall be deemed to be doing so in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided by this Article.

ARTICLE VI
Miscellaneous

Section 6.01. Corporate Seal. The Corporation shall have a corporate seal in the form of a design adopted by the
197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with the words: “PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(U.S.A.), A CORPORATION—FOUNDED 1799 PENNSYLVANIA.”
Section 6.02. Checks. All checks, notes, bills of exchange or other orders in writing shall be signed by such person or persons as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Section 6.03. Contracts. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or to execute or deliver any instrument on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 6.04. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon checks signed by, or bearing the authorized facsimile signature of such one or more officers, employees, or agents as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. The name or accounts to which such deposits are made, and the name of the Corporation on checks drawn against such accounts may be “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”, and may include such other words including the name of the Corporation and an appropriate designation to identify by purpose or otherwise. Funds of the Corporation may also be deposited with the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.05. Annual Report of Directors: Accounting System.

(a) The Board of Directors shall direct the President and the Chief Financial Officer to present at a regular meeting of the Board in every year a report, verified by such officer, showing in appropriate detail the following:

1. The assets, liabilities and fund balances, including the trust funds, of the Corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report;

2. The principal changes in assets, liabilities and fund balances, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report;

3. The revenue and receipts of the Corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation and

4. The expenses or disbursements of the Corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(b) The annual report shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting of the Board and shall be transmitted to the General Assembly.

(c) Financial statements reported on by independent certified public accountants may be statements which have been combined with those of the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.06. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted either (i) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days’ written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (ii) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and shall require confirmation by the General Assembly.

Section 6.07. Constituent Corporations. A list of Constituent Corporations is attached hereto as Appendix A. The bylaws of the Constituent Corporations shall conform to the laws of the state in which the Constituent Corporation is chartered and shall be, in so far as legally possible consistent with these bylaws.

ANNEX A

CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)

2. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC. (Incorporated in North Carolina)

3. THE HUBBARD PRESS (Incorporated in Ohio)
APPENDIX 11
AMENDMENTS TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR MISSION

[The first part of this appendix shows the Organization for Mission with the amendments incorporated into the document. The second part is a link to a PDF file showing the amendments. Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline. See p. 515.]

V. The Presbyterian Mission Agency

Mission, God’s mission, is at the heart of the work to which God calls us. As the Book of Order reminds us:

“In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, calling all people to discipleship in Christ.” (F.101)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is the body of the General Assembly in which are lodged the following responsibilities to implement the mission of the General Assembly domestically and internationally:¹

a. to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;

b. to provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;

c. to develop and propose a Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency consisting of the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval a comprehensive Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and program, including a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan;

d. to act in those specific matters assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency by the General Assembly or the Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;

e. to perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.

In service to the Presbyterian Mission Agency as it fulfills its place in this, the Church’s calling, the primary purpose of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is to lead and coordinate the mission program of the General Assembly. In order to steward this function, the Board and the Agency shall understand this mission based on the Constitution and General Assembly actions, an accounting of denominational resources, and the interpretation of our times and national context.

¹ These responsibilities were part of the Book of Order until 2011, when the new Form of Government was approved, and they were moved to the Organization for Mission.
Standing between the General Assembly and the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board’s work is to advise the General Assembly regarding mission priorities, programs and strategies; to lead the Agency in implementing the directives of the General Assembly; and then to report back to the General Assembly with results and additional advice. It is the Board’s responsibility to make the vision for mission become reality, helping to manage the practical problems those visions and dreams might face.

The Board’s work will move in a flow from General Assembly to General Assembly. It begins by advising the General Assembly on mission priorities, programs, and strategies. At a General Assembly, the Board receives guidance and direction. The Board then leads staff in the agency to fulfill those General Assembly directives. The Board oversees and aligns assets toward the fulfillment of those directives in the context for mission, discerning potential shifts in God’s calling. The Board then responds to General Assembly directives, providing advice on revised priorities at the next General Assembly. This process is inclusive, multi-layered and cyclical, continuing from each General Assembly to the next. The Board should engage a broad array of stakeholders to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s ability to respond faithfully to the Holy Spirit and align its life with God’s mission. Setting strategy and guiding policy in this way necessitates that the Board employ theological, intercultural, corporate, and legal knowledge all enveloped in prayer.

In performing this role, the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall report directly to the General Assembly. (See also Rule A.2 of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.)

A. Policy Responsibility

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may recommend churchwide policies to the General Assembly and is responsible for implementing policies established by the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall establish overall procedures for the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to implement the policies established by the General Assembly.

B. Planning and Priority Setting

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for carrying out planning and priority-setting processes. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for instituting ongoing review processes.

C. General Assembly Budget

It is the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to recommend to the General Assembly a comprehensive Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and program. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board develops the Mission Agency Budget, which includes a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan as well as a budget for all other costs and expenses of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In preparing these budgets, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has the responsibility for developing its own revenue and expense projections, but shall consult with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in doing so. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly jointly have responsibility for developing a Per Capita Budget and apportionment.

All income received by the Presbyterian Mission Agency from sales, bequests, gifts, or from any other source, shall be transmitted to the Treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as is income received by the Office of the General Assembly pursuant to Section IV.B.3.d. of this Organization for Mission. These funds shall be separately accounted for by the Treasurer. All payments related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be made by the Treasurer only upon the receipt of regular vouchered requests, or other adequate documentation, consistent with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and bearing the authorization of the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or a person designated by the President/Executive Director.

D. Personnel Responsibilities

Regarding the staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall, subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board responsibility for the following:

1. Approval of personnel procedures.

2. Approval, annually, of a staff rationale that determines staff commitments for the year. Any staff deployed regionally must be approved as part of the annual staff rationale.

3. Election of the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.

4. Annual performance reviews of the President/Executive Director as specified in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations, and in concurrence with the Presbyterian Mission Agency personnel policies.

6. Approval of compensation guidelines recommended by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, within which salaries may be administered by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are not eligible for election or selection as staff during the period of their term of service.

E. Reporting

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for submitting a report to the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will report regularly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, keeping the Board fully informed about its work. Matters that involve an exception or a proposed change in Presbyterian Mission Agency procedures, a major shift in program emphasis, or a major budget adjustment require action by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Issues of social witness policy, advocacy for racial ethnic and women’s concerns, and those related to Presbyterian theological institutions are reported to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. To support this reporting requirement, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has the right to full access to all information related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency maintained for it by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including the accounting and financial records of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; information about donors, funds, and fund restrictions for funds that have been designated to support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible; external audit reports with respect to such funds and the Presbyterian Mission Agency itself; and, to the same extent as any other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), access to the corporate minutes of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

F. Elected Leadership

1. Organization of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is a direct expression of the planning and mission understanding of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which is accountable to the General Assembly in this regard. Direction and oversight of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is accomplished by Presbyterian Mission Agency Board members serving as members of Program and Administrative Committees. The number and makeup of the committees and assignments are adjustable to accomplish the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in its mission and to allow flexibility to meet changing emphases in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission. The committees are to be policy, strategy, and planning committees.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures advocacy functions for women and racial ethnic persons, and advisory functions for social witness policy by providing direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board also provides for the development of social witness policy.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the continuation of a committee that includes representatives of each Presbyterian theological institution, and that will review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church, will exercise the governance responsibilities of the church to the schools, and will encourage and enhance cooperation among the church’s theological schools. The committee will be provided direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.

2. Membership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The membership, terms of office, and officers of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be provided for in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and approved by the General Assembly.

G. Staff Leadership

1. President/Executive Director

Election and Review—The President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The President/Executive Director is accountable to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Upon election, the President/Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office until confirmed by the next General Assembly following election. Should the General Assembly refuse to confirm any President/Executive Director, the position becomes vacant immediately. Periodic in-depth reviews of the Executive Director are the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The President/Executive Director is elected for a term of four years and may be reelected for additional terms. Initial four-year terms start on the date that work commences following election. Subsequent four-year terms commence on the day following expiration of the prior term. The President/Executive Director may be dismissed upon the recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in conformity with the relevant Employee Handbook and then-current personnel policies and procedures.

Responsibilities—The responsibilities of the President/Executive Director include:
1) Enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to fulfill its responsibilities to the General Assembly;

2) Nurturing relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the other General Assembly agencies, midcouncils, and racial ethnic caucuses (see Covenant of Understanding);

3) Directing the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

4) Providing leadership to, and administrative oversight of, the staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

5) Leading the personnel decision-making processes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency delegated by the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including but not limited to implementing policies and procedures related to inclusiveness, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity;

6) Coordinating, with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the budget planning process of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

7) Serving a major role in all Presbyterian Mission Agency efforts, including funds development; and

8) Serving as primary spokesperson for Presbyterian Mission Agency program and policies.

9) When resolution of a particular legal dispute has been delegated by the Board of Directors of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the President/Executive Director may, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, may retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts.

2. **Staff**

All staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency are accountable to the President/Executive Director. Mission personnel have shared accountability both to the overseas partner church to which they are assigned and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall delegate to the President/Executive Director, subject to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the Stated Clerk for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, authority: (i) to create, implement, and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (ii) to prepare, maintain, and amend an Employee Handbook for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (iii) to retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; and (iv) to promote, demote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The President/Executive Director shall, in exercising such authority, make use of any human resources recordkeeping and expertise provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. The Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation shall coordinate with the Presbyterian Mission Agency to ensure that an adequate number of staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency have or are delegated appropriate signature authority for relevant contracts and bank accounts related to the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

3. **Board Meetings**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board holds regular meetings (no less than one per quarter) with the appropriate and invited Presbyterian Mission Agency staff in order to build collaboration, collegiality, coordination, and trust, while also discussing finances, investment results, and any pertinent legal matters.

**VI. Presbyterian Mission Agency Relationships**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency works in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions to enable the various councils to join together in churchwide expression of the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This means that, as is the case with all agencies of the church, that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its officers, directors, and its staff, must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency shares responsibility with the Office of the General Assembly for the joint office of Mid Council Relations. In addition, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will cooperate in the preparation and presentation of the Per Capita Budget and apportionment and other opportunities for joint endeavors.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for carrying out the mission program for the General Assembly. The ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are linked together and with the church on behalf of that part of the mission entrusted by God to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
The principal legal corporation that provides direct support to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which receives, holds, and transfers property, and facilitates the management of the church’s corporate affairs. Its role with respect to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is to work with the Presbyterian Mission Agency in support of its mission as directed by the General Assembly.

Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the Presbyterian Mission Agency are subordinate to the General Assembly. Thus, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation with respect to the matters for which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to the matters for which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is authorized by its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. As both organizations and their leaders recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of them has any authority but in Him, they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in this and all respects. Consistent with this, the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegates specific authority, as set forth in its Bylaws, this Organization for Mission, and resolutions of its Board of Directors, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to personnel, contracting, finance, and legal issues so that the Presbyterian Mission Agency may better accomplish the mission goals of the General Assembly. As the disbursing agent under the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly that authorized the Plan of Division for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, it also disburses for the Presbyterian Mission Agency the amounts authorized by the General Assembly in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and the Per Capita Budget for mission. It therefore defers to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s mission decisions to the fullest extent permitted by those budgets, fund restrictions, and applicable law.

Other relationships include the following committees:

1. **Advocacy and Advisory Committees**

The Executive Director has the responsibility for the advocacy and advisory committees. All three groups have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The Committee shall be a prophetic voice for involving racial ethnic people in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color. The committee will also monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of racial ethnic people in the church and in the world.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, is responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. The term “social witness policy” refers to the positions adopted by the General Assembly to express its stance on and guide response to issues in the public order, including their relation to the church’s own life and mission. These positions may take the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, or social involvement reports, as defined in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, p. 65, *Forming Social Policy*, 2.a.

2. **Committee on Theological Education**

The Committee on Theological Education has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and their work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry with staff accountability to the director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry. The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to provide an effective linkage between the General Assembly and the theological seminaries of the PC(USA) by: providing a forum through which the church-at-large can express its concerns to the seminaries; interpreting the mission of the denomination’s theological seminaries to the whole church; overseeing the interpretation and administration of the Theological Education Fund (1% Plan); serving as a means for cooperation among the church’s theological seminaries; implementing suggestions made by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions as approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993); serving as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological seminaries other than those of the PC(USA); and working in partnership with mid councils and agencies of the General Assembly to provide for leadership in local congregations, the denomination, and the world.

**VII. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is a corporate entity of the General Assembly. It holds funds and title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly, its Articles of Incorporation, and its Bylaws.
Among other things, it provides accounting, reporting, and financial services for the General Assembly and its entities, and employs the staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it; from restricted funds designated to it; from the portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly needed for employees, facilities, and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services. Pending revision of the budgeting process in Appendix A to reflect the new governance structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, in 2018, its expenditures for the fiscal years 2018 through 2020 are limited to no more than the amount expended by the corporation in fiscal years 2016 through 2018.

No agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly, is obligated to purchase or use any facilities or services provided by or through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, other than those for which they have contracted or, with respect to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency for a transition period through 2022, those that as of December 31, 2017 had been provided to such agencies, including but not limited to office space and facilities services. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall work together and with the other agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to help determine what facilities and services the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, may best offer or cease to offer to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of General Assembly and other agencies of the church in the future.

The officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, their terms, and their election are defined in its By-laws. The Treasurer of the corporation shall commission the preparation of an audit report or reports by an independent public accountant of the financial position and operations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and, to the extent not otherwise separately commissioned and prepared, the financial position and operations of the General Assembly and its other entities.

* * *

X. Amendments

Proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission that are submitted by overture shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Except as provided in Section IV.E., proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission from related bodies or from the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall review these proposed changes and forward those it approves as part of its report to the General Assembly. All changes to Section VI or to provisions concerning the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and any agency or entity shall also be submitted to the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, for review and approval, amendment, or rejection before any such changes are forwarded to the General Assembly.

[Note: See app11-way-forward-org-for-mission-showing-changes.pdf for a version showing the changes made in the Organization for Mission. Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline. See p. 515.]

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 04-03, the report of the Way Forward Commission, joined by the All-Agency Review Committee, proposes a restructuring of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp”), for the stated purpose of enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to better focus on mission when its board members are no longer directors of the corporation, and further proposes changes in the provision of shared services to other agencies and in some ongoing PMA and Stated Clerk responsibilities.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the approval Item 04-03 with amendments as follows:

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

   “1. Composition[, structure, and leadership] of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation ("A Corp")."

2. Strike the current text of a.–h. and replace it with new text; re-letter 1.i. as 1.f.:

   “[a. “Approve the phased-in reduction in the size of the current Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) from forty to twenty members, sixteen of whom are at-large nominees for four-year terms, and one each of whom are nominated from Presbyterian Women, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC, possibly re-named, Racial Equity Advisory Committee, REAC), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). (This set of designations follows the formula agreed upon by the Governance Task Force...としたものに従って、組織の統合化が行われることを許可するものである。]
of the currently existing PMAB.) These twenty individuals constitute the majority of the Board of A-Corp as the ministries
they are elected to oversee derive much of their funding from the investments, property, and other income, restricted and
unrestricted, that constitute the assets of A Corp. These twenty persons are the successors to members of the more than
twenty-three more specialized mission boards of predecessor churches now joined in one corporate entity.

“[b. Approve the addition to those twenty persons of four persons from the Committee on the Office of the General
Assembly and one (1) each from the Boards of the Presbyterian Publishing Company (Westminster/John Knox Press, or WJK)
and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), for a total of six persons whose agencies share in adminis-
trative services with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, currently located in Louisville, Kentucky. This addition shall be done
with the assistance of the General Assembly Nominating Committee and in consultation with the General Assembly Commit-
tee on Representation within thirty days after the adjournment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), and these added mem-
bers shall be immediately invited and incorporated into the scheduled meetings and all other functions of the existing A Corp.

“(c. Direct the resulting twenty-six-member board to adopt a streamlined governance structure that corresponds to the
mission emphases of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and contains no more than one committee devoted to matters of prop-
erty, finance, audit, law, and risk management.

“(d. Direct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to
designate one member each (possibly, but not necessarily, the treasurer) to work with a joint fiduciary coordinating committee
appointed by the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, with liaisons from WJK and
PILP, to oversee the provision of shared services with a maximum of transparency in joint reporting to all three boards and
one committee.

“(e. Authorize the PMAB to modify the election and confirmation process for the Executive Director to include in the
presentation of any nominee(s) to the General Assembly the inclusion of a statement of faith and a strategic plan or vision for
the Agency, and to consider limiting any Executive Director to two terms of four years each. “Executive Director” would be
the sole title for the position.

“[i.] [f.] Text remains unchanged.”

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

“c. Amend the Organization for Mission, Chapter IV.D.1., so that it reads as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown
with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“1. Based on a six-year schedule, the agencies of the General Assembly will be reviewed to evaluate the relationship of
their individual ministry with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), On nomination of the General Assembly
Nominating Committee, the General Assembly will elect two committees, each to review the work of one of the agencies of
the General Assembly. Each committee will be composed of twelve members: four commissioners from the previous three
General Assemblies, four who have served on the board of a General Assembly entity other than the one being reviewed, [two
who have served on the board of the entity under review] and [four] [two] at large. The at-large members may include ecumeni-
cal partners. The committee will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies in the Guidelines and Policies
of the General Assembly. The committee will report to the Stated Clerk who will present the report, along with any additional
recommendations from the Stated Clerk, to the next General Assembly following its election the results of the review and make
recommendations based on its findings.”

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

“The Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General As-
sembly (2018) create a “Moving Forward Implementation Commission” [to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of
the 223rd General Assembly (2018) after consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and to include
[four] [two] members of the 2016 Way Forward Commission, [four] [two] members of the 2016 All-Agency Review Commit-
tee, [two past or present members each from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and Committee on the Office of the
General Assembly,] and four members to be appointed from the commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (in-
cluding one young adult advisory delegate), for a term ending at the 224th General Assembly (2020), with the mandate and
authority to (1) ensure compliance and implementation of 2018 assembly action on recommendations of the Way Forward
Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee, (2) ensure continued implementation of collaborations and commission
administrative actions underway as outlined in this report and the report of the All-Agency Review Committee, (3) coordinate
with the 2020 Vision Team, (4) report findings and make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [If any of
the four members to be appointed from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is a representative of the Presbyterian Mission
Agency or of the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly shall ensure that both such agencies are represented
among those four members.]”

402  223rd General Assembly (2018)
Because social witness capacity is part of the mission of the church, ACSWP is concerned with the diagnosis and prescription developed by the Way Forward Commission. This Advice & Counsel memorandum begins (A) with an organizational and theological critique of the Way Forward and All-Agency Review Committee efforts. We then (B) explain our fairly straightforward proposal, presented above. Most of our members do not like “inside baseball,” so we will try to be frank. We also (C) do not agree with the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s “deliverance” idea (Item 4-06), and have been critical of aspects of the PMA for a long time. So, let’s hope we can help you, the commissioners, make sense of this complicated but important material. ACSWP requested a perspective on the basic issue with the Way Forward proposal from the Theology & Worship area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and have added that perspective as Appendix A: A Theological Note on the Place of Administration in the Ministry of the Church (May 2018).

A. Critical Analysis of Way Forward/All Agency Proposal

Overall, we agree with the Way Forward Commission (WFC) diagnosis that mission has been too often subordinate to “trustee” kinds of functions (accounting, legal, etc.). This was part of the findings of the Review of the Presbyterian Mission Agency at the 222nd General Assembly (2016). In the words of an economist on our committee, “the front office has too often been switched with the back office,” putting vision, mission, and theology in the back seat and management, finance, and administration in the front.

Yet the Way Forward Commission prescription is even more “corporate” and less theological. The commission has designed what is basically an unaccountable board of trustees, their restructured A Corp board, which is to be comprised primarily of institutional representatives of other agencies that retain their own boards. In other words, despite complicated legal delegations and assurances of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s independence, a small group of powerful people will be making decisions that other people will have to live with.

One does not need to be too much of a Calvinist—or a pastor who has both session and trustees—to know that this added layer of administration will be tempted to control via the purse strings, especially if there is a bit of unrestricted or undesignated funding available. In fact, while language of “utility” or even servant has been used, the A Corp. board they propose is also designed to monitor the PMA, and the changes in review process proposed also reflect that outside supervision emphasis. There are good Reformed reasons for checks and balances, even among the well-intentioned, and mutual accountability—keeping each other honest—has been a good reason to keep the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency separate. There are concerns and the authority of the General Assembly again behind somebody else’s ideas of fiduciary responsibility. Are we being too critical, or just realistic about the concentration of power being proposed? Putting aside the corporate law for a moment, the simpler mistake in this well-meaning morass is confusing a leadership and vision problem with a structural one. The virtues of competing institutional self-interest, though, do not justify adding another institutional structure—at whatever unknown cost. (The costs of staffing and meetings for the new group have not been publicly estimated as of April 2018.)

The idea of separating the church’s mission from its money is itself theologically wrong, however, and giving 9 or 11 mainly institutional nominees authority to oversee millions of dollars disinterestedly is theologically naïve. It puts mission concerns and the authority of the General Assembly again behind somebody else’s ideas of fiduciary responsibility. Are we being too critical, or just realistic about the concentration of power being proposed? Putting aside the corporate law for a moment, the simpler mistake in this well-meaning morass is confusing a leadership and vision problem with a structural one. The Way Forward/All Agency proposal would only worsen this leadership problem by adding another “president” to the mix, and a seventh national body that would probably need to be reconsolidated at a later date.

The PMA has, in fact, had leadership problems and the effects of Executive Director turnover are serious. There are significant debates over whether senior staff (and officers of the corporation) need to be Presbyterian (we have been calling for this for years). We have also been concerned that the transition from “council of the church” to “nonprofit institutional board” has made for less discernment and public deliberation, and hence to less accountable leadership. Councils of elected persons debating freely are a hallmark of Protestantism; corporate and nonprofit boards are usually more focused and staff-driven.

Sidebar: The turnover in PMA Executive Directors has sometimes required real leadership by elected board members, necessarily exercised in executive session, and it is a mistake to criticize the PMA Board for some of its efforts to have interim work performed. The Way Forward Commission made the right decision in not urging a merging of the PMA and the OGA precisely because when there are top level leadership problems, it is wise not to have all such eggs in one organizational basket.

B. Why the Short ACSWP Compromise Proposal?

The amendments we propose is based on one fundamental Reformed idea (reflected in all our congregations), that people should elect the leaders and shape the institutions that affect their lives. This means including representatives of other agencies on a board that impacts their work, based on the amount of shared services they receive. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has already voted to reduce its number by half, from 40 to 20, so adding the 6 we propose will not be unduly burdensome. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) at times already meets alongside the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), so additional travel for the four from that group would not be needed.

In terms of overall size and resource use, it should be noted that the Office of the General Assembly is funded by per capita, not the endowments given for mission purposes, and so giving that committee more than four board members with responsibility “over” those assets seems inappropriate. The publishing house, Westminster/JohnKnox Press, has focused needs...
from the PMA Board but was set up with its own board precisely to oversee the business aspects of that Christian mission. Similarly, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., has a staff of eleven persons skilled in supporting the building needs of congregations, and has its own reserves, and does not need significant presence on the A Corp board, though some presence would still be helpful.

Further restructuring of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (A Corp) would be unnecessary and costly. Neither the 2016 nor 2008 Reviews of the Presbyterian Mission Agency focused on the Board functioning. The only piece of written research used by the Way Forward Commission of which we are aware, a member survey by COGA and Research Services of “what does it mean to be Presbyterian?,” published in May 2016, based on 2015 data, does not deal with governance matters. It is a good survey report, but it was completed before the Way Forward Commission was put together. There is no discussion or documentation provided of the experience of other denominations on board structure or, for that matter, on what relationships or boundaries are needed between governing councils and finance boards like the Foundation and Board of Pensions.

Our recommendation 1.d., a joint fiduciary coordinating committee appointed by the Stated Clerk and the PMA Executive Director, is a practical way to raise the accountability of those in charge of “shared services” without, again, elevating these functions into a major institutional raison d’être. Yes, there have been complaints about the operation of some PMA administrative departments and even claims that other agencies are overcharged for some shared services. At times other parts of the PMA itself make similar complaints. There are arguments about what functions or capacities should be outsourced. Generally, these are based in sincere questions about how best to serve the church, but as operational matters they should not occupy serious amounts of board time.

The joint fiduciary coordinating committee concept includes liaisons from the publishing house and the investment and loan program, and would have oversight by representatives from both primary parent agency boards, but the emphasis is on strengthening staff competence via transparency and accountability, and by respecting all institutional interests. Providing solid services at reasonable cost is, of course, the basic form of respect. But again, the functioning of shared services is an executive director responsibility, as is the proper staffing of the A Corp board. It is not enough of a reason for separating out a set of primarily “trustee” board functions for what would, in effect, become a board of trustees.

Our Recommendation 1.e., regarding the executive director, has two elements: a desire to lift up the MISSION this person should represent before the assembly and before the whole church, and the VISION needed by any candidate for this office. ACSWP (and the Theology and Worship area on the staff level) have sometimes despaired of serious missiology being represented in the leadership of the agency. Requiring evidence of a vision for mission to be shown at the assembly would underline this aspect of leadership—not only management capacity—and would strengthen the complementary roles of the assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency as servants of Jesus Christ.

With regard to the title, “president,” it is true that corporations and many boards have presidents as well as chairpersons. Some of the other General Assembly agencies have presidents. But in light of the serious criticism the Presbyterian MISSION Agency has received for “corporate” thinking and for hierarchical pretentions undermining ministry and solidarity among staff, we wonder why this unnecessary title was not discussed by the whole PMA Board? Let it be noted that this change of title did not originate with the Way Forward Commission or All Agency Review Committee. ACSWP made its views known only after we had seen a redone position profile.

C. Why Setting Up a Separate A Corp. for the Mission Agency Is Not Needed

Many of the same arguments we have given above apply to separating the A Corp. into two parts, one for PMA and one for OGA. We understand some of the motivation for the PMA, as it would in fact be difficult to operate overseas especially without a corporate structure and countless inefficiencies would be introduced by a separate body. But we do not see a call from the COGA for its own board and regret they were not consulted, apparently for reasons of time. Our proposal, by expanding the A Corp board in a logical way, would deliver us from the need for a Deliverance as our friends propose (smile).

We believe that the changes that Way Forward Commission and All-Agency Review Committee have proposed for the Stated Clerk’s role may help at some points in increasing the incentives for cooperative work between the Office of the Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. On the other hand, however, it is crucial that the head of the Presbyterian Mission Agency be able to speak and have sufficient standing to do so on matters of MISSION. If MISSION (evangelism, church growth, disaster relief, public witness; the whole Gospel for the whole person!) is important, it needs articulation and expertise.

D. Conclusion

In evaluating what the Way Forward Commission report presents, it may be helpful for commissioners to look at the commission’s own mandate:

- study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA);
- engage/contract a qualified, examination team that may include some or all of the All Agency Review team, with the requisite skills and abilities to assess institutional performance;
• conducting a comprehensive, detailed analysis that will provide clearly detailed, measurable recommendations for improvements to the commission for implementation by the agencies;

• Visit with and explore
  a. the best practices of other national church bodies,
  b. the best practices of corporations and nonprofits, as deemed helpful;

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

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

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

From our standpoint, the weaknesses of the Way Forward Commission report are most evident with regard to the first concern: “a vision….” We do not see much theology in the report, though perhaps there is a hope that 2020 Vision may provide some, even after the fact.

Arguably various of the other tasks have been performed, and we are sympathetic to the general limitations of lack of resources. The Way Forward Commission is, in fact, to be commended for their energy in making all the contacts they have, even if their almost exclusive focus was on the Mission Agency and not the larger church systems. We speak more to that in our A&C on the All Agency Review Committee.

Endnote for Comment on Item 04-03
1. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is authorized by the General Assembly (“Why and How the Church Makes a Social Witness,” 1993) to communicate formally by Advice & Counsel memoranda with the assembly itself and with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). The existing PMA Manual incorporates the several functions of ACSWP including: “Identify facets of the church’s social witness that enable or obstruct effective action. Analyze, in cooperation with the General Assembly Ministries, the effectiveness of social witness in councils, institutions, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency.”

Appendix A
A Theological Note on the Place of Administration in the Ministry of the Church
From the Theology & Worship Unit, Presbyterian Mission Agency, May 2018

As commissioners consider the reports before them, and seek to discern how this denomination can best structure its ministry at the denominational level for shared faithfulness to Jesus Christ and God’s mission, it will be helpful to remember that administration is integral to ministry in the life of the church, and vice versa. Administration and ministry are not separable. While they can be distinguished, they cannot be separated. The church joins the mission of God in specific forms of ministry, forms shaped by the contextual realities that administration addresses.

Administration is integral to ministry. Every session and mid council of this denomination knows and lives this reality. Our ministries are shaped by the specific, concrete settings in which we minister. Sessions make decisions about what specific ministries to engage in and how to do so. They evaluate the particular gifts and skills God has brought together in the congregation they lead. They weigh the resources they have available to support specific forms of ministry. Which ministries shall we support, using what resources, involving which people? These are questions of ministry—questions about discerning the will of God, the call of Christ, and the gifts of the Spirit. Answering them requires the work of administration. Similar discernment happens in presbyteries and synods. In each case, administrative structures are integral to ministry.

We see the interdependence of ministry and administration across Scripture. Consider a few examples from the Old Testament. Moses appoints seventy to share in resolving issues that arise among the people of God on their journey to the promised land (Ex. 18:13–26). The first five books of the Bible embody profound concern for the role of administration in faithful living (e.g. Num. 27, 35, 36). The prophets reveal God’s concern for administrative malpractice, malpractice that betrays the mission of God and malforms the ministry of the people to the world (e.g. Is. 9:13–6, 10:1–4).

In the life and ministry of Jesus Christ we see that administration is integral to ministry. Jesus sets up a staffing structure for his ministry, calling particular people to become disciples and follow him, welcoming women and men to such a role. He chooses twelve from among them to take on a particular role in the community (e.g. Mt. 4:18–22, 10:1–4; Mk. 1:16–20, 3:13–9; Lk. 5:1–11, 6:12–6; Acts 1:6–11). Administrative matters play a key role in Jesus’ miraculous feedings. Jesus asks the disciples what resources they have—one of the most basic administrative questions (“How many loaves have you? Go and see” Mk. 6:38). Having answered that question, Jesus goes about organizing for the feeding: “And [Jesus] said to his disciples, ‘Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each’” (Lk. 9:14b).

In his healings Jesus regularly acknowledges administrative matters, instructing the newly healed to (for example) “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” (Lk. 17:14) In a particularly clear example, Jesus attends carefully to administrative matters in the last supper. “Jesus sent Peter and John, saying ‘Go and prepare the Passover meal for us … when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters and say to the owner of the house, ‘The teacher asks you, ‘Where is the guest room, where I
may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there” (Lk. 22:8–13). In these ways and more Jesus’ ministry always involved the work of administration.

The interrelationship of administration and ministry has deep theological roots. As creatures of the creator God we are limited, finite. We are shaped by the particulars of our context. That we are limited, finite, context-shaped is inherent to being creatures. It is part of the good gift of creaturely life that God has graciously given to us. Our limitedness provides opportunity for us to engage in ministry in this place, or these few places, without the need to engage in all ministry in all places. Our finitude leads us to engage in ministry with specific people, whom God has brought into our life, without the need to engage in ministry with all people. Our limited resources require us to rely on what God provides, encouraging us to be confident that in the hands of Jesus five loaves and two fish are enough to feed thousands; calling us to steadfast assurance that God is at work in and through sisters and brothers in each place, carrying out the mission of God beyond what we can do ourselves.

Finally, our Reformed tradition has consistently identified administration as one of the “notes of the church”—reliable means by which the presence of Jesus Christ may be known in the world. Alongside the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments, the Scots Confession includes “ecclesiastical discipline uprightly [ad]ministered, as God’s Word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished” (Book of Confessions, 3.18). Our Foundations of Presbyterian Polity explain that, through this gift of administration, the church “nurture a covenant community of disciples of Christ, living in the strength of God’s promise and giving itself in service to God’s mission” (Book of Order, F-1.0303). Indeed, the concept of “administration as ministry” is written into the very name of our denomination. We are Presbyterians, one part of the people of God particularly known for our deep convictions about polity and ordered ministry—the administration of the church’s work and worship.

Administration is integral to ministry in the life of the church. We will best shape structures that nurture faithful ministry at the denominational level of the PC(USA) when we bear in mind the mutually shaping relationship between administration and ministry.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-03**

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 04-03 with the following amendments:

- A reconstituted A-Corp that includes equal representation of OGA and PMA, the advocacy committees, users of Shared Services, and at-large representation.
- A theologian-in-residence representative who is intentionally attentive to maintaining the importance of biblical, theological, and ecclesiological imperatives in practice, form, and substance of the A-Corp.
- A revised nominating process for at-large members that is consistent with the nomination process for COGA and PMAB and allows and trusts the General Assembly with ultimate selection authority, as well as the assurance that any entities or agencies designating members to the A Corp propose at least three names to the General Assembly Nominating Committee for the standard nominating process.
- Inclusion of Presbyterian Women (PW) representation in the A Corp.

In partnership with our sibling committee, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), ACREC:

- Affirms the Reformed theological understanding that money and mission are tied together. We reject the idea that money is only a utilitarian function. We believe that this witness is affirmed throughout the denomination and notable examples include the Mission Responsibility through Investment and Washington Office advocacy for moral budgets and funding.
- Notes that PW is the second largest user of Shared Services and has significant missional and fiscal expertise, yet the original proposal disregards the potential expertise of women’s voices in favor of culturally assumed norms.

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-03**

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 04-03 with amendment.

ACWC is grateful for the dedication of the Way Forward Commission (WFC) and the All Agency Review Committee (AARC) engaging in critical work and attempting to move the PC(USA) forward in a new direction. As a critical voice of
accountability in the PC(USA), ACWC has significant insight into the ongoing dysfunction that exists in various corners of the denomination. We agree with WFC/AARC that the make-up of the A. Corp must include more diversity than currently represented. For years, ACWC has pushed against a corporate culture that exacerbates the imbalance of power, perspective, and privilege that exists within the PC(USA) and subsequently perpetuates a culture of patriarchy, misogyny, racism, and paternalism. With that in mind, we wish that the WFC would have sought our council before February 2018.

As such, this proposal, as it stands, misses the mark and separates money and mission, centralizing financial power and offers limited regard for the ecclesiastical mutual responsibility and accountability that is assured in Presbyterianism. This concentration will not address the underlying cultural concerns that the church is too corporate in its function. This proposal diverges from the substance of Reformed theology in delineating between the sacred and the secular, mission and money. Foundationally, Presbyterians have understood that God’s sovereignty exists in all spheres of life and, as such, our missional and theological responsibility is reflected in all of our actions, including how to allocate our funds.

Further, without amendment we are concerned that it adds a layer of bureaucracy that fails to aid the church in doing mission and instead concentrates power with limited regard or process for accountability. We acknowledge the tireless labor that has gone into formulating this proposal, and we applaud the inclusion of the advocacy committees as representatives on a reconstituted A. Corp board. However, without amendment, ACWC believes significant concerns go unaddressed.

Specifically, ACWC:

- Affirms the Reformed theological understanding that money and mission are tied together. We reject the idea that money is only a utilitarian function. We believe that this witness is affirmed throughout the denomination and notable examples include the Mission Responsibility through Investment and Washington Office advocacy for moral budgets and funding.
- Notes that having just celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, ACWC is cognizant that the primary impetus of the radical birth of Protestantism was a rebuke of corruption in the Roman Church. ACWC is concerned that the reconstituted A Corp is not sufficiently attentive to issues of inclusion and this proposal is reliant on a troubling dominant cultural narrative that efficient and responsible expertise emerges from corporate entities.
- Is concerned that a more deliberate consideration of all of the users of Shared Services has not occurred. Specifically, Presbyterian Women (PW) is incorporated as an integrated auxiliary of the PC(USA) and its corporate identity is tied to A. Corp, yet PW is not provided a seat on the A. Corp Board in this proposal.
- Has noted that representatives from the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions are provided seats at the table, while there are no reciprocal “missional expertise” seats on their boards.
- Opposes seats for any entity that is not a user of Shared Services.
- Draws attention to the fact that PW is the second largest user of Shared Service and has significant missional and fiscal expertise, yet the original proposal disregards the potential expertise of women’s voices in favor of culturally assumed norms.

Amendments ACWC advocates for include:

- A reconstituted A. Corp that includes equal representation of OGA and PMA, the advocacy committees, users of Shared Services, and at-large representation.
- A theologian-in-residence representative who is intentionally attentive to maintaining the importance of biblical, theological, and ecclesiological imperatives in practice, form, and substance of the A. Corp.
- A revised nominating process for at-large members that is consistent with the nomination process for COGA and PMAB and allows and trusts the General Assembly with ultimate selection authority, as well as the assurance that any entities or agencies designating members to the A. Corp propose at least three names the General Assembly Nominating Committee for the standard nominating process.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03

Comment on Item 04-03—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to approve Item 04-03. The Office of the General Assembly is one of two agencies that are served by the corporate expression of the General Assembly, known as Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a Corporation, or “A Corp.”

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly thanks the appointed and elected members and staff of the Way Forward Commission and All Agency Review Committee for their innumerable hours of work, prayerful discernment, and humble dedication to the PC(USA). COGA advises the assembly to approve all recommendations in Items 04-03 and 04-04 with the amendments to the composition of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board of Directors approved by
the Way Forward Commission on April 23, 2018. Further, COGA strongly urges disapproval of any action that would require the Office of the General Assembly to create a new or separate corporation.

By amending the proposed membership of the board of directors of A Corp to remove a representative from the Board of Pensions, the Way Forward Commission partially addressed the concerns that COGA communicated to the Way Forward Commission and All Agency Review Committee. COGA has been concerned that including representatives from the Presbyterian Foundation and Board of Pensions would detract from the proposed core focus of the “A Corp.” as a utility to serve those who are constituents of Shared Services, currently the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and Presbyterian Women, Inc. COGA supports the proposed addition to the A Corp board of directors of a representative from Presbyterian Women, as this organization is currently one of the largest Shared Services contracted users.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk …” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

**FOUNDATION COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03**

*Comment on Item 04-03—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation).*

The Presbyterian Foundation welcomes new possibilities that might make more efficient and effective the collective work of the Presbyterian Church (USA) national agencies. The Foundation believes in an approach to Shared Services, which is helpful to the mission of all participating agencies while harming none of them.

The Foundation also believes it has an interest in having representation and leadership of a reconfigured “A Corp” board, as the “A Corp” is granted a beneficial interest in funds titled to and held by the Foundation.

The Foundation underscores, for the good of the whole church, certain essential, long-held parameters and Presbyterian values underlying the Deliverance. These include, among others, that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to acknowledge the Presbyterian Foundation in its role and responsibilities as Fiduciary and Trustee for donors—past, present, and future—in order to assure those donors that their funds will be used for the mission of Jesus Christ, in accordance with their intended purposes.

**GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03**

*Comment on Item 04-03—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).*

The General Assembly Committee on Representation commends to the assembly Standing Rule K.1.c, which lists GACOR with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) as consulting partners to the General Assembly Moderator(s) in appointing special committees and bodies created by General Assembly action.

The GACOR stands ready to advise new bodies and advocate to ensure the widest participation, diversity, and representation so that God's diversity is seen throughout the process and within the resulting nominating pools and finalized slates. The GACOR reminds the assembly that the GANC and the GACOR work together to fulfill F-1.0403 and that relationship is reflected in the Standing Rules and the Organization for Mission.

The GACOR reminds the assembly of the required review it does of the yearly AAEEQ and Supplier Diversity data of the six agencies that is reported on an annual basis. The GACOR advises that this work be aligned cooperatively within the new evaluation cycle.

The GACOR commends the creation of a Diverse Voices table and recommends an assessment of each agency’s appointment process for membership at the table and suggests that the table incorporate regular opportunities to do process observation and power analysis within the group once it is formed. The process observation tool created for the General Assembly could be of use along with representation from the GACOR to submit and analyze the data. This tool may require adaptation for use in other settings, which may include committee meetings and tables. Such change would require additional financial resources. The GACOR is committed to serving as a resource to create and support a culture of inclusion and equity in its work.

In Recommendation 5, the Moving Forward Implementation Commission, the GACOR stands ready to partner with and assist the continuing commission. GACOR evaluates the impact of inclusion practices and advises and consults with bodies and agencies to ensure the widest participation of all persons in our denomination.

*The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).*
ILP COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03

Comment on Item 4-03—From the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (ILP).

Item 04-03, Way Forward Commission Report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Recommendation 1, to restructure the governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, (“A Corp”). ILP believes the recommended new A Corp structure provides significant value for all agencies and other entities utilizing the shared services currently provided through the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”). In addition to the economies of scale afforded through increased coordination of these services, the expanded representation on the board and intrinsic collaboration would better serve the church as a whole. We believe this value could best be realized by shifting oversight of the current PMA shared services area to the restructured A Corp and that the A Corp be seen as a “service” corporation to assist the agencies in advancing their mission. We feel increased accommodation to the time schedules that have been put forth in the recommendation may provide for a more graceful transition.

Item 04-03, Way Forward Commission Report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Recommendation 5, creation of a Moving Forward Implementation Commission. ILP supports this opportunity for review and recommendation by an independent body during the transition. We believe this would provide more value than a review occurring at the end of the transition or at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03

Comment on Item 04-03—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

Introduction

In forming the Way Forward Commission, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) gave a clear mandate for its work: “study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA)” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 38, 226). Unfortunately, the work and recommendations of the commission fall short of this mandate. Rather than paint a picture of a new structure that models a vision of how the work of the national agencies cohere, relate to congregations, and further the mission of the church, Way Forward focused on specific technical changes that:

- Move us toward a more corporate model of church governance that is less inclusive;
- Add complexity to a system that is in need of simplification (more boards, more commissions, more committees);
- Lack a church-wide perspective for ensuring all General Assembly agencies act in unison as one church;
- Fail to address a critical issue—how can our national structure and programs meet the changing needs of congregations (while congregational focus was highlighted by Way Forward in their interim report—it is mostly missing in the final recommendations).

We believe better models are available, but developing new solutions first requires development of an overarching vision. Corporate forms would naturally flow from this vision.

The comments that follow address the recommendations made by Way Forward (of which only one recommendation addresses the structure of the national church).

Recommendation 1: Changes to Presbyterian Mission Agency Governance

This recommendation was made jointly by the Way Forward Commission (WFC) and the All Agency Review Committee (AARC). In short, the recommendation separates mission and administration—establishing a separate board to govern administration and other corporate functions.

We cannot support this proposal in its entirety in current form until vital questions are answered. We affirm this proposal in two respects: (1) we believe that the PMA should step away from the role of providing common administrative services; (2) We believe that A Corp board membership would benefit from the inclusion of additional non-PMA voices. While the PMAB has worked imperfectly in the past, we do have some experience in managing the complexities of mission and administration that we hope to contribute in order to address implementation concerns and possible unanticipated consequences of this proposed structure.

We have significant concerns about the overall viability of the proposal. In many ways, it harkens back to a governance model that existed between reunion and 1993 and resulted in conflicts over funding and control. In a 1993 restructure, the denomination moved to a unicameral model to minimize the divide between mission and corporate decisions. The predecessor to PMAB, the General Assembly Council, was given overall responsibility for governance, bringing mission, money, and administration to a common table. While issues remain, they are largely around finding the right balance between corporate/ad-
ministrative functions and missional priorities; separating oversight and governance will further complicate finding that balance. It will also add bureaucracy and additional expense to the current system. This approach has been tried before and it did not work.

Since the 1993 restructure, the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), which is part of the same corporation as PMA, has gained increasing independence and is now seen as a separate agency (in 1993, OGA was a part of the General Assembly Council). Any new or revised governance model must acknowledge that reality and determine how (or if) a shared corporate identity can be jointly governed by two independent organizations. The recommendation by the WFC and the AARC is partially in response to this reality.

Aside from broad concerns about the viability of this recommendation, the details (or lack of details) are even more problematic.

1. **Nature and Role of New Entity—What Is It?**

We have been assured that this new entity is not a 7th agency. It has been described in different ways, but primarily as a “utility” that will provide administrative services for PMA, OGA, and any other General Assembly agency that chooses to participate. Only PMA and OGA are mandated to use the services of this utility—it is an option for other agencies.

But, based on language in Appendices 10 (Corporate bylaws) and 11 (Organization for Mission), and further conversations with representatives from the WFC and AARC, it is increasingly clear that this is more than a utility as it relates to oversight responsibilities for PMA and OGA.

The level of control appears to be extensive. Section 2.13 of Appendix 10 allows the corporation to delegate powers to other bodies but does not require it—and the delegation is not permanent. This belies the fact that power must be delegated from the corporation to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA)/OGA and PMAB/PMA in order for them to operate. This is a radical change in church governance structures. Previously the General Assembly delegated authority directly to COGA/OGA and PMAB/PMA. The agencies then used a corporation, with PMAB as its board, to carry out necessary secular functions. In the proposal, much of PMAB/COGA’s authority will be delegated to it, not by the General Assembly, but rather by the corporation. At any time, the corporation can remove or limit the powers granted to other bodies. As such, the authority to delegate, limit, or remove powers is exclusive to the corporate board. It should be clear to all that this is not a mission-focused enterprise. It increases the corporate control over the church, and the work of OGA and PMA, which will be subject to the approval of those elected from other agencies/committees.

Appendix 11 reflects changes originally approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (related to the work done by its Governance Task Force in addressing governance changes; work that was encouraged by Way Forward) and recommended for General Assembly approval as Item 04-08. However, Appendix 11 was then further edited to reflect the changes required by this recommendation. Of fundamental concern is the flow of mission-related funds from congregations, individuals, and mid councils to the General Assembly, where they are disbursed. Current receipts range from Shared Mission Support (undesignated gifts for General Assembly mission) to restricted gifts for various purposes (Special Offerings, designated giving, etc.). Mission is also funded through endowments and bequests. Currently administrative functions are funded through cost recovery, which distributes a fair share of all revenue for the administrative expenses undergirding mission (or through a separate schedule of the per capita budget in the case of the Office of the General Assembly).

In the proposal (Appendix 11, Section VII), the corporation “is funded subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it, from restricted funds designated to it, from the portion of the various budgets of PMA and OGA needed for employees, facilities and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services.” There has been no conversation on how this will impact PMA or churchwide giving. It also raises the question—if this new entity is indeed a utility, why does their budget need to be approved by General Assembly? Shouldn’t they be funded from fees received for services provided? And shouldn’t the budgets of PMA and OGA continue to reflect the true cost of mission inclusive of the cost of delivering mission? Even though the Corporation “holds” funds for PMA and OGA, that doesn’t mean that the Corporation has the authority to use the funds for its own purposes apart from the donor’s intent in giving those funds.

We believe that the nature of this new entity and its relationship to PMA, OGA, and the other General Assembly agencies remains unclear.

2. **Nature and Role of PMA and PMAB**

The role of PMAB is equally unclear in this model. Since all authority is vested in the corporation with some of it delegated back to PMA/PMAB, it would help to be very clear on just what will remain within the scope of PMAB. Beyond generic comments such as “focus on mission” and “lead and coordinate the mission program of the General Assembly” the recommendation does not describe its vision for a future PMA/PMAB. Taking away or severely limiting the ability of PMA to “do” mission by separating the “what” from the “how” does not liberate PMA; it makes the work of PMA more difficult to navigate—likely resulting in fewer missional opportunities, delivered more slowly at an increased cost.
3. **Board Composition**

The recommendation places one representative of PMAB and one representative of COGA on a new eleven-member board—minimizing the voices of the two agencies most impacted by the recommendation. Eight of the other nine seats are allocated to specific representative voices:

- Four from the other agencies (one each from the Board of Pensions, the Foundation, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program)—even if they choose not to purchase services from this new “utility.”
- One each from the advocacy committees (Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns and Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns).
- One each from the WFC and AARC (for the first term).

As written, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) will only have full discretion over the choice of one member of the board who will be nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee. This recommendation fails to take our collective white, male, middle-to-older age privilege into account. Ten of eleven specified nominations, limited by the discretion of the various representative agencies, will not produce a diverse board. While we understand there may be changes recommended by Way Forward to the agency nomination process designed to provide a broader slate of potential board members with additional involvement from the General Assembly Nominating Committee, these changes are not currently in the posted materials. We are unsure if or when these changes will be made.

Furthermore, the corporation’s anticipated executive committee (five members) with a quorum of 50 percent, places control of the corporation, PMA, and OGA in the hands of two individuals (a majority of the quorum of three).

4. **Lack of Due Diligence**

We have not seen any detailed financial or operational due diligence and this should be done prior to finalizing the recommendation, so that a determination may be made as to whether this governance model is workable.

Financially, the proposal commits to keeping administrative expenditures in 2018–2020 to levels expended in 2016-2018. We do not believe there is a basis for this commitment. To our knowledge:

- Funds have not been reviewed; no analysis has been completed.
- There has been much conversation about outsourcing, without consideration of the financial impact of severance packages for existing staff.
- There have been no discussions about how to fund the Office of the President (of this new entity), or the new Office of Translation, which will be housed in this entity.
- There has been no conversation regarding which staff will operate out of the new entity versus PMA or OGA; no work has been done to sustain the financial viability of any of the organizations in light of these changes.

The following questions are examples of the kind of operational due diligence that is still required prior to implementation of the recommendation (and that should have been considered in advance of the proposal):

- Who will serve as the Board of Directors of the A Corp between the 30th day following the adjournment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) when the existing forty Presbyterians from across the church are required to resign and the initial meeting of the newly constituted A Corp Board of Directors? (Recommendation 1.a)
- Does the church want a “super-board” made up of board members from other boards and committees? This is unprecedented in our Presbyterian organization. (Recommendation 1.b)
- In our current system, the General Assembly Nominating Committee makes nominations to General Assembly that meet the desire of the church for equality, diversity, and parity. The General Assembly Committee on Representation is charged with ensuring inclusion, participation, and representation at all levels of church leadership and decision-making. This check and balance is effective because the pool of prospective nominees is churchwide and balanced for diversity. Why is this system being replaced for this new A Corp board? (Recommendation 1.c)
- Why is it necessary for the A Corp president, or his/her designee, to sit on the board with voice on the other six “boards or committees”? What is the purpose of this linkage? (Recommendation 1.d)
- Why is an additional commission necessary? Is this an indication that there is a lack of confidence in the new A Corp board being able to fulfill its role and function? (Recommendation 1.f)
Why is this oversight permissive rather than required? Shouldn’t a review of the A Corp on an established schedule and method of review be the same as it for the other six agencies of the church? (Recommendation 1.g.)

It is our understanding that under the provision shown below the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall have broad authority over the employees ASSIGNED to it by the A Corp Board? Can we have clarity how that staffing is identified and then assigned by the A Corp? Do these provisions apply to OGA?

A Corporation shall delegate to the President/Executive Director, subject to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the Stated Clerk for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, authority:

(i) to create, implement, and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (ii) to prepare, maintain, and amend an Employee Handbook for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (iii) to retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; and (iv) to promote, demote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. “Emphasis Added.” (Recommendation 1.h. (Appendix 11))

It is our understanding that the A Corp shall utilize unrestricted funds, currently used to fund important ministries of the PMA (e.g. Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministry), to cover its own expenses? Has anyone reviewed the current PMA Budget to correctly understand how administrative expenses now borne by PMA come from allocations from restricted funds from particular PMA programs? Has an analysis been made of the effect of keeping unrestricted funds for the exclusive use of A Corp expenditures?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation…is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it; from restricted funds designated to it; from the portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly needed for employees, facilities, and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services. (Recommendation 1.h. (Appendix 11))

What will the rescission of the declaration of prior enactments of the General Assembly, particularly the documents of Deliverance, means in the application of secular law to disputes within the church that are adjudicated in secular courts? Documents such as the Deliverances are canon law in most states, certainly in Pennsylvania, and have primacy over secular law (i.e. corporate bylaws). Has anyone considered what the declaration of canon law as being secondary to secular law may mean to the Trust Clause of the PC(USA) Constitution? Can WFC/AARC explain and assure the General Assembly that this action will not have unintended consequences? (Recommendation 1.i.)

5. Timing

If approved by the General Assembly, the transition to the new model will be quick.

Recommendation 1.a. calls for actions to be taken within thirty days of the close of General Assembly. Current corporate members are to resign as of the close of that meeting. Recommendation 1.c. calls for the change even sooner … the day after the 223rd General Assembly (2018) adjourns. A new board is convened within ninety days. Governance between that thirty-day window and the ninety-day meeting is left unclear.

In light of this uncertainty, and the lack of due diligence on both operational and financial matters, the PMAB asks that the details of the proposal, along with the vision called for earlier in this comment, be vetted over the next two years, so that a more comprehensive and sustainable recommendation can be brought to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

6. Acting as “One Church”

Rather than solving conflict between church agencies, this proposal exacerbates it. Four General Assembly agencies have boards that serves both their mission-related purposes and their corporate needs. The other two, PMA and OGA, will have to work through a corporate board controlled by others. This hasn’t worked for the Office of the General Assembly over the past thirty years, leading to many of today’s issues. Members of COGA have described this period as one of “tyranny.” The proposed new corporation board looks no more viable. Minimally, it will at least be a different form of tyranny, but collectively, we should aim higher. Better solutions are available (separate corporate identity for each agency within the context of one overall church corporation board or a joint OGA/PMA corporate board), but neither can be fully evaluated in the absence of an overarching vision. Rather than create upheaval within the agencies without a clear guiding vision, PMAB suggests that the assembly first establish a vision for the structure and function of General Assembly agencies, then allow corporate forms to follow this vision.

7. Conclusion

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is grateful for many voices seeking to correct flaws in the current structure and function of General Assembly agencies. A portion of those flaws are the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and we join with others in a commitment to work wholeheartedly to improve and correct these flaws. We commend the Way Forward Commission for its call for a renewed focus on mission as the heart of all we do, and believe this is best accomplished not by removing corporate responsibilities from the Presbyterian Mission Agency, but by addressing the imbalance of OGA’s relationship to the PMA and the A Corp board. This should be done deliberately, carefully, and above all, be rooted in reformed theological principles driven by a shared vision for the ecclesiastical direction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
Recommendation 2.: Role of the Stated Clerk

We leave the debate and comment on the role of the Stated Clerk to others within the church.

Recommendation 3: Financial Sustainability of the National Denomination

We support this recommendation. We believe it is so important that sustainability should be determined prior to the implementation of changes to the national church proposed by Way Forward and All Agency Review. The report should be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020) and should include consideration of the efficacy and continuation of the Per Capita System now used by the national denomination and many of the mid councils. A good beginning resource should be a review of the Strategy for Funding Christ’s Mission as approved by the General Assembly in 2008.

Recommendation 4.a.: Diversity and Reconciliation

We support the creation of this table. It would be helpful to know how this table will be implemented and the scope of its authority.

Recommendation 4.b.: Completion of Audits

We support this recommendation.

Recommendation 4.c.: Translation Services

We support Item 04-02, Recommendation 2, from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns as the best approach to implementing this recommendation. We further suggest that an analysis of the cost of such a program and a means of supporting it be undertaken immediately following approval of this recommendation so that it may be implemented expeditiously.

Recommendation 6.: Concurrence with AARC on Agency Reviews

We support this recommendation.

PPC COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03

Comment on Item 04-03—From the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC).

Item 04-03, Way Forward Commission Report, Recommendation 1, and Item 04-04, Report of the All Agency Review Committee to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Recommendation 6, seek a new structure for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). PPC believes that this new structure would represent positive change for providing shared services to PC(USA) entities that are located in the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, and offer the promise of more efficient, effective, and affordable shared services.

Item 04-04

[The assembly approved Item 04-04 as amended. See pp. 44, 49.]

Report of the All-Agency Review Committee to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

The All-Agency Review Committee recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Direct the six agencies of the General Assembly, in implementing the General Assembly’s mission, to focus on the call to a new openness in Book of Order, F-1.0404, and to consider the following questions in establishing work plans and budgets:

   • What are the agencies’ views, collectively and individually, as to what radical obedience to Christ looks like both in times of possibility as well as in times of peril?
   • What commitment to transparency in process and resources exists in each agency and in their collaborative work?
   • What does it mean to say yes to some opportunities and say no to others? What do we need to celebrate and release? What do we need to celebrate and support?
   • How does the agency grieve what once was beautiful, but now is no longer possible?
   • What does it mean to be faithful and useful?
2. In order to strengthen the review process:

   a. Recommend that the next All-Agency Review Committee focus its review on the effectiveness of the agencies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives on their response to the call to a new openness in *Book of Order*, F-1.0404, and address the questions set forth in Recommendation 1. in that review.

   b. Approve the revisions to the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies, attached as Appendix A, and direct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to prepare revisions to Section IV.D.1. of the *Organization for Mission* consistent with the revision to the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies.

   c. Direct that the review schedule required by the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies be delayed, to recommence with the schedule contained in the proposed revisions to the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies, with the election of a review committee for the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., by the 224th General Assembly (2020), reporting to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

3. [Note from the All-Agency Review Committee: The All-Agency Review Committee concurs with and urges approval of Recommendation 5. of the Way Forward Commission in creation of a “Moving Forward Implementation Commission,” to be appointed by the Moderator or Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).]

4. Amend the Organization for Mission by including the following statement regarding the value of Shared Services as a new bulleted subpart to Section I.G.: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

   “The value of shared services in the PC(USA) exists when all agencies, carrying out their respective missions as directed by the General Assembly, collectively best serve the church with excellence, transparency, and efficiency. Simultaneously, sharing any service must be accomplished without harming the safety, soundness, well-being, or missional goals of any individual agency.”

5. Instruct the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to engage in a collaborative self-study of the per capita model and its’ ability to adequately fund the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency in the immediate and longer-term future and to explore alternative and creative funding resources for both.

6. [Note from the All-Agency Review Committee: The All-Agency Review Committee concurs with and urges approval of Recommendations 1.a. through 1.i. of the Way Forward Commission to free the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to focus on setting and executing the mission direction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by changing the bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and taking the other steps recommended by the Way Forward Commission in its recommendations.]

7. Amend the Standing Rules of the General Assembly as follows:

   a. Add new sections to the Standing Rules as Section E.2.i. and E.2.j. as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

   “i. A representative of any agency affected by an overture or commissioners’ resolution, either with respect to the use of its financial resources or its mission priorities, shall be entitled to speak to the item of business immediately after the presenter of the overture or the commissioners’ resolution, and shall be allocated reasonable time to speak.

   “j. The financial effect of each recommendation on any agency or entity of the denomination that would be affected by the action shall be clearly presented at the time that an overture or commissioners’ resolution is considered by the committee.”

   b. Amend Standing Rule E.5.a. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

   “a. Each committee, with the exception of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall schedule at its convenience one or more public hearings on matters before it, including on any commissioners’ resolutions submitted to it.”

   c. Amend Standing Rule E.5.c. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

   “c. Any person who wishes to be heard in a public hearing shall sign up on a hearing form, posted in a public place in the building in which the assembly is being held, no later than the close of business on the second day of the General Assembly or one hour noon of the day after the subsequent referral of business to the committee by the General
Assembly. The location of hearing forms shall be announced during the first session of the assembly. In the event that an issue is expected to be controversial, those wishing to speak shall be asked to indicate whether they wish to speak for or against the recommendation.”

8. Continue providing support for the vision process in the following ways:
   a. Receive the mid-term report of the Vision 2020 Committee and encourage them as they continue to discern over the next two years.
   b. Establish a representative Vision Team as part of the denominational structure that is tasked with shepherding ongoing vision discernment work, including engaging in discernment practices in collaboration with the six agencies and the mid councils; bringing recommendations about that discernment to the agencies and/or General Assembly; and communicating the unified, dynamic vision to the broader church.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $31,844. Total—$63,688]

Rationale

Introduction

Ten years ago, the General Assembly created a committee to “review the service of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives” (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 727.) This was a response to concerns about “overall effectiveness” beyond the individual agency reviews, and directed a focus on cooperation of work and duplication of services. The first “All-Agency Review” prepared for the 218th General Assembly (2010) noted that a limitation of their mandate was that “there is no formal or consolidated specification of mission directives of the GA” (Minutes, 2010, Part I, p. 1320) and that no standards were provided for the review, “such as those that exist for the individual agency reviews” (Ibid. p. 1321). In the context of that time, the All-Agency Review Committee lifted up the need for collaboration between the agencies.

The state of the PC(USA) in the time period 2016–18 is different and rapidly changing. We claim the conviction and cling to the hope that God is doing a new thing, and we’re trying to perceive it. Who are we now and what is our calling as a Church of Jesus Christ? As Presbyterian Christians? What is our mission and what are the “mission directives” that should be directing and inspiring our faithful work? These questions loomed so large at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that it created three separate entities to pursue them: the Way Forward Commission (“WFC”), the 20-20 Vision Committee, and the All-Agency Review Committee (“AARC”).

One of the challenges in our work was to parse the mandates and try to identify where we might work together and share resources, and where we might risk redundancy. Before the groups convened, their leaders met to discuss the whole and the parts and to commit to collaboration and communication.

We early on felt the pain of our predecessor review committee. The absence of criteria for review brought our attention to the process itself, and our hope that developing a framework would be helpful to both present and future reviews. Our process took us to the heart of our affirmations about the mission of the church. Each agency has a particular mission within the larger mission of the church, and we are called to align that work to a larger calling. There are “Great Ends of the Church” and we felt drawn to lift up great beginnings. Our Reformed and Presbyterian ethos affirms an “openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit”—continuity and change, ecumenicity, unity in diversity, and openness. The last chapter on “The Mission of the Church” (Chapter One) ends with “a new openness.” It is our hope that our work helps us to move into the next chapter of the life of the PC(USA).

“As it participates in God’s mission, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks … a new openness to see both the possibilities and the perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activities in the world” (Book of Order, F-1.0404). We believe that the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) need to be supported and encouraged in living into these words of promise and challenge.

These views represented the unanimous conclusions of the AARC, which was elected by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), and has been made up of the following individuals: Deborah A. Block (moderator), Debra Avery, Eric Beene, David A. Davis, Marco A. Grimaldo, Christopher M. Mason, Claire J. Rhodes, Kelly Boubel Shriver, James N. Tse, Madison VanVeelen, and James A. Wilson. (Two other members elected to the AARC resigned before they were able to complete their service, Rachel Mihee Kim-Kort and James Rea.) In reaching these views, we held five in-person meetings and met by conference call nine times. As indicated by several joint recommendations contained in this report and in the report of the WFC, we engaged in extensive efforts to coordinate its work. We have also been in regular communication with the Vision 2020 Committee.

II. Overview of the Agencies

At the beginning of its review process, we received verbal and written summaries from the executives of each of the agencies about their specific missions and unique function in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A few months later, to encourage reflection within the agencies about God’s call to “a new openness,” we prepared a set of questions based on the Book of
Order, F-1.0404, and asked each agency to respond in writing to those questions. Following are our summaries of the functions and the responses from the agencies to our questions about “a new openness”:

The Board of Pensions (“BOP”) traces its roots back to the year 1717. According to the Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the BOP is the legally responsible corporate body established under a civil charter for the purpose of administering the pension and benefits program of the PC(USA). The functions assigned by the General Assembly for the BOP include: to design and administer pension and benefits; to design and administer a program of financial assistance to help meet needs beyond the scope of pension and benefits; to receive, invest, and disburse the funds required to support the plans; and to sponsor programs for the sole benefit of the members and beneficiaries of the BOP.

- In recent years, the BOP has heard and acted on a call in the church for flexibility and affordability for benefits in multiple contexts of ministry along with a continued commitment to ministers. As a result of their new programs, there is a 19 percent increase in active members using the BOP’s plans and services.

- The BOP is committed to cooperative work with the other agencies as well as participation in ecumenical efforts to share best practices, form buying coalitions, advocacy and lobbying around faith-based benefit plans, and similar common interests.

- The BOP is exploring the possibilities of providing additional new products and programs to meet the needs of ministers and other church workers in new ministry contexts and other settings who currently are not being served. They also seek to find partners in the other agencies to engage together in bold and comprehensive strategic thinking.

The tasks of the Office of the General Assembly (“OGA”) fall under three primary ministry areas: Ecclesial and Ecumenical Ministries, Mid Council Ministries, and Church Wide Ministries. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) oversees and supports the ministry of the Stated Clerk and staff and partners with OGA in carrying out work assigned by the General Assembly. The OGA is directed by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who is the highest ecclesial officer of the denomination, elected by the assembly to a four-year term.

- The OGA has gone through significant changes, with a major reorganization and loss of several staff positions in 2013 and the election of a new Stated Clerk in 2016. They remain committed to being faithful, accountable, transparent, present, and loving as they engage with the church.

- Listening to and learning about the hopes and struggles of mid councils has been a major focus of OGA’s work since the last General Assembly. The OGA plans to continue that work with recently hired staff charged with supporting and strengthening mid councils. They are also developing new proposals to support mid councils more fully.

- Based on its listening throughout the church, OGA is seeking to be flexible in meeting unmet needs. Examples include the initiative to address context of the St. Louis community as we prepare to hold our General Assembly there; laying out a vision to make the Presbyterian Center a place where we engage in ministry, service, and fun for the Louisville community; and challenging the church to grapple with its own racism and fear of sharing power, which impedes revival and future growth of our denomination.

Established in 1799, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation) is charged by the General Assembly with the responsibility and accountability of raising, stewarding, and distributing funds to support the mission and ministry of the PC(USA). The Foundation is understood to be the national entity specifically called to offer charitable expertise that unites and empowers Presbyterians in the work of the church. The Foundation’s umbrella includes a number of historic corporations like The Presbyterian Board of Home Mission (1862) and The Board of National Missions (1923). In addition, the Foundation operates a fully owned subsidiary called The New Covenant Trust Company established in 1998 and chartered to operate in all fifty states.

- In engaging congregations, pastors, lay leaders, mid councils, and donors in conversations about what the church needs in order to fund the mission and ministry to which God calls them, the Foundation has found it critical to emphasize God’s abundance as a counterpoint to voices in the church fearing scarcity—focusing on what we don’t have rather than what God has given us.

- The Foundation has created new areas of service and greater flexibility to meet the needs of the church and donors, such as developing their online giving system, expanding their Donor Advised Funds products, outsourcing their investment functions, and preparing church financial literacy resources. As a result of these initiatives, the Foundation is growing in its total assets and serving more people, including smaller, more diverse congregations.

- The Foundation is engaged in common projects with each of the other agencies. The Foundation still sometimes encounters challenges related to donor intent, beneficiary interest, and agency processes and policies.

The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (“PILP”) was established by the General Assembly in 1995. It is a non-profit member corporation empowered to sell notes or other financial instruments in order to raise capital for PC(USA) mission and to establish standards of underwriting and loan criteria that enable PC(USA) institutions to acquire or improve real property.
The PILP offers investments that provide a competitive return while participating in the growth, development, and support of congregations within the PC(USA).

- In addition to continuing its traditional products and services to provide loans for construction and capital improvements for church buildings, PILP has introduced new loan products to respond to changing needs and creative initiatives by congregations for energy efficiency, accessibility, and leasehold improvements for congregations leasing space rather than owning it.

- In the course of their work, PILP spends considerable time working with congregations to determine readiness to assume a loan and the appropriateness of proposed construction or improvements. PILP would like to deepen these consultative functions to include mentoring and guidance for all matters related to church finances.

- In the future, PILP looks to further share the stories of churches whose ministries are transformed by the investment PILP makes in them with investors. They also would like to build greater awareness of their products to enable them to serve more congregations.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) serves as the mission and ministry arm of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This agency coordinates and leads the mission program of the PC(USA), working in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions. It also advises and responds to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern of the PC(USA).

- The PMA is committed to listening and responding to the whole church as it receives directives from the General Assembly, engaging in consultation with mid councils and church leaders, and partnering and consultation with mission partners. The PMA seeks to become even more inclusive, expanding translation ministries, examining practices and policies for their impact on people of color and racial diversity, and possibly bringing a single focal point for their work for the next four years on structural racism and white supremacy.

- New initiatives in the past two years to build trust and improve morale among PMA staff include the creation of a Community Life Team, all-staff events, regular all-staff meetings to share information and solicit questions, weekly worship services, mission projects, and mutual support for staff members facing hardship. The PMA Board has also engaged in a significant restructuring, resulting in a much smaller board.

- The PMA sees mission as a means to unite the whole church. They seek to bring even greater focus to their work as they balance corporate accountability with their identity as a church agency. Overcoming a scarcity mindset and creating new ways to be faithful in the ways the church is alive will reduce a feeling of competition among agency departments and staff.

The current corporate identity of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (“PPC”) was established by the 205th General Assembly (1993). PPC’s purpose is Christian nurture through the development and publishing of resources. PPC receives no mission funding and is a legally independent, self-supporting corporation dedicated to the mission of the PC(USA).

- In recent years, PPC has faced radical changes in mainline churches, decline in the number of students of religion in colleges and seminaries, and fundamental changes in the bookelling industry. It has maintained itself as a self-sustaining agency through increased operational efficiency, new technology to reduce costs, new initiatives such as children’s book publishing, new partnerships with seminaries, and ongoing assessment of the needs of their core market. More than half of the resources they publish are used by people outside the PC(USA).

- As a denominational publisher, PPC frequently publishes materials that they know will not provide them a return on their investment but provide value for the church.

- Recently, PPC has developed the PC(USA) Store as a single source website for PC(USA) resources. They have also assumed responsibility for congregational ministry publishing from PMA, which they see as an opportunity to better serve congregations looking for Christian education curricula and other resources.

In addition to these responses directly from the leadership of the agencies about their openness to God’s call, we gathered reflections from mid council leaders about the work of the agencies and their interactions with mid councils and congregations. Some leaders gave specific examples about very positive interactions with the agencies. For instance, a presbytery executive from Florida reported that all six of the agencies took the initiative to contact the presbytery within days of Hurricane Irma. All of the agencies offered specific forms of help to the presbytery and its congregations related to their unique mission and work.

Other mid council leaders shared different perceptions of the agencies. Some still shared their perception of siloing among the agencies, with little coordination of communications, projects, and programs. Similarly, some spoke of branding confusion and the difficulty for mid council and congregation leaders to understand the distinctiveness of the agencies. Some mid council leaders spoke of not enough direct communication with agencies: for instance, they had examples of times when agencies hosted events in their geographic bounds without notifying the mid council, or of fundraising activities that circumvent the mid
council leadership to go directly to congregations and individual members of those congregations. Some mid council leaders also spoke of inefficient communication, with a constant need for reporting and data sharing with multiple agencies.

While we decided not to do a survey, we received the Moderator’s report as well as the OGA report, both of which were before the Way Forward Committee at the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Throughout our process, we have valued and sought input from people connected with the church and the groups who are not a part of the agencies. Not all of the groups to which we reached out responded. We sought the advice of the various racial ethnic caucus leaders related to their engagement with the PMA, the OGA, and the other four agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We heard from the Reverend Tony Aja of the National Hispanic/Latino Caucus and the Reverend Takako Terino of the National Asian Presbyterian Council. While these two responses are far from representative of all of the racial ethnic caucuses, they nonetheless inform our thinking.

- Both interviews highlighted concerns about language, communications, and translations. They expressed the challenge faced by clergy and lay leaders in communicating with agency staff in their own language. The Hispanic caucus highlights the need for more Spanish speakers in church agencies and the Asian Council expressed a need for helping clergy gain or strengthen their English skills.

- Both interviews commented on what they perceived as a lack of connection with some or several of the Presbyterian agencies.

We heard similar responses in conversations with some staff of the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministry areas. We take these responses as reminders that there is still much work to be done within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and commend to the whole church, a commitment to apply a racial equity lens as we each do our part in service to Christ.

In our interactions with the agencies during the process of review, it has found the agency staff to be helpful and responsive. We want to give special attention and affirmation of the work and hope of agencies to lead the church in addressing white privilege and racism.

III. Merging the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Would Not Serve the Denomination

Our initial reviews of all six agencies revealed that the relationship between the PMA and the OGA surfaced as a dominant theme to be addressed. Particularly, there were recurring questions about the possibilities, feasibility, and/or desirability of a merger between the two agencies.

We looked in-depth into the issues concerning the PMA and the OGA, their mission and mandates. Both agencies are staffed by dedicated people who have demonstrated faithfulness in their work over the years, but also acknowledged their frustrations, tensions, and uncertainties in carrying out their duties because of the recurring conversations about a possible merger.

We, however, have seen convincing evidence that the PMA and the OGA have distinctly different mandates and as such, do their work differently, reflecting the message in 1 Corinthians 12:4–5, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord.”

We concluded that any merger of the PMA and OGA would not be in the best interest of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at this time. With this in mind, we supported a “no merger” recommendation in conjunction with the Way Forward Committee (WFC). It was felt that this decision would

- help clear up the uncertainties and tensions of staff in the two agencies;
- give the two agencies the freedom to concentrate on working on important tasks within their mandate without having to put out efforts to constantly address issues concerning a possible merger between the OGA and PMA;
- provide the members of the General Assembly with essential information to better guide future decisions for the church as a whole.

IV. Continuing Conversations

This review process identified concerns and issues beyond the scope of its work that need to be addressed in ongoing processes:

**Communications.** We and the WFC continue to engage with communication staff and agency executives to refine a process to guide changes to denominational communication plans and vehicles. Related projects include (1) an agency-wide communication plan; (2) a unified style/brand guide; (3) a unified and updated web presence and use of social media; (4) clarification and definition of roles, responsibility, and authority within the communication departments.
Property and facilities usage. All six agencies are engaged in discussions about the use of the building at 100 Witherspoon Street and other PC(USA) properties. How can our buildings be used as instruments of our mission? How do the locations of our agencies contribute to or detract from collaborative work, cooperative culture, and common service to the PC(USA)?

V. Rationale for Specific Recommendations

A. Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1. of this report urges that the agencies consider six questions arising from the Book of Order, F-1.0404, in setting their budgets and work plans in the coming years. As all of the recommendations in this report reflect, we believe deeply that the call to a new openness set forth in F-1.0404 speaks to the particular needs and calling of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in this time and place. In our discernment, it became clear that we should center our assessments and focus our recommendations around the following:

- A new openness to the sovereign activity of God in the Church and in the world.
- A new openness in its own membership.
- A new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of institutional forms.
- A new openness to God’s continuing reformation of the church.”

- We believe that this provides significant focus while at the same time offering enough flexibility and adaptability as the Spirit continues to shape our shared future.

We recognize, however, that the focus on F-1.0404 may not always be the appropriate focus of the denomination and its agencies. Accordingly, it has communicated to the 2020 Task Force its recommendation that their final report suggests a process for regular and ongoing discernment for the denomination and its agencies.

B. Recommendation 2

1. Recommendation 2.a. Focus of Next All-Agency Review. In the course of its work, we concluded that the call to a new openness in Book of Order, F-1.0404, provided a useful framework for review of the agencies in light of the challenges that they currently face. We have used this lens as it has sought to discern the meaning of its charge to review the agencies with respect to their effectiveness in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives. We believe that continuity in the application of this focus of the all-agency review will lead to continuity in the review process and a useful framework for assessing the agencies in light of the current recommendation of ourselves and the WFC.

2. Recommendation 2.b. Revision of the agency review policy. In the course of its work, we observed that the current process for individual agency review could be streamlined and improved. In particular, we concluded that mandating a self-study in the course of agency review often does not create a benefit to the review process commensurate with the financial and other cost of such self-studies. If an agency or review committee determines such a self-study justifies the cost, they remain free to incorporate such a process in the review, but mandating such a self-study does not seem appropriate to us. We also concluded that the review cycle should be streamlined and made more efficient by a new pattern for review. Thus, instead of two agencies being reviewed each General Assembly over a six-year cycle, with a potential hiatus at the end of that cycle for an all-agency review (leading in effect to an eight-year cycle), we propose that three agencies be reviewed in each of the first two General Assemblies in a six-year cycle, and then in the final assembly of the cycle an all-agency review would occur. We further propose that a single committee (perhaps divided into subgroups) conduct the review in order to reduce costs and increase consistency in the process. Because the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., all require significant review of financial structures and fiduciary and regulatory duties, we believe it would also increase the effectiveness of reviews to group these three agencies together for review. Finally, the proposed amendments to the policy include the all-agency review process in the policy, given our view that an integrated review process would benefit the church.

Further, we concluded that the criteria for the review of individual agencies should be revised and that clear criteria for the future all-agency review be developed. The lack of clear standards for the all-agency review process was not helpful to us, and caused us to struggle with its charge as it set out to complete its work. At the same time, we believe that the standards for both individual agency review and for the all-agency review process would benefit greatly from the input of the members of the WFC. Therefore, we are recommending that the task of revising and clarifying these criteria be assigned to the Moving Forward Implementation Commission that both the WFC and we recommend be created by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

3. Recommendation 2.c.: A “Sabbatical” in the Review Process. The engagement required of staff in simultaneously responding to and interacting with the WFC and us has been immense. Moreover, the Moving Forward Implementation Commission that both the WFC and we recommend be created by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to assist in implementing these recommendations, as well as the internal work of the agencies required by such implementation efforts, will demand
significant resources of the agencies. Accordingly, we are recommending that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) delay the beginning of the next cycle of review of the agencies to allow the agencies to focus on implementation of these recommendations as well as the work already assigned them.

C. Recommendation 3

Along with the Way Forward Commission, we believe that the changes we have proposed in our review are complex enough, and the need for them is serious enough, that the General Assembly would benefit from appointing a group to provide support and accountability to the agencies in implementing the recommendations.

D. Recommendation 4

It is in the interest of good stewardship that the PC(USA) and its agencies make use of shared services as appropriate. We worked with members of the WFC in exploring better ways of sharing services between agencies. That work continues. We believe that the principle set forth in Recommendation 4 should guide that process, now and in the future.

We have not found that that the most effective delivery of shared services is achieved by having all shared services under the control of one agency or entity. Even when a service is shared, involvement and expertise from within each agency is required for the services to meet expectations and needs.

We recommend that this perspective on the nature of shared services inform the work of future agency reviews when considering the effectiveness of services that cut across departments within an agency and across agencies as well.

E. Recommendation 5

We have significant concern regarding the long-term sustainability of the per capita funding model, especially as it impacts the work of the OGA as the only agency primarily dependent on per capita funds. With the exception of some fundraising by the Presbyterian Historical Society to support its work, the constitutional office and services of OGA are completely dependent on diminishing per capita dollars. The preservation and future of such services should be the concern of the whole church and of all the agencies. We affirm the creativity, skill, and thought of staff members throughout all of the agencies and seek to engage those collective resources on this pressing issue confronting the church. It recommends a self-study by all the agencies to address this issue.

F. Recommendation 6

As highlighted above, F-1.0404 reminds our denomination that “[a]s it participates in God’s mission,” the church should seek “a new openness to see both the possibilities and the perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activities in the world.” This openness to the work of the Spirit has inspired this recommendation concerning “A Corp.”

In every generation, Presbyterians have wondered whether the church was becoming too corporate. As we addressed the concerns lifted up by previous reviews and as we did our own analysis regarding “A Corp,” we also heard this concern. The Book of Order, at G-4.0101, requires each council above the congregation to incorporate if it is legally possible. Indeed, as discussed below, the denomination has had a corporation to support its work since the 18th century. In evaluating the faithful operation of the denomination and its agencies, therefore, it is simply not possible to act as if the corporate form of the General Assembly does not exist. Rather, the focus must be on whether the form of the corporation is faithfully serving the church. We concluded that the current form of governance of the corporation, and particularly its complete control by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (“PMAB”), is not serving well the work of the whole church. In fact, it is one of the sources of inefficiencies and, at times, problematic functioning within the PMA.

The Review Committee for the PMA in 2016 summarized its findings as follows: “Though the PMA has produced good work, it is evident that there are significant weaknesses in a number of areas, including: strategic decision-making and priority-setting; organizational culture and work environment; and collaborative efforts with other General Assembly agencies” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 239). We found that these significant weaknesses remain. We have observed that one of the sources of these significant weaknesses is a board that is not effective at handling corporate governance functions and that focuses far more of its energy on corporate matters than on implementing the mission direction of the church. Many of the distractions that have directly hindered the mission work of the denomination—the lack of transparency regarding the termination of employees involved with 1001 Worshiping Communities, the long absence of a permanent executive director, the opaque use of reserve funds, and disputes regarding shared services—have arisen because of the collision between the role members of PMAB as directors of the corporation and their more important function of implementing the mission directives of the General Assembly.

We have been transparent in our work regarding “A Corp.” Discussions of “A Corp.” in open session began at our meeting on May 2nd and were publicly reported. Representatives of our committee and the WFC reached out to representatives of the Governance Task Force of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in October 2017 to discuss “A Corp.” with them. We had several subsequent discussions with PMAB representatives exclusively focused on “A Corp.” issues. The moderator and vice
moderator of our committee met with and discussed “A Corp.” issues both with the chair of PMAB and with other PMAB representatives as well. In addition, we discussed “A Corp.” issues with COGA and its leadership several times in 2017, as we did with the leadership of each of the other agencies of the church—and others, both in 2017 and at the beginning of 2018. We reviewed a large number of documents, including the history of “A Corp.” (which dates to the late 18th century), its formation and governance documents and the changes in them from 1983 forward, the audited financials of “A Corp.” for multiple years, the budgets submitted by PMA, minutes of PMAB and “A Corp.” meetings and committee meetings for a number of years, to the extent they existed. We retained independent legal counsel to help us with Pennsylvania law issues and advise us on issues such as whether a “deliverance” was needed to change the board of directors of the corporation (we have not proposed one) and whether “A Corp.” could delegate to PMA daily control of its own functions, such as personnel activities (we proposed such delegation).

From all of this, our conclusion is clear: the best way to move past a corporate mentality in the mission agency is to free the mission agency to do mission, and reconstitute the board of “A Corp.” with broad agency representation to ensure sound oversight of the existing corporate entity.

“A Corp.” itself is a direct successor (along with the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [the “Foundation”]) to the original 18th century corporation of our denomination. Its articles of incorporation direct “A Corp.” “[t]o be an integrated auxiliary and a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to act as the principal corporation which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has caused to be formed pursuant to ... the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to receive, hold, and transfer property and to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as affirmed and declared by the 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

In this role, “A Corp.” holds almost all of the property and assets of the denomination not held by the Foundation. (Assets held by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [the “Board of Pensions”]) are not denominational assets, but assets for the benefit of members of the benefit plans offered by that board.) In general, the Foundation holds long-term assets. “A Corp.” holds beneficial interests in some Foundation assets, handles the denomination’s current operating funds, and owns the denomination’s operating assets (such as 100 Witherspoon Street in Louisville, Kentucky). “A Corp.” provides the secular support—such as employment, contracting, and handling of funds—needed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) and the Office of the General Assembly (“OGA”), which are unincorporated ecclesiastical entities (as is the General Assembly). “A Corp.” also works with the four other PC(USA) agencies: the Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

There is a great deal of history behind “A Corp.,” but we believe its appropriate role is clear. The General Assembly, directly representing all the people and councils of the church, should discern and announce theological positions, define mission, set mission priorities, and approve targets (both of income and expense) to accomplish those things. The six agencies of the General Assembly should implement these high-level decisions and support the people and councils of the church in carrying them out. “A Corp.” should help support the agencies in these efforts, particularly the two most ecclesiastical of them, PMA and OGA.

We believe the governance of “A Corp.” should reflect this role. Its governance structure—its board of directors and officers—currently does not.

• The “A Corp.” board currently has forty voting members. Although its own governance task force has recommended reducing that number over time, even if that occurs, the number would remain twenty or more, perhaps reflecting the multiplicity of PMA mission roles.

• All forty are from the PMA board of directors—in effect, the boards are the same.

• The Executive Director of PMA is automatically the President of “A Corp.”

• There is confusion between PMA’s mission role and the operation of “A Corp.” by PMA’s board members.

• There is distrust over whether services provided by “A Corp.” are provided fairly for the benefit of other agencies, particularly OGA, because of this confusion.

• The opportunity for coordination of agency activity through “A Corp.” has not been realized.

• The “A Corp.” board is far too large to carry out its duties effectively.

Our joint recommendation with the WFC represents a better way to govern “A Corp.” It would allow “A Corp.” to carry out its corporate functions to support the agencies of the church, not to control those agencies’ own missions, or favor only one agency’s preferences. “A Corp.” would receive no additional powers from these changes in board composition and selection of the President. (“A Corp.” would, for example, still have no authority to prescribe mission for PMA.) Importantly, however, these changes would eliminate the confusion between “A Corp.” and PMA. They would allow PMA to focus on mission. They
would allow “A Corp.” to manage itself efficiently. They would reduce mistrust over the fair provision of “A Corp.” services to agencies, particularly as between OGA and PMA. They would provide a better platform for interagency cooperation.

Finally, we have sought to ensure that the smaller board of “A Corp.” will still be broadly representative of the diversity of our denomination. We recommend the following three steps to achieve this goal: (1) Nominating members by existing, already diverse agencies assuring not only expertise, but diversity; (2) provide seats nominated by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns; and (3) provide for three, at-large seats, selected with input from the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

These changes would also not be unduly disruptive. They would not require any change in the ownership of any assets or liabilities. They would not require—although they could lead to—any personnel changes other than a new determination of who should be the president of “A Corp.” They would not preclude other changes that this committee or the Way Forward Commission might want to recommend or pursue in other areas.

We further urge the General Assembly to support the change in the composition of the “A Corp.” board with several additional actions to support the function of the new composition:

**Timing of the process (Way Forward Recommendations 1.a. and 1.b.):** These recommendations are to effect the changes of governance specified in the Way Forward Commission’s Recommendation 1.c. in good order in the time frames provided.

**Changes to the Bylaws of “A Corp.” (Way Forward Recommendation 1.c.)** This is the principal recommendation to accomplish the changes to the governance of “A Corp.” that both we and the Way Forward Commission recommend.

**Making the President of “A Corp.” an ex officio member of each agency’s board (Way Forward Recommendation 1.d.):** This recommendation would help emphasize the cooperative nature of the relationship between “A Corp.” and the church’s six current agencies while also underscoring (by the absence of vote) that “A Corp.” does not control those agencies.

**Implementing Resolutions by the Agencies (Way Forward Recommendation 1.e.):** The implementing resolutions directed by this recommendation would simply require the existing agencies of the church to recognize the new governance structure for “A Corp.” The agencies are in the best position to define the particular language they may need to manage their own recommendations for who should serve on the Board of “A Corp.,” for example.

**Further Implementing Recommendation (Way Forward Recommendation 1.f.):** This recommendation is to assist in implementation in the short term of the changes recommended elsewhere in the Way Forward Commission’s Recommendations 1. through 1.g. It is designed to fit with the Way Forward Commission’s Recommendation 3. if the General Assembly so desires.

**Review of “A Corp.” (Way Forward Recommendation 1.g.):** This recommendation is to ensure initial review by the General Assembly of “A Corp.” following the governance changes in “A Corp.” recommended by the Way Forward Commission in which we concur and then for the General Assembly to determine how often in the future separate review of “A Corp.” is needed.

G. **Recommendation 7**

In their reports to us, several of the six agencies shared their concern that recent General Assemblies have discussed and approved overtures that directly impact their work without sufficient consultation with those agencies. For example, at the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the cost of the proposed change back to the language of “ministers of the Word and Sacrament” from “teaching elders” in the Book of Order was reported to the commissioners before they voted. However, that cost did not factor in the significant cost of changing documents, forms, and other printed materials at the other agencies. The Board of Pensions alone had almost $100,000 in costs to make the change. As the General Assemblies considered policies about investments in companies profiting from the conflict in Israel and Palestine, several agencies had to devote significant resources without those impacts on their work being reported to the General Assembly. They were very willing to undertake the work, but the costs were not factored into the overall costs of those policy decisions.

We believe that the amendments to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly proposed will allow assembly committees to better understand the impact of business they consider, particularly when presented with commissioners’ resolutions, while still allowing assembly committees full freedom in its consideration of such business.

H. **Recommendation 8**

We believe a vision should

- bring unity and purpose;
- provide direction and focus;
- establish a basis for trust;
undergird strategic decision-making processes;

• offer a path for alignment of staffing and programmatic choices; and

• inspire people to get involved.

Because we are in a time when contextual dynamics are continually changing, attending to vision implementation and engaging in ongoing vision discernment and strategic alignment is essential if we are to live fully into the new openness to which we are called.

We propose adding a broadly representative team with specific expertise in vision and strategy work, which would serve as the “resident experts” related to the vision of the church and which would be given the authority to do the following:

1. Ensure that the vision is a constant focal point of the work of the church.

2. Ground in the theological themes of “A New Openness” (Book of Order, F-1.0404).

3. Share the vision with the larger church and gather “success stories” that connect the church’s work to the vision.

4. Lead discernment processes throughout the church that not only test the current vision for clarity and relevance but also provide opportunities to listen more broadly in the different ministry contexts of the PC(USA).

5. Provide advice to the agencies regarding continuity of vision and the connection between vision, mission directives, and new programming proposals.

Appendix A

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENCIES

PURPOSE

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to the understanding that ‘the unity of the Church is a gift of its Lord and finds expression in its faithfulness to the mission to which Christ calls it’ (G-4.0201). The basic principles of Presbyterian polity include the responsibility of a higher governing body to review those ministries for which it is accountable (G.-4.0301f). The purpose of the review process is to provide an equitable evaluation of the ministry of the agencies of the General Assembly. The review will focus on the quality of the relationship of the agencies’ ministry with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the agencies’ collaborative efforts with other agencies, and the quality of the agencies’ program based on the standards for review.

THE ROLE, TIMING OF THE PROCESS AND FORMATION OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEES

The review process for General Assembly agencies occurs over the cycle of three General Assemblies. In the first assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the work of the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. In the second assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the work of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In the third assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly’s mission directives.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee will nominate to each meeting of the General Assembly for election two appropriate committees and a moderators for each committee to conduct the review the work of one of the agencies of the General Assembly assigned based on the six-year schedule described above. The agency review committee’s responsibility is to provide an objective report to the General Assembly as to the agency’s compliance to the standards of review. The agency review committee may provide advice on areas of program improvement. The agency review committee’s role will be to examine the agency’s church relations, its policies and practice, history of collaboration with other agencies, and its program effectiveness. The agency review committee will review the agency’s self-study report and other documents. It will visit the agency and talk personally with leadership staff and the governing board or committee. The agency review committee is to conduct its work within the context of the General Assembly’s concern for the strong vital connections within the agencies of the General Assembly and the whole church. The governing board of the agency is responsible for the internal management of the agency and its operational details. The agency review committee’s role is to strengthen the bonds of the agencies to the General Assembly, the essential mission of the church, and the basic accountability of the governing board and executive leadership of the agency to the PC(USA). The agency review committee should celebrate with the whole church the successful ministries of the agency it is reviewing, and to consult with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding representation of employees. The agency review committee will report to the General Assembly through the General Assembly committee to which the agency reports.

STAFFING AND FUNDING

The Office of the General Assembly will provide adequate staffing for the agency review committee to complete its task. Staffing will be provided by the Presbyterian Mission Agency in the year the Office of the General Assembly an agency that is not being reviewed. The funding for the review process will be paid from per capita income.
A manual will be maintained to provide guidance in the review process to the agency review committee and the agencies. The manual will contain information on the process for review self-study by the agency, the visit with the agency, and the report format for the agency review committee. The format will outline the opportunities for dialogue between the agency review committee and the agency in preparation of the final report. The manual will provide guidance for the whole agency review committee on its organization and the role of individual members in the review process.

STANDARDS CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

A. Church Relatedness

1. Each agency was created by the church, and exists to serve and support the church’s mission in a particular area. The agency is expected to have the expertise necessary to accomplish the work it has been assigned, and is also expected to exhibit a constant awareness of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).

2. The basic work, programs, and services of the agency demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly. The agency should exhibit leadership in guiding the church in its engagement with the work and resources in which the agency acts as the church’s expert.

3. When appropriate, printed materials of the agency clearly identify the agency as a part of the PC(USA).

4. The agency honors the policy statements of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Constitution.

5. The agency includes in its administrative officers, and in its governing board in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, persons who understand and respect the relationship with the PC(USA).

6. The agency provides responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly.

7. The agency is actively working to open wide the doors of the church to God’s amazing diversity, welcoming all ages and all expressions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in striving to increase the membership of our denomination and achieve the great ends of the church.

B. Policies and Program Effectiveness

1. The agency understands that its responsibility is to manage its assets for the good of the whole of the PC(USA).

2. The governing board is properly constituted, clearly identified, and fully conversant with (a) the mission of the agency, (b) the current overall condition of the agency, (c) its specific responsibilities as directors, (d) the legal relationship of the agency to the church, and (e) its relationship to the president or chief officer.

3. The agency exhibits full compliance with all appropriate external regulatory and accrediting agencies, including consultation and review with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding principles of participation and representation in the employment of personnel, and conformity with ‘A Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action’ or subsequent guidelines.

4. An annual audit of the financial affairs of the agency is conducted by qualified and disinterested parties.

5. The governing board of the agency has a process for the selection and review of its chief officer or president.

6. The president or chief officer and the governing board have policies and procedures by which they assure that the agency staff hold the necessary and appropriate skills, licenses, and experience to make it reasonable to anticipate that they can perform their work satisfactorily and a functioning policy with expectations of staff development.

7. The agency has in place and operating a long-range and short-range planning process and a process for measuring its delivery of services and of monitoring the effectiveness of those services with its constituencies.

8. The agency exhibits an effective strategy for producing high-quality communication with its constituencies.

9. The agency is currently structured to face effectively the challenges of the future and demonstrates appropriate attention to current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.

C. Collaboration

1. The agency presses beyond communication and consultation to genuine collaboration and, where appropriate and/or directed by General Assembly, shares agendas and work with other agencies toward fulfillment of shared goals.

2. The agency maintains open and regular communication with, and provides timely and appropriate access to information to, other agencies and PC(USA) constituencies, including mid council bodies.

3. The agency has conducted an evaluation of the potential gains and risks associated with collaborative endeavors with other agencies whenever new programs are initiated.
4. The agency seeks pragmatic solutions to operational challenges by relying on the assets, resources, and strengths of other agencies.

**CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF THE COLLECTIVE WORK OF THE AGENCIES**

The review of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies shall focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other councils in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly’s mission directives.

The focus in reviewing the effectiveness of the agencies and other councils with respect to their effectiveness in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives shall be on the following areas:

1. The effectiveness of and obstacles to collaboration between the agencies;
2. The accountability of the agencies to the General Assembly and to one another;
3. The agencies’ responses to the General Assembly’s mission directives, individually and collectively, in light of the call to a new openness in Book of Order, F-1.0404;
4. The stewardship and effective use of resources by the agencies, individually and collectively;
5. Their work to open wide the doors of the church to God’s amazing diversity, welcoming all ages and all expressions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in striving to increase the membership of our denomination and achieve the great ends of the church.

**ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-04**

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 4-04 from the All Agency Review Committee supports the Way Forward Commission recommendation that the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s corporate functions be set within a new “A Corporation” and proposes changes in the review process for agencies that reduce the role of self-study.

The ACSWP advises approval of Item 4-04 as amended:

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

   “b. Approve the revisions to the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies attached as Appendix A and direct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to prepare revisions to Section IV.D.1. of the Organization for Mission consistent with the revision to the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies. [Authorize the board of each agency reviewed to respond to its review to the General Assembly at which its review is presented and to the all agency review on the third General Assembly of the cycle.]”

2. Strike Recommendation 6. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets.]

   “[6. [Note from the All-Agency Review Committee: The All-Agency Review Committee concurs with and urges approval of Recommendations 1.a. through 1.i. of the Way Forward Commission to free the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to focus on setting and executing the mission direction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by changing the bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and taking the other steps recommended by the Way Forward Commission in its recommendations.]]”

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

   “b. [Establish a representative Vision Team as part of the denominational structure that is tasked with shepherding] [Direct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to focus] ongoing vision discernment work, including engaging in [public theological consultations and] discernment practices in collaboration with the [six] [ten seminaries, four other] agencies and the mid councils; bringing recommendations about that discernment to the agencies and/or General Assembly; and communicating the unified, dynamic vision to the broader church.”

The All Agency Review Committee has worked hard and sought “a new openness” as a guiding principle for their work. Here we comment first on their Recommendation 6, which we advise be deleted entirely, and then provide explanation for the amendments we recommend to Recommendations 2.b and 8.b.

Regarding Recommendation 6, for the theological and practical reasons expressed in our Advice & Counsel memorandum on Item 4-03, (the Report of the Way Forward Commission), we believe that establishing a new and separate corporate configuration does not solve the problem of an overly corporate emphasis in the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). The main problems have been in the area of leadership; adding a layer of administration, and one not covered by the review amendments the All Agency Review Committee proposes, does not seem wise or warranted.
Regarding Recommendation 2.b. The All Agency Review Committee recommends down playing or making optional the “self-study” approach that marked previous reviews, which were staffed on a procedural basis by the Office of the General Assembly. Their proposals recommend using staff of other agencies and to some degree combining the reviews of three agencies at a time; the Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., one General Assembly; the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Westminster/JohnKnox publishing the next; and on the third looking at all six together. The idea of the cycle has merit. Yet if one is to be reviewed by persons appointed (by whom?) from other agencies (which?) when three agencies of either finance or mission are grouped together, the provision we recommend is to help ensure that no single agency has aspects of its work misinterpreted or even missed by persons unfamiliar with the work under review. As for the seventh corporate entity proposed by Way Forward Commission, the nine- to eleven-member separate board for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (the “A Corp”), it appears to be exempt from review; another reason to spare the expense of creating it.

To some degree, the paired reports of the Way Forward Commission and All Agency Review Committee illustrate the difficulties in reviewing the six agencies at once, especially when one is in leadership transition. The All Agency Review Committee appears to have focused much of its attention on the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), based in part on the PMA’s critical agency review to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Thus, the PMA is uniquely to be stripped of its board and put under effective oversight of an entity (“A Corp”) comprised largely of representatives from other agencies, whose operations are not affected by the decisions they make. In “Family Systems” therapy terms, the PMA is the “sick patient,” while any sickness of the overall system goes largely undiagnosed.

Recommendation 8.b. To the extent that lack of vision for the church’s mission is a diagnosed problem shared by the agencies, the All-Agency Review Committee is right to pick up on it. They do not strengthen or help renew our agencies, however, by adding a new and undefined body with an extremely broad mandate. Both the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency have management issues, but vision is a particular strength of the Stated Clerk and we hope will also be present in a new PMA leader. In our view, as a committee and staff elected from across the church, what the All-Agency Review Committee proposes should be a challenge to the ecclesial and mission bodies that already exist and to their leadership. Both have trained staff and gifted and dedicated board members. The four other agencies have specialized roles that will also be present in a new PMA leader. In our view, as a committee and staff elected from across the church, what the All-Agency Review Committee proposes should be a challenge to the ecclesial and mission bodies that already exist and to their leadership. Both have trained staff and gifted and dedicated board members. The four other agencies have specialized roles that should be taken into account, but mission will not be helped by another body on top of 2020 Vision. Further, we believe that the churchwide conversation and discernment needed would benefit greatly from the seminars being present in consultations at COGA and PMAB meetings, adding depth to the deliberations. Thus, the work the All-Agency Review Committee identifies is larger than the vehicle they (loosely) propose, and is properly the task of COGA and PMA.

Among the topics not addressed by the All-Agency Review Committee are the considerable differences between the “rich” and “poor” agencies of the assembly. Clearly security of funding streams affects compensation levels and internal cultures, as can be seen in the General Assembly Minutes, Part II, Section VIII, which lists the salaries and benefits of all General Assembly, synod, and presbytery staff. (We challenge those synods and presbyteries withholding their information from the larger church). There is also the usual, virtual silence about possible ecumenical cooperation and learning from the Full Communion relationships we have (with the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

Commissioners have complex material to sift through. A sermon by retired presbytery executive, Gary Skinner, may apply. He spoke of the church over time inventing many new institutional bodies, and while being less able to make existing ones work well or phase out the outdated. Was the church concentrating too much on imagining “new wineskins” and not focusing on the wine itself? May Christ forgive us if we tithe mint and cumin and forget the weightier matters of the law.

It may be the changes proposed by the All-Agency Review Committee will help our church sort out the wineskins. Genuine newness, however, often cannot be measured in institutional or even movement terms.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-04**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 04-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 04-04.

ACREC appreciates the call to the six agencies to be open to new ways of supporting and imagining ministry. However, the parameters need to be distilled and clarified, as they are too broad. ACREC also has concerns that there is appropriate representation when determining parameters.

**COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-04**

*Comment on Item 04-04—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

COGA affirms with great thanks to the All Agency Review Committee’s hard and faithful work, the recommendations within Item 04-04. We are grateful for their dedication, thoughtful questions, and helpful recommendations. In particular, we are excited by the new way in which the General Assembly might engage with commissioners’ resolutions through an
open and transparent process and find this recommendation to be transformative for the ways business is transacted at the
General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out
the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk . . . ” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the
Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

**FOUNDATION COMMENT ON ITEM 04-04**

*Comment on Item 04-04—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation).*

The Presbyterian Foundation welcomes new possibilities that might make more efficient and effective the collective work
of the Presbyterian Church (USA) national agencies. The Foundation believes in an approach to Shared Services, which is
helpful to the mission of all participating agencies while harming none of them.

The Foundation also believes it has an interest in having representation and leadership of a reconfigured “A Corp” board,
as the “A Corp” is granted a beneficial interest in funds titled to and held by the Foundation.

The Foundation underscores, for the good of the whole church, certain essential, long-held parameters and Presbyterian
values underlying the Deliverance. These include, among others, that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to
acknowledge the Presbyterian Foundation in its role and responsibilities as Fiduciary and Trustee for donors—past, present,
and future—in order to assure those donors that their funds will be used for the mission of Jesus Christ, in accordance with
their intended purposes.

**GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-04**

*Comment on Item 04-04—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).*

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) advises amending the last bulleted item of Recommen-
dation 1 to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

• What will the PC(USA) do to open wide the doors of the church to God’s amazing diversity, welcoming all ages and
abilities, all expressions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in striving to increase the membership of our denomi-
nation and achieve the great ends of the church?”

The GACOR receives data reports annually from every agency, reports to General Assembly in summary, and does a deep
analysis of employment and supplier diversity benchmarks and the individual agency contexts when assembly reviews of an
agency are scheduled. The GACOR regularly consults with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) on slates
selected through their nomination, elected by the assembly. The GACOR is not yet consulted on each agency board’s slates.
Only those who have at-large members elected through the GA Nominating Committee are reviewed at this time. It would be
helpful to have access to review all board slates and have opportunity to give advice into those processes.

The changes to the schedule for review impact GACOR in its own reviews of agencies. As the initial review of benchmarks
and evaluating labor pool, workforce, and supplier context require more work and the first round has not yet been completed,
GACOR is concerned about completing three agency reviews (first round) in an assembly cycle. The committee was not con-
sulted on the change in review schedule until after the business item was submitted. The GACOR will need to adjust its plan
to accomplish this additional work, suggesting that there will be financial implications to relate with an additional agency each
cycle as well as sufficient meeting time to accomplish these tasks along with the other work assigned.

In its own self-study preparing for review by this assembly, the GACOR requested being restored to the sixteen members
it had for most of its existence. In addition to that shift, the number of meetings of the committee in years it is reviewing
agencies may also need to adjust. It is hoped these concerns are supported adequately so the reviews can happen as the assembly
is considering.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly,
who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its con-
stitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

**PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-04, Recommendation 6.**

*Comment on Item 04-04, Recommendation 6.—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).*

**Introduction**

In forming the Way Forward Commission, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) gave a clear mandate for its work: “study
and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA)” (Minutes, 2016, Part I,
Unfortunately, the work and recommendations of the commission fall short of this mandate. Rather than paint a picture of a new structure that models a vision of how the work of the national agencies cohere, relate to congregations, and further the mission of the church, Way Forward focused on specific technical changes that:

- Move us toward a more corporate model of church governance that is less inclusive;
- Add complexity to a system that is in need of simplification (more boards, more commissions, more committees);
- Lack a church-wide perspective for ensuring all General Assembly agencies act in unison as one church;
- Fail to address a critical issue—how can our national structure and programs meet the changing needs of congregations (while congregational focus was highlighted by Way Forward in their interim report—it is mostly missing in the final recommendations).

We believe better models are available, but developing new solutions first requires development of an overarching vision. Corporate forms would naturally flow from this vision.

The comments that follow address the recommendations made by Way Forward (of which only one recommendation addresses the structure of the national church).

**Recommendation 1: Changes to Presbyterian Mission Agency Governance**

This recommendation was made jointly by the Way Forward Commission (WFC) and the All Agency Review Committee (AARC). In short, the recommendation separates mission and administration—establishing a separate board to govern administration and other corporate functions.

We cannot support this proposal in its entirety in current form until vital questions are answered. We affirm this proposal in two respects: (1) we believe that the PMA should step away from the role of providing common administrative services; (2) we believe that A Corp board membership would benefit from the inclusion of additional non-PMA voices. While the PMAB has worked imperfectly in the past, we do have some experience in managing the complexities of mission and administration that we hope to contribute in order to address implementation concerns and possible unanticipated consequences of this proposed structure.

We have significant concerns about the overall viability of the proposal. In many ways, it harkens back to a governance model that existed between reunion and 1993 and resulted in conflicts over funding and control. In a 1993 restructure, the denomination moved to a unicameral model to minimize the divide between mission and corporate decisions. The predecessor to PMAB, the General Assembly Council, was given overall responsibility for governance, bringing mission, money, and administration to a common table. While issues remain, they are largely around finding the right balance between corporate/administrative functions and missional priorities; separating oversight and governance will further complicate finding that balance. It will also add bureaucracy and additional expense to the current system. This approach has been tried before and it did not work.

Since the 1993 restructure, the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), which is part of the same corporation as PMA, has gained increasing independence and is now seen as a separate agency (in 1993, OGA was a part of the General Assembly Council). Any new or revised governance model must acknowledge that reality and determine how (or if) a shared corporate identity can be jointly governed by two independent organizations. The recommendation by the WFC and the AARC is partially in response to this reality.

Aside from broad concerns about the viability of this recommendation, the details (or lack of details) are even more problematic.

1. **Nature and Role of New Entity—What Is It?**

We have been assured that this new entity is not a 7th agency. It has been described in different ways, but primarily as a “utility” that will provide administrative services for PMA, OGA, and any other General Assembly agency that chooses to participate. Only PMA and OGA are mandated to use the services of this utility—it is an option for other agencies.

But, based on language in Appendices 10 (Corporate bylaws) and 11 (Organization for Mission), and further conversations with representatives from the WFC and AARC, it is increasingly clear that this is more than a utility as it relates to oversight responsibilities for PMA and OGA.

The level of control appears to be extensive. Section 2.13 of Appendix 10 allows the corporation to delegate powers to other bodies but does not require it—and the delegation is not permanent. This belies the fact that power must be delegated from the corporation to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA)/OGA and PMAB/PMA in order for them to operate. This is a radical change in church governance structures. Previously the General Assembly delegated authority directly to COGA/OGA and PMAB/PMA. The agencies then used a corporation, with PMAB as its board, to carry out necessary secular functions. In the proposal, much of PMAB/COGA’s authority will be delegated to it, not by the General Assembly,
but rather by the corporation. At any time, the corporation can remove or limit the powers granted to other bodies. As such, the
authority to delegate, limit, or remove powers is exclusive to the corporate board. It should be clear to all that this is not a
mission-focused enterprise. It increases the corporate control over the church, and the work of OGA and PMA, which will be
subject to the approval of those elected from other agencies/committees.

Appendix 11 reflects changes originally approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (related to the work done by its
Governance Task Force in addressing governance changes; work that was encouraged by Way Forward) and recommended for
General Assembly approval as Item 04-08. However, Appendix 11 was then further edited to reflect the changes required by
this recommendation. Of fundamental concern is the flow of mission-related funds from congregations, individuals, and mid
councils to the General Assembly, where they are disbursed. Current receipts range from Shared Mission Support (undesignated
gifts for General Assembly mission) to restricted gifts for various purposes (Special Offerings, designating giving, etc.). Mission
is also funded through endowments and bequests. Currently administrative functions are funded through cost recovery, which
distributes a fair share of all revenue for the administrative expenses undergirding mission (or through a separate schedule of
the per capita budget in the case of the Office of the General Assembly).

In the proposal (Appendix 11, Section VII), the corporation “is funded subject to overall budget approval by the General
Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it, from restricted funds designated to it, from the portion of the various budgets of
PMA and OGA needed for employees, facilities and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with
respect to its activities and services.” There has been no conversation on how this will impact PMA or churchwide giving. It
also raises the question—if this new entity is indeed a utility, why does their budget need to be approved by General Assembly?
Shouldn’t they be funded from fees received for services provided? And shouldn’t the budgets of PMA and OGA continue to
reflect the true cost of mission inclusive of the cost of delivering mission? Even though the Corporation “holds” funds for PMA
and OGA, that doesn’t mean that the Corporation has the authority to use the funds for its own purposes apart from the donor’s
intent in giving those funds.

We believe that the nature of this new entity and its relationship to PMA, OGA, and the other General Assembly agencies
remains unclear.

2. **Nature and Role of PMA and PMAB**

The role of PMAB is equally unclear in this model. Since all authority is vested in the corporation with some of it delegated
back to PMA/PMAB, it would help to be very clear on just what will remain within the scope of PMAB. Beyond generic
comments such as “focus on mission” and “lead and coordinate the mission program of the General Assembly” the recommen-
dation does not describe its vision for a future PMA/PMAB. Taking away or severely limiting the ability of PMA to “do”
mission by separating the “what” from the “how” does not liberate PMA; it makes the work of PMA more difficult to navi-
gate—likely resulting in fewer missional opportunities, delivered more slowly at an increased cost.

3. **Board Composition**

The recommendation places one representative of PMAB and one representative of COGA on a new eleven-member
board—minimizing the voices of the two agencies most impacted by the recommendation. Eight of the other nine seats are
allocated to specific representative voices:

- Four from the other agencies (one each from the Board of Pensions, the Foundation, Presbyterian Publishing Corpo-
  ration, and PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program)—*even if they choose not to purchase services from this new “utility.”*

- One each from the advocacy committees (Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns and Advocacy Committee on
  Racial Ethnic Concerns).

- One each from the WFC and AARC (for the first term).

As written, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) will only have full discretion over the choice of one member of the board
who will be nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee. This recommendation fails to take our collective
white, male, middle-to-older age privilege into account. Ten of eleven specified nominations, limited by the discretion of the
various representative agencies, will not produce a diverse board. While we understand there may be changes recommended
by Way Forward to the agency nomination process designed to provide a broader slate of potential board members with addi-
tional involvement from the General Assembly Nominating Committee, these changes are not currently in the posted materials.
We are unsure if or when these changes will be made.

Furthermore, the corporation’s anticipated executive committee (five members) with a quorum of 50 percent, places con-
trol of the corporation, PMA, and OGA in the hands of two individuals (a majority of the quorum of three).

4. **Lack of Due Diligence**

We have not seen any detailed financial or operational due diligence and this should be done prior to finalizing the recom-
mendation, so that a determination may be made as to whether this governance model is workable.
Financially, the proposal commits to keeping administrative expenditures in 2018–2020 to levels expended in 2016-2018. We do not believe there is a basis for this commitment. To our knowledge:

- Funds have not been reviewed; no analysis has been completed.
- There has been much conversation about outsourcing, without consideration of the financial impact of severance packages for existing staff.
- There have been no discussions about how to fund the Office of the President (of this new entity), or the new Office of Translation, which will be housed in this entity.
- There has been no conversation regarding which staff will operate out of the new entity versus PMA or OGA; no work has been done to sustain the financial viability of any of the organizations in light of these changes.

The following questions are examples of the kind of operational due diligence that is still required prior to implementation of the recommendation (and that should have been considered in advance of the proposal):

- Who will serve as the Board of Directors of the A Corp between the 30th day following the adjournment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) when the existing forty Presbyterians from across the church are required to resign and the initial meeting of the newly constituted A Corp Board of Directors? (Recommendation 1.a)
- Does the church want a “super-board” made up of board members from other boards and committees? This is unprecedented in our Presbyterian organization. (Recommendation 1.b.)
- In our current system, the General Assembly Nominating Committee makes nominations to General Assembly that meet the desire of the church for equality, diversity, and parity. The General Assembly Committee on Representation is charged with ensuring inclusion, participation, and representation at all levels of church leadership and decision-making. This check and balance is effective because the pool of prospective nominees is churchwide and balanced for diversity. Why is this system being replaced for this new A Corp board? (Recommendation 1.c.)
- Why is it necessary for the A Corp president, or his/her designee, to sit on the board with voice on the other six “boards or committees”? What is the purpose of this linkage? (Recommendation 1.d.)
- Why is an additional commission necessary? Is this an indication that there is a lack of confidence in the new A Corp board being able to fulfill its role and function? (Recommendation 1.f.)
- Why is this oversight permissive rather than required? Shouldn’t a review of the A Corp on an established schedule and method of review be the same as it for the other six agencies of the church? (Recommendation 1.g.)
- It is our understanding that under the provision shown below the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall have broad authority over the employees ASSIGNED to it by the A Corp Board? Can we have clarity how that staffing is identified and then assigned by the A Corp? Do these provisions apply to OGA?

A Corporation shall delegate to the President/Executive Director, subject to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the Stated Clerk for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, authority: (i) to create, implement, and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (ii) to prepare, maintain, and amend an Employee Handbook for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (iii) to retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; and (iv) to promote, demote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.” Emphasis Added. (Recommendation 1.h. (Appendix 11))

- It is our understanding that the A Corp shall utilize unrestricted funds, currently used to fund important ministries of the PMA (e.g. Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministry), to cover its own expenses? Has anyone reviewed the current PMA Budget to correctly understand how administrative expenses now borne by PMA come from allocations from restricted funds from particular PMA programs? Has an analysis been made of the effect of keeping unrestricted funds for the exclusive use of A Corp expenditures?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation… is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it; from restricted funds designated to it; from the portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly needed for employees, facilities, and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services. (Recommendation 1.h. (Appendix 11))

- What will the rescission of the declaration of prior enactments of the General Assembly, particularly the documents of Deliverance, means in the application of secular law to disputes within the church that are adjudicated in secular courts? Documents such as the Deliverances are canon law in most states, certainly in Pennsylvania, and have primacy over secular law (i.e. corporate bylaws). Has anyone considered what the declaration of canon law as being secondary to secular law may mean to the Trust Clause of the PC(USA) Constitution? Can WFC/AARC explain and assure the General Assembly that this action will not have unintended consequences? (Recommendation 1.i.)
5. **Timing**

If approved by the General Assembly, the transition to the new model will be quick.

Recommendation 1.a. calls for actions to be taken within thirty days of the close of General Assembly. Current corporate members are to resign as of the close of that meeting. Recommendation 1.c. calls for the change even sooner … the day after the 223rd General Assembly (2018) adjourns. A new board is convened within ninety days. Governance between that thirty-day window and the ninety-day meeting is left unclear.

In light of this uncertainty, and the lack of due diligence on both operational and financial matters, the PMAB asks that the details of the proposal, along with the vision called for earlier in this comment, be vetted over the next two years, so that a more comprehensive and sustainable recommendation can be brought to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

6. **Acting as “One Church”**

Rather than solving conflict between church agencies, this proposal exacerbates it. Four General Assembly agencies have boards that serve both their mission-related purposes and their corporate needs. The other two, PMA and OGA, will have to work through a corporate board controlled by others. This hasn’t worked for the Office of the General Assembly over the past thirty years, leading to many of today’s issues. Members of COGA have described this period as one of “tyranny.” The proposed new corporation board looks no more viable. Minimally, it will at least be a different form of tyranny, but collectively, we should aim higher. Better solutions are available (separate corporate identity for each agency within the context of one overall church corporation board or a joint OGA/PMA corporate board), but neither can be fully evaluated in the absence of an overarching vision. Rather than create upheaval within the agencies without a clear guiding vision, PMAB suggests that the assembly first establish a vision for the structure and function of General Assembly agencies, then allow corporate forms to follow this vision.

7. **Conclusion**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is grateful for many voices seeking to correct flaws in the current structure and function of General Assembly agencies. A portion of those flaws are the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and we join with others in a commitment to work wholeheartedly to improve and correct these flaws. We commend the Way Forward Commission for its call for a renewed focus on mission as the heart of all we do, and believe this is best accomplished not by removing corporate responsibilities from the Presbyterian Mission Agency, but from addressing the imbalance of OGA’s relationship to the PMA and the A Corp board. This should be done deliberately, carefully, and above all, be rooted in reformed theological principles driven by a shared vision for the ecclesiastical direction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**Recommendation 2.: Role of the Stated Clerk**

We leave the debate and comment on the role of the Stated Clerk to others within the church.

**Recommendation 3: Financial Sustainability of the National Denomination**

We support this recommendation. We believe it is so important that sustainability should be determined prior to the implementation of changes to the national church proposed by Way Forward and All Agency Review. The report should be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020) and should include consideration of the efficacy and continuation of the Per Capita System now used by the national denomination and many of the mid councils. A good beginning resource should be a review of the Strategy for Funding Christ’s Mission as approved by the General Assembly in 2008.

**Recommendation 4.a.: Diversity and Reconciliation**

We support the creation of this table. It would be helpful to know how this table will be implemented and the scope of its authority.

**Recommendation 4.b.: Completion of Audits**

We support this recommendation.

**Recommendation 4.c.: Translation Services**

We support Item 04-02, Recommendation 2, from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns as the best approach to implementing this recommendation. We further suggest that an analysis of the cost of such a program and a means of supporting it be undertaken immediately following approval of this recommendation so that it may be implemented expeditiously.
We support this recommendation.

Item 04-05

[The assembly approved Item 04-05 with comment. See pp. 44, 49.]

[Comment: We commend the 2020 Vision Team for their work. We desire to hear explicit examples of what this would look like in different contexts and how to get there. We would like to hear more inclusion of grace, joy, and the Great Ends of the Church. We encourage the 2020 Vision Team to make the guiding statement more succinct.]

2020 Vision Team—Interim Report

The 2020 Vision Team recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) forward the proposed draft of the Guiding Statement to the church for study and comment in consideration of submitting it to the 224th General Assembly (2020) for approval. All comments should be directed to the Office of General Assembly by June 1, 2019.


Draft Guiding Statement

Our Reformed heritage understands the power of words and we humbly offer this guiding statement as speaking truth and declaring life.

The 2020 Vision Team was mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and charged with developing a guiding statement for the denomination as it moves into the future (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 40, 257).

In the faithful desire to discern the will of God, we listened throughout the denomination and beyond, hearing hope and frustration, expectation and anxiety.

Along our journey, even when it is hard to see the way forward, God has spoken and continues to speak to us in these times and places.

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be:

Prayerful

• Confessing our sin before God and to those we have wronged, we accept our responsibility for the brokenness in the world and in ourselves. In Christ we are assured of forgiveness and freed to forgive others.

• We ask the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us as we actively listen to Scripture and fully engage in the joys and challenges of life in this present world.

• In Christ we are bound together by grace, cleansed in the waters of baptism, nourished at the Lord’s table, and sent out to share the Good News.

Courageous

• Reformed and always being reformed, we follow the Holy Spirit in new and imaginative ways to places we have not yet been.

• We foster the hope of reconciliation in Christ that brings healing to individuals and communities, which transforms the world.

• We work for God’s justice and peace for all people in every land, prioritizing the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the abused.

United

• As members of the Church universal, we are Christ’s disciples, called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

• Against forces that seek to divide, Christ compels us to bear witness to a love that sustains community across great differences.
• Striving to love all our neighbors as ourselves, we approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting the freedom of other religions, worldviews, and traditions.

Serving
• As followers of the One who washed his disciples’ feet, we listen to and serve our neighbors, working to meet their practical needs.
• We partner with others to become the hands and feet of God in the world, showing compassion and generosity to all creation.
• We venture beyond the familiar, meeting people where they are as we share Christ’s transformative love.

Alive
• We are a people of the resurrection: though death surrounds us, we are not afraid because we follow the One who was raised from the tomb.
• The Holy Spirit gives us courage to build a community that reflects the fullness of God’s image in humanity: beautifully diverse and no longer divided by age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexuality, physical and mental ability, geography, or theological conviction.
• In the sure and certain hope of resurrection, we testify that the church and its members are called to follow Christ’s model by risking all, even life itself, for the sake of the Gospel.

And so, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be: Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive.

Thanks be to God.

The Draft Guiding Statement was created by braiding together several guiding sources: passages from Holy Scripture, foundational documents from our denomination, reports from previous General Assemblies, listening sessions across the nation, organic ideas from members of the Vision 2020 Team, and above all—the Holy Spirit. Through all of our work, we engaged in and were surrounded with prayer. Prayers for guidance, for openness, and for humility were offered by and to the Vision 2020 Team.

Heath Rada, Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), compiled and presented “When We Gather at the Table” at the 222nd General Assembly (2016). This report gave the team an overview of who we are as a denomination and some of the dreams, challenges, and hopes he had heard from denominational voices during his tenure as Moderator.

Upon reflecting on “When We Gather at the Table,” the Vision 2020 Team found it valuable to continue listening, hearing voices and reflections from various locations within the Church. In addition to hearing voices from within the denomination (churches, presbyteries, synods, agencies, etc.), the 2020 Vision Team thought it necessary to listen to voices adjacent to the church (mission partners, other denominations, etc.) and voices outside the church (other faiths, non-believers, etc.) to get a broader picture of what the world around us thinks of the PC(USA). A list of listening sessions conducted by the 2020 Vision Team members can be found in Appendix B and a list of the standard questions asked can be found in Appendix C.

Several themes emerged through these listening sessions:
• Continuing commitment to and appreciation of the PC(USA) emphasis on thoughtful, disciplined engagement with scripture;
• A sense of urgent need to address issues such as racism, poverty, income inequality, climate change, domestic violence, and human rights;
• Growing excitement about new ways of doing and being church;
• A longing for connectionalism based in community rather than bureaucracy;
• A desire to maintain, deepen, and expand ties to the global church;
• Fear about what shifts in religious culture and decline in church attendance and participation will mean for the future of the PC(USA);
• Frustration with systemic and structural barriers to adaptive change that will enable us to meet the challenges ahead;
• Anxiety about finances at the congregational, mid council, and General Assembly level;
A sense that we need to name this moment and articulate a vision for moving forward.

While developing and compiling new content, the 2020 Vision Team recognized the previous work of the church and visioning. The 2020 Vision Team studied the “Six Great Ends of the Church” from the Book of Order, F-1.0304. The team also studied and reflected on several biblical passages, including Haggai, Proverbs 19:21, Habakkuk 1-2:3 and Mark 8: 27-29, etc.

The draft guiding statement is a product of its time, much like the “Six Great Ends of the Church.” The 2020 Vision Team recognizes the PC(USA) is at a turning point and offers this draft guiding statement to sessions, presbyteries, synods, PC(USA) agencies, and other bodies in the church as an evaluative framework: What can we celebrate? What areas need additional work? What efforts might we need to abandon? How might the Draft Guiding Statement be used within the church and beyond? We envision this draft Guiding Statement as a challenge for moving the PC(USA) at all levels forward in new, imaginative, and Spirit-filled ways.

The 2020 Vision Team will continue to build on this groundwork over the next two years, as this draft guiding statement is a living document. The team will be focused on study, focus on study, prayer, and discernment of the Draft Guiding Statement including an invitation for feedback. Feedback will be received in numerous ways including electronic surveys, open communication via email, and structured listening sessions led by 2020 Vision Team members. Some of these focus groups listening sessions will be conducted at large events such as Triennium and Big Tent 2019 as well as smaller events upon request.

The 2020 Vision Team will also develop materials to help agencies, sessions, congregations, and other bodies of the church interact with the statement. Materials will be available that can help assess the vibrancy of their mission and how the new guiding statement may be integrated, enhancing their established work while inspiring new ministries. We pray these supplemental materials will help the fullness of the denomination live into the Guiding Statement in their mission work and birthing new ministries, and will be a resource in deepening the intimacy of their relationship with God. The Guiding Statement invites us as individuals to internalize an identity as prayerful, courageous, united, serving, and alive!

The remaining work of the 2020 Vision Team will focus on ensuring the new vision be accessible and available to all those in the denomination and beyond. To this end, if there are resources to be allocated to the Way Forward Commission and/or the All-Agency Review Committee that include work with a branding consultant, we will dedicate our time with said consultant to work on an implementation plan. Finally, we raise our voices in naming the need to make sure the current Draft Guiding Statement, the supplemental materials to be developed, and the Guiding Statement to be produced for the 224th General Assembly (2020) be accessible to the fullness of the body through translation into as many of our worshipping languages as possible.

By the 224th General Assembly (2020), the 2020 Vision Team will complete the mandate given by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to produce a Guiding Statement for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a plan for its implementation.

Rationale

The proposed Draft Guiding Statement directly responds to the mandate (see Appendix A) created at the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Appendix A

Recommendation Creating the 2020 Vision Team

Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 40–41, 257ff

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

1. The committee shall be made up of the following:
   a. At least six teaching elders and at least six ruling elders.
   b. The following demographic traits should be considered when naming members of the committee: gender identity; geographic location; inclusion of people under the age of forty (with special attention paid to young adult advisory delegates (YAADs) serving on the Assembly Committee on “The Way Forward” of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)); racial ethnic minorities; those engaged in both parish and validated ministries; theological diversity (people representative of all the “clusters” identified in “When We Gather at the Table”).
   c. The following skill sets should be considered when naming members of the committee: strategic planning, visioning, experience on administrative commissions.
   d. The Co-Moderators of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall serve as additional, ex officio, members of this committee.
2. The committee shall build upon the work begun in “When We Gather at the Table” as well as Moderator Heath Rada’s report made to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

3. The committee should conduct targeted listening exercises with various constituencies throughout the PC(USA) in an effort to discern where the Spirit is leading the church in the future. These may include, but are not limited to: congregations, presbyteries, synods, and seminaries. Such conversations should center on the calling of the church (Book of Order, F-1.03) as well as the vision these constituencies have of how God is calling them to respond to “what breaks God’s heart” in their communities.

4. The committee should also look outside the walls of the church to seek best practices and resources for being relevant to the changing landscapes of local, national, and international communities.

5. The committee will develop recommendations that shall be the only business for the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward to review at the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The only exception would be overtures that respond directly to any reports from the 2020 Vision Team. The intention is that there will be a new vision for the denomination by the 224th General Assembly (2020).

6. The assembly shall allocate sufficient resources for this committee to effectively accomplish its work.

Appendix B
Listening Sessions Conducted by the 2020 Vision Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Listening Group</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Point Person(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4--60</td>
<td>Presbytery of Inland Northwest</td>
<td>Feb-17</td>
<td>Justin/Sabrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Executive Presbytery (Presbytery of Inland Northwest)</td>
<td>Feb-17</td>
<td>Justin/Sabrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Presbytery of Maumee Valley</td>
<td>Mar-17</td>
<td>Becca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Christ Supporting Ministry, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>Mar-17</td>
<td>De’ Ann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Presbytery of Southern New England</td>
<td>May-17</td>
<td>Josh N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Presbytery of New York City-General Cabinet</td>
<td>May-17</td>
<td>Josh N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Congregation: First PC Stamford (Stamford, CT)</td>
<td>May-17</td>
<td>Josh N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Informal, young alumni of Princeton Theological Seminary (Alumni week)</td>
<td>May-17</td>
<td>Sabrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Detroit Presbytery</td>
<td>Jun-17</td>
<td>Becca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twin Cities Presbytery</td>
<td>June-July 2017</td>
<td>Becca, Salvador, Jerrod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal, World Communion of Reformed Churches (Germany)</td>
<td>June-July 2017</td>
<td>Sabrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Foothills Presbytery GA Reform Group</td>
<td>Jul-17</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Big Tent (2 Formal Sessions)</td>
<td>Jul-17</td>
<td>Vision 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Big Tent Table Talks</td>
<td>Jul-17</td>
<td>Vision 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Big Tent Informal Sessions</td>
<td>Jul-17</td>
<td>Josh A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180</td>
<td>Greater Atlanta Presbytery</td>
<td>Aug-17</td>
<td>Chris and Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Presbytery of Geneva - Small Church Gathering (informal listening)</td>
<td>Sep-17</td>
<td>Sabrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presbytery of Utah</td>
<td>Sep-17</td>
<td>Jerrod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Lake Michigan Presbytery</td>
<td>Sep-17</td>
<td>Becca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Racial Ethnic &amp; New Immigrant Seminaries Session</td>
<td>Nov-17</td>
<td>Josh N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PCUSA Chaplains</td>
<td>Nov-17</td>
<td>Josh A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Wooster Ukirk</td>
<td>Dec-17</td>
<td>Becca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators</td>
<td>Jan-18</td>
<td>Debbie and Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Foothills Presbytery</td>
<td>Feb-18</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Synod of the South Atlantic</td>
<td>Mar-18</td>
<td>Debbie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Congregation: Martin Luther King, Jr. PC (Springfield, MA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Josh N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Synod of Mid-America</td>
<td></td>
<td>Salvador</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We developed three sets of questions to target different groups of people from whom we wanted to hear. The first survey was shared with members of the PC(USA). The second survey was shared with groups of individuals that are connected with Church but may not be members of the denomination. This group includes our ecumenical partners, campus ministries, etc. Our third survey focused on connecting with those outside of the Church such as nonprofit organizations, social justice groups, the nones and dones, and those with no affiliation to any church.

Survey 1:
1. What do you think breaks God’s heart in your local community?
2. What do you think God might be calling us as Christians to do about this, and to do in general?
3. What do you feel lifts up God's heart in your local community?
4. How could our denomination do things even more effectively than we have been doing?
5. How is the PC(USA) engaging you, and also not engaging you?
6. What else would you like to share with us?

Survey 2:
1. How are you connected with the PC(USA), if at all?
2. What do you think breaks God’s heart in your local community?
3. What do you think God might be calling us as Christians to do about this, and to do in general?
4. What do you feel lifts up God's heart in your area?
5. What, if anything, do you see as PC(USA)’s unique calling?
6. What else would you like to share with us?

Survey 3:
1. How do you find meaning and purpose in your life?
2. What do you think of when you hear the words “Christian churches” and “Presbyterian”?
3. What lifts your heart in your local community?
4. What breaks your heart in your local community?
5. What might people do about this?
6. How might a religious community be involved in this?
7. What else would you like to share with us?

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-05

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 04-05 presents the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with a draft of the Guiding Statement to the church.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 04-05 be received as information and that the following comments be communicated to the group.

Even as a Way Forward Commission proposes reorganizing part of our national structure, it is still appropriate to search for new vision for the whole church that might guide this reorganization or even reformation. We need clarity about God’s calling and purpose for the church. We need clarity of vision for how the church may respond to the challenges and opportunities it faces. We also need clarity of vision regarding the structural changes the church must make that will allow it to adapt and organize for mission in a changing world.

We thank the Vision 2020 Team for its work. We are interested in the themes identified in the listening sessions. Some themes point to internal weaknesses, “anxiety about finances,” “frustration with systemic and structural barriers to adaptive change that will enable us to meet the challenges ahead.” Other themes reflect a mixture of internal weaknesses and external threats, “racism, poverty, income inequality, etc.” and “fear about what shifts and religious culture and decline in church attendance and participation will mean for the future of the PC(USA).” Still other themes suggest opportunities: “a desire to … expand ties to the global church” and “growing excitement about new ways to doing and being church.

These are important themes to investigate, but we are concerned that the draft guiding statement does not adequately address them. To fix this, we advise that the Vision 2020 team go deeper in exploring these themes in order to identify the
challenges and opportunities our church must address for effective ministry in a changing world. For example, what “shifts in religious culture and decline in church attendance” ought a vision for the future address?

Let us be clear: the challenges and opportunities before our church are too diverse and complicated for any single Visioning Team to address. Having said that, if the Vision 2020 Team identified adaptive questions the church must address for it to re- vision ministry, it would constitute a significant contribution to denominational health.

To pick up on our example, among the “shifts in culture” are declines in a Sabbath-keeping culture and an erosion of the ecology of church-related institutions (denominationally related colleges, camps, Sunday school, etc.). These shifts call us to discover new ways to do basic tasks. How will we do Christian formation in THIS culture? There are many other adaptive questions we hope the Vision 2020 team would lift up for the church. One of our members published a take on these questions here.¹

In addition to these questions, it would be helpful if the Vision 2020 Team explored the frustration many feel concerning “barriers to adaptive change.” Why is there insufficient focus on the General Assembly level bringing together responses to the questions that are prompted by the themes you identify? Are there ways we need to reorganize our work so that our church is able to identify a shared, compelling vision for the future of effective ministry in a changing world? The All Agency Review saw some of this need; we try to improve upon their approach in our A&C 4-04, on Recommendation 8.b.

The promise of a national church body is that it can gather experts, and representatives of the church from across the country, and do an in-depth study of challenges and opportunities before us. If properly organized, such study teams could cast a vision for a new future of effective ministry.

To reiterate, we hope the Vision 2020 Team goes deeper into the themes they have discovered to identify the underlying questions they present to the church. These questions and perhaps some directional implications could be shared with the church for comment in the place of/along with the acronym-framed affirmation they have developed. We hope that they will explore and make practical recommendations concerning the vision drift and dearth our denomination has experienced for the last forty years. Why have we not responded to the challenges and opportunities before us?

Endnote

¹ For a discussion of the PCUSA’s “vision dearth,” and the sorts of opportunities and challenges that a vision ought to inform a vision of effective ministry. [http://pres-outlook.org/2018/03/response-way-forward-commissions-report/](http://pres-outlook.org/2018/03/response-way-forward-commissions-report/) The Advisory Committee has also written and spoken with 2020 Vision on some of these points.

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Item 04-06

[The assembly disapproved Item 04-06. See pp. 44, 50.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that if the 223rd General Assembly (2018) determines that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (A Corp.), become a utility and service corporation, as recommended by the Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee, that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) also provide for the division of the A Corp., creating an independent General Assembly Mission Corporation for the purpose of carrying out the mission and direction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as set forth in the attached documents of division.

**DELIVERANCE DIVIDING THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION, INTO TWO CORPORATIONS**

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corporation” or “Mission Corporation”) was created by the division of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Corporation (“UPCUSA”) into (i) itself (a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation renamed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation [the “Foundation”]) and (ii) A Corporation (a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation), with A Corporation holding the sole, nonvoting membership of the Foundation; and

WHEREAS, it was the intent of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“General Assembly”) that both the A Corporation and the Foundation would continue as surviving corporations of the UPCUSA, the original corporation from which the division and separation occurred; that the history and origin of each would be from the origin of UPCUSA, namely, March 28, 1799; that the titles and interests in property allocated to each at the time of the division and separation be deemed to be continuations of the same from the time originally acquired; that the trusteeship and other fiduciary relationships, licenses, rulings, and privileges of and issued to UPCUSA be deemed to continue in the Foundation and in A Corporation, to the extent relevant to its purposes and activities as contemplated in the Deliverance Implementing a Design for the Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the General Assembly adopted by the 198th General Assembly (1986); and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly affirmed and declared each of A Corporation and the Foundation as integrated auxiliaries of and as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) denomination; and

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223rd General Assembly (2018)
WHEREAS, To assist both the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to more efficiently provide services on behalf of the General Assembly, the General Assembly has determined to divide A Corporation into two corporations, one to focus on the General Assembly’s mission and to serve as the General Assembly’s mission agency; and one to primarily serve the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly (the “Stated Clerk”) in collaboration with the other General Assembly agencies in the areas of administrative services; and

WHEREAS, Except expressly provided below, there are no other changes to the Deliverance Implementing a Design for the Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the General Assembly [adopted by the 198th General Assembly (1986), modified by the 199th General Assembly (1987) and the 214th General Assembly (2002)], which remains in full force and effect as to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and the successor to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, specifically the General Assembly Mission Corporation;

THEREFORE, BE IT enacted by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as follows:

PLAN OF DIVISION:
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION

Section 1.

(a) Plan of Division. There will be adopted by A Corporation a plan of division under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (the “Plan of Division”) pursuant to which A Corporation shall be divided into (i) itself (a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation to be renamed the General Assembly Mission Corporation) and (ii) a newly organized Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation named Office of the General Assembly Corporation (“Assembly Corporation”). The Plan of Division will be effective as of 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 2018 (the “Effective Time”).

(b) Office of the General Assembly Corporation established. At the Effective Time, Assembly Corporation shall be established by the Plan of Division as a separate corporate agency of the General Assembly, with the history and origin of the UPCUSA dating back to March 28, 1799.

(c) Continuity and status. It is the intent and understanding of the General Assembly that both corporations resulting from the Plan of Division, the Mission Corporation and the Assembly Corporation, shall continue as surviving corporations of A Corporation; that the history and origin of each of Mission Corporation and Assembly Corporation is from the origin of A Corporation, namely March 28, 1799; that the titles and interests in property allocated to each at the Effective Time through the Plan of Division shall be deemed to be continuations of the same from the time originally acquired by A Corporation and its predecessors; that the roles and responsibilities given to A Corporation under the 1986 Deliverance Implementing a Design for the Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the General Assembly, adopted by the 198th General Assembly (1986), modified by the 199th General Assembly (1987) and the 214th General Assembly (2002), as further amended by the 206th General Assembly (1994) and the Joint Report of the General Assembly Council and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation as approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996) (collectively “the 1986 Deliverance”); licenses, rulings, gifts and bequests to A Corporation and/or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and privileges of and issued to A Corporation shall be deemed to continue in Mission Corporation. The 1986 Deliverance will only be modified to the extent certain specified functions set forth herein will be delegated to Assembly Corporation by the General Assembly through a corporate division and an approved Plan of Division. The General Assembly affirms and declares that each of the resulting corporations, Assembly Corporation and Mission Corporation, is and shall be an integrated auxiliary of and a part of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Mission Corporation will continue as the principal corporation of the General Assembly and the sole member of the Foundation and of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Assembly Corporation shall be the principal administration agency of the General Assembly, primarily responsible for coordinating the biennial meetings of the General Assembly, supporting the work of the Stated Clerk and the Moderator of the General Assembly, and providing such administrative services to the General Assembly and other General Assembly entities as those agencies may request.

(d) Transitional arrangements. On or before January 1, 2019, the directors of A Corporation, who are also board members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, shall take such corporate action as shall be requisite to effect the following changes to the articles of incorporation of A Corporation:

(1) To change the corporate name of A Corporation to the General Assembly Mission Corporation.

(2) To effect such other revisions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement this Deliverance.

(e) Forms of Articles and Bylaws.

(1) The articles of incorporation and initial bylaws of Assembly Corporation shall be in substantially the form submitted to and approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

(2) The articles of incorporation of Mission Corporation shall be the articles of incorporation of A Corporation, and such changes therein as may be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or by an authorized
committee thereof. At this time, the only change to the articles of incorporation of Mission Corporation is the name change referenced in Section 1 (c)(1) above.

(f) *A Corporation’s Constituent Corporations.* The Presbyterian Historical Society, Inc. (“Presbyterian Historical Society”) shall become a constituent corporation of Assembly Corporation on January 1, 2019, or as soon thereafter as is deemed feasible and appropriate. Except for the Presbyterian Historical Society, the constituent corporations of A Corporation shall continue as constituent corporations of Mission Corporation.

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION**

Section 2.

(a) **Corporate Charter.** The articles of incorporation of Assembly Corporation shall provide for its governance and subordination to the General Assembly and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to substantially the following effect:

The management and disposition of the affairs and property of Assembly Corporation shall be vested in directors, who shall be selected from time to time in such number and manner and for such terms as the General Assembly may determine. Any or all of such directors may be removed or the number of such directors may be increased or decreased at any time by the General Assembly or by any officer or agency thereof thereunto duly authorized, and successor or additional directors shall be selected in the manner determined by the General Assembly. All the business and affairs of Assembly Corporation shall be conducted by the directors under and subject to the direction of the General Assembly, or of any duly authorized officer or agency thereof, so far as such direction shall be lawful and in accordance with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and of the United States of America. No material change shall be made to the articles of incorporation of Assembly Corporation without the prior approval of the General Assembly.

(b) **Governing Board.** The Assembly Corporation shall provide for its governance and subordination to the General Assembly and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to substantially the following effect:

1. The members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall by virtue of their offices be the Directors of Assembly Corporation. The Stated Clerk shall serve as an ex-officio member with voice but no vote.

2. The persons serving as directors of Assembly Corporation shall, by virtue of their offices, be the directors of the Presbyterian Historical Society.

3. The persons serving as directors of Assembly Corporation may be removed from office in the manner provided for in the bylaws of Assembly Corporation.

(c) **Executives.** The Stated Clerk shall, by virtue of office, be the President of Assembly Corporation. The Board of Directors of Assembly Corporation shall elect such other officers as required by applicable law and as they deem necessary.

(d) **Functions.** Subject to the lawful directions of the General Assembly or of any duly authorized officer or agency thereof, Assembly Corporation shall from and after January 1, 2019:

1. Receive and hold all property, real and personal, and income thereon, as may be held, given to, or otherwise acquired by Assembly Corporation.

2. Maintain and manage all real properties and tangible personal property held by Administration Corporation including the sale, rental, lease or assigned use, and insuring of all such property, subject to the Foundation continuing to be authorized to hold certain investment property.

3. Subject to the general investment policies adopted from time to time by the General Assembly, effect short-term investments of temporarily surplus funds, and transfer to the Foundation such surplus operating funds as may be designated for medium and long-term investment in the manner provided in Section 4(b) of the 1986 Deliverance.

4. Provide accounting and reporting with respect to all of the foregoing.

5. Provide such shared administrative services to the Office of the General Assembly and other General Assembly entities as those agencies may request, with the costs thereof to be allocated to and borne by the recipients thereof in the manner determined by Assembly Corporation.

6. Provide such other services as the General Assembly may direct or approve.

(e) **Reporting Responsibility.** Assembly Corporation shall report to the General Assembly.
Section 3.

(a) **Name.** The name of Mission Corporation shall be the General Assembly Mission Corporation.

(b) **Corporate Charter.** The articles of incorporation of Mission Corporation shall be the articles of incorporation of A Corporation with the name change noted in (a) above. The articles of incorporation of Mission Corporation shall continue to provide for its governance and subordination to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to substantially the following effect:

The management and disposition of the affairs and property of Mission Corporation shall be vested in directors, who shall be selected from time to time in such number and manner and for such terms as the General Assembly may determine. Any or all of such directors may be removed or the number of such directors may be increased or decreased at any time by General Assembly or by any duly authorized officer or agency thereof, and successor or additional directors shall be selected in the manner determined by the General Assembly. All the business and affairs of Mission Corporation shall be conducted by the directors under and subject to the direction of the General Assembly, or of any officer or agency thereof thereunto duly authorized, so far as such direction shall be lawful and in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and of the United States of America. No material change shall be made in these articles of incorporation without the prior approval of the General Assembly.

(c) **Governing Board.** Mission Corporation shall provide for its governance and subordination to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to substantially the following effect:

1. The members of the board of directors of Mission Corporation shall be selected and may be removed as follows:

   (i) voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall, by virtue of their offices, be the directors of Mission Corporation.

   (ii) The current elected membership of the board of directors will be decreased from forty (40) to twenty (20) by a process of attrition overseen by the General Assembly Nomination Committee. All members shall be elected by the General Assembly to a four-year term, and shall be eligible to serve one additional four-year term. A person elected to an unexpired term shall be eligible to serve only one additional four-year term. Elected members currently serving their first term will be eligible for re-nomination to one additional four-year term.

   (iii) The persons from time to time serving as directors of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall, by virtue of their offices, be the directors or trustees of any treasury constituent corporations, as defined in the bylaws of Mission Corporation.

   (iv) The persons serving as directors of Mission Corporation may be removed from office in the manner provided for in the bylaws of Mission Corporation.

2. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, by virtue of office, be an ex officio member of the Board with voice and vote.

(d) **Executives.** The Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall, by virtue of office, be the President of the Mission Corporation. The Board of Directors of Mission Corporation shall elect such other officers as required by applicable law or deemed necessary, to be accountable to the President of Mission Corporation.

(e) **Functions.** Subject to the lawful directions from time to time of the General Assembly or of any duly authorized officer or agency thereof, Mission Corporation shall from and after January 1, 2019, perform the same functions as A Corporation as follows:

1. Receive and hold all property, real and personal, and income thereon, as may be held, given to, or otherwise acquired by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or by either of the reuniting Churches, except such as is held by or hereafter given to a particular church, a presbytery, a synod, or another agency as contemplated by applicable provisions of the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) set forth in the current *Book of Order*, by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by the Foundation, or by Assembly Corporation. Property heretofore or hereafter given to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) subject to restrictions on use or disposition, by trust or otherwise, shall be received and held by the Foundation as provided in Section 3(d)(1) of the 1986 Deliverance.
(2) Maintain and manage all real properties and tangible personal property held by Mission Corporation, including the sale, rental, lease or assigned use, and insuring of all such property. The 1986 Deliverance authorizes the Foundation to hold certain investment properties.

(3) Subject to the general investment policies adopted from time to time by the General Assembly, effect short-term investments of temporarily surplus funds, and transfer to the Foundation such surplus operating funds as may be designated for medium- and long-term investment in the manner provide by Section 4(b) of the 1986 Deliverance.

(4) Act as disbursing agent for the funds and property held by Mission Corporation or the Foundation as provided by Section 3(d)(4) of the 1986 Deliverance, at the request of the Pension Corporation, a particular church, a presbytery, a synod, or another agency within the Church and, if agreeable to Mission Corporation, for funds and property of any of such corporations or other entities.

(5) Provide accounting and reporting with respect to all of the foregoing.

(6) Provide such other financial and related services as the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may direct or approve.

(f) Reporting Responsibility. Mission Corporation shall report to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

(g) Title to Tangible Property. Except as otherwise provided in this Deliverance, from and after January 1, 2019, legal title to all tangible property, real and personal, purchased or otherwise acquired by or on behalf of the General Assembly (except property of the Pension Corporation or property held for investment) and property purchased by A Corporation, shall be taken in the name of the Mission Corporation and a report thereof made to the General Assembly. The other General Assembly corporations may purchase in their own names such office equipment and other tangible property as may be incidental to their functions and may hold title to any tangible property, real or personal, acquired by them and held for investment. Real and personal property located without the United States of America may be acquired in such name as the board of directors of Mission Corporation may find to be required by or consistent with the laws and practices of the civil authorities having jurisdiction thereof.

CERTAIN GENERAL MATTERS

Section 4. Cooperation. Subject to the general direction of the General Assembly, Mission Corporation and Assembly Corporation shall cooperate by providing to each other timely and detailed financial information relating to receipts, disbursements, contractual responsibilities, and financial positions that may be of concern to the other corporation and shall otherwise cooperate fully with each other.

OTHER ACTIONS

Section 5. Mission Corporation, and its constituent corporations (with the approval of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), Assembly Corporation, and its constituent corporations (with the approval of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly) may take such other or further action as the board of directors of the involved corporations may find to be necessary or desirable to carry into effect the purposes and intent of this Deliverance and related enactments of the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may interpret with binding effect any provision of the Deliverance. Any interpretation under the preceding sentence shall be subject to appeal to the General Assembly.

Section 6. Role of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The bylaws of the Mission Corporation, the Assembly Corporation, the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., shall be amended to recognize:

(1) As the top ecclesial officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk is to exercise constitutional and spiritual leadership, provide counsel in time of crisis; and act as the chief ecumenical officer, and speak to and for the church in matters of faith and practice unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly;

(2) The Stated Clerk shall serve as an ex-officio member on the Board with voice and vote, and be included in executive/closed sessions; and

(3) The Stated Clerk shall be consulted on agency executive leadership changes.

Section 7. Nothing in this Deliverance is intended to modify or supersede the roles and responsibilities of and between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, referred to in this Deliverance as the Mission Corporation, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation as provided in the DELIVERANCE IMPLEMENTING A DESIGN FOR THE CORPORATE...
PLAN OF DIVISION

dividing

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION
(a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation)

into

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION
(a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation to be renamed GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION CORPORATION)

and

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION
(a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation)

ARTICLE I

General

1.01. This is a plan of division under 15 Pa.C.S. § 362 to be adopted by the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION, a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation (“A Corporation” or “Mission Corporation”), pursuant to which A Corporation shall divide into (i) itself (a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation to be renamed GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION CORPORATION) and (ii) a newly organized Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation named OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION (“Assembly Corporation”) subject to the terms and conditions of this plan of division (“Plan of Division”).

1.02. At the Effective Time (as defined in Section 1.06 hereof), A Corporation shall be divided into (i) itself and (ii) Assembly Corporation with the effect specified by section 15 Pa.C.S. § 367 (relating to effect of division) of the Pennsylvania Entity Transaction Law (hereinafter referred to as the “PETL”). A Corporation, the dividing corporation, will survive the division and be renamed GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION CORPORATION.

1.03. Assembly Corporation shall have no members.

1.04. Each of Mission Corporation and Assembly Corporation shall at any time, or from time to time, as and when requested by the other, or by the successors or assigns of either of them, execute and deliver, or cause to be executed and delivered in its name by any of its duly authorized officers, all such conveyances, assignments, transfers, deeds, or other instruments, and shall take or cause to be taken such further or other action as the other, or the successors or assigns of either of them, may deem necessary or desirable in order to evidence the transfer, vesting or devolution of any property, right, privilege or franchise or to vest or perfect in or confirm to either of them, or the successors or assigns of either of them, title to and possession of the respective property, rights, privileges, powers, immunities, franchises, and interests referred to in, or identified pursuant to, this Plan of Division as transferred to or remaining with either of them and otherwise to carry out the intent and purposes hereof.

1.05. Each of Mission Corporation and Assembly Corporation shall at any time, or from time to time, as and when requested by the other, or by its successors and assigns, execute and deliver, or cause to be executed or delivered in its name by any of its duly authorized officers, all such assumptions, acknowledgements, or other instruments, and shall take or cause to be taken such further or other action as the other of them, or its successors and assigns, may deem necessary or desirable in order to evidence the apportioning of the debts and liabilities of A Corporation between Mission Corporation and Assembly Corporation in the manner specified in, or pursuant to, this Plan of Division and otherwise to carry out the intent and purposes hereof.

1.06. A Statement of Division, incorporating this Plan of Division, shall be executed to comply with the applicable filing requirements of the PETL and shall be filed with the Department of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on or before December 31, 2018. This division shall become effective at 11:59 PM on December 31, 2018 (the “Effective Time”).

ARTICLE II

Mission Corporation

2.01. The Articles of Incorporation of Mission Corporation shall be amended as set forth in Amendment No. 1 to the Articles of Incorporation set forth in Exhibit A hereto.

2.02. The bylaws of Mission Corporation shall be as set forth in Exhibit B hereto, until changed in the manner therein provided (the “Mission Corporation Bylaws”).
2.03. The terms of office of the directors of Mission Corporation in office at the Effective Time shall not be affected by the division. Immediately following the division, the number of directors shall be reduced by attrition in the manner provided in the Mission Corporation Bylaws. The initial officers of Mission Corporation following the division shall be the officers of A Corporation.

ARTICLE III
Assembly Corporation

3.01. The Articles of Incorporation of Assembly Corporation shall be as set forth in Exhibit C hereto (“Assembly Corporation Articles”).

3.02. The bylaws of Assembly Corporation shall be as set forth in Exhibit D hereto (“Assembly Corporation Bylaws”).

3.03. The initial directors of Assembly Corporation shall be the persons determined by or in the manner provided by Assembly Corporation Bylaws. The initial officers of Assembly Corporation shall be selected by the Board of Directors of Assembly Corporation, in compliance with the Assembly Corporation Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV
Effect of Division

4.01. In and by an enactment of June [•], 2018 of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Church”) (hereinafter sometimes called the “2018 Deliverance”), the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) did mandate this division of A Corporation into itself (to be renamed GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION CORPORATION) and Assembly Corporation and did declare it to be the intent and understanding of the General Assembly that both Mission Corporation and Assembly Corporation shall continue as surviving corporations of the original corporation from which the division and separation occurs; that the history and origin of each shall be from the origin of Mission Corporation, namely, March 28, 1799; and that the licenses, rulings, and privileges of A Corporation shall be deemed to continue in Mission Corporation, and, to the extent relevant to its purposes and activities as contemplated by the 2018 Deliverance, in Assembly Corporation. It is the intent of this Plan of Division that Mission Corporation shall (i) continue to hold and administer all property held by A Corporation in a missional capacity prior to the division, when it was known as Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and any of its previous names, including, but not limited to, The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Corporation; (ii) succeed to A Corporation’s beneficial interests in all investment assets held by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation or for the benefit of Mission Corporation or given to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for mission, together with all bank accounts and investment accounts (short-term, intermediate and long-term investments); and (iii) shall continue as the corporate entity to which related rulings and determinations were issued or given to it by the Internal Revenue Service and any state or governmental authority when it was known by the aforesaid name and any of its previous names. All provisions of this Plan of Division shall be interpreted and applied in light of such declaration and intent.

4.02. Except as provided in Section 4.03, all of the property of A Corporation and all debts due on whatever account to it, and all liabilities of A Corporation shall, at the Effective Time, be taken and deemed without further act or deed to be transferred to, vested in, and assumed by Mission Corporation.

4.03. The Assembly Corporation shall, at the Effective Time, be free of all the debts, liabilities, and obligations of the Dividing Corporation and all debts, liabilities, and obligations of the Dividing Corporation shall without further act or deed be apportioned to and assumed by the Mission Corporation except as set forth on Exhibit E. Mission Corporation and Assembly Corporation shall each thenceforth be responsible as separate and distinct corporations only for such debts, liabilities, and obligations as each corporation may undertake or incur in its own name.

4.04. The title to real property wherever situated vested in A Corporation on the Effective Date shall not be affected by the division and all debts, if any, secured by liens upon such real property shall remain the liability and obligation of the Mission Corporation, except as set forth on Exhibit E.

EXHIBIT A
ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT TO THE
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

AMENDMENT NO. 1

The Articles of Incorporation of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, are amended as follows:

1. ARTICLE I is amended to change the name of the Corporation to:

General Assembly Mission Corporation.
2. ARTICLE II is amended to change the address of the Corporation to:

c/o C T Corporation System  
600 N 2nd Street, Suite 401  
Dauphin County  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101-1071

3. The effective date of this amendment is 11:59 PM on December 31, 2018.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the undersigned corporation has caused these Articles of Amendment to be signed by a duly authorized officer and its corporate seal, duly attested by another officer, to be hereunto affixed this [*] day of December 2018.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),  
A CORPORATION

By: ________________________________  
President

ATTEST:

__________________________________  
Secretary  
(CORPORATE SEAL)

EXHIBIT B

BYLAWS  
of the  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION CORPORATION

The General Assembly Mission Corporation, is the principal Corporation of and established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the “General Assembly”) to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as provided in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Corporation traces its origins to an entity named the “Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,” originally formed on March 28, 1799, by Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE I

Office and Fiscal Year

Section 1.01. Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such places within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the Corporation requires.

Section 1.02. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January in each year.

ARTICLE II

Board of Directors

Section 2.01. Selection of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be selected as follows:

The voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, by virtue of their offices, be Directors of the Corporation. As set forth in the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation, the number of such Directors may be increased or decreased at any time by the General Assembly or by any officer or agency thereof thereunto duly authorized, and successor or additional Directors shall be selected in the manner determined by the General Assembly.

Section 2.02. Directors of the Corporation’s Constituent Corporations. The persons from time to time serving as Directors of the Corporation shall, by virtue of their offices, constitute the Directors or Trustees of each corporation listed in Annex A hereto (which corporations so listed are referred to collectively in these bylaws as “Constituent Corporations”).

Section 2.03. Resignations Other Vacancies.

(a) Resignation. Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation, to be effective upon receipt or at a later time stated thereon.
(b) Disability. If a Director is unable to perform substantially all of his or her duties and responsibilities by reason of illness, injury, or incapacity for a period exceeding six months, such Director shall tender, or shall be deemed to have tendered, his or her resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation. As soon as practicable thereafter (but in any event not later than at its next regularly scheduled meeting), the Board of Directors shall determine whether to accept such resignation.

(c) Vacancies. In case of a vacancy on the Board of Directors by death, disability, or resignation, a successor to fill the unexpired term shall be nominated by the entity who nominated the former Director in the same manner as provided in Section 2.01 of these Bylaws for the selection of Directors.

Section 2.04. Meetings of Directors. Every meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation may be, without further notice or action, a meeting of the Board of Directors or Trustees of each of the Constituent Corporations, as to matters concerning such Constituent Corporation.

Section 2.05. Powers; Liability.

(a) The Board of Directors shall have full power to conduct, manage, and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation; and all powers of the Corporation are hereby granted to and vested in the Board of Directors.

(b) A Director of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as may be defined under applicable law and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Director for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or Federal law.

Section 2.06. Organization. The Board of Directors shall elect from among the members of the Board a Chair of the Board and a Chair-elect (who shall serve as the Vice Chair), who may each serve one two-year, non-renewable term. The Chair-elect shall become Chair at the end of the two-year term, and a new Chair-elect shall be elected from among the eligible members of the Board. Eligibility requirements are set forth in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair, or, in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair or a Chair chosen by a majority of the Directors present, shall preside, and the Secretary, or in the absence of the Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, or any person designated by majority vote of the Board or appointed by the Chair as Secretary Pro Tem or Secretary of the meeting, shall act as Secretary of the meeting and shall record the minutes of the meeting.

Section 2.07. Place of Meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such place within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint, or as may be designated in the notice of the meeting.

Section 2.08. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time and place as shall be designated from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors, and one such meeting each year shall be designated as a meeting for organization and the election of officers. At every regular meeting, the Directors shall transact such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws.

Section 2.09. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held whenever called by the Chair of the Board of Directors or by three or more of the Directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be given to each Director and shall be the greater of (a) 24 hours (in the case of notice in person or by telephone, facsimile transmission, email, or other electronic communication) or 48 hours (in the case of notice by telegram, courier service, or express delivery service) or five days (in the case of notice by mail), or (b) the minimum notice required by applicable law for any Constituent Corporation when the action to be taken by the Board of Directors is solely for the Constituent Corporation, before the time at which the meeting is to be held. Every such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting.

Section 2.10. Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote; Directors may not vote by proxy. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting by unanimous written consent, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the Secretary of the Corporation. Unanimous written consent may be affected through e-mail by the Directors returning the written consent together with their written signature on or before the announced deadline for returning the consent.
Section 2.11. Committees of the Board.

(a) The Committees of the Board shall be the Administration Committees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, more specifically designated in these bylaws as the Audit Committee, the Personnel/Nominating Committee, and the Property/Legal Committee, the authorities and responsibilities of which are set forth in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Manual of Operations. The number of members, quorum, and authority of each of these Committees shall be as set forth in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The board may establish one or more other committees or an “other body” as such term is defined in 15 Pa.C.S. Sec. 5103(2), each such other committee or body to consist of two or more Directors of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board may be, ex officio a nonvoting member of each such other committee or body except the Nominating Committee. Committee Chairs shall be elected for a two-year term, commencing after the adjournment of the General Assembly or in non-General Assembly years, with the Committee Chair orientation meeting. The Board may designate one or more Directors as alternate members of any committee or body, who may replace any absent or disqualified member at any meeting of the committee or body.

(b) No Committee of this Corporation shall have and exercise all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Corporation, and shall not have any power or authority as to the following:

1. The adoption, amendment, or repeal of these bylaws, or the adoption of any amendment of articles or plan of merger, division or consolidation or the approving of the sale, lease, or exchange of all or substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or of the dissolution of the Corporation.
2. The amendment or repeal of any resolutions of the Board.
3. The filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors thereof.

(c) No committee of the Board of Directors shall, pursuant to resolution of the Board of Directors or otherwise, exercise any of the powers or authority vested by these bylaws or other applicable law in the Board of Directors as such, but any other committee of the Board of Directors may make recommendations to the Board of Directors concerning the exercise of such powers and authority.

(d) A majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee, or Directors designated to replace them as provided in this section, shall be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the acts of a majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee or their replacements shall be the acts of the committee.

(e) Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report such proceedings periodically to the Board of Directors. Sections 2.08, 2.09 and 2.10 shall be applicable to committees of the Board of Directors, with the exception of quorum in Section 2.11(d).

Section 2.12. Compensation and Expenses. Except as permitted by Section 4.15 of these bylaws, no compensation of any kind shall be paid directly or indirectly by the Corporation to, and no loan or other extension of credit shall be made for the benefit of, any Director, as such, or as an officer or employee of the Corporation. Directors may be reimbursed for expenses in a manner consistent with any applicable policies adopted by the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

ARTICLE III

Notice—Waivers—Meetings

Section 3.01. Notice. What Constitutes. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws. Whenever written notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, it may be given to such person, either personally or by sending a copy thereof by first class mail, postage prepaid, or by email, to his or her address appearing on the books of the Corporation, or in the case of Directors, supplied by the Director to the Corporation for the purpose of notice. If the notice is sent by mail or by email, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the United States mail or upon transmission to such person. A notice of meeting shall specify the place, day, and hour of the meeting and any other information required by law or these bylaws. When a meeting is adjourned pursuant to Section 2.09 of these bylaws for lack of a quorum, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting, other than by announcement at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.

Section 3.02. Waivers of Notice. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section and by Section 6.06 of these bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.
Section 3.03. Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice. Whenever the language of a proposed resolution is included in a written notice of a meeting, the meeting considering the resolution may without further notice adopt it with such clarifying or other amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

Section 3.04. Conference Telephone Meetings and Meetings by other electronic means. One or more persons may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, including but not limited to electronic meetings providing video conferencing utilizing telephone or other audio methods, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in the meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. Conference and electronic meetings will follow procedures approved by Board from time to time.

ARTICLE IV
Officers

Section 4.01. Number, Qualifications and Designation. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Chief Financial Officer, one or more Vice Presidents (including but not limited to executive Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents), a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Controller, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.02 of this Article. The President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be the President of the Corporation. Any number of the offices may be held by the same person. Officers may, but need not be Directors or members of the Corporation, and shall be natural persons of full age. The Chair of the Board of Directors elected under Section 2.06 shall also be an officer of the Corporation.

Section 4.02. Selection and Term of Office. The officers of the Corporation shall be selected and their terms of office shall be determined as follows:

(a) The President shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and shall be eligible for reelection. Annually other officers of the Corporation shall be nominated by the Personnel/Nominating Committee upon the recommendation of the President and elected by the Board of Directors.

(b) The Board of Directors may from time to time elect such other officers as the business of the Corporation may require, including a Secretary and one or more assistant secretaries, each of whom has such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee of the Corporation the power to elect subordinate or other officers and to retain or appoint employees or other agents, or committees thereof, and to prescribe the authority and duties of such subordinate or other officers, committees, employees or other agents.

Section 4.03. Resignations. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, or to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4.04. Removal. Any elected or appointed officer, may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors or other authority which elected or appointed such officer. The term of any offices held by an employee ends the earlier of the employee’s last day of employment or last day in the office.

Section 4.05. Vacancies. A vacancy in any elective office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board of Directors (where appropriate, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly) or by the authority to which the power to fill such office has been delegated, pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article, as the case may be, and if the office is one for which a term is prescribed by or pursuant to these bylaws, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term. The refusal of the General Assembly to confirm an election, where such confirmation is required by these bylaws, shall result in the creation of a vacancy in the office affected.

Section 4.06. General Powers. All officers of the Corporation, as between themselves and the Corporation, shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be determined by resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, as may be provided in these bylaws.

Section 4.07. The Chair of the Board. Generally, the Chair of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board of Directors.

Section 4.08. The President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors.
President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, by virtue of office, shall be the President of the Corporation. The President shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. In the event of an extended absence of the President, the President shall assign one of the officers of the Corporation to fulfill the duties of the office during the absence of the President.

Section 4.09. Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation shall be responsible for corporate, financial and accounting functions. The Chief Financial Officer is authorized to sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the President.

Section 4.10. The Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents are authorized to sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws as well as perform such other duties as may be assigned to them or authorized by the Board of Directors or the President. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Vice Presidents to be accountable to the President or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.11. The Secretary. The Secretary or an Assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall cause to be recorded personally or by an Assistant Secretary or by the person designated by the Chair of the Board as Secretary Pro Tem or Secretary of the meeting, all votes of the Directors and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of committees of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose. The Secretary shall ensure that notices are given and records are properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal. In general, the Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary, and such other duties as may be assigned to the Secretary by the Board of Directors, or the President. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Secretary to be accountable to the President or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.12. The Treasurer. The Treasurer or an Assistant Treasurer shall have or provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Corporation and shall keep a separate account of the same as Treasurer; shall collect and receive or provide for the collection and receipt of moneys earned by or in any manner due to or received by the Corporation; shall deposit all funds in such banks or other places of deposit (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation hereinafter “Fiduciary Corporation”) as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the Corporation’s funds, and in general shall discharge such other duties as may be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board of Directors, the President, or Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Treasurer to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position. The CFO may be elected Treasurer.

Section 4.13. The Controller. The Controller shall be responsible for maintaining the chart of accounts, accounting records, and accounting procedures of the Corporation; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the results of operations and financial condition of the Corporation (at least annually) and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Controller by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Controller to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

Section 4.14. Officers’ Bonds. Any officer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office held by such officer in such sum, if any, and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall require, and the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

Section 4.15. Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees, and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the authority to which the power to elect such officers or to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been delegated pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article. All compensation shall be consistent with any general compensation structure established by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving such compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board of Directors as an officer shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.12 of these bylaws.)

Section 4.16. Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, are covered by the personnel policies, as adopted by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and set forth in the Employee Handbook.

ARTICLE V

Indemnification of Directors, Officers, etc.

Section 5.01. Scope of Indemnification (a) The Corporation shall indemnify an indemnified representative against any liability incurred in connection with any proceeding in which the indemnified representative may be involved as a party or otherwise, by reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in an indemnified capacity, including without limitation any
liability resulting from any actual or alleged breach or neglect of duty, error, misstatement or misleading statement, negligence, gross negligence or act giving rise to strict or products liability, except:

(1) where such indemnification is expressly prohibited by applicable law;

(2) where the conduct of the indemnified representative has been finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to constitute willful misconduct or recklessness as may be defined by applicable law or any other conduct sufficient in the circumstances to bar indemnification against liabilities arising from the conduct;

(3) to the extent the liability is finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to be based upon or attributable to the indemnified representative gaining any personal pecuniary profit to which such indemnified representative was not legally entitled; or

(4) to the extent such indemnification has been finally determined in a final adjudication pursuant to Section 5.06(d) to be otherwise unlawful.

(b) If an indemnified representative is entitled to indemnification in respect of a portion, but not all, of any liabilities to which such person may be subject, the Corporation shall indemnify such indemnified representative to the maximum extent for such portion of the liabilities.

(c) The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the indemnified representative is not entitled to indemnification.

(d) For purposes of this Article:

(1) “indemnified capacity” means any and all past, present, and future service by an indemnified representative in one or more capacities as a Director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation or a Constituent Corporation, or, at the request of the Corporation, as a Director, officer, employee, agent, fiduciary, or trustee of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan, or other entity or enterprise;

(2) “indemnified representative” means any and all Directors and officers of the Corporation, including any and all officers elected or committee members, employees, or other agents appointed under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” also means any and all officers, committee members, employees, and other agents elected or appointed under the power delegated to the General Assembly, or to any General Assembly agency under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” shall include any other person so designated by the Board of Directors.

(3) “liability” means any damage, judgment, amount paid in settlement (provided, in the case of settlements, that (i) the settlement is effected with the Corporation’s consent; and (ii) the settlement is in the best interests of the Corporation), fine, penalty, punitive damages, excise tax assessed with respect to an employee benefit plan, or cost or expense of any nature (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees and disbursements); and

(4) “proceeding” means any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, appeal, or other proceeding of any nature, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, whether formal or informal, and whether brought by or in the right of the Corporation, a class of its security holders, if any, or otherwise.

Section 5.02. Proceedings Initiated by Indemnified Representatives. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Corporation shall not indemnify under this Article an indemnified representative for any liability incurred in a proceeding initiated (which shall not be deemed to include counter-claims or affirmative defenses) or participated in as an intervenor or amicus curiae by the person seeking indemnification unless such initiation of or participation in the proceeding is authorized, either before or after its commencement, by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Directors of the Corporation.

This section does not apply to reimbursement of expenses incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending an arbitration under Section 5.06(d) or otherwise successfully prosecuting or defending the rights of an indemnified representative granted by or pursuant to this Article.

Section 5.03. Advancing Expenses. The Corporation shall pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by a Director or officer and may, by act of the Board of Directors (including the votes or consents of interested Directors), pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by any other indemnified representative in advance of the final disposition of a proceeding, described in Section 5.01 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified representative to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation pursuant to this Article. The financial ability of an indemnified representative to repay an advance shall not be a prerequisite to the making of such advance.

Section 5.04. Securing of Indemnification Obligations. To further effect, satisfy, or secure the indemnification obligations provided herein or otherwise, the Corporation may maintain insurance, obtain a letter of credit, act as self-insurer, create a reserve, trust, escrow, cash collateral, or other fund or account, enter into indemnification agreements, pledge or grant a security
interest in any assets or properties of the Corporation, or use any other mechanism or arrangement whatsoever in such amounts, at such costs, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Directors shall deem appropriate. Absent fraud, the determination of the Board of Directors with respect to such amounts, costs, terms, and conditions shall be conclusive against all security holders, if any, officers, and Directors and shall not be subject to voidability.

Section 5.05. Payment of Indemnification. An indemnified representative who is entitled to indemnification shall be entitled thereto within 30 days after a written request for such indemnification has been delivered to the Secretary of the Corporation.

Section 5.06. Indemnification Procedure.

(a) An indemnified representative shall use such indemnified representative’s best efforts to notify promptly the Secretary of the Corporation of the commencement of any proceeding or the occurrence of any event which might give rise to a liability under this Article, but the failure so to notify the Corporation shall not relieve the Corporation of any liability which it may have to the indemnified representative under this Article or otherwise.

(b) The Corporation shall be entitled, upon notice to any such indemnified representative, to assume the defense of any proceeding with counsel reasonably satisfactory to the indemnified representative, or a majority of the indemnified representatives involved in such proceeding if there be more than one. If the Corporation notifies the indemnified representative of its election to defend the proceeding, the Corporation shall have no liability for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) of the indemnified representative incurred in connection with the defense of such proceeding subsequent to such notice, unless (i) such expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) have been authorized by the Corporation, (ii) the Corporation shall not in fact have employed counsel reasonably satisfactory to such indemnified representative or indemnified representatives to assume the defense of such proceeding, or (iii) it shall have been determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) that the indemnified representative was entitled to indemnification for such expenses under this Article or otherwise. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the indemnified representative may elect to retain counsel at the indemnified representative’s own cost and expense to participate in the defense of such proceeding.

(c) The Corporation shall not be required to obtain the consent of the indemnified representative to the settlement of any proceeding which the Corporation has undertaken to defend if the Corporation assumes full and sole responsibility for such settlement and the settlement grants the indemnified representative an unqualified release in respect of all liabilities at issue in the proceeding. Whether or not the Corporation has elected to assume the defense of any proceeding, no indemnified representative shall have any right to enter into any full or partial settlement of the proceeding without the prior written consent of the Corporation (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), nor shall the Corporation be liable for any amount paid by an indemnified representative pursuant to any settlement to which the Corporation has not so consented.

(d) Any dispute related to the right to indemnification as provided under this Article shall be decided only by arbitration in the metropolitan area in which the principal executive offices of the Corporation are located at the time, in accordance with the commercial arbitration rules then in effect of the American Arbitration Association, before a panel of three arbitrators, one of whom shall be selected by the Corporation, the second of whom shall be selected by the indemnified representative, and the third of whom shall be selected by the other two arbitrators. In the absence of the American Arbitration Association, or if for any reason arbitration under the arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association cannot be initiated, and if one of the parties fails or refuses to select an arbitrator, or the arbitrators selected by the Corporation and the indemnified representative cannot agree on the selection of the third arbitrator within 30 days after such time as the corporation and the indemnified representative have each been notified of the selection of the other’s arbitrator, the necessary arbitrator or arbitrators shall be selected by the presiding judge of the court of general jurisdiction in such metropolitan area. The party or parties challenging the right of an indemnified representative to the benefits of this Article shall have the burden of proof. The Corporation shall reimburse an indemnified representative for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending such arbitration. Any award entered by the arbitrators shall be final, binding and nonappealable and judgment may be entered thereon by any party in accordance with applicable law in any court of competent jurisdiction, except that the corporation shall be entitled to interpose as a defense in any such judicial enforcement proceeding any prior final judicial determination adverse to the indemnified representative under Section 5.01(a)(2) or(3) in a proceeding not directly involving indemnification under this Article. This arbitration provision shall be specifically enforceable.

(e) Upon a payment to any indemnified representative under this Article, the Corporation shall be subrogated to the extent of such payment to all of the rights of the indemnified representative to recover against any person for such liability, and the indemnified representative shall execute all documents and instruments required and shall take such other action as may be necessary to secure such rights, including the execution of such documents as may be necessary for the Corporation to bring suit to enforce such rights.

Section 5.07. Discharge of Duty. An indemnified representative shall be deemed to have discharged such person’s duty to the Corporation if he or she has relied in good faith on information, advice or an opinion, report or statement prepared by:

(a) one or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom such indemnified representative reasonably believes to be reliable and competent with respect to the matter presented;
(b) legal counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters that the indemnified representative reasonably believes are within the person’s professional or expert competence; or

(c) a committee of the Board of Directors on which he or she does not serve as to matters within its area of designated authority, which committee he or she reasonably believes to merit confidence.

Section 5.08. Contract Rights: Amendment or Repeal. All rights to indemnification under this Article shall be deemed a contract between the Corporation and the indemnified representatives pursuant to which the Corporation and each indemnified representative intend to be legally bound. Any repeal, amendment or modification hereof shall be prospective only and shall not affect any rights or obligations then existing.

Section 5.09. Scope of Article. The indemnification of indemnified representatives, as authorized by this Article, shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any statute, agreement, vote of the General Assembly or disinterested Directors or otherwise, both as to action in an official capacity and as to action in any other capacity. The indemnification provided by or granted pursuant to this Article shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an indemnified representative in respect of matters arising prior to such time, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators and personal representatives of such a person.

Section 5.10. Reliance on Provisions. Each person who shall act as an indemnified representative of the Corporation shall be deemed to be doing so in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided by this Article.

ARTICLE VI
Miscellaneous

Section 6.01. Corporate Seal. The Corporation shall have a corporate seal in the form of a design adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with the words: “GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION CORPORATION—FOUNDED 1799 PENNSYLVANIA.”

Section 6.02. Checks. All checks, notes, bills of exchange, or other orders in writing shall be signed by such person or persons as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Section 6.03. Contracts. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or to execute or deliver any instrument on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 6.04. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon the order of, or checks signed by or bearing the authorized facsimile signature of such one or more officers, employees, or agents as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. The name or accounts to which such deposits are made, and the name of the Corporation on checks drawn against such accounts may be “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”, and may include such other words including the name of the Corporation and an appropriate designation to identify by purpose or otherwise. Funds of the Corporation may also be deposited with the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.05. Annual Report of Directors: Accounting System.

(a) The Board of Directors shall direct the President and Chief Financial Officer to present at a regular meeting of the Board in every year a report, verified by such officer, showing in appropriate detail the following:

(1) The assets, liabilities, and fund balances, including the trust funds, of the Corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report.

(2) The principal changes in assets, liabilities, and fund balances, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report.

(3) The revenue and receipts of the Corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(4) The expenses or disbursements of the Corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(b) The annual report shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting of the Board and shall be transmitted to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
Section 6.06. Choice of Law and Forum. The Corporation shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and all actions of any nature shall be brought in the courts of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Section 6.07. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted either (1) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days’ written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (2) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. The substance of any proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall first be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Section 6.08. Constituent Corporations. A list of Constituent Corporations is attached hereto as Appendix A. The bylaws of the Constituent Corporations shall conform to the laws of the state in which the Constituent Corporation is chartered and shall be, in so far as legally possible consistent with these bylaws.

ANNEX A
CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION CORPORATION

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)
2. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC. (Incorporated in North Carolina)
3. THE HUBBARD PRESS (Incorporated in Ohio)
4. PEDCO, INC. (Incorporated in Delaware)
5. PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC. (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
6. PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)
7. BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
8. COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL MISSION AND RELATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)
9. THE WOMAN’S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)

EXHIBIT C
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by act approved March 28, 1799 (P.L. 379), incorporated the “Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America” (the “Church Corporation”) as the corporate agency of the Ministers and Elders constituting the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, said act of incorporation was supplemented by the act of March 23, 1865 (P.L. 648); and

WHEREAS, the charter of the Church Corporation was amended pursuant to the Corporation Act of 1874, act of April 29, 1874 (P.L. 73), by decree of Court of Common Pleas No. 4 of Philadelphia County (the “Court”) entered October 17, 1885, at September Term, 1885, No. 422, which decree was duly recorded on October 27, 1885, in the Office for the Recording of Deeds in and for Philadelphia County (the “Office for the Recording of Deeds”) in Charter Book No. 10, page 512; and

WHEREAS, the Trustees of the Presbyterian House, a Pennsylvania corporation created by the act of April 21, 1855 (P.L. 575), was merged with and into the Church Corporation by decree of the Court entered October 17, 1885, at September Term.
WHEREAS, the amount of property which the Church Corporation is authorized to hold was increased pursuant to the Act of June 6, 1893 (P.L. 324), by decree of the Court entered June 20, 1910, at September Term, 1885, No. 422; and

WHEREAS, the articles of incorporation of the Church Corporation were further amended and restated in full pursuant to the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1933, act of May 5, 1933 (P.L. 289), by decree of the Court entered November 9, 1953, at September Term, 1885, No. 422, which decree was duly recorded on November 9, 1953 in the Department of Records of the City of Philadelphia (the “Department of Records”) in Charter Book No. 158, page 304, whereby, inter alia, the name, style and title of the Church Corporation was changed to “The Foundation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America”; and

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the United Presbyterian Church of North America did on May 28, 1958, unite to form The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and in pursuance thereof the Trustees of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, a Pennsylvania corporation created by the act of March 22, 1860 (P.L. 743), was merged with and into the Church Corporation pursuant to the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1933 by decree of the Court entered September 22, 1958, at September Term, 1885, No. 422, which decree was duly recorded on September 23, 1958, in the Department of Records in Miscellaneous Book No. 219, page 545, and whereby the name, style, and title of the Church Corporation was changed to “United Presbyterian Foundation”; and

WHEREAS, the articles of incorporation of the Church Corporation were further amended pursuant to the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1933 by the filing of Articles of Amendment in the Department of State on October 5, 1970 (Roll 3-1-71-05, Film 548); and

WHEREAS, in and by Section 1(c) of the enactment of May 23, 1972 of the 184th General Assembly (1972) of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the General Assembly expressly designated and declared the Church Corporation to be the corporation which the General Assembly caused to be formed pursuant to Section 1 of Chapter XXXII of the Form of Government of the said Church; and

WHEREAS, the said enactment of May 23, 1972, directed the Board of Trustees of the Church Corporation to amend the articles of incorporation of the Church Corporation in certain respects; and

WHEREAS, the articles of incorporation of the Church Corporation were so amended and restated pursuant to the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1933 by the filing of Articles of Amendment in the Department of State on October 25, 1972 (Roll 3-1-72.47, Film 324); and

WHEREAS, the articles of incorporation of the Church Corporation were amended to change the organization of the corporation to a non-member basis, to make certain other changes in the text of the articles, and to restate the articles as so amended pursuant to the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1972 by the filing of Articles of Amendment in the Department of State on February 16, 1973 (Roll 3-1-73.08, Film 829); and

WHEREAS, the 185th General Assembly (1973) of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America directed that the name, style, and title of the Church Corporation be changed to “The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Corporation”; and

WHEREAS, the articles of incorporation of the Church Corporation were so amended pursuant to the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1972 by the filing of Articles of Amendment in the Department of State on May 31, 1973 (Roll 3-1-73.24, Film 1106); and

WHEREAS, a Statement of Change of Registered Office was filed in the Department of State on November 26, 1973 (Roll 3-1-73.52, Film 852); and

WHEREAS, the articles of incorporation of the Church Corporation were amended and restated to eliminate a reference to a constituent corporation pursuant to the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1972 by the filing of Articles of Amendment in the Department of State on November 3, 1982 (Roll 62-82, Film 1461); and

WHEREAS, The Presbyterian Church in the United States and The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America did on June 10, 1983, reunite to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Church”) pursuant to Articles of Agreement of the Plan for Reunion between The Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (the “Articles of Agreement”); and

WHEREAS, Article 5.4 of the Articles of Agreement directed the General Assembly Council of the reunited Church to develop and present to the General Assembly of the Church a design for the work of, inter alia, the corporate agencies (except the pension corporations) of the General Assemblies of the reuniting Church; and
WHEREAS, on June 17, 1986, the 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), on the recommendation of the General Assembly Council, enacted a deliverance implementing a design for the corporate structure of certain agencies of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in and by Section 1 of the enactment of June 17, 1986, the Church Corporation was directed to divide, effective at the close of business on December 31, 1986, into two corporations, one of which was a central treasury corporation and the other of which was a fiduciary corporation, and it was declared to be the intent and understanding of the General Assembly that both corporations resulting from the corporate division continue as surviving corporations of the original corporation from which the division and separation occurred; that the history and origin of each be from the origin of the dividing corporation, namely, March 28, 1799; that the titles and interests in property allocated to each at the time of division and separation be deemed to be continuations of the same from the time originally acquired; that the trusteeships and other fiduciary relationships, licenses, rulings and privileges of and issued to the dividing corporation be deemed to continue in the fiduciary corporation, and, to the extent relevant to its purposes and activities as contemplated by said enactment, in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and

WHEREAS, it was intended by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, be the successor to the Church Corporation as the principal corporate embodiment of the Church; and

WHEREAS, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) created an Administrative Commission to review the structure of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and

WHEREAS, in and by an enactment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is directed to divide, effective at 11:59 PM on December 31, 2018, into two corporations, one of which will be the mission corporation and principal corporation of the General Assembly and one of which will be the Assembly corporation, and it was declared to be the intent and understanding of the General Assembly that both corporations resulting from the corporate division shall continue as surviving corporations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, that the history and origin of each is from the origin of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Corporation, namely to March 28, 1799; that the titles and interests in property allocated to each at the time of division and separation are deemed to be continuations of the same from the time originally acquired; that the licenses, rulings, and privileges of and issued to the dividing corporation are deemed to continue in the mission corporation, and, to the extent relevant to its purposes and activities as contemplated by said enactment, in the Assembly corporation; and

WHEREAS, all acts and things necessary on the part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation to affect a division of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, have been done and performed;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Office of the General Assembly Corporation does under the provisions of the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988 hereby accept this instrument as the Articles of Incorporation thereof.

Article I. The name of the Corporation is:

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION

Article II. The address of the registered office of the Corporation in this Commonwealth is:

425 Lombard Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19147

Article III. The purpose or purposes for which the Corporation is incorporated are:

(a) To be an integrated auxiliary and a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to act as the Assembly corporation of the General Assembly, which the General Assembly caused to be formed, to perform functions as set forth in the Deliverance approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for the General Assembly and such other General Assembly corporations as the General Assembly shall direct from time to time.

(b) To take, receive, hold, and administer and dispose of any and all manner of lands, tenements, rents, annuities, franchises, hereditaments, moneys, securities, income and property, real and personal, of any kind in any state, territory, or country, which at any time or times heretofore have been or which at any time and from time to time shall hereafter be given, granted, bargained, sold, enfeoffed, relieved, devised, bequeathed, conveyed, transferred, assigned, set over, or delivered by any person or persons, corporations, associations, trusts, foundations or other forms of organization to the Office of the General Assembly Corporation, the Presbyterian Historical Society, Inc., to the predecessors of either, to their use or to the use of any of them, or in trust for them, or any of them, or to them or any of them for the support of any work, activity, purpose, project, or interest of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) within the functions of the Corporation, in which property of any kind of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or this Corporation, have or are intended to have any legal or equitable interest, present or future, vested or contingent.
(c) To acquire and receive moneys, funds, income, securities, and property, real and personal, of any kind or nature whatsoever, in any state, territory, or country, from particular churches, presbyteries, synods, or other agencies or institutions of or related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to be held, administered and invested, reinvested, and kept invested, for this Corporation.

**Article IV.** The Corporation does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise.

**Article V.** The Corporation shall exist perpetually.

**Article VI.** The Corporation is organized on a non-stock basis.

**Article VII.** The Corporation shall have no members.

**Article VIII.** The management and disposition of the affairs and property of the Corporation shall be vested in directors, who shall be selected from time to time in such number and manner and for such terms as the General Assembly may determine. Any or all of such directors may be removed or the number of such directors may be increased or decreased at any time by the General Assembly or by any officer or agency thereof thereunto duly authorized, and successor or additional directors shall be selected in the manner determined by the General Assembly. All the business and affairs of the Corporation shall be conducted by the directors under and subject to the direction of the General Assembly, or any officer or agency thereof thereunto duly authorized, so far as such direction shall be lawful and in accordance with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and of the United States of America.

**Article IX.** All the properties, moneys, and assets of the Corporation are irrevocably dedicated to charitable and religious purposes and shall not inure to the benefit of any private individual. In the event the Corporation shall be dissolved or wound up at any time, then all the properties, moneys, and assets of the Corporation shall be transferred exclusively to and become the property of such nonprofit funds, foundations, or corporations, all the assets of which are irrevocably dedicated to religious and charitable purposes, as are selected and designated by the General Assembly.

**Article X.** These articles of incorporation may be amended in the manner now or hereafter provided by statute, but no material change shall be made in these articles of incorporation without the prior approval of the General Assembly.

**EXHIBIT D**

**BYLAWS**

**of the**

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION**

The Office of the General Assembly Corporation (“Corporation”) is the principal administrative Corporation of and established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the “General Assembly”) to facilitate the management of the corporate administrative affairs of the Office of the General Assembly and any of the agencies of the General Assembly who choose to utilize the administrative services. The Corporation traces its origins to an entity named the “Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,” originally formed on March 28, 1799, by Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**ARTICLE I**

**Office and Fiscal Year**

Section 1.01. **Offices.** The Corporation may have offices at such places within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the Corporation requires.

Section 1.02. **Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January in each year.

**ARTICLE II**

**Board of Directors**

Section 2.01. **Selection of Directors.** The members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be selected and may be removed as follows:

(a) The members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall, by virtue of their offices, be the directors of the Corporation.

All members shall be elected by the General Assembly to a four-year term, and shall be eligible to serve one additional four-year term. A person elected to an unexpired term shall be eligible to serve only one additional four-year term. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“Stated Clerk”) shall serve as an ex-officio member with voice but no vote.
Section 2.02. Directors of the Corporation’s Constituent Corporation. The persons from time to time serving as Directors of the Corporation shall, by virtue of their offices, constitute the Directors or Trustees of the Corporation listed in Annex A hereto (which Corporation so listed is referred to in these bylaws as “Constituent Corporation”).

Section 2.03. Resignations, Removal and Other Vacancies.

(a) Resignation/Removal. Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation, to be effective upon receipt or at a later time stated thereon. Any Director may be removed from office by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all members of the Board of Directors then in office whenever the Board in its judgment believes that the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby.

(b) Disability. If a Director is unable to perform substantially all of his or her duties and responsibilities by reason of illness, injury, or incapacity for a period exceeding six months, such Director shall tender, or shall be deemed to have tendered, his or her resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation. As soon as practicable thereafter (but in any event not later than at its next regularly scheduled meeting), the Board of Directors shall determine whether to accept such resignation.

(c) Vacancies. In case of a vacancy on the Board of Directors by death, disability, resignation, or removal, a successor to fill the unexpired term shall be nominated by the entity who nominated the former Director in the same manner as provided in Section 2.01 of these Bylaws for the selection of Directors.

Section 2.04. Meetings of Directors. Every meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation may be, without further notice or action, a meeting of the Board of Directors or Trustees of the Constituent Corporation as to matters concerning such constituent Corporation.

Section 2.05. Powers; Liability.

(a) The Board of Directors shall have full power to conduct, manage, and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation; and all powers of the Corporation are hereby granted to and vested in the Board of Directors.

(b) A Director of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as may be defined under applicable law and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Director for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or Federal law.

Section 2.06. Organization. The Board of Directors shall elect annually from among the members of the Board a Chair of the Board, who may serve one two-year, non-renewable term, and a vice-Chair of the Board, also for one two-year, non-renewable term. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the chair, or, in the absence of the chair, the vice chair or a chair chosen by a majority of the Directors present, shall preside, and the Secretary, or in the absence of the Secretary, an assistant Secretary, or any person designated by majority vote of the Board or appointed by the Chair as Secretary Pro Tem or Secretary of the Meeting, shall act as Secretary of the meeting and shall record the Minutes of the meeting.

Section 2.07. Place of Meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such place within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint, or as may be designated in the notice of the meeting.

Section 2.08. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time and place as shall be designated from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors; and one such meeting each year shall be designated as a meeting for organization, election of officers, and the election of members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee and officers may also be elected at any other meeting of the Directors. At every regular meeting, the Directors shall transact such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws.

Section 2.09. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held whenever called by the Chair of the Board of Directors or by three or more of the Directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be given to each Director and shall be the greater of (a) 24 hours (in the case of notice in person or by telephone, facsimile transmission, email, or other electronic communication) or 48 hours (in the case of notice by telegram, courier service, or express delivery service) or five days (in the case of notice by mail), or (b) the minimum notice required by applicable law for any Constituent Corporation when the action to be taken by the Board of Directors is solely for the Constituent Corporation, before the time at which the meeting is to be held. Every such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting.

Section 2.10. Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote; directors may not vote by proxy. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a
quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the Secretary of the Corporation. Unanimous written consent may be effected through e-mail by the Directors returning the written consent together with their written signature on or before the announced deadline for returning the consent.

Section 2.11. Executive and Other Committees.

(a) The Board of Directors shall, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors in office, establish an Executive Committee of not less than five members, one of whom shall be the Chair of the Board of Directors. By like action the Board may establish one or more other committees or “other bodies” as such term is defined in 15 Pa.C.S. Sec. 5103(a), each such other committee or body to consist of two or more Directors of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board may be, ex officio a voting member of each such other committee or body except the nominating committee, and shall designate or appoint each particular committee or body chair. The Board may designate one or more Directors as alternate members of any committee or body, who may replace any absent or disqualified member at any meeting of the committee or body. In the absence or disqualification of a member and the alternate or alternates, if any, designated for such member, of any committee or body, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not the member or members constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another Director to act at the meeting in the place of any such absent or disqualified member. Each committee, or body of the Board shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. Any committee member may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors.

(b) The Executive Committee shall have and exercise all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Corporation, except that the Executive Committee shall not have any power or authority as to the following:

(1) The adoption, amendment, or repeal of the articles of incorporation and these bylaws, or the adoption of any amendment of articles or plan of merger, division or consolidation or the approving of the sale, lease or exchange of all or substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or of the dissolution of the Corporation.

(2) The amendment or repeal of any resolutions of the Board.

(3) The filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors thereof.

(c) No committee of the Board of Directors, other than the Executive Committee, shall, pursuant to resolution of the Board of Directors or otherwise, exercise any of the powers or authority vested by these bylaws, or other applicable law in the Board of Directors as such, but any other committee of the Board of Directors may make recommendations to the Board of Directors or Executive Committee concerning the exercise of such powers and authority.

(d) A majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee, or Directors designated to replace them as provided in this section, shall be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the acts of a majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee or their replacements shall be the acts of the committee.

(e) Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report such proceedings periodically to the Board of Directors. Sections 2.08, 2.09, and 2.10 shall be applicable to committees of the Board of Directors, except as to quorum (2.11(d)).

Section 2.12. Compensation and Expenses. Except as permitted by Section 4.15 of these bylaws, no compensation of any kind shall be paid directly or indirectly by the Corporation to, and no loan or other extension of credit shall be made for the benefit of, any Director, as such, or as an officer or employee of the Corporation. Directors may be reimbursed for expenses in a manner consistent with any applicable policies adopted by the General Assembly or the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

ARTICLE III

Notice—Waivers—Meetings

Section 3.01. Notice. What Constitutes. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws. Whenever written notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, it may be given to such person, either personally or by sending a copy thereof by first class mail, postage prepaid, or by email, to his or her address appearing on the books of the Corporation, or in the case of Directors, supplied by the Director to the Corporation for the purpose of notice. If the notice is sent by mail or by email, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the United States mail or upon transmission to such person. A notice of meeting shall specify the place, day, and hour of the meeting and any other information required by law or these bylaws. When a meeting is adjourned pursuant to Section 2.09 of these bylaws for lack of a quorum, it shall not be necessary to give
any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting, other than by announcement at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.

Section 3.02. Waivers of Notice. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section and by Section 6.06 of these bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transacting of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 3.03. Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice. Whenever the language of a proposed resolution is included in a written notice of a meeting, the meeting considering the resolution may without further notice adopt it with such clarifying or other amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

Section 3.04. Conference Telephone Meetings. One or more persons may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, including but not limited to electronic meetings providing video conferencing utilizing telephone or other audio methods, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in the meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. Conference and electronic meetings will follow procedures approved by Board from time to time.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 4.01. Number, Qualifications and Designation. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Chief Financial Officer, one or more Vice Presidents, (including but not limited to executive Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents), a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Controller, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.02 of this Article. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be the President of the Corporation. Any number of the offices may be held by the same person. Officers may, but need not be Directors or members of the Corporation, and shall be natural persons of full age. The Chair of the Board of Directors elected under Section 2.06 shall also be an officer of the Corporation.

Section 4.02. Selection and Term of Office. The officers of the Corporation shall be selected and their terms of office shall be determined as follows:

(a) The President shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and shall be eligible for reelection. Annually other officers of the Corporation shall be nominated by the Personnel/Nominating Committee upon the recommendation of the President and elected by the Board of Directors.

(b) The Board of Directors may from time to time elect such other officers as the business of the Corporation may require, including a Secretary and one or more assistant secretaries, each of whom has such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee of the Corporation the power to elect subordinate or other officers and to retain or appoint employees or other agents, or committees thereof, and to prescribe the authority and duties of such subordinate or other officers, committees, employees or other agents.

Section 4.03. Resignations. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, or to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4.04. Removal. Any elected or appointed officer, may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors or other authority which elected or appointed such officer. The term of any offices held by an employee ends the earlier of the employee’s last day of employment or last day in the office.

Section 4.05. Vacancies. A vacancy in any elective office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board of Directors (where appropriate, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly) or by the authority to which the power to fill such office has been delegated, pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article, as the case may be, and if the office is one for which a term is prescribed by or pursuant to these bylaws, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term. The refusal of the General Assembly to confirm an election, where such confirmation is required by these bylaws, shall result in the creation of a vacancy in the office affected.

Section 4.06. General Powers. All officers of the Corporation, as between themselves and the Corporation, shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be
determined by resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, as may be provided in these bylaws.

Section 4.07. The Chair of the Board. Generally, the Chair of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board of Directors.

Section 4.08. The President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by virtue of office, shall be the President of the Corporation. The President shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. In the event of an extended absence of the President, the President shall assign one of the officers of the Corporation to fulfill the duties of the office during the absence of the President.

Section 4.09. Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation shall be responsible for corporate, financial, and accounting functions. The Chief Financial Officer is authorized to sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the President.

Section 4.10. The Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents are authorized to sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws as well as perform such other duties as may be assigned to them or authorized by the Board of Directors or the President. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Vice Presidents to be accountable to the President or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.11. The Secretary. The Secretary or an Assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall cause to be recorded personally or by an Assistant Secretary or by the person designated by the Chair of the Board as Secretary Pro Tem or Secretary of the meeting, all votes of the Directors and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of committees of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose. The Secretary shall ensure that notices are given and records and reports properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal. In general, the Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary, and such other duties as may be assigned to the Secretary by the Board of Directors, or the President. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Secretary to be accountable to the President or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.12. The Treasurer. The Treasurer or an Assistant Treasurer shall have or provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Corporation and shall keep a separate account of the same as Treasurer; shall collect and receive or provide for the collection and receipt of moneys earned by or in any manner due to or received by the Corporation; shall deposit all funds in such banks or other places of deposit (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation hereinafter “Fiduciary Corporation”) as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the Corporation’s funds, and in general shall discharge such other duties as may be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board of Directors, the President, or Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Treasurer to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position. The CFO may be elected Treasurer.

Section 4.13. The Controller. The Controller shall be responsible for maintaining the chart of accounts, accounting records, and accounting procedures of the Corporation; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the results of operations and financial condition of the Corporation (at least annually) and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Controller by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Controller to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

Section 4.14. Officers’ Bonds. Any officer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office held by such officer in such sum, if any, and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall require, the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

Section 4.15. Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees, and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the authority to which the power to elect such officers or to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been delegated pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article. All compensation shall be consistent with any general compensation structure established by the Board. No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving such compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board of Directors as an officer shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.12 of these bylaws.)
Section 4.16. Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, are covered by the personnel policies, as adopted by the Board and set forth in the Employee Handbook.

ARTICLE V

Indemnification of Directors, Officers, etc.

Section 5.01. Scope of Indemnification.

(a) The Corporation shall indemnify an indemnified representative against any liability incurred in connection with any proceeding in which the indemnified representative may be involved as a party or otherwise, by reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in an indemnified capacity, including without limitation any liability resulting from any actual or alleged breach or neglect of duty, error, misstatement or misleading statement, negligence, gross negligence or act giving rise to strict or products liability, except:

1. where such indemnification is expressly prohibited by applicable law;
2. where the conduct of the indemnified representative has been finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to constitute willful misconduct or recklessness as may be defined by applicable law or any other conduct sufficient in the circumstances to bar indemnification against liabilities arising from the conduct;
3. to the extent the liability is finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to be based upon or attributable to the indemnified representative gaining any personal pecuniary profit to which such indemnified representative was not legally entitled; or
4. to the extent such indemnification has been finally determined in a final adjudication pursuant to Section 5.06(d) to be otherwise unlawful.

(b) If an indemnified representative is entitled to indemnification in respect of a portion, but not all, of any liabilities to which such person may be subject, the Corporation shall indemnify such indemnified representative to the maximum extent for such portion of the liabilities.

(c) The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the indemnified representative is not entitled to indemnification.

(d) For purposes of this Article:

1. “indemnified capacity” means any and all past, present and future service by an indemnified representative in one or more capacities as a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation or a Constituent Corporation, or, at the request of the Corporation, as a Director, officer, employee, agent, fiduciary or trustee of another Corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other entity or enterprise;
2. “indemnified representative” means any and all Directors and officers of the Corporation, including any and all officers elected or committee members, employees, or other agents appointed under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” also means any and all officers, committee members, employees, and other agents elected or appointed under the power delegated to the General Assembly, or to any General Assembly agency under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” shall include any other person so designated by the Board of Directors.
3. “liability” means any damage, judgment, amount paid in settlement (provided, in the case of settlements, that the Corporation shall have given its consent to such settlement in advance of the payment thereof), fine, penalty, punitive damages, excise tax assessed with respect to an employee benefit plan, or cost or expense of any nature (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees and disbursements); and
4. “proceeding” means any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, appeal, or other proceeding of any nature, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigatory, whether formal or informal, and whether brought by or in the right of the Corporation, a class of its security holders, if any, or otherwise.

Section 5.02. Proceedings Initiated by Indemnified Representatives. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Corporation shall not indemnify under this Article an indemnified representative for any liability incurred in a proceeding initiated (which shall not be deemed to include counter-claims or affirmative defenses) or participated in as an intervenor or amicus curiae by the person seeking indemnification unless such initiation of or participation in the proceeding is authorized, either before or after its commencement, by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Directors of the Corporation. This section does not apply to reimbursement of expenses incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending an arbitration
under Section 5.06(d) or otherwise successfully prosecuting or defending the rights of an indemnified representative granted by or pursuant to this Article.

Section 5.03. Advancing Expenses. The Corporation shall pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by a Director or officer and may, by act of the Board of Directors (including the votes or consents of interested Directors), pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by any other indemnified representative in advance of the final disposition of a proceeding, described in Section 5.01 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified representative to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation pursuant to this Article. The financial ability of an indemnified representative to repay an advance shall not be a prerequisite to the making of such advance.

Section 5.04. Securing of Indemnification Obligations. To further effect, satisfy, or secure the indemnification obligations provided herein or otherwise, the Corporation may maintain insurance, obtain a letter of credit, act as self-insurer, create a reserve, trust, escrow, cash collateral or other fund or account, enter into indemnification agreements, pledge or grant a security interest in any assets or properties of the Corporation, or use any other mechanism or arrangement whatsoever in such amounts, at such costs, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Directors shall deem appropriate. Absent fraud, the determination of the Board of Directors with respect to such amounts, costs, terms, and conditions shall be conclusive against all security holders, if any, officers and Directors and shall not be subject to voidability.

Section 5.05. Payment of Indemnification. An indemnified representative who is entitled to indemnification shall be entitled thereto within 30 days after a written request for such indemnification has been delivered to the Secretary of the Corporation.

Section 5.06. Indemnification Procedure.

(a) An indemnified representative shall use such indemnified representative’s best efforts to notify promptly the Secretary of the Corporation of the commencement of any proceeding or the occurrence of any event which might give rise to a liability under this Article, but the failure so to notify the Corporation shall not relieve the Corporation of any liability which it may have to the indemnified representative under this Article or otherwise.

(b) The Corporation shall be entitled, upon notice to any such indemnified representative, to assume the defense of any proceeding with counsel reasonably satisfactory to the indemnified representative, or a majority of the indemnified representatives involved in such proceeding if there be more than one. If the Corporation notifies the indemnified representative of its election to defend the proceeding, the Corporation shall have no liability for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) of the indemnified representative incurred in connection with the defense of such proceeding subsequent to such notice, unless (i) such expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) have been authorized by the Corporation, (ii) the Corporation shall not in fact have employed counsel reasonably satisfactory to such indemnified representative or indemnified representatives to assume the defense of such proceeding, or (iii) it shall have been determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) that the indemnified representative was entitled to indemnification for such expenses under this Article or otherwise. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the indemnified representative may elect to retain counsel at the indemnified representative’s own cost and expense to participate in the defense of such proceeding.

(c) The Corporation shall not be required to obtain the consent of the indemnified representative to the settlement of any proceeding which the Corporation has undertaken to defend if the Corporation assumes full and sole responsibility for such settlement and the settlement grants the indemnified representative an unqualified release in respect of all liabilities at issue in the proceeding. Whether or not the Corporation has elected to assume the defense of any proceeding, no indemnified representative shall have any right to enter into any full or partial settlement of the proceeding without the prior written consent of the Corporation (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), nor shall the Corporation be liable for any amount paid by an indemnified representative pursuant to any settlement to which the Corporation has not so consented.

(d) Any dispute related to the right to indemnification as provided under this Article shall be decided only by arbitration in the metropolitan area in which the principal executive offices of the Corporation are located at the time, in accordance with the commercial arbitration rules then in effect of the American Arbitration Association, before a panel of three arbitrators, one of whom shall be selected by the Corporation, the second of whom shall be selected by the indemnified representative, and the third of whom shall be selected by the other two arbitrators. In the absence of the American Arbitration Association, or if for any reason arbitration under the arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association cannot be initiated, and if one of the parties fails or refuses to select an arbitrator, or the arbitrators selected by the Corporation and the indemnified representative cannot agree on the selection of the third arbitrator within 30 days after such time as the Corporation and the indemnified representative have each been notified of the selection of the other’s arbitrator, the necessary arbitrator or arbitrators shall be selected by the presiding judge of the court of general jurisdiction in such metropolitan area. The party or parties challenging the right of an indemnified representative to the benefits of this Article shall have the burden of proof. The Corporation shall reimburse an indemnified representative for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending such arbitration. Any award entered by the arbitrators shall be final, binding, and non-appealable, and judgment may be entered thereon by any party in accordance with applicable law in any court of competent jurisdiction, except
that the Corporation shall be entitled to interpose as a defense in any such judicial enforcement proceeding any prior final judicial determination adverse to the indemnified representative under Section 5.01(a)(2) or(3) in a proceeding not directly involving indemnification under this Article. This arbitration provision shall be specifically enforceable.

(e) Upon a payment to any indemnified representative under this Article, the Corporation shall be subrogated to the extent of such payment to all of the rights of the indemnified representative to recover against any person for such liability, and the indemnified representative shall execute all documents and instruments required and shall take such other action as may be necessary to secure such rights, including the execution of such documents as may be necessary for the Corporation to bring suit to enforce such rights.

Section 5.07. Discharge of Duty. An indemnified representative shall be deemed to have discharged such person’s duty to the Corporation if he or she has relied in good faith on information, advice or an opinion, report or statement prepared by:

(a) one or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom such indemnified representative reasonably believes to be reliable and competent with respect to the matter presented;

(b) legal counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters that the indemnified representative reasonably believes are within the person’s professional or expert competence; or

(c) a committee of the Board of Directors on which he or she does not serve as to matters within its area of designated authority, which committee he or she reasonably believes to merit confidence.

Section 5.08. Contract Rights: Amendment or Repeal. All rights to indemnification under this Article shall be deemed a contract between the Corporation and the indemnified representatives pursuant to which the Corporation and each indemnified representative intend to be legally bound. Any repeal, amendment, or modification hereof shall be prospective only and shall not affect any rights or obligations then existing.

Section 5.09. Scope of Article. The indemnification of indemnified representatives, as authorized by this Article, shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any statute, agreement, vote of the General Assembly, or disinterested Directors or otherwise, both as to action in an official capacity and as to action in any other capacity. The indemnification provided by or granted pursuant to this Article shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an indemnified representative in respect of matters arising prior to such time, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators, and personal representatives of such a person.

Section 5.10. Reliance on Provisions. Each person who shall act as an indemnified representative of the Corporation shall be deemed to be doing so in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided by this Article.

ARTICLE VI

Miscellaneous

Section 6.01. Corporate Seal. The Corporation shall have a corporate seal in the form of a design adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with the words: “OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CORPORATION—FOUNDED 1799 PENNSYLVANIA.”

Section 6.02. Checks. All checks, notes, bills of exchange, or other orders in writing shall be signed by such person or persons as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Section 6.03. Contracts. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or to execute or deliver any instrument on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 6.04. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon the order of, or checks signed by or bearing the authorized facsimile signature of, such one or more officers, employees, or agents as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. Funds of the Corporation may also be deposited with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

Section 6.05. Annual Report of Directors: Accounting System.

(a) The Board of Directors shall direct the President and Chief Financial Officer to present at a regular meeting of the Board in every year a report, verified by such officer, showing in appropriate detail the following:

(1) The assets, liabilities, and fund balances, including the trust funds, of the Corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report.
(2) The principal changes in assets, liabilities, and fund balances, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report.

(3) The revenue or receipts of the Corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(4) The expenses or disbursements of the Corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(b) The annual report shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting of the Board and shall be transmitted to the General Assembly through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

(c) Financial statements reported on by independent certified public accountants may be statements which have been combined with those of the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.06. Choice of Law and Forum. The Corporation shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and all actions of any nature shall be brought in the courts of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Section 6.07. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted either (1) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days’ written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal, or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (2) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal, or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal, or new bylaws shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. The substance of any proposed amendment, repeal, or new bylaws shall first be approved by the General Assembly.

Section 6.08. Constituent Corporation. A list of Constituent Corporations is attached hereto as Annex A. The bylaws of any Constituent Corporation shall conform to the laws of the state in which the Constituent Corporation is chartered and shall be, in so far as legally possible consistent with these bylaws.

ANNEX A
CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS
OF THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, A CORPORATION

1. THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

EXHIBIT E

1. Property (real, personal, and improvements) located at 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19147, shall remain the property of The Presbyterian Historical Society, Inc., a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation (the “Historical Society”). The Historical Society shall be a constituent corporation of A Corporation, and except as otherwise provided herein, Mission Corporation shall have no further obligations or liabilities with regard to the Historical Society or the assets and liabilities thereof.

2. All equipment, archived materials, collections and supplies located at 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19147, except Mission Corporation, will continue to have access to all Mission Corporation records stored there and shall retain the absolute right to control all access to such records. In the furtherance of the foregoing, Mission Corporation and the Historical Society shall enter into a confidentiality agreement with respect to all Mission Corporation records in the custody of the Historical Society.

3. Personal property (equipment, materials, files, resources [in any medium of expression], and supplies) carried on Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation’s ledgers or inventory lists as designated for the Office of the General Assembly, as well as all cash and investments designated for the Office of the General Assembly.

4. The promissory note of the Historical Society in favor of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. in an initial principal amount of $790,000 (the “Note”, and together with all agreements, instruments, and documents relating thereto, the “Historical Society Loan”). For the avoidance of doubt, the Historical Society Loan shall remain an obligation of the Historical Society, and Mission Corporation shall have no direct or indirect obligations or liabilities with respect to the Historical Society Loan.

5. The Trademark Registration of the seal and symbol for Words and Design of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and any licenses thereof with third parties. The Mission Corporation shall retain an irrevocable, nonexclusive license to use the seal and symbol for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
6. Copyrights for the *Book of Confession*, the *Book of Order*, and any other resources or documents created by employees or contractors of the Presbyterian Historical Society and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, on behalf of the Office of the General Assembly.

7. Defense and any liabilities related to pending litigation as of 12/31/18 related to personal injuries on local church properties, sexual misconduct by employees or agents of local churches or other councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and church property trust clause where the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the General Assembly, and/or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were named as defendant(s) or brought into the litigation by other means, reimbursing General Assembly Mission Corporation for any defense costs or liabilities from time the litigation commenced until transferred to the Office of the General Assembly Corporation.

*Rationale*

The church and all of its boards, whether ecclesiastical, corporate, or both, must represent the diversity of people who are within and without it. Power and authority should never be separated from action or mission, and actions are more important than intent. Therefore, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board believes that it must offer the General Assembly the opportunity to consider a division of the corporate structure in order to ensure that the General Assembly’s mandates and directives for mission are honored and carried out.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has demonstrated relentlessly, since February of 2016, its commitment to reforming itself and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Board recognizes that its work is not done, but it believes that it has shown great diligence in working to find new ways to be more effective and efficient without sacrificing inclusion and diversity.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has had a Governance Task Force in place since receiving the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee in early 2016. The task force was charged with reviewing:

- the size of the Board;
- the composition of the Board, including the process for selection;
- the length of service of Board members, including the ability to serve consecutive terms;
- the roles and responsibilities of Board members;
- the committee structure of the Board;
- the relationship of the Board to and with PC(USA) Agencies, Advisory Committees, Advocacy Committees, and other committees and organizations affiliated with PMA;
- best practices for peer groups, including governance models, board, and committee structures.

The results of the board’s focused work in this area may be seen in revisions to the bylaws of PC(USA), A Corporation, the *Organization for Mission*, and the PMA Manual of Operations … documents that are being presented to the General Assembly through other business items. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board believes that it has embraced the crucial work of reform that was called for by the review committee, evaluating every component of our structural work and seeking to be faithful.

In the process of doing this work, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has become very familiar with the foundational documents on which the work of Presbyterian Mission rests, including the ones listed above, but also lesser known documents such as the appendices to the *Organization for Mission*—a collection of General Assembly directives, known as “deliverances,” and memoranda that lay out the interconnected, interdependent, and collaborative principles that govern the work of all six General Assembly agencies.

The proposal of the Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee regarding Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as of March 1, 2018, seeks to create a body of oversight for the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, with respect to financial, legal, personnel, and corporate matters, so that the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly might focus solely on missional or ecclesiastical matters. This separation of responsibilities is at odds with the holistic view of Reformed Theology that sees the sovereignty of God over all of life. The Confession of 1967 states:

> The church thus orders its life as an institution with a constitution, government, officers, finances, and administrative rules. These are instruments of mission, not ends in themselves. Different orders have served the gospel, and none can claim exclusive validity. A presbyterian polity recognizes the responsibility of all members for ministry and maintains the organic relation of all congregations in the church. It seeks to protect the church from exploitation by ecclesiastical or secular power and ambition. Every church order must be open to such reformation as may be required to make it a more effective instrument of the mission of reconciliation. (*Book of Confessions*, 9:40)

By moving this body of oversight from the body charged with implementing General Assembly mission to an eleven-member body, with only one member representing the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Way Forward Commission and All
Agency Review Committees have increased the likelihood not only of separating mission from administration, but also of creating an additional corporate layer with supervisory powers over mission implementation.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board sees value in a collective approach to providing shared services and agrees with Way Forward and All Agency Review that these functions are not at the core of what it means to be the Presbyterian Mission Agency. However, the creation of such a function should not become an end, in and of itself, divorced from faithful mission practices. To appropriately share services, each Assembly agency first must have its own corporate expression so that it can be viable on its own, then each is free to engage in services with others on an equal footing, and corporate expressions do not determine mission functions. This approach is consistent with Presbyterian polity as established in Book of Order, G-4.0101: “The powers and duties of the trustees shall not infringe upon the powers and duties of the session or the board of deacons.” As an agency of the General Assembly, the duties of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board should not be infringed upon by a separate service corporation.

The Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee are proposing a structure that effectively sets aside the foundational documents that created the A Corp., gave separate expression to the Foundation, and set forth the responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (formerly referred to in these documents as the General Assembly Council). These foundational documents govern the work of the General Assembly through its agencies, not including the Board of Pensions, which was created independently and is separately incorporated.

Under Pennsylvania law, these ecclesial documents are given deference (primacy over secular law); an important component for the separation of church and state.

§ 5107. Subordination of subpart to canon law.

If and to the extent canon law or similar principles applicable to a corporation incorporated for religious purposes sets forth provisions relating to the government and regulation of the affairs of the corporation that are inconsistent with the provisions of this subpart on the same subject, the canon law or similar principles shall control except to the extent prohibited by the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of Pennsylvania.”


The division proposed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the linkage of the General Assembly Mission Corporation to its origins and its relationship to ecclesial “law.” Without this division, the changes to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, run risk of losing the vital connection between Presbyterian mission and congregational life, as separating mission from governance, only furthers the corporatization of the church.

Endnote

i. See the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations, Section I, approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for Transitional term information. [See p. 478.]

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 04-06. See ACREC’s rationale for Item 04-03, p. 426.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-06

Comment on Item 04-06—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-06. COGA affirms and supports the comment of the All Agency Review Committee and the Way Forward Commission on Item 04-06.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk …” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

WFC COMMENT ON ITEM 04-06

Comment on Item 04-06—From the Way Forward Commission (WFC) with the Concurrence of the All-Agency Review Committee.

The Way Forward Commission (“WFC”), with the concurrence of the All Agency Review Committee (“AARC”), advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 04-06 with its action on Recommendation 1. of Item 04-03.
“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.” (Eph. 4:15–16)

Created by the 222nd General Assembly, the WFC was charged to examine and find a new structure paradigm that would address the challenges identified by previous review committees. The commission was aware of the significant struggles our friends and colleagues on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (“PMAB”) have endured, and their deep desire to find a better way forward. And although we appreciate the significant amount of work they have dedicated, we believe their recommendations do not promote the entire body of Christ or build up the whole of our denomination.

As discussed below, the specific recommendation of the PMAB would reinforce existing issues of control and accountability with respect to the PMAB, are contrary to G-4.0101, and are unwise. More broadly, a new deliverance of corporate authority by the General Assembly is not the answer to the lack of focus on implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives that has plagued the PMAB for a number of years. Instead, these concerns should be addressed by the proposals contained in Recommendation 1 of the Way Forward Commission report, Item 04-03.

A. What “A Corp.” Is

“A Corp.” is shorthand for the corporate entity whose official name is “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation,” which can trace its existence back to 1799. A Corp. exists by virtue of the requirement of G-4.0101, which requires “the General Assembly shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained and shall determine a method to constitute the board of trustees by its own rule. The corporation so formed, or individual trustees, shall have the following powers: to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the [General Assembly].” The A Corp allows the General Assembly (including the OGA and PMA) to conduct its business. The current authority of A Corp. was established by a “deliverance” of the 1986 General Assembly, which delivered these powers to A Corp., which at the time was called Central Treasury Corporation. (A “deliverance” is an action of the General Assembly that delivers powers from the General Assembly to a corporation. While the General Assembly can withdraw powers given by a deliverance, to do so it has to specifically act to withdraw the powers “delivered” before it can reassert its own authority over those matters.)

After the reunion of the northern and southern churches, after an initial period when the board of Central Treasury Corporation was elected directly by the General Assembly, membership on the board of the newly named A Corp. was assigned to the General Assembly Council, which was originally conceived to act as an assembly between General Assemblies. The General Assembly Council, after several name changes, has become the PMAB. It no longer acts as an assembly between General Assemblies, but has been reformed in the hope that it would focus on implementing the mission directives set by the General Assembly. However, the members of the PMAB have remained the only members of the A Corp. board of directors—there is no representation on the A Corp board from the ecclesial arm of the corporation, the Office of General Assembly.

B. The Context of Item 04-06

The WFC, together with the AARC, at the direction of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), has been engaged in the process of studying and identifying a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA). This mandate arose in the context of the 2016 review of the PMAB, which found: “Though the PMA has produced good work, it is evident that there are significant weaknesses in a number of areas, including: strategic decision-making and priority-setting; organizational culture and work environment; and collaborative efforts with other General Assembly agencies.” After nearly two years of detailed examination, thousands of hours of intensive engagement with staff at all levels, elected leadership, mid councils, and conversation throughout the denomination, both groups tasked by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) have found that these significant weaknesses remain. Both the WFC and AARC have observed that one of the sources of these significant weaknesses is a board that is not effective at handling corporate governance functions and that focuses far more of its energy on corporate matters than on implementing the mission direction of the church and assisting the General Assembly in determining what mission directions are now needed in our changing world. Just one example of this concern is addressed in our comments to Item 10-04, the PMAB “Work Plan,” which in our view fails to give the General Assembly meaningful insight into how the PMAB intends to accomplish its work over the next two years.

The WFC and AARC, in the context of a broad set of recommendations designed to help our national church to make the space for discernment, to work together as one body in Christ, and to change the way we think and the way we act, recommend to this General Assembly a change in the A Corp board of directors. We do so in the belief that to change the focus of our national church, and particularly the PMAB, we must change its culture.

C. Specific Concerns with a Deliverance to Divide A Corp. into Two Corporations

Item 04-06 arose from the WFC and AARC recommendation (Item 04-03, Recommendation 1) that A Corp. retain its current delegation of powers from the General Assembly, but that the PMAB members be replaced as the board of A Corp. by a diverse board nominated by agencies impacted by the work of A Corp. together with nominees from advocacy committees and at large members. The PMAB’s counterproposal was described at the time by the co-moderator of the PMAB’s Governance
Task Force as a “nuclear option” in opposition to the proposal to replace PMAB members as the board of A Corp. In effect, the PMAB proposal would divide the existing A Corp. into two corporations, and place most of the property now held by A Corp. into a corporation that continues to be controlled by the board of the PMAB. It is unclear whether the PMAB still recommends this multiplication of corporate entities to the General Assembly: while in public statements members of the PMAB have stated that the proposal is intended to put the PMAB in a position to negotiate issues of corporate control, the proposal as of the date of this comment remains business the PMAB is placing before the General Assembly. To the extent that the PMAB does not withdraw this proposal, the WFC, with the concurrence of the AARC, recommends its disapproval for the following reasons:

- Proposing a new corporation for the exclusive use of the PMAB would take the church in the opposite direction from what the 2016 review and our committees’ work have concluded is needed. For many years the PMAB has retained exclusive control of A Corp., which has resulted in the issues identified by the 2016 review, as well as the additional work our two groups have done over the last two years. The separate incorporation proposal does not free the PMAB to focus on mission, but rather would perpetuate those issues of control and accountability.

- The proposal would leave the Office of the General Assembly with a shell corporation to provide for the delivery of shared services and accountability to the General Assembly. This puts the Office of the General Assembly in an even more precarious position than it is now. Further, the Office of General Assembly itself has strongly rejected the proposal to be severed corporately from the missional arm of the PC(USA).

- Serious questions exist as to whether the proposal is constitutional. The Book of Order, G-4.0101, directs the General Assembly for “a corporation” to “receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal …,” not to create a new entity or entities and divide the assets of “A Corp.” to carry out this task.

- The proposal is contrary to the PMAB’s own policy regarding the creation of new corporate entities. In 2007, the predecessor to the PMAB adopted “Criteria and Standards” (attached as Appendix 1) for considering whether a new corporation should be created by the General Assembly. Among other criteria, the PMAB’s own Criteria and Standards require consideration of: (a) whether a separate corporation is needed to accomplish a new mission of the church; (b) whether the existing A Corp. can accomplish the mission objective; and (c) the impact on existing church structures (such as OGA, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc.) that rely on A Corp. to provide services and financial transparency for their work. In advancing its proposal, PMAB has made no effort to address these criteria.

- A Corp. provides services to the General Assembly, and through it, to the entire denomination. It is a mistake to view it as a narrow “shared service” bureau only for PMA and OGA. The money and property it holds is not held solely for PMA and OGA—it is the property of the General Assembly held for the whole church. A Corp. is the denomination’s corporation. It should be managed for the denomination. It should not be divided to create even deeper divisions between agencies that should have a common purpose of serving the whole church.

Apart from its constitutional and practical shortcomings, the proposal to divide A Corp. into two corporations, one of which the PMAB continues to control, is not simply just keeping options open for the PMAB, but rather demonstrates the PMAB has a fundamentally different view than the WFC and AARC of the broader themes that have emerged from our discernment throughout the church and are reflected in our recommendations and administrative actions.

D. Broader Concerns with Any New Deliverance

In the light of critiques of the proposal to divide A Corp., some members of the PMAB have suggested that they may pursue an alternative proposal, presumably by suggesting a substitute for Item 04-06, that creates a new deliverance. Such a new deliverance would not create two corporations, but instead would deliver corporate powers to PMAB without a new incorporation. The WFC, with the concurrence of the AARC, urges the General Assembly that such an action would be both unprecedented and unwise.

In light of statements by PMAB members claiming a deliverance is necessary to accomplish the change in board membership proposed by the WFC and AARC, we received a legal opinion (attached as Appendix 2) from Pennsylvania counsel regarding the issue. To summarize, under Pennsylvania law:

1. There is no legal requirement for a deliverance.
2. There is no requirement in the Book of Order for a deliverance to change the membership of the A Corp. board.
3. There is no requirement in the case law for a deliverance.
4. The Criteria and Standards (attached as Appendix 1) as to creation of new corporations indicate that a deliverance is not actually appropriate here, because no corporation is being created.
The last point is particularly important. As discussed above, PMAB is not, and should not be, a separate corporation. Therefore, it can only create confusion, and potentially a deeper lack of accountability, to give PMAB corporate powers without corporate accountability.

The General Assembly has a different mechanism for delegating authority to the PMAB as an agency of the denomination—amendment of the Organization for Mission. Authority has never been given by the General Assembly to the PMAB through a deliverance. It has been given through the Organization for Mission. Claims that the Organization for Mission is somehow less authoritative than corporate documents ignores our polity and replaces our Presbyterian system of decision-making with the corporate mindset that has created dysfunction at the PMAB.

A Corp. already has, through the 1986 Deliverance, the powers appropriate to the General Assembly’s corporate form, consistent with G-4.0101. No proposal that expands those powers, or that gives PMAB corporate powers without corporate responsibilities is appropriate. Item 04-3, Recommendation 1., allows PMAB to continue to set its budget, control its funds, and to supervise its staff, without the risk and confusion of a new deliverance. Accordingly, the WFC, with the concurrence of the AARC, recommends against approval of any new deliverance as a response to Item 04-06, and instead recommends that the General Assembly answer Item 04-06 with its action on Recommendation 1. of Item 04-03.

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**Item 04-07**

[The assembly answered Item 04-07 by the action taken on Item 04-03, Recommendation 4. See pp. 44, 50.]

* A Resolution to Require Race Audits of the Six PC(USA) Agencies—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Direct the agencies of the PC(USA) to utilize an external, professional race auditor outside the PC(USA) agencies who can best expose systemic bias and prejudice and suggest actions toward becoming racially just and equitable employers. Each agency shall engage with the same outside source in order that all are audited by the same standard.

2. Direct that the agencies of the PC(USA) incorporate this process into their regular six-year General Assembly Agency Review processes.

**Rationale**

The 222nd General Assembly (2016), at the direction of the Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentrism Report (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, pp. 787ff, Item 11-24, Recommendation 1.b.), directed the six agencies of the PC(USA) to “complete organizational reviews of their practices and policies as they impact people of color and racial diversity (known as a ‘race audit’), and to evaluate the potential impacts of future initiatives on people of color and racial diversity.”

In mid-December of 2017, ACREC contacted each of the agencies to see what the agencies could share from their race audit processes and to offer partnership and assistance to them as they worked toward their final reports (due in February of 2018).

The ACREC heard back from four of the six agencies by the time of the submission of this resolution. While grateful for the work that these agencies have done to self-reflect, the responses displayed preliminary work at best (as even acknowledged by one agency). Even when approached with the best of intentions, ACREC notes the inherent inability of any organization to entirely accurately assess and expose its own bias. Fortunately, as Presbyterians, our theology and policy1 undergirds and leads us to this recognition of systemic sin and has been the impetus for the creation of systems of accountability throughout the PC(USA).

Racism is one systemic sin this denomination has committed to working against actively, and that work is one for which the denomination has created clear points of accountability and monitoring, such as the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns. This kind of accountability gives us a more honest perception of ourselves and allows us to make changes and choices necessary to more accurately reflect the realm that God intends.

For these reasons, ACREC sees the necessity of continuing the essential process of exposing racial bias and injustice within our six agencies by engaging outside professionals who are better equipped to uncover those places where systemic and policy biases and injustices exist.

Given the momentum that has already been created by the initial, internal race audit work, now the church has the opportunity to be a leader and model in holding itself accountable to the highest standards of just employment by taking this action and making corrections where necessary.
In God’s mercy, however, work and economic responsibility remain gifts that God bestows on us for the maintenance of our life and that of other creatures. In the Good News of Jesus and in the power of the Spirit, we experience God’s great deliverance of the world from the power of sin, including in economic systems and workplaces of the world. Our workplaces are filled with the struggle between God’s intentions and human corruptions. We are called, as followers of Jesus, to join in this struggle, to seek justice in the midst of injustice, to overcome sin in which we too are complicit. The Reformed tradition supports the view that humans should be fully engaged in service to God and to each other (“God’s Work in Our Hands,” Minutes, 1995, Part I, pp. 424–42).

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-07

Comment on Item 04-07—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports efforts to increase awareness and understand the impacts of racism within the bodies of the PC(USA). The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 11-24, which included resources on race audits and power analysis: https://www.pc-biz.org/-/search/3000155. Other items of business before this assembly lift up race audits and personnel audits for action of agencies of the assembly.

The GACOR is charged to advise and provide counsel to General Assembly entities, including the six agencies to ensure fair and effective access to decision-making and full representation/participation in employment. Race audits are important tools to give feedback on equity and inclusion of an employer. The committee welcomes the opportunity to serve as a partner by sharing its own data analysis to address the emerging areas of growth in the agencies once the race audits are complete.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 04-08

[The assembly answered Item 04-08 by the action taken on Item 04-03. See pp. 44, 50.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

1. Amend Sections V.–VII of the Organization for Mission as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

V. The Presbyterian Mission Agency

Mission, God’s mission, is at the heart of the work to which God calls us. As the Book of Order reminds us:

“In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.” (F-1.01)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is the body of the General Assembly in which are lodged the following responsibilities:

a. to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;

b. to provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;

c. to develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

d. to act in those specific matters assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency by the General Assembly or the Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;

e. to perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.
steward this function, the Board and the Agency shall understand this mission based on the Constitution and General Assembly actions, an accounting of denominational resources, and the interpretation of our times and national context.

Standing between the General Assembly and the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board’s work is to advise the General Assembly regarding mission priorities, programs, and strategies; lead the Agency in implementing the directives of the General Assembly; and then reporting back to the General Assembly with results and additional advice. It is the Board’s responsibility to make the vision for mission become reality, helping to manage the practical problems those visions and dreams might face.

The Board’s work will move in a flow from General Assembly to General Assembly. It begins by advising the General Assembly on mission priorities, programs, and strategies. At a General Assembly, the Board receives guidance and direction. The Board then leads staff in the agency to fulfill those General Assembly directives. The Board oversees and aligns assets toward the fulfillment of those directives in the context for mission, discerning potential shifts in God’s calling. The Board then responds to General Assembly directives, providing advice on revised priorities at the next General Assembly. This process is inclusive, multilayered and cyclical, continuing from each General Assembly to the next. The Board should engage a broad array of stakeholders to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s ability to faithfully respond to the Holy Spirit and align its life with God’s mission. Setting strategy and guiding policy in this way necessitates that the Board employ theological, intercultural, corporate, and legal knowledge all enveloped in prayer.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall advise and respond to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the mission of our church. The primary purpose of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is to lead and coordinate the total mission program. It will cultivate a style of work that emphasizes

- coordination among ministries;
- flexible deployment of resources to match changing needs;
- allocation of funding to reflect stated goals;
- attention to the needs and gifts of congregations;
- effective relationships with all mid councils; and
- holding the vision described without reverting to old patterns.

A. Policy Responsibility

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may recommend churchwide policies to the General Assembly and is responsible for implementing policies established by the General Assembly and for establishing overall procedures for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

B. Planning and Priority Setting

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for carrying out planning and priority-setting processes. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for instituting ongoing review processes.

C. General Assembly Budget

It is the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to recommend to the General Assembly a Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and Program and a Per Capita Budget. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board develops the Mission Budget. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly jointly have responsibility for developing a per capita budget and apportionment.

All restricted and unrestricted funds (principal or income) that support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible are allocated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency and distributed in accordance with procedures approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. In every case the instructions of the donors are carefully followed. Such resources presently include contributions from individuals, congregations, and related organizations; proceeds from wills and bequests; and sales of property and other assets. All funds administered by the Board of Pensions, including dues and earnings on investments, are specifically excluded.\(^1\)

D. Personnel Responsibilities

Regarding the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for the following:

1. Approval of personnel procedures.

2. Approval, annually, of a staff rationale that determines staff commitments for the year. Any staff deployed regionally must be approved as part of the annual staff rationale.
3. Election of the President/Executive Director subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.

4. Annual performance reviews of the Executive Director as specified in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (Appendix 8), and in concurrence with the Presbyterian Mission Agency personnel policies.


6. Approval of compensation guidelines within which salaries are administered.

Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are not eligible for election or selection as staff during the period of their term of service.

E. Reporting

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for submitting a report to the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will report regularly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, keeping the Board fully informed about its work. Matters that involve an exception or a proposed change in Presbyterian Mission Agency procedures, a major shift in program emphasis, or a major budget adjustment, require action by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Issues of social witness policy, advocacy for racial ethnic and women’s concerns, and those related to Presbyterian theological institutions are reported to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly.

F. Elected Leadership

1. Organization of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is a direct expression of the planning and mission understanding of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which is accountable to the General Assembly in this regard. Direction and oversight of the Presbyterian Mission Agency entities is accomplished by deploys a majority of Presbyterian Mission Agency Board members serving as members of Program and Administrative Mission Committees and Audit Committee. The work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is a direct expression of the planning and mission understanding of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which is accountable to the General Assembly in this regard. The number and makeup of the committees and assignments are adjustable to accomplish the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in its mission and to allow flexibility to meet changing emphases in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission. The Mission Committees committees are to be policy, strategy, and planning committees.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board determines the need for area program committees, how many are to be established (specifying the expertise and or experience needed), the terms of service for members, and the duration of the committees’ existence.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures advocacy functions for women and racial ethnic persons, and advisory functions for social witness policy by providing direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board also provides for the development of social witness policy.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the continuation of a committee that includes representatives of each Presbyterian theological institution, and that will review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church, will exercise the governance responsibilities of the church to the schools, and will encourage and enhance cooperation among the church’s theological schools. The committee will be provided direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.

The principal legal corporation is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which receives, holds, and transfers property, and facilitates the management of the church’s corporate affairs. All voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board serve as members of the board of directors of this corporation.

2. Membership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The membership, terms of office, and officers of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be approved by the General Assembly as provided for in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

G. Staff Leadership

1. President/Executive Director

Election and Review—The Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The President/Executive Director is accountable to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Upon election, the President/Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office
until confirmed by the next General Assembly following election. Should the General Assembly refuse to confirm any President/Executive Director, the position becomes vacant immediately. Periodic in-depth reviews of the President/Executive Director are the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The President/Executive Director is elected for a term of four years and may be re-elected for additional terms. Initial four-year terms start on the date that work commences following election. Subsequent four-year terms commence on the day following expiration of the prior term. The President/Executive Director may be dismissed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in conformity with current personnel policies and procedures.

Responsibilities—The responsibilities of the President/Executive Director include:

a. Enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to fulfill its responsibility to the General Assembly;

b. Nurturing relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the other General Assembly agencies, mid councils and racial ethnic caucuses (see Covenant of Understanding);

c. Directing the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

d. Providing leadership to, and administrative oversight of, the staff;

e. Leading the personnel decision-making processes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

f. Coordinating, with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the budget planning process of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

g. Serving a major role in all Presbyterian Mission Agency efforts, including funds development.

h. Leading the Presbyterian Mission Agency in implementing policies and procedures, not limited to those related to inclusiveness, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity;

i. Serving as president of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and

j. Serving as primary spokesperson for Presbyterian Mission Agency program and policies.

Deputy Executive Directors are hired by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director subject to confirmation by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Responsibilities—The Deputy Executive Directors are responsible for the healthy functioning of their areas, as well as for the support of the wider organizational health of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

2. Staff

All staff are staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and are accountable to the President/Executive Director. Mission personnel have shared accountability both to the overseas partner church to which they are assigned and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency through the Deputy Executive Director for Mission.
VI. Presbyterian Mission Agency Relationships

The Presbyterian Mission Agency works in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions to enable the various councils to join together in churchwide expression of the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency shares responsibility with the Office of the General Assembly for the joint office of Mid Council Relations. In addition, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will cooperate in the preparation and presentation of the Per Capita Budget and other opportunities for joint endeavors.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for carrying out the mission program for the General Assembly. The ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are linked together and with the church on behalf of that part of the mission entrusted by God to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for financial and corporate services supporting the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Other relationships include the following committees:

1. **Advocacy and Advisory Committees**

   The Executive Director has the responsibility for the advocacy and advisory committees. All three groups have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

   The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The Committee shall be a prophetic voice for involving racial ethnic people in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color. The committee will also monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of racial ethnic people in the church and in the world.

   The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole.

   The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, is responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. The term “social witness policy” refers to the positions adopted by the General Assembly to express its stance on and guide response to issues in the public order, including their relation to the church’s own life and mission. These positions may take the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, or social involvement reports, as defined in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, p. 65, Forming Social Policy, 2.a.

2. **Committee on Theological Education**

   The Committee on Theological Education has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and their work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry with staff accountability to the director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry. The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to provide an effective linkage between the General Assembly and the theological seminaries of the PC(USA) by: providing a forum through which the church-at-large can express its concerns to the seminaries; interpreting the mission of the denomination’s theological seminaries to the whole church; overseeing the interpretation and administration of the Theological Education Fund (1% Plan); serving as a means for cooperation among the church’s theological seminaries; implementing suggestions made by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions as approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993); serving as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological seminaries other than those of the PC(USA); and working in partnership with mid councils and agencies of the General Assembly to provide for leadership in local congregations, the denomination, and the world.

VII. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, (previously the Central Treasury Corporation—CTC) is a corporate entity of the General Assembly and, as the principal church corporation, will hold title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance, and provide accounting, reporting, and financial services for the General Assembly and its entities. All voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (previously the General Assembly Mission Council GAMC) are members of the board of directors.

The officers of the corporation include a president, an executive vice president and a chief financial officer (“treasurer”), one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, a controller, and an associate treasurer. The president shall be elected by the board
of directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. Ordinarily, the offices of the president and the treasurer are held by the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Deputy Executive Director for Shared Services, respectively.

Responsibility for managing the activities of this corporation is assigned to the Deputy Executive Director for Shared Services and other Shared Services staff who have been elected officers of the corporation under the direction of the president.

The treasurer Chief Financial Officer shall prepare an annual report, audited by a certified public accountant, of the financial position and operations of the General Assembly activities for the General Assembly.

Endnote

1 These responsibilities were part of the Book of Order until 2011, when the new Form of Government was approved, and they were moved to the Organization for Mission.

2. Amend “Values Statement,” “General Assembly Budget Development,” and “Shared Services” sections of Appendix A of the Organization for Mission as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

VALUES STATEMENT FOR FINANCIAL ISSUES

The funding of the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rests on the following principles:

Faithfulness to Jesus Christ—because God loves the world and Christ gave his life, we are called, as individuals and groups, to respond with our lives and resources.

Flexibility—because we believe that the Holy Spirit informs the missional instincts of all God’s people honoring the promises of the past and preparing the promise of the future, we will accommodate regional differences, historical practices, and changing realities.

Respect—because we seek to have the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus, who looked not to his own interests but to the interest of others (Phil. 2:4–5), we will acknowledge the passion of donors through accountable systems and transparently open, informed and inclusive decision-making, acknowledging the many views of mission designed and enacted in every part of the church. We recognize the tension that exists between respecting the passions of donors and encouraging support of our connectional nature, but confess that “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Ps. 24:1–2).

Communication—because we are servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1); we will commit ourselves to frequent interaction with mid councils and individuals, for the purpose of mutual clarification and unity of experience and hope across diverse boundaries.

Therefore, a design for funding Christ’s work throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be consistent with the following core values:

1. A design for funding Christ’s work will recognize stewardship as integral to Christian discipleship:
   ● promoting the biblical concept of tithing,
   ● encouraging stewardship education that is understood as the faithful response of discipleship to God’s gifts in all of life,
   ● requiring the development of stewardship education materials that are creative, attractive, clear, and affordable.

2. A design for funding Christ’s work will appeal to the passions and values of members, pastors, mid councils, and benefactors:
   ● communicating to the head and heart of the people of God
   ● engaging the donor in the mission of the church
   ● recognizing that everyone is a beneficiary of God’s grace, and everyone benefits from joyful stewardship.

3. A design for funding Christ’s work will be transparent and accountable:
   ● honoring donor intent,
   ● offering easily understood opportunities for giving,
meeting clear standards of accountability for pastors, sessions, and potential donors.

4. A design for funding Christ’s work will utilize our connectionalism, recognize our interdependence, and demonstrate our partnership in mission:
   ● emphasizing the value of interpersonal relationships,
   ● encouraging the more inclusive council to facilitate the mission of its constituent members,
   ● encouraging the less inclusive council to participate in the mission of the church beyond its bounds,
   ● encouraging mutual investment of time and resources among mid councils and constituent members recognizing that Presbyterians are the primary base of support for Presbyterian missions, and affirming the importance and priority of funding Presbyterian validated mission.

5. A design for funding Christ’s work will emphasize information sharing between mid councils leading to a dynamic mission and vision:
   ● placing mid councils in structural and interactive relationships,
   ● valuing the wisdom of other mid councils,
   ● recognizing the need for consultation prior to engaging in ministries beyond one’s bounds.

6. A design for funding Christ’s work will encourage two-way communications:
   ● welcoming and encouraging a flow of information and feedback,
   ● recognizing that information sharing benefits the whole church,
   ● encouraging face-to-face communication when possible.

7. A design for funding Christ’s work will honor historic relationships:
   ● recognizing that previous funding systems had value and may continue to inform the development of new funding systems,
   ● requiring careful investigation of current funding partnerships before altering or eliminating those partnerships.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

A. Mission Budget Cycle

The Mission Budget will be developed in budget cycles. Each budget cycle will consist of two consecutive calendar years, where the first year is the year following a biennial General Assembly meeting (e.g., 2008 General Assembly, 2009/2010 budget cycle). A separate budget will be developed for each year within the cycle.

B. Basic Mission Direction

1. The Mission Work Plan is adopted by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and provides the framework for the two-year budget cycle.

2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will develop proposals that will advance the Mission Work Plan.

3. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will recommend a budget to the General Assembly that will provide the funding to fulfill the goals in the Mission Work Plan for the budget cycle.

C. The Proposed Budget

1. At the second Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting of the year prior to the budget cycle, (e.g., May of 2008 for the 2009/2010 budget cycle), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will review the budget presented by the Deputy Executive Director for Shared Services Chief Financial Officer and recommend to the General Assembly a proposed budget for the budget cycle that embodies the Mission Work Plan and describing the work to be added or deleted as part of the recommendation. The Executive Committee will recommend a budget if, for any reason, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board does not make a recommendation.
2. At the General Assembly during the year before the budget cycle (e.g., 2008 General Assembly for the 2009/2010 budget cycle), the appropriate assembly committee of the General Assembly will receive the report of the Mission Work Plan and the proposed budget for approval and recommendation to the full assembly.

3. The appropriate assembly committee of the General Assembly will recommend a balanced budget for each year in the budget cycle, incorporating work from the proposed budget and overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, and other actions of the General Assembly, for approval as the outline of work for the budget cycle. The General Assembly may make decisions to add or subtract any element to or from proposed budgets. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will then make appropriate adjustments.

D. The Detailed Budget

1. Detailed Budget Development
   a. Following the General Assembly, the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency will review the changes made by the assembly and adjust the budget accordingly. Further, in the second year of the budget cycle, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will develop the budget for the subsequent assembly as outlined in the Manual of Operations and under the leadership of the Executive Committee, detailed implementation of the Mission Work Plan as approved by the General Assembly will be outlined, and work responsibility assigned.
   b. Under the management of Shared Services and with specific involvement by the ministry areas, a detailed budget proposal that encompasses the work approved by the General Assembly will be developed for each year in the budget cycle.

2. Approval of the Detailed Budget

At its third meeting of the year prior to each budget cycle (e.g., September 2008 for the 2009/2010 budget cycle), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will review both the detailed budget for the following year and the most up-to-date financial information. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will review the adequacy of the Executive Committee’s response to the General Assembly directives in the adopted budget and, after any necessary changes, approve the detailed budget for the following year with particular expenditures by organizational entity displaying both budget offices and relatedness to the basic Mission Work Plan.

E. Budget Monitoring

1. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will monitor the accomplishment of the Mission Work Plan and the appropriate expenditure of funds throughout the budget cycle.

2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will report to each biennial General Assembly on the results of the work undertaken during the previous two budget years (e.g., 2008 General Assembly for budget years 2006 and 2007), including full disclosure of the financial results of each year and other information related to the financial condition of the church. These two budget years will not be within the same budget cycle.

F. Roles and Responsibilities in Developing Budgets

1. The General Assembly does the following:
   a. Determines churchwide mission goals upon which budget development will be based.
   b. Has the authority to institute and terminate programmatic emphases and activity.
   c. Upon recommendation from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, approves both the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program and the Per Capita Budget.

2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board does the following:
   a. Implements General Assembly decisions regarding (1) Mission Work Plan goals and objectives and (2) programmatic activity.
   b. Recommends a Mission Work Plan for each budget year to the General Assembly, after appropriate consultation.
   c. Presents the budget to the General Assembly.
   d. Approves detailed budgets based upon General Assembly action.
   e. Oversees programmatic activity funded through the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board related work from the Per Capita Budget.
3. The Deputy Executive Director for Shared Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the following:
   a. Manages the process for budget development, in consultation with the Board.
   b. Prepares budget presentations for both the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.

4. The Deputy Executive Director for Mission is responsible for the following:
   a. Prepare descriptions of programmatic activities in appropriate form for budget consideration, reflecting the adopted Mission Work Plan goals.
   b. Develop detailed budgets based on budget allocations made by the General Assembly and as instructed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

G. Per Capita Budget

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) jointly have responsibility for developing a per capita budget and apportionment for recommendation to the General Assembly. The per capita budget will be prepared using timelines similar to those for the General Assembly mission budget.

SHARED SERVICES

Shared Services is accountable to the Executive Director and carries out the following responsibilities.

A. To provide accounting and reporting services for
   1. the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its ministry areas, and certain related bodies and committees;
   2. the Office of the General Assembly;
   3. other entities as requested on a fee-for-service basis; and
   4. synod, presbytery, and session finance officers, as appropriate.

B. To perform and establish policies and procedures for the following functions of
   1. controller/financial accounting controls, general ledger maintenance, general accounting, financial reporting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, church and student loans, payroll, budgeting, fixed asset management, overseas accounting, inventory control, and project accounting;
   2. treasury/central receiving service, bank relations and services, overseas treasury service (as appropriate), foreign exchange, short-term investments, working capital/cash management, and endowment and revenue accounting;
   3. financial planning, capital planning and economic forecasting, and financial modeling;
   4. property maintenance and management including acquisitions, gifts, leases, and dispositions, purchasing and print services, and mail services;
   5. establishing standards for receiving sites throughout the church in consultation with other parts of the church;
   6. distribution management services, including order processing, customer services, warehousing, and shipping.

C. To ensure that no payment of any expenditure is made in excess of the total budget approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each Deputy Executive Director to ensure that expenditures for their respective areas are within the approved budget before commitments are made.

D. To maintain all financial records and prepare quarterly reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and monthly reports to the executive staff leadership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

E. To prepare and present the annual report of the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets, and Statement of Cash Flows of the General Assembly that will be audited by a certified public accountant and presented to the General Assembly.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has been in an extended season of discernment and re-shaping following the 2016 work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee and related actions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). We have had dozens of conversations with stakeholders regarding the work of the agency. The major result has been an overhaul
of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s *Manual of Operations*. The *Organization for Mission* is one part of the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Chapter IV of the *Organization for Mission* deals with “General Assembly Officers and Committees and the Office of the General Assembly.” As such, the responsibility for recommending revisions rests with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. For other chapters it is the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to recommend revisions.

The PMA Board is recommending changes to Chapter V ("The Presbyterian Mission Agency"), Chapter VII (“Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation”) and Appendix A (“Financial Issues”) in order to bring them into line with proposals adopted by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board relative to governance matters and in some cases to update them to be consistent with current staffing practices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

### Item 04-09

[The assembly approved Item 04-09 with amendment. See pp. 44, 50–51.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the revised Sections I. and V. of the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Manual of Operations* as follows: [Current text is to be deleted in Sections I. and V. and the new text below would be inserted.]

**PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD**

**MANUAL OF OPERATIONS**

I. Manual

A. Authoritative Documents

This Manual of Operations shall be in compliance with and subordinate to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), General Assembly Deliverances, the Organization for Mission, the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, and General Assembly actions directing and guiding the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

B. Role and Responsibilities

Mission, God’s mission, is at the heart of the work to which God calls us. As the *Book of Order* reminds us:

“... In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.” (F.101)

In service to the agency as it fulfills its place in this, the Church’s calling, the primary purpose of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Board) is to lead and coordinate the mission program of the General Assembly. In order to steward this function, the Board and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Agency) shall understand this mission based on the authoritative documents, an accounting of denominational resources, and the interpretation of our times and national context.

Standing between the General Assembly and the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board’s work is to advise the General Assembly regarding mission priorities, programs and strategies; lead the Agency in implementing the directives of the General Assembly; and then reporting back to the General Assembly with results and additional advice. It is the Board’s responsibility to make the vision for mission become reality, helping to manage the practical problems those visions and dreams might face.

The Board’s work will move in a flow from General Assembly to General Assembly. It begins by advising the General Assembly on mission priorities, programs and strategies. At a General Assembly, the Board receives guidance and direction. The Board then leads staff in the agency to fulfill those General Assembly directives. The Board oversees and aligns assets toward the fulfillment of those directives in the context for mission, discerning potential shifts in God’s calling. The Board then responds to General Assembly directives, providing advice on revised priorities at the next General Assembly. This process is inclusive, multilayered, and cyclical, continuing from each General Assembly to the next. The Board should engage a broad array of stakeholders to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s ability to faithfully respond to the Holy Spirit and align its life with God’s mission. Setting strategy and guiding policy in this way necessitates that the Board employ theological, intercultural, corporate, and legal knowledge all enveloped in prayer.
C. Composition

Membership

a. Voting and Non-Voting Members

The Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is currently composed of twenty voting members. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is currently composed of twenty-nine members (twenty voting and nine nonvoting). Elected members serve a four-year term, and may be reelected for one additional four-year term.

(1) Voting Members

(a) Elected Membership (19)

(i) 15 at-large members

(ii) 1 member from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

(iii) 1 member from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

(iv) 1 member from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

(v) 1 member from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

(b) Ex-officio Member (1)

The current moderator of the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women

(2) Non-voting (corresponding) members (9)—with voice

(a) Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director

(b) Moderator of the General Assembly

(c) Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

(d) Board of Pensions President

(e) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation President
b. **Inclusiveness and Diversity**

(1) General Assembly policies ensure that elected bodies represent the wealth of diverse gifts found in the church and provide a means to share responsibilities and decision making. The General Assembly Nominating Committee provides for diversity and inclusiveness in the Board’s membership. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board identifies needed gifts and talents for its work as a matter of practical assistance for the work of the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The General Assembly Committee on Representation monitors the work of the General Assembly Nominating Committees, as well as the appointment of committees and task forces by the Board.

(2) It is the policy of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to use expansive language when referring to God and inclusive language when referring to God’s people.

**D. Election and Confirmation of the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency**

1. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be responsible for recruiting, calling, electing, supervising, and if necessary terminating the employment of the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The election of the Executive Director is to a four-year term, with the possibility for renewal, and is subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. Upon election, the Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office until confirmed by the next General Assembly (Organization for Mission, Section V.G.).

2. The Executive Director reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Coordinating Committee and the Board itself. The Executive Director shall provide direction, leadership, and coordination for the total mission program of the denomination. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall have a comprehensive Executive Director performance review process documented in its internal manual.

**E. Conduct of Business**

Meetings shall be held consistent with the provisions of G-3.0105, including:

1. Meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

2. Business shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*. Processes of discernment may be used prior to a vote by the body.

**[F. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation**

[Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is the principal corporation of the General Assembly. The voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are, by virtue of their offices, the directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. The directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, are, by virtue of their offices, the directors or trustees of each constituent corporation listed below:

1. **GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC.** (Incorporated in Georgia)

2. **THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESbyterian AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC.** (Incorporated in North Carolina)

3. **THE HUBBARD PRESS** (Incorporated in Ohio)

4. **PEDCO, INC.** (Incorporated in Delaware)

5. **THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY** (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

6. **PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC.** (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

7. **PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC.** (Incorporated in Georgia)

8. **BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)** (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
V. Amendment Process

A. Amendments to the Manual of Operations

1. Individual Presbyterian Mission Agency Board members or members of the Executive Director’s Office staff may submit proposed changes to the Manual of Operations in writing to the Board Chair a minimum of one month prior to a Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting.

2. The Board Chair shall respond to submissions a minimum of two weeks prior to a Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting.

3. Approval by the Coordinating Committee is necessary prior to consideration by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.


5. Changes to Sections II–IV of the Manual of Operations require approval by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. A written report of changes to Sections II–IV shall be submitted to the General Assembly as an information item.

6. Documents included in this Manual on the basis of General Assembly action, such as the Open Meeting Policy, may not be amended without General Assembly approval.

B. Amendments to other Manuals

1. The manuals of several other committees (Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), Committee on Theological Education, Mission Responsibility through Investment Committee, Mission Development Resources Committee, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and the United States Advisory Committee for the Jinishian Memorial Program) must be consistent with this Manual of Operations.
2. Proposed changes to their manual of operations shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, through the Coordinating Committee, following customary procedures, for adoption or rejection.

3. By action of the General Assembly in 2016 and 2014 respectively, changes to the operating manuals for the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, are reviewed and approved by the General Assembly Review Committee, which oversees their work on a six-year cycle, rather than the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Endnotes

1. Transitional Elements—(this footnote will be deleted following the 224th General Assembly (2020)). In order to affect a gradual transition in the size of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board:
   a. The reduction of Board size (from 40 voting and 17 non-voting to 20 voting and 9 non-voting) will be accomplished by a process of attrition overseen by the General Assembly Nominating Committee with respect to elected members. Other changes, regarding ex-officio and corresponding members, will take place immediately.
   b. Individuals, including at-large members of committees, elected to Board service prior to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) regarding this Manual of Operations, may continue to be eligible for election in their current roles until their original eligibility has been exhausted.
   c. Any members elected prior to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to fill unexpired terms shall be eligible for nomination to an additional four-year term.

2. “As long as the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, remains the same as the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, five voting members will be from the following: (a) Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, (b) Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, (c) Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, (d) Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, (e) Presbyterian Women, Inc.” (Action of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (September 2017).

3. Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (“PW”), a Delaware corporation, was incorporated in 2009 as an entity related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., as an integrated auxiliary. The covenant-based Institutional Relationship Agreement between PW and the Presbyterian Mission Agency provides this ex-officio membership with voice and vote on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. A member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board also serves on the PW corporate Board with voice and vote.

4. “Attorney-in-fact” means authorized agent, and the Corporation is given this authority by the 1986 Deliverance and by a Limited Power of Attorney from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approved the above changes. Changes to the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations* must be approved by the General Assembly.

In February of 2016, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board created the Governance Task Force:

to complete a comprehensive review of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) governance model and bring final recommendations to the Board’s September 2017 meeting, for submission to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), regarding:

1. the size of the Board;
2. the composition of the Board, including the process for selection;
3. the length of service of Board members, including the ability to serve consecutive terms;
4. the roles and responsibilities of Board members;
5. the committee structure of the Board;
6. the relationship of the Board to and with PC(USA) agencies, advisory committees, advocacy committees, and other committees and organizations affiliated with PMA; and
7. best practices for peer groups, including governance models, board and committee structures.

Methodology

In conducting its work over the past twenty-three months, the task force held dozens of telephonic and in-person meetings. In addition, members of the task force engaged in numerous conversations with the leaders of the Way Forward Commission, All Agency Review, the other PC(USA) agencies, the advisory and advocacy committees, and other committees and organizations affiliated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).
In September of 2017, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approved in concept a raft of proposals, and directed that they be codified into a new Manual of Operations. In February of 2018, a new Manual of Operations was presented to the Board for approval, and recommendation to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Proposal Overview

The driving purpose of each of these changes is to advance PMA’s ministry and mission, indeed the ministry and mission of the whole church, and to ensure that it is more effective and efficient, focused on being the body of Christ in the world. The directional goals of the Mission Work Plan help lead us toward that outcome:

- Evangelism and Discipleship
- Servant Leader Formation
- Justice and Reconciliation

Subject areas include:

1. Size of Board

Our research suggests that the current Board size (40 voting members + 15 corresponding members + 2 ecumenical advisory members + 4 at-large committee members) is too large for effective collective discernment and governance. The current differentiation of membership categories creates confusion for participants regarding who has a vote and builds a hierarchical system that challenges the equality of members. This is often seen when the Executive Committee needs to convene for decision-making between full Board meetings. The large size also creates the impression that individual choices do not matter—that someone else on the Board will pick up the task or will represent diversity.

Best practices indicate that a smaller Board will produce a more engaged process of discernment and oversight. In September of 2017, the Board voted to recommend that as long as the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board also serves as the Board of Directors for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, that Board have fifteen at-large members, one member each from four related committees, and an ex-officio member from Presbyterian Women. Non-voting members would include the senior staff position from each of the General Assembly Agencies and the General Assembly Moderator.

2. Composition of Board (Including Process for Selection)

The current model for acquiring Board members relies first on nominations based on geography and membership in groups within the church and is not concerned with diversity of qualifications. This restricts the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and a few members are added as at-large committee members, without concern for diversity, in order to gain the needed skills. The Board believes that the General Assembly Nominating Committee process is capable of ensuring inclusivity and geographic representation without additional restrictions being placed by the Manual of Operations, so that sufficient social, ecclesial, and skill diversity may be present on the Board.

3. Length of Service (and Multiple Terms)

Currently Board members are elected to serve one, nonrenewable six-year term. Our research shows that in today’s mobile society, individuals often have difficulty making a six-year commitment to a Board. At each General Assembly, multiple members have been elected to fill unexpired terms. At the same time, it does take a few years of experience for new members to learn the scope of the ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Our proposal calls for members to be elected to a four-year term, with the opportunity of election for one additional four-year term. We believe this will help address the needs of a mobile society, while also allowing individuals to develop long-term expertise with the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

4. Relationship of the Board to and with PC(USA) Agencies, Advisory Committees, Advocacy Committees, and Other Committees and Organizations Affiliated with PMA

Currently the Board maintains these relationships through a combination of receiving corresponding members and sending members to serve on other bodies in a variety of capacities. These two categories will be addressed separately: Corresponding Members and Deployments.

- Corresponding Members—The Board currently has fifteen corresponding members: two from each of the other agencies (chair and executive), one each from the three advocacy and advisory committees, one rotating seat from the Committee on Theological Education, and our own Executive Director. The current model has not been effective at ensuring a relationship between the other entities and the Board. It has not facilitated communication to and with the full Board. In addition, several of the corresponding members have not made Board meeting attendance a priority.
Our proposal calls for reducing the number of corresponding members to seven: one from each of the six General Assembly agencies (including our own Executive Director) and the General Assembly Moderator.

- **Ecumenical Advisory and Committee At-Large Members**

Currently, the Board has two ecumenical advisory members (with voice in plenary and voice/vote in committee), two at-large Finance Committee members (with voice/vote in committee, and voice in plenary on financial matters), and two at-large Audit Committee members (with voice/vote in committee and voice in plenary on matters relating to the audit function). The members serve a two-year term, and may be reelected for two additional two-year terms.

Our proposal is to allow the current members serving in these roles to finish their terms and any remaining future eligibility, but then not to continue with these forms of membership in the new governance structure.

Ecumenical collaboration will be continued through the ecumenical advisory members.

Committee at-large members have brought needed professional experience to the work of the Board, but in the new model, the primary qualifier for Board service would be professional expertise. Therefore, these positions will not be needed.

5. **Organization of the Manual of Operations**

The former Manual of Operations contained multiple appendices in addition to the Manual. The Manual section required General Assembly approval. Appendices were authoritative upon Board approval, but were not well-organized, making it difficult for Board members to have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities.

In this revision, the organization of the Manual has changed.

- Section I is the traditional Manual.
- Section II combined all items related to Board Operations.
- Section III focuses on Staff Operations.
- Section IV deals with relationships with other organizations
- Section V describes the amendment process, and maintains the General Assembly’s oversight of Section I and authorizes the Board to approve Sections II–IV.

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**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-09**

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 04-09.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports this item and recommends its approval. ACREC acknowledges the need for diverse voices representing persons of color participating in the decision-making of the PMA. The recommended change in board size and membership is a proactive change and acknowledges the critical importance of the partnership with and the work of ACREC and ACWC.

Grateful for the partnership that has grown between the Board and ACREC, our hope is that even if the A Corp is separated from the board, ACREC would still have a seat at the table as a full member of the PMA Board.

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-09**

Advice & Counsel on Item 04-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 04-09 with the following amendment:

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

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2. [As long as the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, remains the same as the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency,] [five] [Five] voting members will be from the following: (a) Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, (b) Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, (c) Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, (d) Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, (e) Presbyterian Women, Inc. (Action of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (September 2017).]
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The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns has faithfully sent a member to serve as corresponding member to the Presbyterian Mission Agency for many years. As corresponding members, we contributed to conversations and advised the board, but could not vote.

After many conversations and the building of a healthy ministry partnership, ACWC and the Governance Task Force members agreed that in the newly proposed iteration of the board, the advocacy committees should have a seat at the table as voting members. ACWC is grateful for both this partnership and the opportunity to continue to work closely with the PMA Board.

Unfortunately, this partnership was quickly overshadowed by the struggles that have continued to this day with the proposals made by the Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee regarding the A. Corp and its separation from the PMA Board. ACWC has drafted our own Advice and Counsel on this proposal, but what is of concern here regarding the PMA Manual of Operations is the language that still remains in the Endnotes, as cited above.

Via further conversation with members of the Governance Task Force of the PMA Board, it is ACWC’s understanding that regardless of whether or not the A. Corp remains the same as the PMA Board, ACWC will have a seat at the table of the board as a full, voting member. That said, we would prefer that the language as written in the endnote be removed from the official document in order to avoid confusion in the future.

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Item 04-Info


“God alone is Lord of conscience....”

There has long been a fundamental principle in our denomination for transparency and openness in process, information, and discernment in order to engender trust, to allow for the work of the Holy Spirit to flow freely, and to reflect respect for the talent and perspectives of all members of our community. Our open meetings policies are just one manifestation of this underlying philosophy.

We acknowledge that the scriptures and our Reformed Christian tradition urges us to speak in love, tact, kindness, care, and with proper decorum, being sensitive as Jesus was to the privacy and feelings of others. However, scripture and our Reformed tradition also urges us to speak the truth of our convictions. Over the past decades, becoming particularly acute in recent years, there has been an unwritten practice in some of our denominational agencies—perhaps put into place with the best intentions from experience in non-ecclesial or corporate contexts—that has resulted in an unhealthy institutional culture in our denomination at the staff and board levels of fear and intimidation with respect to limitations on free speech, freedom of conscience, and disclosure of information, unwarranted suspicion and claims of disloyalty, and noncompliance with the spirit of our denomination’s open meeting policies. This action does not alter or replace these open meeting policies.

Such restrictions on free and candid speech, claims of insubordination or demands for “loyalty” when speaking one’s truth privately or publicly, even informal pressure that weighs on an individual’s willingness to speak their truth and exercise freedom of conscience—especially when accompanied by intimidation or threats of termination or legal action—are all unconscionable at the Lord’s Table. Our ultimate loyalty lies with Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and to His church as a whole, not to any particular agency or individual.

**THEREFORE,** in order to further the vision for the healthy functioning of the agencies of the national denomination in terms of institutional culture, transparency and openness; and because this vision is important enough to be lifted up in administrative action, the General Assembly Way Forward Commission hereby takes the following administrative action, effective immediately:

**Limits on Confidentiality.** With respect to matters discussed in public, private, or in executive or confidential sessions of staff or governing entities (including committees of staff or governing entities), only such information shall be required to be kept confidential that directly relates to

(a) personnel matters regarding a particular employee or position,

(b) pending sale, disposition or acquisition of property, or

(c) pending or threatened litigation (but not litigation that is merely possible),

(d) confidentiality obligations imposed by law or regulation,
(e) matters that may unjustifiably embarrass, humiliate, or defame another or invade another’s privacy, with no legally allowable or constructive purpose; in each case if specifically designated as confidential; and all other conversation and matters, including those related to process and application of confidentiality, shall not be subject to such confidentiality restrictions.

Excepting the information listed above and under “Limitations” below, all individuals, including denominational staff and members of governing entities (boards, committees), shall be free to discuss and express their personal opinions both publicly and privately on any and all matters that fall outside those restrictions, consistent with their role in assuring fair deliberation of issues within the church, even if the underlying information was made known in executive or confidential session. They shall be free to do so without real or implied threat against their status, employment, or reputation, so long as they are not using their position to boost their personal opinions. Moreover, no investigatory or disciplinary action may be taken in response to the exercise or purported exercise of these rights made in good faith.

**Transparency of Financial Information.** These principles also apply with respect to disclosure of accurate and verifiable financial information, including without limitation conversations and financial information with respect to budgets and sources/uses of funds. There has evolved a practice within certain denominational entities of restricting access to the full detail of financial information, even among staff who are responsible for a particular area. The guiding principle should always be towards full and complete disclosure of all accurate and verifiable information, with exceptions made sparingly, due to overwhelmingly clear and appropriate reasons, and determined collectively by leadership and the line-users of such information.

This principle of full disclosure is not intended as a license to allow those seeking information to burden or harass staff or board members of a church entity or agency by demanding such information in excessive or repeated ways. Though church agencies must provide clear financial reports and information regarding their ministries, it is also understood that certain items may not be disclosed if deemed to be privileged or confidential information as described above. It is also understood that the staff or board members of agencies shall refer inquirers to information when it is readily available through public records, the records of the Presbyterian Historical Society, General Assembly records, the records of the Office of the General Assembly, or the like.

**Interagency Relationships.** This transparency, openness, and full disclosure extends to relationships between and among agencies and other entities within the denomination as well. We are all part of the same body in Christ. Interagency exchanges, relationships, and arrangements are not arms-length, third party transactions, and they must not be treated as such.

**Limitations.** This action does not alter any specific restrictions that are placed upon disclosure of information due to explicit requirements of (i) law or regulation, such as HIPAA, HITECH, and other federal and state regulations; nor (ii) binding third-party contractual provisions in effect, such as donor-specified or third-party confidentiality restrictions; nor (iii) personal information of pensioners, donors, beneficiaries, investors, borrowers, or others whose information must remain protected for purposes of cyber security or customer confidentiality (which for data security might in some instances preclude the sharing of certain IT information); nor (iv) competitive market advantage, such as draft strategic plans or proprietary software; in each case only to the minimum restriction required. This action does not alter any existing arrangements in place between an agency or entity (including its governing board) and the General Assembly.

In speaking our truths and expressing our opinions, individuals should also act with prudence, respect, humility, discretion, love, and an acknowledgement that authority for decision-making for particular matters is placed in particular individuals or entities. Individuals that have taken on specific roles at the General Assembly—resource people, platform and committee assistants, parliamentarians—by taking on that task have in effect chosen to limit their right of conscience in order to assist the assembly in its tasks, and therefore have a separate duty to refrain from attempting to influence the opinions of commissioners during the assembly. Further, agency employees attending an assembly should not use their presence to attempt to revisit internal agency decisions with which they disagree. For example, a staff member who lost the internal debate on agency priorities should not instigate a commissioners’ resolution to have the General Assembly direct PMA to reverse its priorities and reinstate the staff member’s priority. However, these examples are exceptions to the general rule that staff members should be allowed to honestly express their views and concerns without fear of sanction or retaliation.

The commission directs staff and governing entities of all six denominational agencies to review their policies and procedures, both formal and informal, to comply with the spirit of this administrative action, subject to any existing agreements between General Assembly and the agencies; and directs that, in all interpretation of the requirements of this administrative action, the minimal restriction on disclosure and/or speech required be put into effect.
BYLAWS
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“Corporation”), is the principal Corporation of and established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the “General Assembly”) to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as provided in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and was originally formed on March 28, 1799 by Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE I
Office and Fiscal Year

Section 1.01. Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such places within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the Corporation requires.

Section 1.02. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January in each year.

ARTICLE II
Board of Directors

Section 2.01. Selection and Term of Directors.

(a) The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be eleven in number. Any vacancies in such number between General Assemblies shall be filled promptly, pursuant to the procedures of Section 2.03 of these bylaws, subject to the person or persons filling such vacancy or vacancies having been first recommended by the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with respect to the Directors in Section 2.01(b) below, and subject in all cases to the Board of Directors of the Corporation first consulting with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) The governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the following councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee, each recommend to the General Assembly Nominating Committee a person (not an employee of such council, agency, or office), to serve as a Director of the Corporation:

(1) The Office of the General Assembly: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(2) The Presbyterian Mission Agency: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(3) The Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(4) The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(5) The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc.: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(6) The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;
Meetings of Directors

Section 2.04. Meetings of Directors. Every meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be, without further notice or action, a meeting of the board of directors or trustees of each of the Constituent Corporations as to matters concerning such Constituent Corporation.

Powers; Liability

Section 2.05. Powers; Liability.

(a) The Board of Directors shall have full power to conduct, manage, and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation. All powers of the Corporation are hereby granted to and vested in the Board of Directors.

(b) A Director of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as may be defined under applicable law and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Director for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or Federal law.

Section 2.06. Organization. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall elect from among its members a Chair of the Board. The Chair shall serve a term of two years and may, at the discretion of the Board, be re-elected to up to two more two-year terms during such Director’s tenure on the Board of Directors, for a maximum of six consecutive years. The Board of Directors may elect from among its members a Vice-Chair of the Board, subject to the same term limitations as the Chair, to serve as Chair in the absence of the Chair, but not to succeed the Chair automatically upon the expiration of the term of the Chair. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, or in the absence...
of the Vice-Chair, a Chair pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of Directors then present, shall preside. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Secretary of the Board, which may be the Secretary of the Corporation, to serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. The Secretary or, in the absence of the Secretary, a Secretary pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of the Directors then present, shall act as secretary of the meeting and shall record the minutes of the meeting.

**Section 2.07.** **Place of Meeting.** Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such place within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint, or as may be designated in the notice of the meeting.

**Section 2.08.** **Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time as shall be designated from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors. One such meeting each year shall be designated as a meeting for organization, election of officers, and election of members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee and officers may also be elected at any other meeting of the Board of Directors. At every regular meeting, the Board of Directors shall transact such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws.

**Section 2.09.** **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held whenever called by the Chair of the Board or by three or more Directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be given in person, by telephone, by email, or by mail to each Director at least 24 hours (in the case of notice in person, by telephone, or by email), or 48 hours (in the case of notice by telephone or email with respect to any Ohio corporation), or five days (in the case of notice by mail) before the time at which the meeting is to be held. Every such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting.

**Section 2.10.** **Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment.** Two-thirds (66%) of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote. Directors may not vote by proxy. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting by unanimous written consent, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the Secretary in person, by mail, or by electronic communication.

**Section 2.11.** **Executive and Other Committees.**

(a) The Board of Directors shall, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors then in office, establish an Executive Committee of not less than five members, one of whom shall be the Chair of the Board. By like action the Board of Directors may establish one or more other committees or “other bodies”, as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§ 5103 and 5721, with each such other committee or other body to consist of two or more Directors. The Chair of the Board may be, ex officio, a voting member of each such other committee or other body except a nominating committee, and shall designate or appoint the chair of each particular committee or other body. The Board of Directors may designate one or more Directors as alternate members of any such committee or other body, who may replace any absent or disqualified member at any meeting of the committee or other body. In the absence or disqualification of a member and the alternate or alternates, if any, designated for such member of any such committee or other body, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not the member or members constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another Director to act at the meeting in the place of any such absent or disqualified member. Each committee or other body of the Board of Directors shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Any member of such committee or other body may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors.

(b) The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall have and exercise all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Corporation, except that the Executive Committee shall not have any power or authority as to the following:

1. The adoption, amendment or repeal of these bylaws, or the adoption of any amendment of articles or plan of merger, division or consolidation or the approving of the sale, lease or exchange of all or substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or of the dissolution of the Corporation.
2. The amendment or repeal of any resolutions of the Board.
3. The filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

(c) No committee of the Board of Directors, other than the Executive Committee, shall, pursuant to resolution of the Board of Directors or otherwise, exercise any of the powers or authority vested by these bylaws, or other applicable law in the Board of Directors as such, but any other committee of the Board of Directors may make recommendations to the Board of Directors or Executive Committee concerning the exercise of such powers and authority.

(d) A majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee, or Directors designated to replace them as provided in this section, shall be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the acts of a majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee or their replacements shall be the acts of the committee.

(e) Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report such proceedings periodically to the Board of Directors. Sections 2.07, 2.08 and 2.09 shall be applicable to committees of the Board of Directors.
One half (50%) of the Directors of the Corporation in office assigned to a committee shall be present at each committee meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the doing of business.

Section 2.12. Compensation and Expenses. Except as permitted by Section 4.15 of these bylaws, no compensation of any kind shall be paid directly or indirectly by the Corporation to, and no loan or other extension of credit shall be made for the benefit of, any Director, as such, or as an officer or employee of the Corporation. Directors may be reimbursed for expenses in a manner consistent with any applicable policy approved by the General Assembly for the Corporation or any other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and thereafter adopted for such purpose by the Board of Directors.

Section 2.13. Authority to Delegate Powers to Other Body. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint a specific person or persons, agency, or entity other than of the Board of Directors to act on its behalf as an “other body”, as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§ 5103 and 5721, and to assume such governing body powers and responsibilities, and such other duties and responsibilities, as may be delegated to such other body by resolution of the Board of Directors, provided that such delegation shall be consistent with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. Such delegation of governing body powers and responsibilities shall not be exclusive and the Board of Directors shall continue to have the authority and power to act in lieu of such other body or to remove or limit the powers and authority granted to such other body, as necessary to fulfill the Board of Director’s fiduciary duties to the Corporation. Unless otherwise provided in the delegation by the Board of Directors, when acting on behalf of the Corporation, such other body shall be governed by and subject to the applicable provisions of these bylaws, including without limitation provisions relating to fiduciary duties and conflicts of interest. Such other body shall report to the Board of Directors upon request and the report shall be recorded in the minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE III
Notice - Waivers - Meetings

Section 3.01. Notice. Whenever written notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, it may be given to such person, either personally or by sending a copy thereof by first class mail, postage prepaid, or by email, to his or her address appearing on the books of the Corporation, or in the case of Directors of the Corporation, supplied by the Director to the Corporation for the purpose of notice. If the notice is sent by mail or by email, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the United States mail or upon transmission to such person. A notice of meeting shall specify the place, day and hour of the meeting and any other information required by law or these bylaws. When a meeting is adjourned, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting, other than by announcement, recorded in the minutes, at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.

Section 3.02. Waivers of Notice. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section and by Section 6.06 of these bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 3.03. Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice. Whenever the language of a proposed resolution is included in a written notice of a meeting, the meeting considering the resolution may without further notice adopt it with such clarifying or other amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

Section 3.04. Conference Telephone Meetings. One or more persons may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors or of a committee of the Board by means of conference telephone or other electronic communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in the meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. Conference and electronic meetings will follow procedures approved by Board of Directors from time to time.

ARTICLE IV
Officers

Section 4.01. Number, Qualifications and Designation. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Chief Financial Officer, one or more Vice Presidents, (including but not limited to Executive Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents), a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Controller, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.05 of this Article. Any number of the offices may be held by the same person. Officers may, but need not be Directors, and shall be natural persons of full age. The Chair of the Board elected under Section 2.05 shall also be an officer of the Corporation.

Section 4.02. Selection and Term of Office. The officers of the Corporation shall be selected and their terms of office shall be determined as follows:

(a) The President shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and shall be eligible for reelection. Other officers of the Corporation shall be nominated by a nominating committee of the Board of Directors in consultation with the President and elected by the Board annually.
The Board of Directors may from time to time elect such other officers as the business of the Corporation may require, including a Secretary and one or more Assistant Secretaries, each of whom has such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee of the Corporation the power to elect subordinate or other officers and to retain or appoint employees or other agents, or committees thereof, and to prescribe the authority and duties of such subordinate or other officers, committees, employees or other agents.

**Section 4.03.** Resignations. Any officer or agent may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, or to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice, or at any later time specified therein, and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

**Section 4.04.** Removal. Any elected or appointed officer may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors or other authority which elected or appointed such officer. The term of any offices held by an employee ends the earlier of the employee’s last day of employment or last day in the office.

**Section 4.05.** Vacancies. A vacancy in any elective office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board of Directors (where appropriate, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly) or by the authority to which the power to fill such office has been delegated, pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article, as the case may be, and if the office is one for which a term is prescribed by or pursuant to these bylaws, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term. The refusal of the General Assembly to confirm an election, where such confirmation is required by these bylaws, shall result in the creation of a vacancy in the office affected.

**Section 4.06.** General Powers. All officers of the Corporation, as between themselves and the Corporation, shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be determined by resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, as may be provided in these bylaws.

**Section 4.07.** The Chair of the Board. Generally, the Chair of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.

**Section 4.08.** The President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors. The President shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. In the event of an extended absence of the President and the Chief Financial Officer, the President shall assign one of the other senior officers of the Corporation to fulfill the duties of the office during the absence of the President. The President, or the President’s designee pro tem, shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of the boards or governing committees of each of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and such additional or successor agencies as may be created by the General Assembly. The President shall not, while holding such office, be a Director recommended pursuant to Section 2.01(b) or (c) above from any of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or the president, executive director, stated clerk, or similar principal leader of any of those agencies.

**Section 4.09.** Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer shall be the chief financial officer of the Corporation responsible for corporate, financial and accounting functions. The Chief Financial Officer shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President or as otherwise assigned by the Board of Directors or the President. The Chief Financial Officer shall sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, all deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the President.

**Section 4.10.** The Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents shall perform the duties of the Chief Financial Officer in the absence of the Chief Financial Officer and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to them by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Vice Presidents to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

**Section 4.11.** The Secretary. The Secretary or an Assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall cause to be recorded personally or by an Assistant Secretary, or by the person designated by the chair of the Board as secretary pro tem or secretary of the meeting, all votes of the Directors and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of committees of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall ensure that notices are given and records and reports properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal. In general, the Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of secretary, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Secretary by the Board of Directors, or the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Secretary to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

**Section 4.12.** The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have or provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Corporation and shall keep a separate book account of the same to his or her credit as Treasurer. The Treasurer shall collect and receive, or provide for the collection and receipt of, moneys earned by or in any manner due to or received by the Corporation; shall deposit all funds in his or her custody as Treasurer in such banks or other places of deposit (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (hereinafter the “Fiduciary Corporation”) as the Board of Directors may from time to
time designate; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an account showing his or her transactions as Treasurer, and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Treasurer to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

**Section 4.13.** The Controller. The Controller of the corporation shall be responsible for maintaining the chart of accounts, accounting records, and accounting procedures of the Corporation; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the results of operations and financial condition of the Corporation (at least annually) and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Controller by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Controller to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

**Section 4.14.** Officers’ Bonds. Any officer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office held by such officer in such sum, if any, and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall require, the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

**Section 4.15.** Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors, a committee of such Board, or any other body to which power to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been assigned or delegated pursuant to Sections 2.3, 2.11, or 4.02 of this Article. The establishment and annual review of a consistent compensation structure for all such officers, employees, and other agents shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors, or a committee of such Board (in either instance, in consultation with any other body or bodies to which a delegation of authority for retention or appointment of employees and agents has been made), which shall also annually review and approve the specific compensation of the five most highly-compensated such officers and employees. No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board as an officer shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.12 of these bylaws.)

**Section 4.16.** Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, shall be covered by personnel policies reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors, or any committee of such Board, or any other body or bodies to which a delegation of such authority has been made, which policies shall be set forth in an Employee Handbook.

**ARTICLE V**

**Indemnification of Directors, Officers, etc.**

**Section 5.01.** Scope of Indemnification. (a) The Corporation shall indemnify an indemnified representative against any liability incurred in connection with any proceeding in which the indemnified representative may be involved as a party or otherwise, by reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in an indemnified capacity, including without limitation any liability resulting from any actual or alleged breach or neglect of duty, error, misstatement or misleading statement, negligence, gross negligence or act giving rise to strict or products liability, except:

1. Where such indemnification is expressly prohibited by applicable law;
2. Where the conduct of the indemnified representative has been finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to constitute willful misconduct or recklessness as may be defined by applicable law or any other conduct sufficient in the circumstances to bar indemnification against liabilities arising from the conduct;
3. To the extent the liability is finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to be based upon or attributable to the indemnified representative gaining any personal pecuniary profit to which such indemnified representative was not legally entitled; or
4. To the extent such indemnification has been finally determined in a final adjudication pursuant to Section 5.06(d) to be otherwise unlawful.

(a) If an indemnified representative is entitled to indemnification in respect of a portion, but not all, of any liabilities to which such person may be subject, the Corporation shall indemnify such indemnified representative to the maximum extent for such portion of the liabilities.

(b) The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the indemnified representative is not entitled to indemnification.

(c) For purposes of this Article:

1. “Indemnified capacity” means any and all past, present and future service by an indemnified representative in one or more capacities as a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation or a Constituent Corporation, or, at the request of the Corporation, as a Director, officer, employee, agent, fiduciary or trustee of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other entity or enterprise;
2. “Indemnified representative” means any and all Directors and officers of the Corporation, including any and all officers elected or committee members, employees or other agents appointed under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” also means any and all officers, committee members, employees and other agents elected or appointed under the power delegated to the General Assembly, or to any General Assembly agency under
Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” shall include any other person so designated by the Board of Directors.

(3) “Liability” means any damage, judgment, amount paid in settlement (provided, in the case of settlements, that the Corporation shall have given its consent to such settlement in advance of the payment thereof), fine, penalty, punitive damages, excise tax assessed with respect to an employee benefit plan, or cost or expense of any nature (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees, costs, and disbursements); and

(4) “Proceeding” means any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, appeal or other proceeding of any nature, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, whether formal or informal, and whether brought by or in the right of the Corporation, a class of its security holders, if any, or otherwise.

Section 5.02. Proceedings Initiated by Indemnified Representatives. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Corporation shall not indemnify under this Article an indemnified representative for any liability incurred in a proceeding initiated (which shall not be deemed to include counter-claims or affirmative defenses) or participated in as an intervenor or amicus curiae by the person seeking indemnification unless such initiation of or participation in the proceeding is authorized, either before or after its commencement, by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Directors of the Corporation. This section does not apply to reimbursement of expenses incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending an arbitration under Section 5.06(d) or otherwise successfully prosecuting or defending the rights of an indemnified representative granted by or pursuant to this Article.

Section 5.03. Advancing Expenses. The Corporation shall pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by a Director or officer and may, by act of the Board of Directors (including the votes or consents of interested Directors), pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by any other indemnified representative in advance of the final disposition of a proceeding, described in Section 5.01 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified representative to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation pursuant to this Article. The financial ability of an indemnified representative to repay an advance shall not be a prerequisite to the making of such advance.

Section 5.04. Securing of Indemnification Obligations. To further effect, satisfy or secure the indemnification obligations provided herein or otherwise, the Corporation may maintain insurance, obtain a letter of credit, act as self-insurer, create a reserve, trust, escrow, cash collateral or other fund or account, enter into indemnification agreements, pledge or grant a security interest in any assets or properties of the Corporation, or use any other mechanism or arrangement whatsoever in such amounts, at such costs, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Directors shall deem appropriate. Absent fraud, the determination of the Board of Directors with respect to such amounts, costs, terms and conditions shall be conclusive against all security holders, if any, officers, and Directors, and shall not be subject to voidability.

Section 5.05. Payment of Indemnification. An indemnified representative who is entitled to indemnification shall be entitled thereto within 30 days after a written request for such indemnification has been delivered to the Secretary.

Section 5.06. Indemnification Procedure.

(a) An indemnified representative shall use such indemnified representatives’ best efforts to notify promptly the Secretary of the commencement of any proceeding or the occurrence of any event which might give rise to a liability under this Article, but the failure so to notify the Corporation shall not relieve the Corporation of any liability which it may have to the indemnified representative under this Article or otherwise.

(b) The Corporation shall be entitled, upon notice to any such indemnified representative, to assume the defense of any proceeding with counsel reasonably satisfactory to the indemnified representative, or a majority of the indemnified representatives involved in such proceeding if there be more than one. If the Corporation notifies the indemnified representative of its election to defend the proceeding, the Corporation shall have no liability for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) of the indemnified representative incurred in connection with the defense of such proceeding subsequent to such notice, unless (i) such expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) have been authorized by the Corporation, (ii) the Corporation shall not in fact have employed counsel reasonably satisfactory to such indemnified representative or indemnified representatives to assume the defense of such proceeding, or (iii) it shall have been determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) that the indemnified representative was entitled to indemnification for such expenses under this Article or otherwise. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the indemnified representative may elect to retain counsel at the indemnified representative’s own cost and expense to participate in the defense of such proceeding.

(c) The Corporation shall not be required to obtain the consent of the indemnified representative to the settlement of any proceeding which the Corporation has undertaken to defend if the Corporation assumes full and sole responsibility for such settlement and the settlement grants the indemnified representative an unqualified release in respect of all liabilities at issue in the proceeding. Whether or not the Corporation has elected to assume the defense of any proceeding, no indemnified representative shall have any right to enter into any full or partial settlement of the proceeding without the prior written consent of the Corporation (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), nor shall the Corporation be liable for any amount paid by an indemnified representative pursuant to any settlement to which the Corporation has not so consented.

(d) Any dispute related to the right to indemnification as provided under this Article shall be decided only by arbitration in the metropolitan area in which the principal executive offices of the Corporation are located at the time, in accordance with the commercial arbitration rules then in effect of the American Arbitration Association, before a panel of three arbitrators, one of whom shall be selected by the Corporation, the second of whom shall be selected by the indemnified representative and the third of whom shall be selected by the other two arbitrators. In the absence of the American Arbitration
Article VI

Miscellaneous

Section 6.01. Corporate Seal. The Corporation shall have a corporate seal in the form of a design adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with the words: "PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION—FOUNDED 1799 PENNSYLVANIA."

Section 6.02. Checks. All checks, notes, bills of exchange or other orders in writing shall be signed by such person or persons as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Section 6.03. Contracts. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or to execute or deliver any instrument on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 6.04. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon checks signed by, or hearing the authorized facsimile signature of such one or more officers, employees, or agents as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. The name or accounts to which such deposits are made, and the name of the Corporation on checks drawn against such accounts may be “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”, and may include such other words including the name of the Corporation and an appropriate designation to identify by purpose or otherwise. Funds of the Corporation may also be deposited with the Fiduciary Corporation.
Section 6.05. Annual Report of Directors: Accounting System.

(a) The Board of Directors shall direct the President and the Chief Financial Officer to present at a regular meeting of the Board in every year a report, verified by such officer, showing in appropriate detail the following:

1. The assets, liabilities and fund balances, including the trust funds, of the Corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report;

2. The principal changes in assets, liabilities and fund balances, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report;

3. The revenue and receipts of the Corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation and

4. The expenses or disbursements of the Corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(b) The annual report shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting of the Board and shall be transmitted to the General Assembly.

(c) Financial statements reported on by independent certified public accountants may be statements which have been combined with those of the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.06. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted either (i) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days’ written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (ii) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and shall require confirmation by the General Assembly.

Section 6.07. Constituent Corporations. A list of Constituent Corporations is attached hereto as Appendix A. The bylaws of the Constituent Corporations shall conform to the laws of the state in which the Constituent Corporation is chartered and shall be, in so far as legally possible consistent with these bylaws.

ANNEX A

CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)

2. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC. (Incorporated in North Carolina)

3. THE HUBBARD PRESS (Incorporated in Ohio)

4. PEDCO, INC. (Incorporated in Delaware)

5. THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

6. PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC. (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

7. PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)

8. BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

9. COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL MISSION AND RELATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)

10. THE WOMAN’S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)

[Note: Following is a version of the above document showing the changes made in the A Corp. Bylaws. Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline.]
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“Corporation”), is the principal
Corporation of and established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
(hereinafter sometimes referred to as the “General Assembly”) to facilitate the management of its
corporate affairs, as provided in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—
The Corporation traces its origins to an entity named the “Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian
Church in the United States of America,” and was originally formed on March 28, 1799 by Act of the
General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE I
Office and Fiscal Year

Section 1.01.——Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such places
within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time
appoint or the business of the Corporation requires.

Section 1.02.——Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin
on the first day of January in each year.

ARTICLE II
Board of Directors

Section 2.01.——Selection of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be
selected as follows:

Section 2.01.——Selection and Term of Directors.
(a) The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be eleven in number. Any vacancies in such number between General Assemblies shall be filled promptly, pursuant to the procedures of Section 2.03 of these bylaws, subject to the person or persons filling such vacancy or vacancies having been first recommended by the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with respect to the Directors in Section 2.01(b) below, and subject in all cases to the Board of Directors of the Corporation first consulting with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) The governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the following councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee, each recommend to the General Assembly Nominating Committee a person (not an employee of such council, agency, or office), to serve as a Director of the Corporation:

1. The voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, by virtue of their offices, be Directors of the Corporation. As set forth in the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation, the number of such Directors may be increased or decreased at any time by the General Assembly or by any officer or agency thereof duly authorized, and successor or additional Directors shall be selected in the manner determined by the General Assembly. Office of the General Assembly: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

3. The Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

4. The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

5. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc.: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

6. The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

7. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (not also to be a member of any of the councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (1) through (6) or above or (8) below): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation; and

8. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (not also to be a member of an of the councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (1) through (7) above: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(c) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall nominate as Directors the persons recommended through the process of Section 2.01(b) of these bylaws unless, as to any
person recommended, such person fails to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or these bylaws. In such case, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall immediately request, and the governing board of directors or trustees of the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall immediately provide, a new recommendation to the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(d) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall, in addition, nominate three at-large Directors to the Board of the Corporation. For nominees for election at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), one such nominee shall be proposed by and selected from the members of the Way Forward Commission appointed by the 222nd General Assembly and one such nominee shall be proposed by and selected from the members of the Committee for the Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “All Agency Review Committee”).

(e) Nominations from the floor of the General Assembly shall be permitted only as to the three at-large Directors of the Corporation.

(f) Each Director of the Corporation shall serve a term of four (4) years, except that:

(1) A Director shall be eligible, if recommended, nominated, and elected, to serve a second four (4) year term as a Director of the Corporation; and

(2) No Director shall serve as a Director of the Corporation for more than eight (8) years in total.

Section 2.02. Directors of the Corporation’s Constituent Corporations. The persons from time to time serving as Directors of the Corporation shall, by virtue of their offices, constitute the Directors or Trustees of each corporation listed in Annex A hereto (which corporations so listed are referred to collectively in these bylaws as “Constituent Corporations”).

Section 2.03. Resignations of Directors; Other Vacancies.

(a) Resignation. Any Director of the Corporation may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation, to be effective upon receipt or at a later time stated therein.

(b) Disability. If a Director is unable to perform substantially all of his or her duties and responsibilities by reason of illness, injury, or incapacity for a period exceeding six months, such Director shall tender, or shall be deemed to have tendered, his or her resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation. As soon as practicable thereafter (but in any event not later than at its next regularly scheduled meeting), the Board of Directors shall determine whether to accept such resignation.

(c) Vacancies. In case of a vacancy on the Board of Directors by death, disability, or resignation, a successor to fill the unexpired term shall be nominated by the entity who nominated the former Director in the same manner as provided in Section 2.01 of these bylaws for the selection of Directors, subject to approval by the General Assembly at its next meeting, but with full authority as a Director pending such meeting.
Section 2.04. Meetings of Directors. Every meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation may be, without further notice or action, a meeting of the board of directors or trustees of each of the Constituent Corporations, as to matters concerning such Constituent Corporation.

Section 2.05. Powers; Liability. (a) The Board of Directors shall have full power to conduct, manage, and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation and all powers of the Corporation are hereby granted to and vested in the Board of Directors.

(b) A Director of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as may be defined under applicable law and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Director for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or Federal law.

Section 2.06. Organization. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall elect from among its members a Chair of the Board and a Chair-elect (who shall serve as the Vice Chair), who may each serve one two-year, non-renewable term. The Chair-elect shall become Chair at the end of the two-year term, and a new Chair-elect shall be elected from among the eligible members of the Board. Eligibility requirements are set forth in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The Chair shall serve a term of two years and may, at the discretion of the Board, be re-elected to up to two more two-year terms during such Director’s tenure on the Board of Directors, for a maximum of six consecutive years. The Board of Directors may elect from among its members a Vice-Chair of the Board, subject to the same term limitations as the Chair, to serve as Chair in the absence of the Chair, but not to succeed the Chair automatically upon the expiration of the term of the Chair. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair or in the absence of the Vice-Chair, a Chair pro tem chosen by a majority vote of the quorum of Directors then present, shall preside, and the Secretary or, in the absence of the Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, or any person designated by pro tem chosen by a majority vote of the Board or appointed by the Chair as Secretary Pro Tem or Secretary of the meeting, shall act as Secretary of the meeting and shall record the minutes of the meeting.

Section 2.07. Place of Meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such place within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint, or as may be designated in the notice of the meeting.

Section 2.08. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time and place as shall be designated from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors, and one such meeting each year shall be designated as a meeting for organization and the election of officers, and election of members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee and officers may also be elected at any other
meeting of the Board of Directors. At every regular meeting, the Board of Directors shall transact such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws.

**Section 2.09. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held whenever called by the Chair of the Board of Directors or by three or more of the Directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be given in person, by telephone, by email, or by mail to each Director and shall be the greater of (a) at least 24 hours (in the case of notice in person or by telephone, facsimile transmission, email or other electronic communication, or by email), or 48 hours (in the case of notice by telephone or email with respect to any Ohio corporation), or five days (in the case of notice by mail), or (b) the minimum notice required by applicable law for any Constituent Corporation when the action to be taken by the Board of Directors is solely for the Constituent Corporation, before the time at which the meeting is to be held. Every such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting.

**Section 2.10. Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment.** Fifty-one percent (51%) of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote. Directors may not vote by proxy. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting by unanimous written consent, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the Secretary of the Corporation. Unanimous written consent may be effected through e-mail by the Directors returning the written consent together with their written signature on or before the announced deadline for returning the consent in person, by mail, or by electronic communication.

**Section 2.11. Executive and Other Committees of the Board.**

(a) The Board. The Committees of the Board shall be the Administration Committees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, more specifically designated in these bylaws as the Audit Committee, the Personnel/Nominating Committee and the Property/Legal Committee, the authorities and responsibilities of which are set forth in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Manual of Operations. The number of members, quorum and authority of each of these Committees shall be as set forth in the Manual of Operations. Of Directors shall, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors then in office, establish an Executive Committee of not less than five members, one of whom shall be the Chair of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. By like action the Board of Directors may establish one or more other committees or an “other body—bodies”, as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§ 5103(2) and 5721, with each such other committee or other body to consist of two or more Directors of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board may be, ex officio, a nonvoting member of each such other committee or other body except the Nominating Committee. Committee Chairs shall be elected for two year terms, commencing after the adjournment of the General Assembly or in non-General Assembly years, with the Committee Chair orientation meeting a nominating committee, and shall designate or appoint the chair of each particular committee or other body. The Board of Directors may designate one or more Directors as alternate members of any such committee or other body, who
may replace any absent or disqualified member at any meeting of the committee or body. In the absence or disqualification of a member and the alternate or alternates, if any, designated for such member of any such committee or other body, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not the member or members constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another Director to act at the meeting in the place of any such absent or disqualified member. Each committee or other body of the Board of Directors shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Any member of such committee or other body may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors.

(b) The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall have and exercise all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Corporation, except that the Executive Committee shall not have any power or authority as to the following:

(1) The adoption, amendment or repeal of these bylaws, or the adoption of any amendment of articles or plan of merger, division or consolidation or the approving of the sale, lease or exchange of all or substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or of the dissolution of the Corporation.

(2) The amendment or repeal of any resolutions of the Board.

(3) The filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors thereof.

(c) No committee of the Board of Directors, other than the Executive Committee, shall, pursuant to resolution of the Board of Directors or otherwise, exercise any of the powers or authority vested by these bylaws or other applicable law in the Board of Directors as such, but any other committee of the Board of Directors may make recommendations to the Board of Directors or Executive Committee concerning the exercise of such powers and authority.

(d) A majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee, or Directors designated to replace them as provided in this section, shall be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the acts of a majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee or their replacements shall be the acts of the committee.

(e) Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report such proceedings periodically to the Board of Directors. Sections 2.08, 2.07, 2.08 and 2.09 and 2.10 shall be applicable to committees of the Board of Directors.

(f) One half (50%) of the Directors of the Corporation in office assigned to a committee shall be present at each committee meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the doing of business.

Section 2.12. Compensation and Expenses. Except as permitted by Section 4.15 of these bylaws, no compensation of any kind shall be paid directly or indirectly by the Corporation to, and no loan or other extension of credit shall be made for the benefit of, any Director, as such, or as an officer or employee of the Corporation. Directors may be reimbursed
for expenses in a manner consistent with any applicable policies adopted by the General Assembly or for the Corporation or any other agency of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Church (U.S.A.) and thereafter adopted for such purpose by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE III
Section 2.13. Authority to Delegate Powers to Other Body. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint a specific person or persons, agency, or entity other than of the Board of Directors to act on its behalf as an “other body”, as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§ 5103 and 5721, and to assume such governing body powers and responsibilities, and such other duties and responsibilities, as may be delegated to such other body by resolution of the Board of Directors, provided that such delegation shall be consistent with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. Such delegation of governing body powers and responsibilities shall not be exclusive and the Board of Directors shall continue to have the authority and power to act in lieu of such other body or to remove or limit the powers and authority granted to such other body, as necessary to fulfill the Board of Director’s fiduciary duties to the Corporation. Unless otherwise provided in the delegation by the Board of Directors, when acting on behalf of the Corporation, such other body shall be governed by and subject to the applicable provisions of these bylaws, including without limitation provisions relating to fiduciary duties and conflicts of interest. Such other body shall report to the Board of Directors upon request and the report shall be recorded in the minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE III
Notice - Waivers – Meetings

Section 3.01. Notice, What Constitutes. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws. Whenever written notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, it may be given to such person, either personally or by sending a copy thereof by first class mail, postage prepaid, or by email, to his or her address appearing on the books of the Corporation, or in the case of Directors of the Corporation, supplied by the Director to the Corporation for the purpose of notice. If the notice is sent by mail or by email, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the United States mail or upon transmission to such person. A notice of meeting shall specify the place, day and hour of the meeting and any other information required by law or these bylaws. When a meeting is adjourned pursuant to Section 2.09 of these bylaws for lack of a quorum, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting, other than by announcement, recorded in the minutes, at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.

Section 3.02. Waivers of Notice. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section and by Section 6.06 of these bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such
meeting, except where a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the
beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully
called or convened.

Section 3.03. Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice. Whenever
the language of a proposed resolution is included in a written notice of a meeting, the meeting
considering the resolution may without further notice adopt it with such clarifying or other
amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

Section 3.04. Conference Telephone Meetings and Meetings by other
electronic means. One or more persons may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors or of
a committee of the Board by means of conference telephone or similar other electronic
communications equipment, including but not limited to electronic meetings providing video conferencing,
utilizing telephone or other audio methods, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting
can hear each other. Participation in the meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute
presence in person at such meeting. Conference and electronic meetings will follow procedures
approved by Board of Directors from time to time.

ARTICLE IV
Officers

Section 4.01. Number, Qualifications and Designation. The officers of
the Corporation shall be a President, a Chief Financial Officer, one or more Vice Presidents,
(including but not limited to executive Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents), a
Secretary, a Treasurer, a Controller, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with
the provisions of Section 4.02 of this Article. The President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian
Mission Agency shall be the President of the Corporation. Any number of the offices may be held by the
same person. Officers may, but need not be Directors or members of the Corporation, and shall be
natural persons of full age. The Chair of the Board of Directors elected under Section 2.06.05
shall also be an officer of the Corporation.

Section 4.02. Selection and Term of Office. The officers of the
Corporation shall be selected and their terms of office shall be determined as follows:

(a) The President shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four
years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and shall be eligible for reelection.
Annually other officers of the Corporation shall be nominated by the Personnel/Nominating
Committee upon the recommendation of a nominating committee of the Board of Directors in
consultation with the President and elected by the Board of Directors annually.

(b) The Board of Directors may from time to time elect such other officers as the
business of the Corporation may require, including a Secretary and one or more assistant
secretaries, each of whom has such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The
Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee of the Corporation the power to
elect subordinate or other officers and to retain or appoint employees or other agents, or
committees thereof, and to prescribe the authority and duties of such subordinate or other officers, committees, employees or other agents.

Section 4.03. Resignations. Any officer or agent may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, or to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein, and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4.04. Removal. Any elected or appointed officer, may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors or other authority which elected or appointed such officer. The term of any offices held by an employee ends the earlier of the employee’s last day of employment or last day in the office.

Section 4.05. Vacancies. A vacancy in any elective office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board of Directors (where appropriate, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly) or by the authority to which the power to fill such office has been delegated, pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article, as the case may be, and if the office is one for which a term is prescribed by or pursuant to these bylaws, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term. The refusal of the General Assembly to confirm an election, where such confirmation is required by these bylaws, shall result in the creation of a vacancy in the office affected.

Section 4.06. General Powers. All officers of the Corporation, as between themselves and the Corporation, shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be determined by resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, as may be provided in these bylaws.

Section 4.07. The Chair of the Board. Generally, the Chair of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.

Section 4.08. The President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors. The President, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, by virtue of office, shall be the President of the Corporation. The President shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. In the event of an extended absence of the President and the Chief Financial Officer, the President shall assign one of the other senior officers of the Corporation to fulfill the duties of the office during the absence of the President. The President, or the President’s designee pro tem, shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of the boards or governing committees of each of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and such additional or successor agencies as may be created by the General Assembly. The President shall not, while holding such office, be a Director recommended pursuant to Section 2.01(b) or (c) above from any of the six current national.
agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or the president, executive director, stated clerk, or similar principal leader of any of those agencies.

Section 4.09. **Chief Financial Officer.** The Chief Financial Officer shall be the chief financial officer of the Corporation and shall be responsible for corporate, financial, and accounting functions. The Chief Financial Officer is authorized to sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President or as otherwise assigned by the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to or the President.

Section 4.10. **The Vice Presidents.** The Vice Presidents are authorized to sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, all deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws as well as perform or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the President.

Section 4.11. **The Secretary.** The Secretary or an Assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall cause to be recorded personally or by an Assistant Secretary, or by the person designated by the Chair of the Board as Secretary pro tem or Secretary pro tem or secretary of the meeting, all votes of the Directors and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of committees of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall ensure that notices are given and records and reports properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal. In general, the Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Secretary by the Board of Directors, or the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Secretary to be accountable to the President, Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.12. **The Treasurer.** The Treasurer or an Assistant Treasurer shall have or provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Corporation and shall keep a separate book account of the same to his or her credit as Treasurer. The Treasurer shall collect and receive, or provide for the collection and receipt of, moneys earned by or in any manner due to or received by the Corporation; shall deposit all funds in his or her custody as Treasurer in such banks or other places of deposit (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (hereinafter the “Fiduciary Corporation”) as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the Corporation’s funds, and account showing his or her transactions as Treasurer, and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board.
of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Treasurer to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position. The CFO may be elected Treasurer.

Section 4.13. The Controller. The Controller of the corporation shall be responsible for maintaining the chart of accounts, accounting records, and accounting procedures of the Corporation; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the results of operations and financial condition of the Corporation (at least annually) and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Controller by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Controller to be accountable to the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

Section 4.14. Officers’ Bonds. Any officer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office held by such officer in such sum, if any, and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall require, and the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

Section 4.15. Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the authority Board of Directors, a committee of such Board, or any other body to which the power to elect such officers or to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been assigned or delegated pursuant to Sections 2.3, 2.11, or 4.02 of this Article. All compensation shall be The establishment and annual review of a consistent with any general compensation structure established by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, compensation structure for all such officers, employees, and other agents shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors, or a committee of such Board (in either instance, in consultation with any other body or bodies to which a delegation of authority for retention or appointment of employees and agents has been made), which shall also annually review and approve the specific compensation of the five most highly-compensated such officers and employees. No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving such compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board of Directors as an officer shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.12 of these bylaws.)

Section 4.16. Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, shall be covered by the personnel policies, as adopted, reviewed and approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and set forth in the Board of Directors, or any committee of such Board, or any other body or bodies to which a delegation of such authority has been made, which policies shall be set forth in an Employee Handbook.

ARTICLE V
Indemnification of Directors, Officers, etc.

Section 5.01. Scope of Indemnification. (a) The Corporation shall indemnify an indemnified representative against any liability incurred in connection with any proceeding in which the indemnified representative may be involved as a party or otherwise, by
reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in an indemnified capacity, including without limitation any liability resulting from any actual or alleged breach or neglect of duty, error, misstatement or misleading statement, negligence, gross negligence or act giving rise to strict or products liability, except:

1. Where such indemnification is expressly prohibited by applicable law;

2. Where the conduct of the indemnified representative has been finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to constitute willful misconduct or recklessness as may be defined by applicable law or any other conduct sufficient in the circumstances to bar indemnification against liabilities arising from the conduct;

3. To the extent the liability is finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to be based upon or attributable to the indemnified representative gaining any personal pecuniary profit to which such indemnified representative was not legally entitled; or

4. To the extent such indemnification has been finally determined in a final adjudication pursuant to Section 5.06(d) to be otherwise unlawful.

(b) If an indemnified representative is entitled to indemnification in respect of a portion, but not all, of any liabilities to which such person may be subject, the Corporation shall indemnify such indemnified representative to the maximum extent for such portion of the liabilities.

(c) The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the indemnified representative is not entitled to indemnification.

(d) For purposes of this Article:

1. "Indemnified capacity" means any and all past, present and future service by an indemnified representative in one or more capacities as a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation or a Constituent Corporation, or, at the request of the Corporation, as a Director, officer, employee, agent, fiduciary or trustee of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other entity or enterprise;

2. "Indemnified representative" means any and all Directors and officers of the Corporation, including any and all officers elected or committee members, employees or other agents appointed under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; "indemnified representative" also means any and all officers, committee members, employees and other agents elected or appointed under the power delegated to the General Assembly, or to any General Assembly agency under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; "indemnified representative" shall include any other person so designated by the Board of Directors.
(3) “liability” means any damage, judgment, amount paid in settlement (provided, in the case of settlements, that the Corporation shall have given its consent to such settlement in advance of the payment thereof), fine, penalty, punitive damages, excise tax assessed with respect to an employee benefit plan, or cost or expense of any nature (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees, costs, and disbursements); and

(4) “proceeding” means any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, appeal or other proceeding of any nature, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigatory, whether formal or informal, and whether brought by or in the right of the Corporation, a class of its security holders, if any, or otherwise.

Section 5.02. Proceedings Initiated by Indemnified Representatives. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Corporation shall not indemnify under this Article an indemnified representative for any liability incurred in a proceeding initiated (which shall not be deemed to include counter-claims or affirmative defenses) or participated in as an intervene or amicus curiae by the person seeking indemnification unless such initiation or participation in the proceeding is authorized, either before or after its commencement, by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Directors of the Corporation. This section does not apply to reimbursement of expenses incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending an arbitration under Section 5.06(d) or otherwise successfully prosecuting or defending the rights of an indemnified representative granted by or pursuant to this Article.

Section 5.03. Advancing Expenses. The Corporation shall pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by a Director or officer and may, by act of the Board of Directors (including the votes or consents of interested Directors), pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by any other indemnified representative in advance of the final disposition of a proceeding, described in Section 5.01 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified representative to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation pursuant to this Article. The financial ability of an indemnified representative to repay an advance shall not be a prerequisite to the making of such advance.

Section 5.04. Securing of Indemnification Obligations. To further effect, satisfy or secure the indemnification obligations provided herein or otherwise, the Corporation may maintain insurance, obtain a letter of credit, act as self-insurer, create a reserve, trust, escrow, cash collateral or other fund or account, enter into indemnification agreements, pledge or grant a security interest in any assets or properties of the Corporation, or use any other mechanism or arrangement whatsoever in such amounts, at such costs, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Directors shall deem appropriate. Absent fraud, the determination of the Board of Directors with respect to such amounts, costs, terms and conditions shall be conclusive against all security holders, if any, officers, and Directors, and shall not be subject to voidability.
Section 5.05. Payment of Indemnification. An indemnified representative who is entitled to indemnification shall be entitled thereto within 30 days after a written request for such indemnification has been delivered to the Secretary of the Corporation.

Section 5.06. Indemnification Procedure. (a) An indemnified representative shall use such indemnified representative’s best efforts to notify promptly the Secretary of the Corporation of the commencement of any proceeding or the occurrence of any event which might give rise to a liability under this Article, but the failure so to notify the Corporation shall not relieve the Corporation of any liability which it may have to the indemnified representative under this Article or otherwise.

(b) The Corporation shall be entitled, upon notice to any such indemnified representative, to assume the defense of any proceeding with counsel reasonably satisfactory to the indemnified representative, or a majority of the indemnified representatives involved in such proceeding if there be more than one. If the Corporation notifies the indemnified representative of its election to defend the proceeding, the Corporation shall have no liability for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) of the indemnified representative incurred in connection with the defense of such proceeding subsequent to such notice, unless (i) such expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) have been authorized by the Corporation, (ii) the Corporation shall not in fact have employed counsel reasonably satisfactory to such indemnified representative or indemnified representatives to assume the defense of such proceeding, or (iii) it shall have been determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) that the indemnified representative was entitled to indemnification for such expenses under this Article or otherwise. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the indemnified representative may elect to retain counsel at the indemnified representative’s own cost and expense to participate in the defense of such proceeding.

(c) The Corporation shall not be required to obtain the consent of the indemnified representative to the settlement of any proceeding which the Corporation has undertaken to defend if the Corporation assumes full and sole responsibility for such settlement and the settlement grants the indemnified representative an unqualified release in respect of all liabilities at issue in the proceeding. Whether or not the Corporation has elected to assume the defense of any proceeding, no indemnified representative shall have any right to enter into any full or partial settlement of the proceeding without the prior written consent of the Corporation (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), nor shall the Corporation be liable for any amount paid by an indemnified representative pursuant to any settlement to which the Corporation has not so consented.

(d) Any dispute related to the right to indemnification as provided under this Article shall be decided only by arbitration in the metropolitan area in which the principal executive offices of the Corporation are located at the time, in accordance with the commercial arbitration rules then in effect of the American Arbitration Association, before a panel of three arbitrators, one of whom shall be selected by the Corporation, the second of whom shall be selected by the indemnified representative and the third of whom shall be selected by the other two arbitrators. In the absence of the American Arbitration Association, or if for any reason

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arbitration under the arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association cannot be initiated, and if one of the parties fails or refuses to select an arbitrator, or the arbitrators selected by the Corporation and the indemnified representative cannot agree on the selection of the third arbitrator within 30 days after such time as the corporation and the indemnified representative have each been notified of the selection of the other’s arbitrator, the necessary arbitrator or arbitrators shall be selected by the presiding judge of the court of general jurisdiction in such metropolitan area. The party or parties challenging the right of an indemnified representative to the benefits of this Article shall have the burden of proof. The Corporation shall reimburse an indemnified representative for the expenses (including attorneys' fees and disbursements) incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending such arbitration. Any award entered by the arbitrators shall be final, binding and nonappealable and judgment may be entered thereon by any party in accordance with applicable law in any court of competent jurisdiction, except that the corporation shall be entitled to interpose as a defense in any such judicial enforcement proceeding any prior final judicial determination adverse to the indemnified representative under Section 5.01(a)(2) or(3) in a proceeding not directly involving indemnification under this Article. This arbitration provision shall be specifically enforceable.

(e) Upon a payment to any indemnified representative under this Article, the Corporation shall be subrogated to the extent of such payment to all of the rights of the indemnified representative to recover against any person for such liability, and the indemnified representative shall execute all documents and instruments required and shall take such other action as may be necessary to secure such rights, including the execution of such documents as may be necessary for the Corporation to bring suit to enforce such rights.

Section 5.07. Discharge of Duty. An indemnified representative shall be deemed to have discharged such person’s duty to the Corporation if he or she has relied in good faith on information, advice or an opinion, report or statement prepared by:

(a) One or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom such indemnified representative reasonably believes to be reliable and competent with respect to the matter presented;

(b) Legal counsel, public accountants or other persons as to matters that the indemnified representative reasonably believes are within the person's professional or expert competence; or

(c) A committee of the Board of Directors on which he or she does not serve as to matters within its area of designated authority, which committee he or she reasonably believes to merit confidence.

Section 5.08. Contract Rights; Amendment or Repeal. All rights to indemnification under this Article shall be deemed a contract between the Corporation and the indemnified representatives pursuant to which the Corporation and each indemnified representative intend to be legally bound. Any repeal, amendment or modification hereof shall be prospective only and shall not affect any rights or obligations then existing.
Section 5.09. Scope of Article. The indemnification of indemnified representatives, as authorized by this Article, shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any statute, agreement, vote of the General Assembly or disinterested Directors or otherwise, both as to action in an official capacity and as to action in any other capacity. The indemnification provided by or granted pursuant to this Article shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an indemnified representative in respect of matters arising prior to such time, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators, and personal representatives of such a person.

Section 5.10. Reliance on Provisions. Each person who shall act as an indemnified representative of the Corporation shall be deemed to be doing so in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided by this Article.

ARTICLE VI

Miscellaneous

Section 6.01. Corporate Seal. The Corporation shall have a corporate seal in the form of a design adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with the words: “PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION—FOUNDED 1799 PENNSYLVANIA.”

Section 6.02. Checks. All checks, notes, bills of exchange or other orders in writing shall be signed by such person or persons as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Section 6.03. Contracts. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or to execute or deliver any instrument on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 6.04. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon the order of, or checks signed by, or bearing the authorized facsimile signature of such one or more officers, employees, or agents as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. The name or accounts to which such deposits are made, and the name of the Corporation on checks drawn against such accounts may be “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”, and may include such other words including the name of the Corporation and an appropriate designation to identify by purpose or otherwise. Funds of the Corporation may also be deposited with the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.05. Annual Report of Directors: Accounting System. (a)

(a) The Board of Directors shall direct the President and the Chief Financial Officer to present at a regular meeting of the Board in every year a report, verified by such officer, showing in appropriate detail the following:

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The assets, liabilities and fund balances, including the trust funds, of the Corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report.

The principal changes in assets, liabilities and fund balances, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report.

The revenue and receipts of the Corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation, and

The expenses or disbursements of the Corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

The annual report shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting of the Board and shall be transmitted to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Financial statements reported on by independent certified public accountants may be statements which have been combined with those of the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.06. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted either (i) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days' written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (ii) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. The substance of any proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall first be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and shall require confirmation by the General Assembly.

Section 6.07. Constituent Corporations. A list of Constituent Corporations is attached hereto as Appendix A. The bylaws of the Constituent Corporations shall conform to the laws of the state in which the Constituent Corporation is chartered and shall be, in so far as legally possible consistent with these bylaws.
ANNEX A

CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)

2. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC. (Incorporated in North Carolina)

3. THE HUBBARD PRESS (Incorporated in Ohio)

4. PEDCO, INC. (Incorporated in Delaware)

5. THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

6. PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC. (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

7. PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)

8. BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

9. COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL MISSION AND RELATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)

10. THE WOMAN’S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)
V. The Presbyterian Mission Agency

Mission, God’s mission, is at the heart of the work to which God calls us. As the Book of Order reminds us:

“In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, calling all people to discipleship in Christ.” (F.101)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is the body of the General Assembly in which are lodged the following responsibilities to implement the mission of the General Assembly domestically and internationally:¹

a. to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;

b. to provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;

c. to develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, a Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency consisting of the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the comprehensive Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and program, including a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan;

d. to act in those specific matters assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency by the General Assembly or the Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;

e. to perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall advise and respond to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the mission of our church. The primary purpose of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is to lead and coordinate the total mission program. It will cultivate a style of work that emphasizes

1 These responsibilities were part of the Book of Order until 2011, when the new Form of Government was approved, and they were moved to the Organization for Mission.
• coordination among ministries;
• flexible deployments of resources to match changing needs;
• allocation of funding to reflect stated goals;
• attention to the needs and gifts of congregations;
• effective relationships with all mid councils; and
• holding the vision described without reverting to old patterns.

Standing between the General Assembly and the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board’s work is to advise the General Assembly regarding mission priorities, programs and strategies; to lead the Agency in implementing the directives of the General Assembly; and then to report back to the General Assembly with results and additional advice. It is the Board’s responsibility to make the vision for mission become reality, helping to manage the practical problems those visions and dreams might face.

The Board’s work will move in a flow from General Assembly to General Assembly. It begins by advising the General Assembly on mission priorities, programs, and strategies. At a General Assembly, the Board receives guidance and direction. The Board then leads staff in the agency to fulfill those General Assembly directives. The Board oversees and aligns assets toward the fulfillment of those directives in the context for mission, discerning potential shifts in God’s calling. The Board then responds to General Assembly directives, providing advice on revised priorities at the next General Assembly. This process is inclusive, multi-layered and cyclical, continuing from each General Assembly to the next. The Board should engage a broad array of stakeholders to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s ability to respond faithfully to the Holy Spirit and align its life with God’s mission. Setting strategy and guiding policy in this way necessitates that the Board employ theological, intercultural, corporate, and legal knowledge all enveloped in prayer.

In performing this role, the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall report directly to the General Assembly. (See also Rule A.2 of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.)

A. Policy Responsibility

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may recommend churchwide policies to the General Assembly and is responsible for implementing policies established by the General Assembly and for establishing. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall establish overall procedures for the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to implement the policies established by the General Assembly.

B. Planning and Priority Setting

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The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for carrying out planning and priority-setting processes. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for instituting ongoing review processes.

C. General Assembly Budget

It is the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to recommend to the General Assembly a comprehensive Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and Program and a Per Capita Budget program. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board develops the Mission Budget Agency Budget, which includes a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan as well as a budget for all other costs and expenses of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In preparing these budgets, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has the responsibility for developing its own revenue and expense projections, but shall consult with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in doing so. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly jointly have responsibility for developing a per capita budget and apportionment.

All restricted and unrestricted funds (principal or income) that support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible are allocated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. In every case the instructions of the donors are carefully followed. Such resources presently include contributions from individuals, congregations, and related organizations; proceeds from wills and bequests; and sales of property and other assets. All funds administered by the Board of Pensions, including dues and earnings on property and other assets. All funds administered by the Board of Pensions, including dues and earnings on investments, are specifically excluded. Income received by the Presbyterian Mission Agency from sales, bequests, gifts, or from any other source, shall be transmitted to the Treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as is income received by the Office of the General Assembly pursuant to Section IV.B.3.d. of this Organization for Mission. These funds shall be separately accounted for by the Treasurer. All payments related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be made by the Treasurer only upon the receipt of regular vouchered requests, or other adequate documentation, consistent with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and bearing the authorization of the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or a person designated by the President/Executive Director. [All restricted and unrestricted funds (principal or income) that support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible, are allocated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency pursuant to budget and other procedures established by the General Assembly including those arrangements with respect to funds held by the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation.]

D. Personnel Responsibilities

Regarding the staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall, subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board responsibility for the following:
1. Approval of personnel procedures.

2. Approval, annually, of a staff rationale that determines staff commitments for the year. Any staff deployed regionally must be approved as part of the annual staff rationale.

3. Election of the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.

4. Annual performance reviews of the President/Executive Director as specified in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (Appendix 8), and in concurrence with the Presbyterian Mission Agency personnel policies.


6. Approval of compensation guidelines recommended by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, within which salaries may be administered by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are not eligible for election or selection as staff during the period of their term of service.

E. Reporting

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for submitting a report to the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will report regularly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, keeping the Board fully informed about its work. Matters that involve an exception or a proposed change in Presbyterian Mission Agency procedures, a major shift in program emphasis, or a major budget adjustment require action by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Issues of social witness policy, advocacy for racial ethnic and women’s concerns, and those related to Presbyterian theological institutions are reported to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. To support this reporting requirement, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has the right to full access to all information related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency maintained for it by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including the accounting and financial records of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; information about donors, funds, and fund restrictions for funds that have been designated to support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible; external audit reports with respect to such funds and the Presbyterian Mission Agency itself; and, to the same extent as any other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), access to the corporate minutes of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

F. Elected Leadership

1. Organization of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Direction and oversight of Presbyterian Mission Agency entities deploys a majority of Presbyterian Mission Agency Board members as members of Mission Committees and Audit
Committee. The work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is a direct expression of the planning and mission understanding of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which is accountable to the General Assembly in this regard. Direction and oversight of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is accomplished by Presbyterian Mission Agency Board members serving as members of Program and Administrative Committees. The number and makeup of the committees and assignments are adjustable to accomplish the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in its mission and to allow flexibility to meet changing emphases in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission. The Mission Committees committees are to be policy, strategy, and planning committees.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board determines the need for area program committees, how many are to be established (specifying the expertise and/or experience needed), the terms of service for members, and the duration of the committees’ existence.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures advocacy functions for women and racial ethnic persons, and advisory functions for social witness policy by providing direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board also provides for the development of social witness policy.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the continuation of a committee that includes representatives of each Presbyterian theological institution, and that will review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church, will exercise the governance responsibilities of the church to the schools, and will encourage and enhance cooperation among the church’s theological schools. The committee will be provided direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.

The principal legal corporation is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which receives, holds, and transfers property, and facilitates the management of the church’s corporate affairs. All voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board serve as members of the board of directors of this corporation.

2. Membership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The membership, terms of office, and officers of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be approved by the General Assembly as provided for in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and approved by the General Assembly.

G. Staff Leadership

1. President/Executive Director

Election and Review—The President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The President/Executive Director is accountable to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Upon election, the President/Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office until confirmed by the next General Assembly following election. Should the General Assembly refuse to confirm any President/Executive Director, the position becomes vacant immediately. Periodic in-depth reviews of the Executive Director are the responsibility of the Presbyterian
Mission Agency Board. The President/Executive Director is elected for a term of four years and may be reelected for additional terms. Initial four-year terms start on the date that work commences following election. Subsequent four-year terms commence on the day following expiration of the prior term. The President/Executive Director may be dismissed upon the recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in conformity with the relevant Employee Handbook and then-current personnel policies and procedures.

Responsibilities—The responsibilities of the President/Executive Director include:

a. enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, in response to mission directions and policies set by the General Assembly, to lead the whole church in the implementation of directions for the life and mission of the church;

b. supporting the organizational health of the Presbyterian Agency, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

c. enabling 1) Enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities to the General Assembly;

   d. providing oversight of the work of 2) Nurturing relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency as a whole and the linkages among the various parts that carry out its work and the other General Assembly agencies, mid councils, and racial ethnic caucuses (see Covenant of Understanding):

   3) Directing the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

   e. providing 4) Providing leadership to and administrative oversight of the staff and assigned to the staffing and Presbyterian Mission Agency;

   5) Leading the personnel decision process—making processes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;

   f. leading and supervising the staff lodged in the office of the Executive Director including a staff rationale, position description, selection of staff, annual performance reviews and staff development;

   g. bearing direct responsibility for the coordination of planning and budgeting for the Presbyterian Mission Agency; h. leading the Presbyterian Mission Agency in delegated by the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including but not limited to implementing policies and procedures related to inclusiveness, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity; and

   i. presiding as president

6) Coordinating, with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the budget planning process of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Mission Agency;

7) Serving a major role in all Presbyterian Mission Agency efforts, including funds
development; and

j. Serve

8) Serving as primary spokesperson for Presbyterian Mission Agency program and policies and programs.

9) When resolution of a particular legal dispute has been delegated by the Board of Directors of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the President/Executive Director may, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, may retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts.

2. **Deputy Executive Directors**

Deputy Executive Directors are hired by All staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director subject to confirmation by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Responsibilities——The Deputy Executive Directors are responsible for the healthy functioning of their areas, as well as support for the wider organizational health of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and are accountable to the President/Executive Director. Mission personnel have shared accountability both to the overseas partner church to which they are assigned and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Board of Directors of the

3. **Staff** All staff are staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and are accountable to the Executive Director. Mission personnel have shared accountability both to the overseas partner church to which they are assigned and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency through the Deputy Executive Director for Mission. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall delegate to the President/Executive Director, subject to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the Stated Clerk for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, authority: (i) to create, implement, and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (ii) to prepare, maintain, and amend an Employee Handbook for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (iii) to retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; and (iv) to promote, demote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The President/Executive Director shall, in exercising such authority, make use of any human resources recordkeeping and expertise provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. The Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation shall coordinate with the Presbyterian Mission Agency to ensure that an adequate number of staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency have or are delegated appropriate signature authority for relevant contracts and bank accounts related to the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
3. **Board Meetings**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board holds regular meetings (no less than one per quarter) with the appropriate and invited Presbyterian Mission Agency staff in order to build collaboration, collegiality, coordination, and trust, while also discussing finances, investment results, and any pertinent legal matters.

**VI. Presbyterian Mission Agency Relationships**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency works in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions to enable the various councils to join together in churchwide expression of the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This means that, as is the case with all agencies of the church, that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its officers, directors, and its staff, must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency shares responsibility with the Office of the General Assembly for the joint office of Mid Council Relations. In addition, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will cooperate in the preparation and presentation of the Per Capita Budget and apportionment and other opportunities for joint endeavors.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for carrying out the mission program for the General Assembly. The ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are linked together and with the church on behalf of that part of the mission entrusted by God to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The principal legal corporation that provides direct support to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which receives, holds, and transfers property, and facilitates the management of the church’s corporate affairs. Its role with respect to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for financial and corporate services supporting the work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Agency in support of its mission as directed by the General Assembly.

Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the Presbyterian Mission Agency are subordinate to the General Assembly. Thus, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation with regard to the mission directives of the General Assembly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to the matters for which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is authorized by its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. As both organizations and their leaders recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of them has any authority but in Him, they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in this and all respects. Consistent with this, the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegates specific authority, as set forth in its Bylaws, this Organization for Mission, and resolutions of its Board of Directors, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to personnel, contracting, finance, and legal issues so that the
Presbyterian Mission Agency may better accomplish the mission goals of the General Assembly. As the disbursing agent under the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly that authorized the Plan of Division for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, it also disburses for the Presbyterian Mission Agency the amounts authorized by the General Assembly in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and the Per Capita Budget for mission. It therefore defers to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s mission decisions to the fullest extent permitted by those budgets, fund restrictions, and applicable law.

Other relationships include the following committees:

1. **Advocacy and Advisory Committees**

The Executive Director has the responsibility for the advocacy and advisory committees. All three groups have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, F-1.0403. The Committee shall be a prophetic voice for involving racial ethnic people in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color. The committee will also monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of racial ethnic people in the church and in the world.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, is responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. The term “social witness policy” refers to the positions adopted by the General Assembly to express its stance on and guide response to issues in the public order, including their relation to the church’s own life and mission. These positions may take the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, or social involvement reports, as defined in the Manual of the General Assembly, p. 65, Forming Social Policy, 2.a.

2. **Committee on Theological Education**

The Committee on Theological Education has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and their work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry with staff accountability to the director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry. The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to provide an effective linkage between the General Assembly and the theological seminaries of the PC(USA) by: providing a forum through which the church-at-large can express its concerns to the seminaries; interpreting the mission of the denomination’s theological seminaries to the whole
church; overseeing the interpretation and administration of the Theological Education Fund (1% Plan); serving as a means for cooperation among the church’s theological seminaries; implementing suggestions made by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions as approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993); serving as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological seminaries other than those of the PC(USA); and working in partnership with mid councils and agencies of the General Assembly to provide for leadership in local congregations, the denomination, and the world.

VII. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, previously the Central Treasury Corporation (CTC), is a corporate entity of the General Assembly. It holds funds and, as the principal church corporation, will hold title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance, and provided of the General Assembly, its Articles of Incorporation, and its Bylaws. Among other things, it provides accounting, reporting, and financial services for the General Assembly and its entities. All voting members of, and employs the staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (previously the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) are members of the board of directors. The office of the corporation include a president, an executive vice-president and a chief financial officer (“treasurer”), one or more vice presidents, a secretary, a controller, and an associate treasurer. The presidential shall be elected by the board of directors for a term of four years subject to the confirmation by the General Assembly. Ordinarily, the office of the president and the treasurer are held by the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Deputy Executive Director for Shared Services, respectively. It is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it; from restricted funds designated to it; from the portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly needed for employees, facilities, and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services. Pending revision of the budgeting process in Appendix A to reflect the new governance structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, in 2018, its expenditures for the fiscal years 2018 through 2020 are limited to no more than the amount expended by the corporation in fiscal years 2016 through 2018.

Responsibility for managing the activities of this corporation is assigned to the Deputy Executive Director for Shared Services and other Shared Services staff who have been elected officers of the corporation under the direction of the president.

The treasurer shall prepare an annual report, audited by a certified public accountant, of the financial position and operations of the General Assembly activities for

No agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly, is obligated to purchase or use any facilities or services provided by or through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, other than those for which they have contracted or, with respect to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency for a transition period through 2022, those that as of December 31, 2017 had been provided to such agencies, including but not limited to office space and facilities services. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall work together and with the
other agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to help determine what facilities and services the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, may best offer or cease to offer to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of General Assembly and other agencies of the church in the future.

The officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, their terms, and their election are defined in its Bylaws. The Treasurer of the corporation shall commission the preparation of an audit report or reports by an independent public accountant of the financial position and operations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and, to the extent not otherwise separately commissioned and prepared, the financial position and operations of the General Assembly and its other entities.

* * *

X. Amendments

Proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission that are submitted by overture shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Except as provided in Section IV.E., proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission from related bodies or from the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall review these proposed changes and forward those it approves as part of its report to the General Assembly. All changes to Section VI or to provisions concerning the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and any agency or entity shall also be submitted to the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, for review and approval, amendment, or rejection before any such changes are forwarded to the General Assembly.
Item 05-01

[The assembly approved Item 05-01. See pp. 12, 23.]

On Realigning the Border Between the Synod of the Northeast and the Synod of the Trinity so the Village of Waverly, New York, Shall Be Within the Synod of the Trinity and the Presbytery of Lackawanna—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley and the Presbytery of Lackawanna overture the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to realign the border between the Synod of the Northeast and Synod of the Trinity so that the Village of Waverly, New York, of the Town of Barton, both political subdivisions of Tioga County, New York, shall be within the boundary of the Synod of the Trinity and the Presbytery of Lackawanna, thus transferring the First Presbyterian Church of Waverly, New York, to the Presbytery of Lackawanna.

Rationale

The larger community that residents refer to as “The Valley” consists of the Village of Waverly, New York, and the Boroughs of South Waverly, Sayre, and Athens, Pennsylvania, as well as the immediate surrounding area. The total population of the area is approximately 30,000. Were it not for signage, no person would ever think that there were multiple municipalities in our community based on our physical location and layout.

Although divided into four small communities and separated by a state line, the area functions in many respects as one entity. Examples are Waverly being the only locality in New York that has electric and natural gas utilities supplied by Pennsylvania public utilities. Interstate Highway 86, although built and maintained by New York, is located in Pennsylvania for both “Waverly” exits. In many ways, Waverly is more a part of Pennsylvania than New York.

Historically there were three Presbyterian congregations, one each in Athens, Sayre, and Waverly. These churches had cooperated in many endeavors throughout their existence and, in fact, one was formed as a mission of the oldest, that taking place in 1847. The state line resulted in these churches being separated into separate presbyteries and synods in spite of being only four miles apart at the furthest point. In fact, these churches sit at the corner juncture of four presbyteries.

In 2012 the sessions of the three churches agreed to begin talks concerning their future. This activity was begun with the full support of both presbyteries having jurisdiction. Following these initial talks, all three congregations participated in the New Beginnings process. During this time, the congregations began worshipping jointly. None of the churches had an installed minister of Word and Sacrament at this point in time. As a result of this work, in the summer of 2013 all three congregations voted to consolidate effective the first day of 2014. In November 2013, both presbyteries approved the same motion and plan that would see the combined church at some point joining one of the two presbyteries. At the same time, a PNC was searching for a pastor to be called to the new church; this effort was completed in August 2014.

The congregations joined as one on 1 January 2014, forming Valley United Presbyterian Church. A new corporation was formed that consolidates the previous churches into one; it is a Pennsylvania corporation recognized as a church that is also recognized by the State of New York, under the applicable religious law, to function as a church in the State of New York. It should be noted that this is the only known church recognized by both states in this manner. Effective 1 January 2014 all financial assets of the three churches were combined.

Although one organization from a secular standpoint, ecclesiastically the church is currently considered a “Greater Parish” by the PC(USA). This requires maintenance of a “shadow” set of records in order to properly submit required reports annually. As per the agreement adopted by both presbyteries, the congregation is considered a member of the Presbytery of Lackawanna and the pastor a member of the Presbytery of Susquehanna; however, both have voice and vote in both presbyteries. Care has been taken to only vote once on General Assembly matters and the congregation has fully paid all per capita to all jurisdictions in accordance with the initial agreement.

The congregation has worked hard on the consolidation and decided to sell both church buildings in Pennsylvania and renovate the one in New York. This was in spite of the majority of membership being from the Pennsylvania churches. Under the initial agreement that all three congregations and both presbyteries adopted at the start of this process, the consolidated church would be able to select the presbytery of membership regardless of physical location. The congregation, after careful and prayerful deliberation, has decided to remain a member of the Presbytery of Lackawanna. However, the PC(USA) is unable to accomplish this without a modification of the synod boundaries. As far as the congregation is concerned, we are one church, regardless of bureaucratic matters.

Although Valley United has a historical relationship with both presbyteries and synods, we need to have full affiliation with only one to continue our ministry to our community in the most efficient manner.

Concurrences to Item 05-01 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Upper Ohio Valley, and from the Synods of the Trinity and the Northeast.
Item 05-02

[The assembly approved Item 05-02. See pp. 12, 23.]

On Changing the Name of Eastern Korean Presbytery—From the Synod of the Northeast.

The Synod of the Northeast overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC (USA) to approve changing the official name of “Eastern Korean Presbytery” to “Eastern Korean American Presbytery.”

Rationale

At its 78th stated meeting on June 7, 2017, the Eastern Korean Presbytery approved a resolution to change their official name to Eastern Korean American Presbytery. In early February 2018, the presbytery sent a request to the Synod of the Northeast to approve their action and to overture the General Assembly concerning this change. On February 10, 2018, the Synod of the Northeast Mission and Ministries Commission, the council that conducts synod business between synod assemblies, voted to concur with the presbytery’s request. Therefore, the Synod of the Northeast sends forward this overture.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 05-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

ACREC commends the Eastern Korean Presbytery in recognizing the gifts and contributions of the first- and second-generation immigrants in their communities.

Item 05-03

[In response to Item 05-03, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See p. 23.]

Alternate Resolution:

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) form an administrative commission to address disorder in the Synod of the Covenant as provided in G-3.0109(b)(5) and in accordance with Standing Rule K.2.(a). The commission shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) persons appointed by the Co-Moderators and shall:

1. Honor the principles of *Seeking to Be Faithful Together* with the intent to restore trust and mutuality between the synod and its staff with its constituent presbyteries and their staff and elected leadership. All will:
   a. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ.
   b. Share concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom there are disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus’ teachings.
   c. Seek to stay in community though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension.

2. Conduct a Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108(b)) for the purpose of inquiring into and settling allegations of disorder:
   a. To review and recommend revisions to synod procedures, to institute changes that are necessary to ensure the fulfillment of the PC(USA) principles of participation and representation as outlined in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. This will include but is not limited to a review of records, bylaws, procedures, policies, and manuals of the synod.
   b. To assure effective consultation with the synod committees and commissioners, synod staff, racial ethnic caucuses, Presbyterian Women, presbyteries, presbytery executives, and others as it may determine helpful to its tasks.
   c. To assure adequate support for the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations (G-3.0401).
   d. To assure adequate communication with and among its presbyteries, G-3.0401(a), through commissioners to synod, presbytery leadership, staff, and others as it may determine helpful to its task.
   e. To assure pastoral care among its presbyteries in order that the synod may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments, G-3.0401(b).
f. To address conflicts in a pastoral manner that promotes reconciliation, healing, and restores unity between synod and its presbyteries using professional mediation services if necessary. They may use processes of D-1.0103 Conciliate and Mediate as needed.

g. To assume original jurisdiction if deemed necessary by the commission.

h. To have full authority to enforce the findings and recommendations with due process, granting fair notice and an opportunity to be heard by all parties.

This commission shall report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

[Financial Implications: Per Capita 2019 $24,888. Total—$48,376]

On Establishing an Administrative Commission to Address Issues in the Synod of the Covenant—From the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

The Presbytery of Cincinnati overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to establish an administrative commission to address disorder in the Synod of the Covenant, as provided in G-3.0109b(5) of the Book of Order and Standing Rule K.2. of the Manual of the General Assembly. The commission, which shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) persons appointed by the Moderator (or Co-Moderators), shall:

1. Conduct Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b; Standing Rule K.2.) for the purpose of inquiring into and settling the following allegations of disorder:

a. Failure to determine a satisfactory method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103 in proposed amendments to the bylaws of the synod, or adequately to consult with the presbyteries and racial ethnic caucuses of the synod in the preparation of said bylaws.

b. Failure to adequately support the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations (G-3.0401).

c. Failure to adequately facilitate communication with and among its presbyteries (G-3.0401a).

d. Failure to adequately exercise pastoral care among its presbyteries in order that the synod may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments (G-3.0401b).

e. Conflict between the synod executive and the racial ethnic caucuses of the synod, and with the Cabinet on Ethnic Church Affairs of the synod.

f. Loss of trust and mutuality between the synod and its constituent presbyteries.

g. Loss of trust and mutuality between the synod executive and multiple presbyteries of the synod;

h. Loss of trust and mutuality between the synod executive and the elected and/or administrative leadership of multiple presbyteries of the synod.

2. In its exercise of Special Administrative Review, and in consultation with the Personnel Services Committee of the synod, conduct a comprehensive performance review of the synod executive, including feedback from commissioners, synod staff, racial ethnic caucuses, presbyteries, presbytery executives, and others as it may determine helpful to its task; and to direct the synod regarding the remediation of performance deficiencies, which may include recommendation to terminate employment if it deems the mission of the synod imperatively demands it.

3. Have full authority to enforce the findings and recommendations of its special administrative review, granting fair notice and an opportunity to be heard to all parties. The process for termination of employment, if recommended, shall conform to the personnel policies of the synod in effect at the time the request for special administrative review was initially filed.

4. Refer to judicial process any irregularities or offenses it may discover in the conduct of its review that cannot be remedied through administrative review.

Rationale

The Synod of the Covenant is experiencing serious conflict and dysfunction. At its August 2017 synod assembly, amendments to the synod bylaws were introduced that would have the effect of disempowering and marginalizing the racial ethnic caucuses of the synod from the decision-making processes of the synod. These bylaws were constructed and presented with little, if any, consultation with the persons directly affected, and with no consultation with the presbyteries of the synod. The given rationale was that “When a synod meets, it shall be composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries” (Book of Order).
of Order, G-3.0401), disregarding the synod’s obligation stated in the very same paragraph, “[to] determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod, as well as the method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103; both plans shall be subject to approval by a majority of the presbyteries in the synod” [emphasis added]. The proposed bylaws have never been distributed to the presbyteries, nor are they available on the synod website. The process seems set up to exclude the very voices synods are charged to protect. The proposed bylaws remove racial ethnic voices from the council commissioned to make decisions for the body between assemblies, on which persons elected by the synod (as opposed to the presbyteries) may legally serve (see Request 90-1, Minutes, 1990, Part I, p. 254).

The process for the proposed amendments to the bylaws reinforces perceptions that they are a response to ongoing conflict between the synod executive and the racial ethnic caucuses of the synod that comprise the Cabinet for Ethnic Church Affairs (CECA). In defending the proposed bylaws at the August 2017 meeting, the synod executive allegedly accused those registering objections as being “greedy for power.”

In addition, the qualities of trust and mutuality in the relationships between the presbyteries and the synod, and presbytery leaders and the synod executive, have strained to the point of breaking. The Presbytery of Mackinac was recently blindsided by a request for a called meeting of the synod to appoint an administrative commission to take original jurisdiction of the presbytery without any prior consultation or inquiry. Only threatened ecclesiastical suits alleging a violation of due process prompted the presentation of a substitute motion limiting the commission’s powers to inquiry only. No rationale, other than the receipt of four anonymous letters—the contents of which were withheld—were presented for the motion in the call.

Several presbyteries, including Maumee Valley, Scioto Valley, and Detroit have withdrawn some or all of their participation in the life of the synod. Serious conflicts exist between several presbytery executives and the synod executive. Recently, all five female presbytery executives refused to participate in an executive forum because of conflicts or concerns involving the synod executive.

There are serious, chronic problems in the dissemination of information from the synod to presbyteries and their leaders. Some presbytery executives have been told directly that they are not permitted at synod assemblies. Information regarding the timing and location of upcoming assemblies, as well as agendas and supporting documents, are neither sent to the executives nor posted on the synod website.

At the November 2017 meeting of the synod, the Personnel Services Committee indicated they had conducted a job performance review of the synod executive and a pay raise was being recommended to the synod on the basis of that review. Email correspondence documentation indicates that the Personnel Services Committee did not meet in 2017, in direct contrast to their report filed in November 2017.

In November 2017, a question was publicly posed to the chair of the Personnel Services Committee during a synod meeting, inquiring if that committee would be willing to meet with the presbytery executives of the Synod of the Covenant. A direct response was deferred. The question was presented on additional occasions in email communication subsequent to the November 2017 synod meeting, and the response from a synod officer indicated it was inappropriate to make such a request. In addition, in December 2017, a presbytery executive requested a meeting between presbytery executives and the synod executive, and that direct invitation was refused by the synod executive.

Due to the severity of the issues involved, we believe time is of the essence in conducting this review.

Concurrences to Item 05-03 from the Presbyteries of Detroit, Mackinac, and Scioto Valley.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 05-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 05-03.

This overture requests the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to establish an administrative commission to address disorder in the Synod of the Covenant and bases their request on G-3.0109b(5) of the Book of Order and Standing Rule K.2. of the Manual of the General Assembly.

ACREC is concerned about assuring polity and proper procedures. As ACREC understands Standing Rule K.2 of the Manual of the General Assembly, a request for an administrative commission to address disorder in a synod can come to the General Assembly in one of three ways as outlined in K.2.a. One of these ways, K.2.a (1), is by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-3.0303d; G-3.0402; Standing Rule A.3.) Furthermore, Standing Rule K.2.b. specifies the orderly manner in which this request is to be submitted. Rule K.2.b. states:

b. Special administrative review of an alleged synod irregularity or delinquency may occur when a written request for such review is received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly from another synod or a presbytery within the synod of the alleged irregularity or delinquency. If the request relates to an alleged delinquency, the request can only be filed with the Stated Clerk after the failure or refusal of the synod to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, having been requested to do so in writing prior to the meeting. When the re-
quest for special administrative review is received, the Stated Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. If the request is in order and all the moderators agree that for the good of the church the special administrative review needs to be undertaken before the next meeting of the General Assembly (when the request could be considered by the whole General Assembly), the Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a special committee (Standing Rule K.1.) to conduct a special administrative review in accordance with G-3.0108b and report its findings and recommendations to the next General Assembly.

The rationale of Item 05-03 does not satisfy the requirements stated in K.2.b and is, therefore, out of order.

Furthermore, it is troubling to see personnel matters brought out publicly without giving the individuals concerned due process to defend themselves.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-03

Comment on Item 05-03—From the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

Section K.2.a. of the Standing Rules, Special Administrative Review of Synods, provides three ways that the General Assembly might be requested to initiate such review: “(1) by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-3.0302d; G-3.0402; Standing Rule A.3.; (2) by request from one of the General Assembly entities (Standing Rule A.2.); or (3) By a commissioners’ resolution (Standing Rule A.6.). If such overture, request, or resolution is acted on favorably by the General Assembly, the General Assembly could undertake Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b) through commission or special committee as provided for in Standing Rule K.1. and G-3.0109.”

Section K.2.b., Written Request for Review, states a second process for requesting special administrative review, which is appropriate between meetings of the General Assembly and would be considered by the Stated Clerk along with the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

While it is not appropriate for personnel matters to be decided by the General Assembly, it is appropriate for the General Assembly, if it discerns the need, to establish an administrative commission to inquire into and settle such issues.

Item 05-04

On Transferring Fruitland Presbyterian Church from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.

Item 05-04 was not referred by the Stated Clerk upon recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Item 05-05

[The assembly approved Item 05-05. See pp. 12, 24.]

On Changing the Boundaries within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies—From the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to change the geographic boundaries of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa by moving the Township of LeRoy, County of Mower, Minnesota, from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area to the Presbytery of North Central Iowa; and by this action, to require the transfer of First Presbyterian Church in LeRoy, Minnesota, from membership in the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area to the Presbytery of North Central Iowa.

Rationale

The session of First Presbyterian Church in LeRoy, Minnesota, first initiated conversation with the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area about a possible transfer of membership to the Presbytery of North Central Iowa in 2017. With the full knowledge of its current presbytery, it also initiated conversation with the Presbytery North Central Iowa and observed a stated presbytery meeting there. On January 11, 2018, the session of the First Presbyterian Church in LeRoy unanimously approved a motion to request the transfer. The congregation received and approved the same motion at its annual meeting on January 21, 2018.

On March 30, 1868, the First Presbyterian Church was organized in the far southern Minnesota farming community of LeRoy. The church has continuously served residents of this small town (2010 census population: 929) and those who farm the rich lands around it for 150 years.
Through a series of presbytery mergers and realignments over its history, First Presbyterian Church in LeRoy became a current member of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (PTCA). Its status in the PTCA is often seen as “remote,” both geographically and in focus of ministry. First Presbyterian Church of LeRoy sits but a mile from the Minnesota-Iowa border, and more than 100 miles from the geographic center of the presbytery, further than any other congregation. Its focus on rural ministry is also a more remote fit with the increasingly urban-and-suburban ministry focus of the presbytery. “After a period of prayer and discernment,” the session wrote, “in which we have engaged in dialogue with representatives of our presbytery and the Presbytery of North Central Iowa, we have discerned that the culture and ministries of North Central Iowa are of much greater similarity to our own. We believe that the support and encouragement that they offer would be much more helpful to our church. We would be among churches and members who understand our way of life to a far greater degree.”

Presbyterian churches located in the state of Minnesota hold membership across five different presbyteries, including in two presbyteries whose churches are primarily in other states. Likewise, the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Areas includes five congregations from neighboring Wisconsin. The question of state lines as concurrent with presbytery lines is not an abiding one here.

Therefore, both presbyteries have agreed that, with the goal of supporting our congregations in the particular ministries to which they have been called by God, this transfer is in accordance with the history, the vision, and the needs of First Presbyterian Church in LeRoy, Minnesota.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area approved the transfer of the church to the Presbytery of North Central Iowa at its stated meeting on March 10, 2018. The Presbytery of North Central Iowa, having consulted with the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, approved the admission of the First Presbyterian Church of LeRoy, Minnesota, at its stated meeting on March 6, 2018, pending the vote of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Concurrence to Item 05-05 from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Item 05-06

[Item 05-06 was answered by the action taken on Item 05-03. See pp. 23, 24.]

Response to Item 05-03—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to answer Item 05-03 from the Presbytery of Cincinnati with this overture:


2. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) hereby affirms the due process rights of all Presbyterians and church staff granted in the constitution and policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

3. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directs the Stated Clerk to encourage the Presbytery of Cincinnati and concurring presbyteries to adhere to the principals found in Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement (approved by the 204th General Assembly (1992) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

   “Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ” (Manual of the General Assembly, 2018, p. 63).

   “Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus’ teachings” (Ibid).

   “Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension” (Ibid).

4. That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) reject Item 05-03 because the synod can demonstrate that it asserts false claims and misleading conclusions based upon misinformation, and because there are no outstanding written or filed complaints or accusations against any policy of, or action by, the synod, or against any synod staff.

5. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) rejects Item 05-03 and similar efforts that subvert the judicial process.

6. That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) answer Item 05-03 (from the Presbytery of Cincinnati) with this overture of the Synod of the Covenant.
The Synod of the Covenant has petitioned the Stated Clerk to rule out of order Item 05-03 from the Presbytery of Cincinnati because it violates Standing Rule K. Standing Rule K.2.b. in the General Assembly Manual states:

b. Special administrative review of an alleged synod irregularity or delinquency may occur when a written request for such review is received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly from another synod or a presbytery within the synod of the alleged irregularity or delinquency. If the request relates to an alleged delinquency, the request can only be filed with the Stated Clerk after the failure or refusal of the synod to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, having been requested to do so in writing prior to the meeting. When the request for special administrative review is received, the Stated Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. If the request is in order and all the moderators agree that for the good of the church the special administrative review needs to be undertaken before the next meeting of the General Assembly (when the request could be considered by the whole General Assembly), the Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a special committee (Standing Rule K.1.) to conduct a special administrative review in accordance with G-3.0108b and report its findings and recommendations to the next General Assembly. (Manual of the General Assembly 2018, Standing Rule K.2.b.)

The Presbytery of Cincinnati did not comply with the above quoted Standing Rule (K. 2. b.) and in the process has defamed the synod executive and violated his rights to due process.

Item 05-03 does not follow the constitutional mandates that promote peaceable partnerships between church councils and safeguard the civil and ecclesial rights to due process. The overture defames, bullies, and harasses the character of the synod executive, church leaders, and synod staff, and serves to hinder collaboration and mutuality among colleagues.

There was no advance correspondence from any of the presbytery or presbytery coordinating councils, and no written requests to address concerns or provide input to this overture prior to the recommendation by coordinating councils and action by presbyteries. The synod did not receive any related correspondence. In fact, the Presbytery of Mackinac did not vote on concurring with the overture. Rather, the Coordinating Council of the Presbytery of Mackinac acted on its own without the vote of the presbytery, without specific authorization of its bylaws, and without advance notice to the members of the coordinating council. The Synod of the Covenant learned of Item 05-03 from Cincinnati after the fact from a member of the Presbytery of Mackinac who received a letter from the chair of the coordinating council dated 3/8/2018 regarding the action taken by the coordinating council at their meeting on 3/6/2018. The letter, which was written by the Reverend Jessica L. Paulsen, council chair, stated “The Presbytery of Cincinnati, through their General Presbyter the Reverend Doctor Nancy Kahaian, reached out to the Presbytery of Mackinac to request concurrence on an overture to General Assembly.”

The presbytery coordinating councils sent this action to presbyteries prior to giving the Synod of the Covenant an opportunity to respond. The opportunity to respond would have provided essential information and corrected misinformation.

In accordance with Standing Rule K.2.b. of the Manual of the General Assembly 2018, the Synod of the Covenant should have received a written request on all of these matters from a presbytery action. The Synod of the Covenant has not received a written request from any presbytery about any of the items mentioned.

Furthermore, the Synod of the Covenant has not been informed that the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly has, in fact, received such a request and complied by the same mandate.

Inclusion of personnel matters in Item 05-03 has already resulted in the improper discussion of personnel matters at presbytery coordinating councils and on the floor of presbyteries without affording due process to the synod executive, who was accused and therefore defamed and without an opportunity for defense. Placing these assertions in Item 05-03 (Cincinnati overture) publicly subverts due process and the rights and protections that are built into our disciplinary parliamentary procedures. These items should not be part of the business of the Mid-Council Committee 05 and may not be made public without due process.

Since the Synod of the Covenant has not received from any presbytery a request upon which a determination could be made that the synod took an action or whether any other action by the synod was an irregularity or a delinquency, we urge the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve this overture and reject Item 05-03 from the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

Further, in direct response to some of the allegations and/or rationale contained in Item 05-03, the synod states:

1. In regard to the process for the amendment of the bylaws, the Synod Bylaws Task Force proposal was an attempt to correct the bylaws to comply with the Book of Order (G-3.0401) and was disapproved by the November 2017 assembly. The process followed by the synod for reviewing, recommending, and voting on proposed bylaws changes was communicated to all commissioners and the eleven presbyteries. It involved all commissioners including consultation with all eleven presbytery stated clerks. Documentation is available.

2. Synod assembly meetings, agenda, and documents have always been circulated to commissioners and all eleven presbytery stated clerks. Documentation is available.
3. The Presbytery of Mackinac Administrative Commission was approved at a duly called special meeting with a unanimous roll call vote after consultation with the Presbytery of Mackinac Coordinating Council and giving appropriate hearing and representation from the presbytery stated clerk, presbytery moderator, and moderator of the coordinating council. The commissioners from the Presbytery of Mackinac were included in unanimous vote. Documentation is available.

4. The statement that three presbyteries “have withdrawn some or all of their participation in the life of the synod” is both misleading and divisive. The statement that “all five female presbytery executives refused to participate in an executive forum because of conflicts or concerns involving the synod executive” has proven to be a misleading and defamatory statement.

5. The synod has always made every effort to communicate and act with integrity and transparency. The synod assembly and synod committees continue to account for various responsibilities and all functions of the synod. The synod continues to affirm unity in diversity, equal protection under the law, and the right to due process.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 05-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 05-06.

Item 05-03 requested the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to establish an administrative commission to address alleged disorder in the Synod of the Covenant. The response of the Synod of the Covenant embodied in this overture premises its request of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to reject Item 05-03 based on the lack of compliance of the complainants, Cincinnati Presbytery and concurring presbyteries, with the principles found in Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement [Approved by the 204th General Assembly (1992) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]

Furthermore, it appears that Item 05-03 fails to demonstrate that complainants adhered to Standing Rule K.2.b. in the General Assembly Manual. See the ACREC’s advice and counsel statement for Item 05-03 for further comments.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM OVT 05-06

Comment on Item 05-06—From the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

Section K.2.a. of the Standing Rules, Special Administrative Review of Synods, provides three ways that the General Assembly might be requested to initiate such review: “(1) by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-3.0302d; G-3.0402; Standing Rule A.3.; (2) by request from one of the General Assembly entities (Standing Rule A.2.); or (3) By a commissioners’ resolution (Standing Rule A.6.). If such overture, request, or resolution is acted on favorably by the General Assembly, the General Assembly could undertake Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b) through commission or special committee as provided for in Standing Rule K.1. and G-3.0109.”

Section K.2.b., Written Request for Review, states a second process for requesting special administrative review, which is appropriate between meetings of the General Assembly and would be considered by the Stated Clerk along with the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

While it is not appropriate for personnel matters to be decided by the General Assembly, it is appropriate for the General Assembly, if it discerns the need, to establish an administrative commission to inquire into and settle such issues.

Item 05-07

[The assembly approved Item 05-07. See pp. 12, 24.]

On Changing the Name of Midwest Hanmi Presbytery—From the Synod of Lincoln Trails.

The Synod of Lincoln Trails overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to approve changing the official name of Midwest Hanmi Presbytery to Midwest Korean American Presbytery.

Rationale

In 2017, Midwest Hanmi Presbytery approved a resolution to change its official name to Midwest Korean American Presbytery. The presbytery then submitted a request to the Synod of Lincoln Trails to approve that action and to overture the General Assembly concerning the name change. At its 105th Stated Meeting on October 21, 2017, the Synod of Lincoln Trails approved the presbytery’s action. During its 106th Stated Meeting on April 21, 2018, the synod voted to submit the overture. Therefore, the Synod of Lincoln Trails submits this overture and recommends its approval by the General Assembly.
Item 05-08

[The assembly approved Item 05-08. See pp. 12, 24.]

Commissioners’ Resolution: On Transferring Fruitland Presbyterian Church from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast.

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018), upon request of the Synod of Alaska-Northwest and with the concurrence of both presbyteries, approve the transfer of Fruitland Presbyterian Church from the Presbytery of Olympia to the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast. This would result in changing the boundaries of the presbyteries.

Rationale

The Presbytery of Olympia approved the transfer on November 17, 2017. The Presbytery of the Northwest Coast approved the transfer on February 15, 2018.

The membership of the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast is approximately one-third Korean, and the presbytery has a Korean associate executive presbyter. The session, both presbyteries, and the synod believe that the active Korean community in Northwest Coast, as well as the personnel and language resources offered by the presbytery, will significantly strengthen the ministry of the congregation.

Julie Scheer Johnson, Presbytery of Olympia
Charlotte L. McMullen, Presbytery of Olympia

Item 05-09

[The assembly approved Item 05-09 with amendment. See pp. 23, 24–25.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On the Challenges of Being Black in the PC (USA).

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. [Direct mid councils to recommit to] [Reaffirm the] committee on representation requirements for inclusiveness as stated in the constitution (G-3.0103), paying careful attention to issues of inclusiveness and fair practices by the pastor nominating committees and committees on preparation for ministry.

2. [Direct] [Advise] mid councils to [raise] [follow the lead of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus in raising] awareness of the declining nature of black congregations throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the lack of pastoral leadership, both current and future, for those congregations.

3. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to respond to the presbyteries that the National Black Presbyterian Caucus has identified as not abiding by Committee on Representation Guidelines.

4. The Office of the General Assembly is to report within one year to presbyteries and synods concerning the progress on this resolution and a full report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

5. Advise the Board of Pensions to analyze and report on the viability of African American Presbyterian Churches and the challenges of supporting installed pastoral leadership.

Rationale

This is a call to action for the PC(USA) regarding issues and concerns of the black constituency of this denomination. As the church, we have stated the obvious, repeatedly, in reference to our perspective on racism and injustice. However, the time has come for the denomination to take some action beyond developing resources, writing reports, and passing rules and regulations that are disregarded, or in some cases, outright ignored by a seemingly biased system that tends to favor those in power and control. While many of the same issues are relevant to most ethnic congregations, this paper will address “black” congregations specifically.

As black Presbyterians, we have been on a continuing pilgrimage with this denomination long before the beginning of the First African Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in May of 1807.

Over the years, black Presbyterians have organized and reorganized in order to meet the challenges that emerge out of the awkward movement of history for black Presbyterians. African American Presbyterians helped shape the direction of a reunited church in 1983, with a commitment to racial justice and inclusiveness, as part of our confession of faith and rules of
government. Yet, even today, we feel the church continues to struggle to effectively comply with this commitment, embrace the history and rich contributions of black people, and move swiftly toward change.

The time for stating the obvious and setting new goals is no longer an acceptable strategy without a plan of action that can be implemented immediately.

The National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC) has noted the following concerns that could lead to some action and resolution of the majority of the issues raised:

1. Research completed in twelve presbyteries indicate that presbyteries are not abiding by the Committee on Representation guidelines, as stated in the Constitution (Book of Order, G-3.0103).

2. Currently of the 400+ black congregations, approximately 80 percent are without a pastor, mainly because they are unable to support one. Many of these congregations are less than fifty members.

3. Many pastors currently providing pastoral leadership are not Presbyterian and, therefore, lack a sufficient knowledge of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. Therefore, the status of the diminishment of the “black” church appears obvious. Without intervention, they will certainly continue to be closed or merged, one by one. The appearance is that presbyteries do not pay much attention to the decline or the issues causing the decline, until it is too late. A goal would be that the number of vacant congregations become a priority and that we address this issue so that we increase the number of vacant pulpits by 40 percent before the 224th General Assembly (2020). Further, presbyteries are encouraged to consider ways to address issues in black congregations before a church reaches the point of no return and an administrative commission is formed as an after-thought. Attention to mentoring and training for elders, similar to the pilot program in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, may be one feasible alternative to providing pastoral leadership to small churches under fifty members.

4. A study of the impact of the ordination exams and the grueling process have caused many to drop out of the process.

5. The failure of seasoned elders on sessions, in some cases, has discouraged youth and young adults from participating. Providing opportunities and mentoring for youth and young adults may help with the desired results.

6. Encourage black persons who choose to serve on committees to speak out and speak up on issues that need to be addressed rather than feeling like their voices will not be heard.

7. Monitor the progress of African American women serving in leadership positions, particularly, senior pastor positions. Notable are the number of PNC’s who are still reluctant to consider and call women despite the representation guidelines and the latest Status of Women Report.

8. Begin conversations around our own prejudices within the black church, particularly, as we look at the whole issue of inclusiveness in our particular context.

Helen B. Dean, Presbytery of the Peaks
Jane B. Johnson, Presbytery of the Peaks

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-09

Advice and Council on Item 05-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 05-09 with the following amendment: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Direct mid councils to recommit to [Reaffirm the] Committee on Representation requirements for inclusiveness as stated in the constitution (G-3.0103), paying careful attention to issues of inclusiveness and fair practices by the pastor nominating committees and committees on preparation for ministry.

“2. [Direct] [Advise] mid councils to [follow the lead of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus in raising] [raise] awareness of the declining nature of black congregations throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the lack of pastoral leadership, both current and future, for those congregations.

“[3. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to respond to the presbyteries that the National Black Presbyterian Caucus has identified as not abiding by Committee of Representation Guidelines.]

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) appreciates the resolution’s call for the PC(USA) to follow through with its stated commitments to representation and creating just church structure. In doing so, it is critical to listen
ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-09

Advice and Council on Item 05-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 05-09.

This resolution supports the work of ACREC as it advocates and addresses issues of racial justice and equity of people of color in the church and society.

ACREC supports this resolution as it brings awareness again of the need to take action to address the continuing problem of the lack of representation of people of color, specifically black members of the PC(USA) in decisions affecting pastoral leadership and representation in the emerging life of the PC(USA).

ACREC believes a lack of action by the PC(USA) will directly and negatively impact the participation and membership of its black members and thereby the entire church.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-09

Advice and Council on Item 05-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 05-09.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns identifies the need for more intentionality in unmasking the idolatries of racism and gender bias. The intersectionality of each is intrinsically embedded in church and in culture. “Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism.”

At this critical moment in history, when racism, sexism, and misogyny explicitly abound throughout the current culture, causing significant spiritual and emotional violence against women, it imperative for the church to hear the voices of those long silenced. The commitment of the PC(USA)’s decade of “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God” supports the attempts to address gender concerns for women clergy.

There is currently no integrated plan to address declining black congregations, with enough bandwidth to adapt to the changing needs of black congregations in the 21st century. And while the General Assembly cannot direct mid councils, we feel a sense of urgency to study the listed implications via a task force to direct all agencies to engage in the sacred practice of strengthening our black congregations.

Endnotes

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 05-09

Comment on Item 05-09—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation commends the authors of this commissioners’ resolution. We are in full support of the premise and substance of the document. GACOR stands ready to assist and advise the committees on representation of mid councils in their work regarding African American pastors and the 400+ African American PC(USA) congregations.

Committees on representation (CORs) of the mid councils of the church have the potential to be impactful agents of change in the PC(USA). Empowered and resourced CORs can lift up the voices and challenges of those that have been long silenced or ignored. GACOR works to increase diversity and equity at all levels of the church. We will assist and support efforts to make the PC(USA) more just, diverse, and equitable.

223rd General Assembly (2018)
Item 05-A

Review of Synod Minutes

Approved with comment and with exceptions.

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synods for their good work and makes the following suggestions for the review of minutes:

- Provide more training for assembly committee members on how to review minutes.
- Provide a list of acronyms used.
- Advise synods to include photos and a narrative of the mission work being done in the synod.
- Advise synods that all minutes should be provided to the General Assembly electronically in order to facilitate the review in a process.

The committee lifts up the synods who provided reports and presentations regarding the mission work in their particular synod. All synods are encouraged to participate in this process for future assemblies.

Comments and Exceptions:

- **Synod of Alaska-Northwest**
  
  2016
  Exception: No list of roster of last six years of former members of PJC. Minutes should be numbered consecutively.
  Comment: They noted exceptions but did not comment on action taken.

  2017
  Exceptions: Minutes should be numbered consecutively.
  No Comments

- **Synod of Boriquen (Puerto Rico)**
  
  The Assembly Committee on Mid Council Ministries (05) received the minutes and commends the synod for providing the minutes while in the midst of a devastating natural disaster.

- **Synod of the Covenant**
  
  Overall the Synod of the Covenant meeting minutes appear in order and follow the requirements of the Constitution. Many of the policies and other items missing in the regular minutes are found in the appendix.

  2016
  No Exceptions.
  No Comments.

  2017
  No Exceptions.
  No Comments.

- **Synod of Lakes and Prairies**
  
  2016
  No Exceptions.
  No Comments.

  2017
  No Exceptions.
  No Comments.

- **Synod of the Lincoln Trails**
  
  The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils recommends the synod consider a narrative report in their minutes highlighting their good work.

  2016
  No Exceptions.
  Comment: No opportunity for floor nominations reflected in the minutes.
2017
Exception: No evidence of a Child & Youth protection policy.
No Comments.

Synod of the Living Waters
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils encourages the synod to provide evidence of ecumenical engagement.

2016
No Exceptions.

2017
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the work on crisis assistance with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

2016
Exception: #8—No financial report included in the minutes.

2017
Exceptions: #8—No financial report included in the minutes.
No Comments.

Synod of the Northeast
2016
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

2017
The Synod of the Northeast formally meets only once every two years.

Synod of Mid-America
The committee commends the Synod of Mid America for their electronic presence.

2016
No Exceptions.
Comment: No index provided in the minutes.

2017
No Exceptions.
Comment: No index provided in the minutes.

Synod of the Pacific
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their work with Disaster Assistance.

2016
No Exceptions
Comments:
1. No evidence of nominations from the floor.
2. Evidence of nominations missing from index.

2017
No Exceptions.
Comments:
1. No evidence of nominations from the floor.
2. Evidence of nominations missing from index.

Synod of the Rocky Mountains
2016
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.
2017
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.

**Synod of the South Atlantic**

2016
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.

2017
No Exceptions.
The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their great ministry.

**Synod of Southern California and Hawaii**

2016
No Exceptions.
Comments: Called electronic meeting June 4, 2016, does not appear to qualify as a meeting.

2017
No Exceptions.
Comments: The review checklist for the December 2, 2017, meeting wasn’t completed.

**Synod of the Southwest**

2016
No Exceptions.
Comments: Minutes were missing a previous PJC class.

2017
Exception: Child and youth protection policy not evident in minutes.
Comment: Minutes were missing a previous PJC class.

**Synod of the Sun**

The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for their creative ways of electronic meetings.

2016
No Exceptions.
No Comments.

2017
Exceptions: None.
Comments: None.

**Synod of the Trinity**

The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils commends the synod for the substantial mission support to its presbyteries.

2016
Exceptions: COR, no members listed and no report, but in bylaws.
Comments:
1. Decisions not as an attachment to minutes of the meeting.
3. Minutes included evidence of “property and liability insurance coverage.”
4. No motions listed in consent agenda, just a few words

2017
Exceptions:
1. No number needed for quorum listed. Quorum announced.
2. Not included in the minutes.
3. No members listed and no report, but in bylaws.
4. #6—No COR report.
5. #7—Budget not approved by Synod Assembly or Governing Commission.
Comments:
1. #19—Decisions not as an attachment to minutes of the meeting.
2. #28—No listing of nominating committee and COR and other committees other than assembly commissioners, governing commission, six years former PJC and PJC.
   a. No motions listed in consent agenda, just a few words
   b. No check list included.

Item 05-Info

_Synod Reports in Response to Item 05-01 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016)_

In approving Item 05-01 in 2016, the General Assembly stated the following:

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

In the spirit of that recommendation, the following synods submitted reports:

- Synod of the Covenant—07-Info-Synod of the Covenant report.pdf (See p. 542.)
- Synod of Lakes and Prairies—07-Info-synod-of-lakes-and-prairies-report.pdf (See p. 544.)
- Synod of Lincoln Trails—07-Info-synod-of-lincoln-trails-report.pdf (See p. 547.)
- Synod of Mid-America—07-Info-synod-of-mid-america-report.pdf (See p. 549.)
- Synod of the Sun—07-Info-synod-of-the-sun-report.pdf see p. 554; also 07-Info-Synod-of-the-Sun-Spanish.pdf (See p. 559.)
- Synod of Trinity—07-Info-Synod of the Trinity Review 2018.pdf (See p. 551.)
SYNOD OF THE COVENANT RESPONSE TO
ITEM 05-01 FROM THE 222nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2016

In 2014, the Synod of the Covenant initiated a discernment process in response to the 221st General Assembly 2014 action and reported the 222nd GA 2016 as follows:

Synod of the Covenant Response to the 221st GA (2014) item 05-04

In response to the 221st GA (2014) item 05-04, the Synod of the Covenant invited all eleven of its presbyteries and neighboring synods into conversation to discuss possible boundary changes and/or new partnerships. Regretfully, we were unable to fulfill the 221st (2014) GA item 05-04 as issued. However, what did emerge from our contextual discernment process was a renewed purpose and sense of call as A Just-Peace church.

Recommendations:

1. That the Synod of the Covenant maintain its current geographic boundaries.
2. That the Synod of the Covenant be permitted to affirm its calling as A Just-Peace church.
3. That the Synod of the Covenant invite the presbyteries and congregations that lie within its bounds to adopt The Five Peacemaking Affirmations.

Since then, the Synod continued the discernment to live out the calling of A Just-Peace church. This is evident in our continuous self-evaluation and organizational redevelopment. The Synod Assembly convenes trice annually. In spring, the Synod welcomes new and returning commissioners with a three-day retreat, which includes faith nurture, education and reflection, and orientation, preceded or followed by a brief business meeting of the Assembly. In the summer, the one-day Assembly is focused on conversations with and receiving reports from the 11 presbyteries, which are presented by presbytery/coordinating council moderators. The context of mission, challenges and opportunities, is the focus of these community conversations. The Annual Assembly is a two-day in November and begins with a seminar led by the International Mission Partners from the Synod’s Mission to the USA program as they conclude their itineration with congregations. The seminar is followed by worship and often a visit by the GA Moderator. The next day is designated as the annual assembly business.

We continue to conduct the Mobile Health Fair Ministry program, the Mission to the USA program, and the Welcome Refugee initiative. The Synod continues to resources presbyteries as invited, and especially during transitions in leadership, and other constitutional requirements in presbytery minutes review, consultations, referrals, and PJC. The synod is in process of renewing the covenant agreements with PCUSA related institutions within the bounds and maintain ecumenical and interfaith relations. We have recently concluded a deliberate and lengthy process to review and update the Synod Bylaws and Manual of Operations.

The Synod continues to support various new and continued initiatives generously, reduce the cost, and refrain from increasing per capita apportionment. The Synod conducts its mission within the bounds in partnership with presbyteries and congregations, and with GA entities, in order to effect change in church and society. Through the Welcome Refugees initiative, the Synod allocates resources to help support congregations in order to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus through genuine hospitality, as well as with the three-year focus on Christian-Muslim relations through the Mission to the USA program. Synod also deploys six young adults to organize and conduct free health fairs through the Mobile Health Fair ministry. Synod funding also include the ecumenical mission of the Ohio Council of Churches, in addition to other engagements in the local and regional communities.
Support for Campus Ministry programs continues in public universities and colleges. The Synod maintains a focus on multicultural and diversity, which include the Cabinet of Racial Ethnic Affairs, Black Clergy Pastoral Care Retreats, and Korean Pastors and Spouses retreats. In addition, the Synod continues to administer R/E Program grants, New Covenant Grants, Higher Education and Seminary Scholarships, and Peacemaking Scholarships. Synod also maintains vibrant partnerships with the Synod Presbyterian Women, and the Covenant Gathering (former Synod School in partnership with Synod of Lincoln Trails), and PCUSA related mission networks, and international partnerships.

Since the 222nd GA 2016, through the efforts of the Moderators’ Committee, there was an added effort to improve the committee structure of the Synod of the Covenant. The Synod Assembly established a task group of diverse commissioners to review the Bylaws and Manual of Administrative Operations. Those proposals were voted on at the November 3-4, 2017 Synod Assembly. This effort was the result of the evaluation of the Synod’s Moderators Committee, which also follow up on the process of implementation.

The Synod’s Moderators Committee will continue to evaluate the work of the synod as mandated by synod policy to “Guide the synod in its review of the vision and mission directions of its life and work” which include reviewing the organizational structure, policies, and mission focus of the Synod of the Covenant annually, and report to the General Assembly biennially.
SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES

Report to the 223rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
June 2018

The 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urged synods “to undertake an intentional system of review and self-study and to report to General Assembly on a biannual basis.”

However, the General Assembly provided no guidance for submitting reports or outline of the format of such reports. In keeping with the spirit of the recommendation, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies submits the following summary of some of its activities during the past two years.

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, with more than 750 churches across six states of the upper Midwest, partners with its 16 presbyteries in the ministry and mission of its congregations across the wide region. To do so, the synod concentrates much of its effort within the framework of a covenant adopted nearly three years ago with the synods of Lincoln Trails and Mid-America. The covenant calls for an effort to support the ministry and mission small and rural churches, and for the commitment to fight against oppression, racism and disenfranchisement of the marginalized and communities of color.

With that broad scope, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies offers this summer its 65th annual Synod School, which serves as a learning and personal enrichment experience for people of all ages, and also serves as a leadership development program for small and rural churches. The weeklong program typically draws about 600 participants, but in the summer of 2017 that number set a record at 686 when the Rev. J. Herbert Nelson II, stated clerk of the General Assembly, served through the week as its convocation speaker.

The synod is also a sponsor and one of the developers, along with participating presbyteries, in The Academy, a series of 11 courses “designed to develop well equipped, thoughtful people to better serve councils in a variety of capacities.” The Academy opened its series of classes at Synod School 2017, and a new series of classes will open again this year at the midsummer ministry. For some participants, classes through The Academy will lead to becoming commissioned pastors, but others may use the education to become stronger leaders in their churches and presbytery.

Developing leaders for the presbyteries and congregations across the synod continues to evolve. What the synod once called the COM/CPM Conference is now the Leadership Summit, an annual conference designed for presbytery leadership in a new world. Participation has been expanded beyond members of committees on ministry and
committees on the preparation for ministry to reach leaders in a variety of roles. In the
2017 event the theme centered on bi-vocational ministry, a key to many leadership
positions in small and rural churches, and the 2018 event concentrated on mental health.
The synod subsidizes a number of participants from each of its presbyteries.

The synod continues to support members and institutions of racial ethnic communities
through scholarships, grants, presence and activities. Over the past two years, the synod
has contributed nearly $20,000 in scholarships to racial-ethnic students. A recent recipient,
the Rev. Ekram Kachu, became the second ordained Sudanese woman in the synod, and
was installed this June as pastor of First Arabic Presbyterian Church in Des Moines. The
Rev. Kachu is also the executive director of the Arabic Outreach Center of Des Moines, a
recipient of grant from the synod’s Self Development of People Committee. That synod
committee continues to support initiatives among racial-ethnic and immigrant
communities in their efforts to provide social, economic, educational and legal resources to
their members. The Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministry also provides grants to 12 Native
American tribal colleges in its bounds.

Being present is an important part of the synod’s ministry and mission. Beginning the fall of
2016 the synod participated in the Dakota Access Pipeline protests near the Standing Rock
Indian Reservation in North Dakota. More than 4,000 people gathered as “water
protectors” to prevent the pipeline from being placed beneath the Missouri River. Although
the pipeline now runs beneath the river, the opportunity for ministry and mission was
clear. In addition to being present and visible at the protest campsite, the synod accepted
nearly $25,000 from across the church in donations that were subsequently used for fuel,
food, medical care, legal services, sustainable energy projects, native-led stewardship
organizations and interfaith advocacy.

Believing that dialogue and conversations around the issues of white privilege and
systemic racism are an integral part of the church’s effort to move forward, the synod
invited Jennifer Harvey, author of “Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for
Reconciliation,” to address its assembly in the spring of 2017. Harvey, a professor of
religion at Drake University, led three educational sessions that addressed white privilege,
racism and reparations. “We cannot have paradise in a world full of theme parks if at first
we do not lament,” Harvey said. The synod also purchased and distributed Debby Irving’s

While staff and other leadership positions within the synod change and evolve, we continue
to value the relationships that have been established. The synod maintains covenant
relationships with each of the seven Presbyterian-related institutions of higher education
within its bounds. A member of the synod staff serves on the Council of Advisors of the
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.
The synod has continued to support a variety of ministries through emerging mission, and ecclesiastical and ecumenical grants. Those grants have supported programs addressing youth homelessness, leadership development, innovative collegiate ministries, youth and family services, and housing for young adults engaged in public services like AmeriCorps. More specifically, one $10,000 grant supported Iowa presbyteries who are working together to assist those who suffer from mental illness. Iowa has substantial shortages in both facilities and providers for mental-health care. An emerging mission grant supports the Table of Grace community, a new congregation in South Dakota organized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Presbyterian Student Center Foundation – more commonly known as Pres House – in Madison, Wisconsin, received a synod grant to support an experimental young-adult community, a program receiving substantial support from the Lilly Foundation.

Pres House has a particularly strong relationship with the synod. Speaking at the most recent gathering of NEXT Church, the Rev. Mark Elsdon, executive director and campus co-pastor of Pres House, told those who attended his Ignite presentation, "I'm going to tell you about the incredible impact that leveraging assets within the church can have in our mission and ministry. It's a story of hope and one that just might give us some ideas for today." Elsdon told the story of the successful Pres House Student Apartments, and how the synod -- "one of the most helpful partners," Elsdon said -- used $2.5 million to enable Pres House to obtain "favorable financing" on its debt. The complete presentation is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=13&v=GhqXd1BTT0A.

A strong spirit of sharing gifts and resources exists within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. In the last two years the synod has shared more than $450,000 in Comprehensive Presbytery Support with 15 of the synod's 16 presbyteries. An additional $36,000 has been shared with Dakota Presbytery, a non-geographic presbytery, and the oldest presbytery west of the Mississippi River. The synod also provides payroll and accounting services for a number of presbyteries, and maintains partnership access to Leaderwise, a regional counseling and consulting organization for church leaders.

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies is thankful for this opportunity to report to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Through prayer, careful discernment, and trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we look forward to continued fruitful service in our broad region of the upper Midwest.
SYNOD OF LINCOLN TRAILS
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

REPORT TO THE 223RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In approving Item 05-01 in 2016, the General Assembly stated the following:

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

In the spirit of that recommendation, the Synod of Lincoln Trails submits the following report:

The Mission of the Synod of Lincoln Trails of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to develop, nurture, and support leaders in partnership with our presbyteries and congregations, and to coordinate Presbyterian mission strategy within the Synod.

Historically, this mission has been carried out in a programmatic structure of providing innovative teaching, training, and skills development for leaders within the Synod, both lay persons and clergy. Examples include Synod School, forging a cooperative program with the Synod of Mid-America to train potential interim pastors, creating an academy to provide the necessary training for ruling elders wanting to serve as commissioned pastors, and developing a New Pastors formation program to support newly ordained clergy in their first three years. Believing with John Calvin that the “human mind and conscience are freed for obedience to God through learning”, we continue to use a variety of educational modalities developing, nurturing, and supporting leaders to be sent out as a primary form of Christian witness to where and how God acts in Illinois and Indiana.

In 2010, in recognition of the need to shift from our historic programmatic model, the Synod began a deliberate process of discernment around leadership for these times. In proactive response to the possibility of action by the 220th General Assembly about synods in 2012, Lincoln Trails led in gathering as many executive presbyters as possible from the upper Midwest, from within the synods of Mid-America, Lakes and Prairies, and Lincoln Trails. Geographically representing the heartland of America as well as 15% of the membership of the denomination, we anticipated that synods might be asked to do governance while programming would shift to networks. We imagined a Heartland Resource Network which would consider three areas of partnership: efficiency through shared administrative function, shared leadership development, training opportunities, and a common mission initiative.

Moving with the ambiguities created through the decision of the General Assembly to send the questions about synods back out for further study and action in 2014, we simultaneously worked with the internal shifts caused by the 2014 retirement of the Reverend Carol McDonald, who had served as our Synod Executive for 25 years and embodied the best of our qualities. We completed divesting ourselves of physical properties, streamlined our operations and asked where God is calling us to be now. In the time of transitional leadership from 2014-2017, we examined all that
we value from our history, retained our significant legacy programs, eliminated support for programs whose time has passed, and solidified our understanding of our finances. Embracing a generous spirit related to all the blessings God provides to us, we are already acting in new ways.

Installing the Reverend Sara Dingman as our Synod Executive in October 2017 is a sign of our renewed enthusiasm, passion for ministry, and readiness to explore how we can continue to provide generative, relevant, timely, and nourishing leadership within the Synod of Lincoln Trails for years to come. It is Reverend Dingman's capacity to teach adaptive behaviors that led the Synod to discern the fitness of extending a call to her while she was yet our Transitional Executive.

During our time of transition and beyond, the Synod has engaged in numerous activities to serve presbyteries and congregations with enthusiasm, imagination, and love. Examples include the following:

- **New Pastors cohorts** – a three-year program for new pastors that meets twice per year for professional development and networking.

- **Utilization of Financial Resources** – allocating a percentage from the Synod’s investments within unrestricted funds to provide investments within our eight presbyteries for transformational ministries.

- **Professional Education** - contracting with LeaderWise for Synod-wide training in behavioral boundaries and ethics.

- **Synod Collegium** – gatherings taking place three times per year for mid-council leaders, networking, and professional development.

- **Partnerships** – expanding ministries to include collaboration with Creation Lab in Chicago, planning a Synod Sankofa, facilitating #MeToo events, hosting trainings for committees on ministry and preparation for ministry, providing a Synod Legal Roundtable, and being a resource for four of our presbyteries in their searches for new executive leadership.

- **Build-up of Virtual Community** – the Synod has used platforms such as Facebook and the online meeting service Zoom. The number of followers on the Synod’s Facebook page has increased from 100 to 1,000. Zoom has been particularly helpful in facilitating special meetings of the Synod and work among committees.

In 2016, the Synod convened a Dream Team summit, which consisted of individuals representing a variety of constituencies. The Dream Team was charged with casting a vision for the Synod and looking to new directions for ministry. Emerging from these discussions was a proposal to create a Synod Council, which was approved by the Synod in 2017. Possessing an imaginative and nimble spirit, the Synod Council’s responsibilities will include proposing a vision for the Synod’s life and work, as well as providing a mechanism for conversation and coordination in implementing the Synod’s vision.

This opportunity to report to the General Assembly is appreciated. Through God’s love and abundant grace, the Synod will prayerfully continue its work for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).
Report from the Synod of Mid-America to the 223rd General Assembly of the PC(USA)

When acting to approve item 05-01, the 222nd General Assembly made the following comment:

_The Mid Councils Committee would like to recommend to synods that they continue conversation and collaboration of ministry and mission between and among synods. This includes encouraging synods to offer assistance to struggling synods, including the possibility of changing boundaries to increase the vitality and viability of synods. Further, the Committee urges synods to undertake an intentional system of review and self-study and to report to General Assembly on a bi-annual basis._

In lieu of an official, standard method of reporting outlined by the General Assembly, the Synod of Mid-America commends to the Mid Councils Committee a close reading of our minutes, wherein the committee will find our annual activities of intentional review and self-study (2016 Minutes, pgs 6-10, 22-30; 2017 Minutes, pgs 8-11, 40-47).

In particular, we advise the Committee to direct its attention to the annual “Approval and Ranking of Missional Priorities” during each Fall Assembly meeting. This process of reviewing and prioritizing our missional goals is undertaken each year, and serves as the basis for the next year’s operational and missional activity on the part of the Executive and staff. Connected to this process (and equally as important) are the subsequent progress reports from the Executive to the Assembly (during both spring and fall meetings) concerning the strategic goals established in collaboration with the Committee on Governance.

The Synod of Mid-America has not undertaken any further conversation with sister synods about changing boundaries after engaging in such conversations intensively between 2014-2016 (at the direction of the 221st General Assembly).

The Synod has instituted a joint process with our member presbyteries of entering a season of discernment to answer the question: “What is the future of Presbyterian ministry in the Synod of Mid-America?” On pgs 12-15 of our 2017 Minutes, the Mid Council Committee can find an approved proposal for a “Presbytery Futures Task Force.” In short, the charge to this task force from both the Synod and our six member presbyteries is to
undergo comprehensive look at the totality of our region, and to recommend any and all changes they deem necessary to increase our collective ability to serve our region given the nuances and complexities associated with a changing religious and social landscape. We look forward to making a report to the 224th General Assembly about the progress that we have made.

Conversations of collaborative mission and ministry have continued to blossom. As noted in the progress reports from our Executive, we continue to work with our sister synod, the Synod of Lincoln Trails, to provide education and training in Interim/Transitional Ministry. MALT (Mid-America/Lincoln Trails) continues to be a well-attended program, held twice annually in St. Louis and for those wishing to receive training at both the Week 1 and Week 2 pastoral level. We have also added an additional week focusing on executive training for those interested in serving mid-councils.

Further, our Theocademy program continues to be blessed by the financial support of the Synods of the Southwest, Lincoln Trails, and Sun. The recent releases of our complete Spanish Language reshoot of our core educational series (titled Teocademia) has been received well by congregations both domestically and abroad and was made possible only due to the partnership of other synods.
April 30, 2018
The Synod of the Trinity Review

RE: In response to Item 05-01 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016), urging Synods "to undertake an intentional system of review and self-study and to report to General Assembly on a bi-annual basis".

The Synod of the Trinity has recently adopted John and Miriam Carvers’ Policy Governance approach to assist in maintaining appropriate relationships with the 16 presbyteries¹ of the Synod and to guide it in enacting relevant regional ministries together.

We are still learning this new way of being but have felt comfortable enough with it for the past 18 months to conclude that we are moving over the hurdle of initial implementation.

Policy Governance requires us to understand presbyteries as owners of the Synod as well as primary beneficiaries of its work and ministry. Life for us is a constant conversation between the presbyteries (and through the presbyteries, the congregations) and the synod commissioners, leadership and staff as we listen for ministry wants, needs and future.

Our commissioners and Governing Commission have the responsibility to take their listening and develop primary and secondary ends that guide the work of staff, advisory teams and task groups. In October 2017 the Synod Assembly reviewed and confirmed the continuation of our current ends (purposes), and in November 2017 the governing commission designated three of the ends for special emphasis in the coming year. (insert ends)

In addition to reviewing and affirming, changing or replacing the secondary ends, the Assembly and Governing Commission review the work of the transitional synod executive each year to determine whether or not the executive has maintained the fiscal and administrative responsibilities required, and to see if the executive has pursued implementation of the ends through the work of staff, task groups etc. We are still refining what this regular monitoring will look like but in general are pleased with the way that the ends are being used to develop the work of the Synod.

What we learned at the end of the first full year, October 2016 to October 2017:

1. We are doing a good job of training the 10 members of the Governing Commission for their work. At each of its four yearly meetings, moderator and staff configure a meeting that allows time for necessary governance tasks, deep conversation about an aspect of culture and ministry in our region, and consideration of how we continue to enhance the ongoing conversation with the presbyteries, both in their role as owners and as beneficiaries of our work. GC members express their own personal growth through this process and their deepening ability to see what might be across a broad region. They articulate how their time spent to understand and serve the broader church has helped them in their congregations back home as well as in their connection to their presbyteries.

2. Supporting the full complement of commissioners into their new roles has not been easy. There are two aspects of the commissioner role – governor and liaison – and the two are not completely separate. For our work of governance to be as rich as possible, commissioners must come into service with an awareness of their own presbytery, its ministry context, its strengths and places of needs. They must then be able to engage in discerning conversations that consider the larger region, including but not limited to their own. As a liaison, they are to continually be alert for local information that would benefit the work of the Synod, Synod/regional information that needs to be shared back home, and an eye towards their colleague commissioners for possible networking and partnership. We struggle to deal with folks who do not have sufficient internet skills to stay in helpful connection and those for whom these expectations may feel like too much work. We are testing the kind of training and ongoing conversations/gatherings that will help commissioners embrace their role and the possibilities in it, but we are not yet where we want to be. We continue to share our commissioner job description with the presbyteries in order to help them select those who might best serve. In addition, we have asked presbyteries to make room for Synod Commissioners at their leadership tables in order for commissioner awareness to be raised and that is beginning to happen more frequently.

3. The executive has taken significant steps with the staff to shift from work simply being done because it always has been done, to work being done because of the ends and in ways that meet the ends. Initially this felt like turning the proverbial battleship, but as staff have learned to breathe the ends, new strategies and possibilities for implementation are emerging.

4. The Synod of the Trinity embraced virtual meeting possibilities beginning in 2010 and began to experiment with that using WebEx and encouraged the presbyteries to borrow and test the synod service. With the advent and ease of Zoom, virtual work is a regular occurrence across the Synod and even some of our most technologically timid can see the benefit. Recently during the month of snow storms in the Northeast, an entire Governing Commission meeting was successfully spread over the course of two days using Zoom. Leadership carefully reworked the meeting for the online modality and the GC members were delighted. All of the work got done and everyone actively participated.

Some key work completed/in process includes:

- Partnering with the Community Responders Network in Harrisburg to video three skits around bias that will be put out on YouTube with brief study guides for use by anyone.
- Special support during our 300th anniversary year for global mission and mission partnerships. Grants to presbyteries served:
  - As seed money for matching funds to South Sudan in the face of the food crises.
  - To develop CRE resources in a partnership with a Dakota presbytery.
  - To enhance a medical clinic in Ghana.
  - To rebuild homes in Haiti.
- Special support during our 300th anniversary year for Freedom Grants to congregations in small cities for ministry with predominately African American male populations.
- Renewed and revised process for grants supporting the next generation through campus ministry. Instead of funding campus ministry directly, the Synod will fund presbyteries to fund a particular
ministry. The desire is to develop relationship and partnership between the presbytery and the campus, potentially increasing funds and those who will enact the ministry.

- Several presbyteries who have moved beyond traditional leadership models have received grants for process consultation as well as ongoing Synod leadership presence to enhance their work and help them to be mindful that they do not do this change work alone. For many this is a first awareness that their future may be in a different kind of connection to and with others than they have had in the past.

- Renewed and expanded emphasis on Synod-wide communications, telling the stories of our presbyteries and congregations, seeking the unique and life-changing experiences of faithfulness and balancing our press to include the whole region and not just those who are the loudest and most active. This area of continuing growth was set in motion in 2014 with the hiring of a fulltime communications staff person. This role is now moving out to include training for presbyteries when desired and the expansion of synod ears to intentionally include others who will participate in listening for stories and information and developing stories and resources to share across the region.

Even at more than 300 years old, the Synod of the Trinity is reinventing itself to be a faithful, 21st Century expression of the connectional church, building on a strong foundation created at the beginnings of American Presbyterianism but remaining cognizant of the challenges of a world where organized religion – especially Christianity – is viewed with suspicion in many corners, including those where future growth must originate.

The Synod is not “rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic,” but turning to new technologies, new expressions of mission, new structures and organization, to fulfill its calling as a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Synod leadership is confident in its future, even while not being entirely sure what it will look like.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

Ruling Elder John A. Bolt
2018 Synod Moderator

[Signature]

Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Yost
Synod Stated Clerk

[Signature]

Rev. Susan Faye Wonderland
Synod Transitional Executive
In 2016, the Coordinating Team of The Synod of the Sun spent time and prayer asking themselves the question: WHY? Why do we matter? WHY? Why do we do what we do?

Out of this question, the following WHY Statement was created:

**We believe when we work together across boundaries,**
**We make visible the Good News and find wholeness as the Body of Christ.**
**In our common calling, we impact lives together.**
**Connecting, Equipping and Empowering.**

In more depth, we gather because we are a connectional people; we gather to be equipped for ministry because we believe we are stronger together, and when we connect and are equipped, we become empowered to do the work God has called each of us to do - within our Synod, Presbytery, Congregation, our personal Calling.
The Synod of the Sun encompasses 11 Presbyteries from the States of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. The majority of our Presbyteries are in some form of transition and there is currently one Administrative Commission in place who is charged with walking along side and supporting/encouraging the Presbytery and has been given no original jurisdiction.

We are the only Synod that does not assess a per capita.

How do we live out our WHY statement?

**Connects** - The Synod connects Presbyterians for mission through a variety of formal relationships

**Associated organizations** -
- Presbyterian Women
- Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Foundation
- Presbyterian Historical Society of the SouthWest.

**Networks** -
A Synod of the Sun Network is formed around a specific and creative purpose, mission, or ministry project enabling relationships and mission opportunities not possible within a single presbytery. Each network chooses its priorities, leaders, and implements its own activities. Each network requires a covenant relationship with the synod whereby the synod becomes a partner in ministry and mission. The Synod of the Sun offers its resources of connection, consultation, and communication along with limited funding and administrative support. Current Networks include:
- Solar Under the Sun
- Synod Youth Workshop
- Synod Multicultural Youth Workshop
- Faithful Action on Climate Change
- Hispanic Ministries Mission Network (HMMN)
- Oklahoma Presbyterian Network (OPN)

**Covenant Partners** -
*Consist of 9 education institutions:*
- Austin Presbyterian Theological Society
- Trinity University
- Schreiner University
- Austin College
- Goodland Academy
- Lyon College
- Presbyterian Pan American School
- University of Tulsa
- University of the Ozarks
Six Covenant Partners are social service or ministry organizations:
- Presbyterian Children’s Homes & Services
- Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly
- Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center
- Texas Presbyterian Foundation
- Evergreen Life Services
- Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home & Family Services, Inc.

**Equips** - The Synod equips Presbyterians for God’s Call through a variety of programs and opportunities:

- Training provided by Solar Under the Sun
- Synod Youth Workshop
- Synod Multicultural Youth Workshop
- Imagine – 2018 Theme, “Moving Into the Neighborhood”
- Grants and Scholarships for Congregations, Partnering Congregations, Presbyteries, Institutions related to the Synod, and individuals who meet the criteria for Mission or other specified purposes. Scholarships also available for Candidates and Inquirers attending a PC(USA) Seminary.
- Communication Services Plan with very reasonable pricing available for all Presbyteries.

**Empowers** - The Synod equips Presbyterians to be the hands and feet of Christ. Here are but a few examples:

Standing side-by-side with teachers, the Rev. Tracy Evans, Rev. Michael East, Rev. Jessica Dixon and Rev. Josh Kerr, and their congregations heard the call of the Spirit to speak truth to power during the Oklahoma City Teacher’s Walk Out.

Over 10 years ago, Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church in San Antonio started doing “Family Decompression Retreats”. Over 100 people came to the first solo retreat. In 2017, the director of John Knox Ranch contacted Divine Redeemer about doing a Spanish language camp. Thanks to this new collaboration, the Family Decompression Camp has moved to John Knox Ranch, a camp run by Mission Presbytery.

The Hispanic Ministry Mission Network (HMMN), having recently elected their Leadership Team, has the vision and determination to help presbyteries and the Synod of the Sun develop sorely needed Hispanic ministries.
The Synod Coordinating Team recently asked Commissioners and Attendees of the Synod's Spring Assembly Meeting to complete a Survey, using the story of Mary and Martha, in order to self-evaluate the balance between our Management and Maintenance with our Spiritual Development and Transformation. Questions asked included how well we collaborated in our work; how well we treated each other with respect and cared for our relationships; how well we listened to each other in an effort to seek understanding; and if our work focused more on the future of our ministries rather than the past. The results were overwhelming positive, with comments ranging from “the value of love and respect that was shown, even with differing opinions” to the statement, “We are definitely on a forward path.”

Gratefully submitted,
RE Shelley Hernandez, Moderator
RE Bernadette Coffee, Coordinating Team Chair
TE Elizabeth Gabbard, Moderator-Elect
RE Valerie Young, Synod Leader

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Synod of the Sun Communications Services Plan

Seizing the unique opportunity to tell your exceptional story of feeding the seeds of ministry and mission to the broader culture.

Churches, faith-based entities, and innovative events who are not using web and social media resources effectively are understood as literally “silent”, particularly to younger people.

We can speak into multiculturalism, peace and justice, diversity, equality, and disaster relief. When the larger community can see this, they see the Gospel. They see grace, mercy, gratitude and unconditional love. They see the church being the church.

Our message of hope, inclusion and service beyond our walls and borders is one that we can share on multiple platforms, engaging our communities in a cost-effective manner.

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Synod of the Sun - Facebook
Informe del Sínodo del Sol a la
Asamblea General 223
Abril 2018

En 2016, el Equipo Coordinador del Sínodo del Sol pasó tiempo orando y haciéndose la pregunta:
¿POR QUE? ¿Por qué importamos? ¿POR QUE? ¿Qué tenemos que hacer?
De ésta pregunta surgió la siguiente Declaración POR QUE:

Creemos que cuando trabajamos juntos a través de los límites,
Hacemos visibles las Buenas Nuevas y encontramos plenitud como Cuerpo de Cristo.
En nuestro llamado común, juntos impactamos vidas.

Conectando, Preparando y Empoderando.
Concretamente, nos reunimos porque somos gente conecional; nos reunimos para ser preparados para el ministerio porque creemos que juntos somos más fuertes, y cuando nos conectamos y somos preparados, nos empoderamos para hacer la obra que Dios ha llamado a cada uno de nosotros a hacer - dentro de nuestro Sínodo, Presbiterio, Congregación, y en nuestro llamado personal.

¿Cómo vivimos nuestra declaración POR QUE?

Conecta- El Sínodo conecta a Presbiterianos para hacer misión mediante una variedad de relaciones formales.

Organizaciones Asociadas –
• Mujeres Presbiterianas
• Fundación Presbiteriana del Sínodo del Sol
• La Sociedad Histórica Presbiteriana del Suroeste.

Redes -
Una Red del Sínodo del Sol está formada con propósitos específicos y creativos, misión, o proyecto de ministerio habilitando oportunidades de relación y de misión que no son posibles dentro de un solo presbiterio. Cada red escoge sus prioridades, líderes, e implementa sus propias actividades. Cada red requiere una relación de pacto con el Sínodo en la que el Sínodo es un copartícipe en ministerio y misión. El Sínodo del Sol ofrece los recursos de conexión, consulta, y comunicación con financiamiento limitado y apoyo administrativo. Las Redes en funciones incluyen:
• Solar Bajo el Sol / Solar Under the Sun
• Taller Sinódico Juvenil / Synod Youth Workshop
• Taller Sinódico Juvenil Multicultural / Synod Multicultural Youth Workshop
• Acción Fiel en Cambio Climático / Faithful Action on Climate Change
• Red de Misión de Ministerios Hispanos (HMMN)
• Red Presbiteriana de Oklahoma / Oklahoma Presbyterian Network (OPN)

Colaboradores en Covenio –
Consiste en 9 instituciones educacionales:
• Austin Presbyterian Theological Society
• Trinity University
• Schreiner University
• Austin College
• Goodland Academy
• Lyon College
• Presbyterian Pan American School
• University of Tulsa
• University of the Ozarks

Seis Colaboradores en Convenio son organizaciones o ministerios de servicio social:
• Presbyterian Children’s Homes & Services
• Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly
• Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center
• Texas Presbyterian Foundation
• Evergreen Life Services
• Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home & Family Services, Inc.

Prepara- El Sínodo prepara a Presbiterianos para el Llamado de Dios mediante una variedad de programas y oportunidades:

• Capacitación provista por Solar Under the Sun
• Synod Youth Workshop
• Synod Multicultural Youth Workshop
• Imagine – Tema 2018, “Moviéndose al Vecindario”
• Subvenciones y Becas para Congregaciones, Congregaciones en Colaboración, Presbiterios, Instituciones relacionadas con el Sínodo, y personas que cumplan el criterio de Misión u otros propósitos específicos. Las Becas también están disponibles para Candidatos y Prospectos estudiando en un Seminario PC(USA).
• Los Servicios del Plan de Comunicación están disponibles para todos los Presbiterios a un precio muy razonable.

Empodera- El Sínodo prepara a Presbiterianos a ser las manos y los pies de Cristo. Estos son unos ejemplos:

Apoyando a los maestros, la Rev. Tracy Evans, el Rev. Michael East, la Rev. Jessica Dixon y el Rev. Josh Kerr, con sus congregaciones escucharon el llamado del Espíritu de hablar con la verdad a las autoridades durante la Marcha de los Maestros de la Ciudad de Oklahoma.

La Red de Misión de Ministerios Hispanos (HMMN), recientemente eligió a su Comité Directivo, con la visión y la determinación de ayudar a los presbiterios y al Sínodo del Sol a desarrollar Ministerios Hispanos en las áreas donde no hay.

El Equipo Coordinador del Sínodo recientemente pidió a los Comisionados y Asistentes a la Reunión de Primavera del Sínodo a llenar una Encuesta, usando la historia de María y Marta, para auto evaluar el balance entre nuestra Administración y Mantenimiento de nuestro Desarrollo y Transformación Espiritual. Las preguntas incluyeron qué tan bien colaboramos en nuestro trabajo; qué tan bien nos tratamos mutuamente con respeto y cuidado por nuestras relaciones; qué tan bien nos escuchamos mutuamente en un esfuerzo de lograr entendimiento; y si nuestro trabajo se enfoca más en el futuro y no en el pasado de nuestros ministerios. Los resultados fueron abrumadoramente positivos, con comentarios que van desde “el valor del amor y el respeto fue demostrado, a pesar de diferir en opiniones” hasta la declaración, “Definitivamente nos estamos moviendo hacia adelante.”

Agradecidamente sometidas,
Anciana Gobernante Shelley Hernandez, Moderadora
Anciana Gobernante Bernadette Coffee, Coordinating Team Chair
Anciana Docente Elizabeth Gabbard, Moderadora Electa
Anciana Gobernante Valerie Young, Líder del Sínodo
Item 06-01

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-01. See pp. 69, 70.]

On Amending G-4.0203 to Resolve a Conflict Between the Book of Order and the Laws of Some States—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-4.0203 (Church Property Held in Trust) of the Form of Government be amended by adding text at the end of that section as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]:

“All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): unless state law requires otherwise.”

Rationale

This proposed amendment seeks to resolve a conflict that exists between the Book of Order and the laws of some states. The conflict exists clearly when ecclesiastical law requires the presbytery to defend the property interests of the PC(USA) and civil law, either through judicial rulings or legislative actions, have rendered G-4.0203 to no force or effect.

For example, in some states it may be permissible for a congregation to ask to clarify its property rights. This request might take the form of a congregation, acting properly through its trustees, asking the presbytery to execute a Quitclaim Deed in favor of the congregation. Regardless of the requirements of state law, the Book of Order arguably prohibits the presbytery from granting the congregation’s request and requires the presbytery to defend the property interests of the PC(USA).

In similar circumstances, some congregations have filed lawsuits against a presbytery, synod, and the PC(USA). This litigation has been costly and counterproductive. Some presbyteries have suffered significant financial losses related to the litigation. In these lawsuits, congregations routinely request and courts routinely issue restraining orders against the higher governing bodies. These restraining orders limit a presbytery’s ability to fulfill its ordinary ecclesiastical responsibilities.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) received a commissioners’ resolution (Item 06-17) seeking to raise the issue of this conflict between the Book of Order and the laws of some jurisdictions and seeking prayer for affected presbyteries. In its response, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) provided important guidance.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) sees the trust clause to embody the solidarity of the church and the conviction that the church cannot be “owned.” The Heidelberg Catechism states, “That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ” (Book of Confessions, 4.001). The trust clause puts this in both communal and concrete terms, so that we “are not [our] own ….”

In practical terms, it separates us from congregational polities, and throughout our history there have been various ways funds have circulated and been used to support each other. It is part of our social witness as a community to maintain that shared trust that points to the larger whole.

In a context where our church’s beliefs are challenged and efforts made to weaken our connectionalism, ACSWP would encourage conversation on how to strengthen our bonds of mutual accountability and our ability to resist legal and other efforts to weaken our church. It is not clear that this measure would add much to the discussions that regularly occur in many of our congregations and presbyteries. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 381–82)

This overture and the proposed amendment to the Book of Order honors the importance and power of our shared connection and support the responsibility of each presbytery to confront difficult circumstances to the best of its ability.

BACKGROUND: The Book of Order and Church Property

The Book of Order reflects wisdom received from our predecessor denominations, including the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). An example of this is the shared value reflected in the principle that church property is held in trust for the larger denomination. In the circumstances of congregational dissolutions and church closures, this principle has allowed for the church property to be used to carry the work of the church to successive generations. However, recent state court rulings and other legislative actions have created circumstances where the requirements of the Book of Order are in conflict with the requirements of state law. This situation is unproductive and unsustainable for affected presbyteries. The proposed amendment to G-4.0203 will resolve the conflict with state law and, at the same time, allow presbyteries to uphold our historic principles and shared values.

In principle and in practice each congregation is simultaneously an expression of the Body of Christ and an institution of the state in which it is located. This is to say that each congregation, as a part of the Body of Christ, bears witness to Jesus Christ in the fullness of our biblical and theological traditions; and, that each congregation, as an institution of the world, is also subject to the ordering and responsibilities required by civil authorities. When addressing issues of church property
ownership and possession, the language of the Book of Order reflects the richness of our heritage, the complex nature of the church, and our commitment to the ongoing work of the church.

1. The Book of Order recognizes civil law and requires compliance with it. For example, our Form of Government establishes, “Where permitted by civil law, each congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained” (G-4.0101). Furthermore, the Form of Government grants certain civil responsibilities to the congregation:

   The corporation so formed, or the individual trustees, shall have the following powers: to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for the congregation, provided that in buying, selling, and mortgaging real property, the trustees shall act only after the approval of the congregation, granted in a duly constituted meeting; to accept and execute deeds of title to such property; to hold and defend title to such property; to manage any permanent special funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the congregation, all subject to the authority of the session and under the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The powers and duties of the trustees shall not infringe upon the powers and duties of the session or the board of deacons. (G-4.0101)

2. The Book of Order also recognizes the connectional nature of the church and its continuation throughout the ages. Such is the wisdom that grants certain property rights to higher governing authorities—that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to continue beyond the lifespan of any particular congregation. As there was in the constitutions of the PCUS and the UPCUSA, the current Book of Order includes a provision that the property is held in trust for the denomination. “All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) … is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (G-4.0203).

3. The language of the Book of Order, recognizes that each congregation has authority and responsibility for the property owned by the congregation. However, the language of G-4.0203, G-4.0204, and G-4.0205 creates a property interest in favor of the PC(USA). A presbytery is required to take action in any of three possible situations: (1) when property “ceases to be used by that congregation as a congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with this Constitution” (G-4.0204), (2) when “a congregation is formally dissolved by the presbytery” (G-4.0205), and (3) when a congregation “has become extinct by reason of the dispersal of its members, the abandonment of its work, or other cause” (G-4.0205).

BACKGROUND: Conflicting Requirements of State Law

This overture has its origins in the State of Texas. The circumstances described in this rationale are rooted in a decision of the Texas Supreme Court. These same issues are likely to apply to other states and to other Presbyteries as well.

In 2013, the Texas Supreme Court issued a widely publicized ruling regarding a property dispute between a congregation and The Episcopal Church of the United States (Masterson v. Diocese of Northwest Texas, 2013). At issue was a property dispute between a congregation and the denomination; and, like the PC(USA)’s Book of Order, the constitution of The Episcopal Church includes a property trust clause.

Among the issues addressed by the Texas Supreme Court was the legal methodology to be applied when considering issues related to the ownership and possession of church property. The court decided in favor of using a standard known as “neutral principals of law.” The court concluded:

Under the neutral principles methodology, courts decide non-ecclesiastical issues such as property ownership based on the same neutral principles of law applicable to other entities, Jones v. Wolf, 443 U.S. 595, 603–04 (1979), while deferring to religious entities’ decisions on ecclesiastical and church polity questions. See Serbian E. Orthodox Diocese v. Milivojevich, 426 U.S. 696, 708 (1976). (http://caselaw.findlaw.com/tx-supreme-court/1643315.html)

and

Properly exercising jurisdiction requires courts to apply neutral principles of law to non-ecclesiastical issues involving religious entities in the same manner as they apply those principles to other entities and issues. Thus, courts are to apply neutral principles of law to issues such as land titles, trusts, and corporate formation, governance, and dissolution, even when religious entities are involved. (http://caselaw.findlaw.com/tx-supreme-court/1643315.html)

The methodology of “neutral principles of law” does not simply or immediately wipe-away the property interests of the PC(USA). This methodology introduces a new and complex set of issues to be considered. The specifics are likely to vary from state to state; but, some of the matters to be considered are foreign to the language used in the Book of Order.

In Masterson, the Texas Supreme Court listed some of these considerations.

Under the neutral principles methodology, ownership of disputed property is determined by applying generally applicable law and legal principles. That application will usually include considering evidence such as deeds to the properties, terms of the local church charter (including articles of incorporation and by laws, if any), and relevant provisions of governing documents of the general church. (http://caselaw.findlaw.com/tx-supreme-court/1643315.html)

As it currently reads, the Book of Order does not allow for a presbytery to consider the information required by the neutral principles of law and then to act in a manner that is inconsistent with G-4.0203.
Advice on Item 06-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-01.

The proposed language is inconsistent with the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and specifically conflicts with F-3.0102, F-3.0201, F-3.0203, F-3.0206, and F-3.0209. The proposed language is also inconsistent with G-4.0203, G-4.0206, G-4.207, and G-4.0208 and is likely to add further confusion and conflict to resolution of church property disputes.

Section F-3.0102 specifically provides that every “Christian Church … is entitled to declare … the whole system of its internal government….” The proposed language fails to recognize this core fundamental principle of our Presbytery polity and form of government. Section F-3.0201 states that “the particular congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church, called the church.” We are one church over time and space. Particular congregations, governed by sessions at a specific point in time, are not free to act independently of these connectional principles, but must act within these connectional bounds, “not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (F-3.0204).

Section F-3.0206 provides that “A higher council shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal.” Section F-3.0209 states: “Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church. The jurisdiction of each council is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, with powers not mentioned being reserved to the presbyteries.” This language is a foundation for the express powers and authority set forth in G-4.01 and G-4.02. This language controls the relationships and respective spheres of authority of presbyteries and sessions in the midst of church property disputes.

The overture’s stated rationale that a presbytery must “defend the property interests of the PC(USA)” does not reflect the wide range of discernment and discretion granted to presbyteries by G-4.02. The presbytery’s obligations, like those of a session or other council, with respect to church property are to hold and use property for the benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and when there is a question or change regarding how “property shall be held, used, applied, transferred, or sold,” it is the presbytery’s obligation to act in conformity with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including G-4.0203. A proposal to require presbyteries to act in a manner consistent with state law, even where such law is not clear, subject to change or in conflict, and contrary to the church’s Constitution would not likely make things easier for presbyteries facing church property disputes, and may embroil them in civil litigation. For example, there could be remedial cases brought alleging that a presbytery failed to follow specific provisions of state property or trust law.

Any amendment of G-4.0203 (sometimes referred to as the "trust clause") should address the obligations and fiduciary responsibilities of sessions and particular congregations to adhere to G-4.02 even where title to specific property is held in the name of a particular congregation. The proposed change does not do this, and the ACC advises that it be disapproved. Any revision or amendment of G-4.0203 and other parts of Chapter 4 will have significant implications for the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and must be carefully considered prior to approval.

Item 06-02

[The assembly approved Item 06-02. See pp. 69, 70.]

On Amending G-3.0307 to Clarify the Responsibility of the Presbytery—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

The Presbytery of Santa Fe respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-3.0307 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Congregations

“Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.

“Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its pastors, both ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (also called commissioned pastors (also known as commissioned ruling elders)), as well as the and certified Christian educators of
the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, pastors ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.”

Rationale

The Presbytery of Santa Fe was one of the concurring presbyteries on the 2016 overture that became Amendment 16-C, Recommendations C.1 through C.8, ratified by a majority of the presbyteries. We are mindful of the valid criticism of Recommendation 16-C.6 (G-3.0307) raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, as well as other concerns about repetitive wording. We believe this can be easily remedied by our proposed amendment.

Concurrence to Item 06-02 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Sierra Blanca, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-02

Advice on Item 06-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-02.

The rationale for Item 06-02 focuses on the issue of repetitive wording in this section, but there is a more important issue that is corrected by this amendment.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 06-08 on amending the Book of Order to clarify titles to Ordered Ministry. Item 06-08 (2016) was a large amendment with seven recommendations, most which dealt with switching the default term for the ordered ministry of “teaching elder” to “minister of the Word and Sacrament.” In the process of approval, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved an amendment to G-3.0307 (sixth recommendation) to strike out the term “teaching elder” and insert not “minister of the Word and Sacrament,” but “pastor.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution called the attention of the assembly to an unintended consequence of this amendment, that by inserting the word “pastor” into the action defining who had access to the committee on ministry or its equivalent, the amendment was cutting off all ministers of the Word and Sacrament not serving as installed or temporary pastors from access to this committee or entity. Item 06-08 (2016) was approved and referred to the presbyteries without addressing this concern.

Item 06-02, if approved, will restore constitutional access to the committee on ministry or its equivalent to all minister members of the presbytery. It also deals with the issue of repetitive wording in this section with language that is clear and concise.

Item 06-03

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-03. See pp. 70, 71.]

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

The Presbytery of Central Nebraska overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall a new section, G.211 Certified Church Service, be added to read as follows:

“G. 2.1104 Administrative Personnel Association (APA)

“Administrative Personnel Association (APA) certified persons have been called to service within particular churches, councils, and church-related entities. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication with the purpose to improve the quality of professionalism and to affirm the ministry of the lay church professional.

“Members of the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) include secretaries, administrative assistants, bookkeepers, and support staff in church-related settings.

“Certification is overseen and granted by the Administrative Personnel Association; the requirements for certification are reported to the appropriate body of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. A formal liaison relationship will be developed between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Administrative Personnel Association.
“a. Skills and Training

“Certified Administrative Personnel Assistants are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of church administration in congregations and councils. They shall have skills and training in church polity, church history, reformed theology, spiritual growth and discipline, office administration, Directory for Worship, Book of Confessions, General Assembly entities, and other areas of professional development beneficial to the church.

“b. Councils Responsibility

“The presbytery shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing for recognition at presbytery at the time of their certification and by inviting certified employees to presbytery meetings, granting them the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified APA members who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

“Names of those who have earned certification through APA shall be transmitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, which will forward them to the Office of the General Assembly and to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.”

Rationale

A request from twelve women attending a business administration course at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia, laid the groundwork for a professional organization to be created. In 1976, the Administrative Personnel Association was founded by Joyce Bauer and in almost forty-two years APA has expanded to eight regions, which include all fifty states with a membership of 254 representing churches of all sizes, including those denominations with whom we are in communion, presbyteries, synods, and the different agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The APA defines its active members as all persons engaged in administrative work in any local church or church-related institution, councils or agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or those denominations with which we have communion.

The APA is ruled by the body but leads by the executive board and council. The executive board is made up of elected officials to include the president, president-elect, immediate past-president, certification chair, membership chair, secretary, and treasurer. The council is composed of the following: The National Executive Board, all regional presidents, and National Conference Planning chair.

The mission of APA is to offer the opportunity for professional development and personal growth for those called by God to serve as support staff of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and those denominations with whom we are in communion. The mission is accomplished by providing continuing education events for certification and occasions for fellowship, worship, and spiritual nurture and prayer at both national and regional meetings, as well as, APA-sponsored training events.

The APA offers three levels of certification with the opportunity to receive recognition for every fifty hours of continuing education beyond Level 3. Our members may also receive an additional certificate in concentrated studies in polity, communications, administration and facilities management, theology, church history, and finance after completing another twenty-five hours in each of these areas of studies. Approved instructors are required to teach the requested amount of time for the class. Approval is given by the certification chair. The Council on Accreditation and Standards reviews the levels to ensure the classes being taught are current with what is happening in the church and office administration. Elective hours include conflict management, designing for communication, technology classes, financial matters, and other classes that provide professional growth and understanding of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Below explains the breakdown for each level.

LEVEL I Core Courses

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td>Church History (Part 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church History (Part 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polity 1 (Part 1)</td>
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<td>Polity 1 (Part 2)</td>
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<td>Office Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Growth and Discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theology—Christian Perspectives of the Church (Part 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theology (Part 2)</td>
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LEVEL II Core Courses

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<td>Directory for Worship</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Matters</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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</table>
The current reading of the Book of Order is too vague and places APA in a category of “other.” Before the changes made to the Form of Government, APA had been recognized previously by General Assembly, and under the former section G-14.0740 APA had been affiliated with the Office of Vocation and had a PC(USA) staff liaison. The APA had also been listed in the Minutes, Part III, Directory, and the Minutes, Part II, Statistics. However, after NFOG was approved, APA was lost in translation and have struggled since to be specifically identified by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its service and dedication to the larger church.

The Administrative Personnel Association continues to struggle with being identified as a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) organization because there is no defined line connecting APA to the larger church. Even though APA is currently recognized as a certified body by the larger church, it still does not identify APA as PC(USA). As a result, this continues to put into question the status of APA’s 501c3 designation (nonprofit).

The lack of support and recognition from our leaders within the larger church that do not know or choose not to recognize APA’s existence has also impacted the long-lasting relationship between APA and the PC(USA) church.

Therefore, the Presbytery of Central Nebraska is asking that after APA’s forty-two years of service to the church that it again be specifically named and recognized in the Book of Order for its support and commitment to belonging to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Concurrences to Item 06-03 from the Presbyteries of Abingdon, the Cascades, de Cristo, Great Rivers, Indian Nations, North Central Iowa, Palo Duro, and Prospect Hill, and from the Synod of Lincoln Trails.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-03

Advice on Item 06-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-03.

Item 06-03 is substantially similar to Item 06-10. Both propose to grant standing in the Form of Government to a particular professional association, some of whose members are also members of congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The committee recognizes the vital services that the association’s members provide throughout the church and appreciates the value of the association to its work. The introduction of an Administrative Personnel Association into the Form of Government would seem to be consistent with the Constitution’s recognition of Certified Christian Educators (G-2.1103).

The certification of Christian educators, however, has its origins in John Calvin's fourth office of ministry (the “Doctor”). Administrative service has no similar origin. Moreover, including the item's proposed language in the Form of Government would contradict several fundamental principles of Presbyterian governance:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels is governed through the deliberative work of presbyters (F-3.0203). Those presbyters, both ruling elders and Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, are selected by the process of ordination (F-3.0202).
Item 06-03, however, would establish professional certification neither connected to an office of ministry nor conducted by a council of the church as a basis for participation in the deliberations of church governance.

Presbyters arise from within particular congregations (G-2.0602; G-3.0303). Item 06-03, however, would grant formal standing to members of an association without regard to their membership in any particular congregation.

Presbyters are elected by the people (F-3.0106). Item 06-03, however, would mandate granting voice and vote to all members of the association who are also ruling elders, even if those elders had not been elected for service to their respective mid councils. Doing so would undermine individual presbyteries’ authority to determine their own membership (F-3.0102, G-3.0303, G-3.0306).

Presbyters by their ordination are under the authority of the wider Church. They have covenanted “[t]o be governed by [the] church’s polity, and … [t]o abide by its discipline” (W-4.0404e). Item 06-03 would grant certain individuals permanent influence upon presbytery proceedings without clearly defined accountability. It does not provide constitutional provisions either for overseeing the certification process or for monitoring the members’ service to the church.

Furthermore, passage of Item 06-03 would reintroduce the use of the Form of Government as an operations manual with standardized practices across mid councils. Introduction of one professional association with mid council standing would potentially lead to future overtures on behalf of similar associations.

The Form of Government already allows a presbytery to “grant the privilege of voice at all its meetings to persons in certified church service” (G-2.1102). It further allows presbyteries to specify forms of certified church service in their manuals of administrative operations (G-2.1101).

Item 06-03, then, proposes changes to the Form of Government which are neither necessary nor advisable. As it did in response to a similar overture presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), and for similar reasons, the ACC advises disapproval.

If the assembly believes that the intent of these overtures is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the language of 06-10 is preferable to that of 06-03 for two reasons: (1) It specifies the responsibility of the General Assembly to receive and transmit names of certified administrative professionals (noting that the proper avenue for transmission should be through the Office of the General Assembly); and (2) it specifies that those individuals’ names be placed upon the registers of presbyteries.

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-03**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 06-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-03.

The membership of the Administrative Personal Association (APA) are people committed to the administrative work of the PC(USA) who are willing to do the course work required to achieve certification. The required course work is dependent on the level of certification sought:

- Level I requires 20 hours of Core courses plus 20 hours of elective courses.
- Level II requires 17.5 hours of Core courses plus 27.5 hours of elective courses.
- Level III requires 12.5 hours of Core courses plus 37.5 hours of elective courses.

Core courses include but are not limited to PC(USA) History, Polity, Theology, Spiritual Growth and Discipline. Elective courses include but are not limited to Biblical Interpretation, Christology, and Sexual Harassment (Administrative Personnel Association Council on Accreditation and Standards Handbook, revised 11-9-2016, pp.7–8).

As of May 2017, a polity course must be taken once every three years to maintain current certification (pcusa-apa.org).

According to information provided by APA, their membership is 98.1 percent female. By approving this overture, the General Assembly is acknowledging the commitment of the APA membership to their work along with granting them the privilege of voice on the floor of presbytery. This is the same privilege granted to Certified Christian Educators per G-3.0307.

ACWC hopes that in the future the General Assembly will ensure that Certified Church Administrators will be compensated to make sure they are receiving a living wage.
Item 06-04

[The assembly approved Item 06-04 as amended. See pp. 70, 71.]

On Amending D-2.0203b Regarding the Definition of ‘‘Offense’’—From the Presbytery of North Alabama.

The Presbytery of North Alabama overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall D-2.0203b be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“b. An offense is any act or omission by a member or a person in an ordered ministry of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). [An act or omission prohibited by the council of authority’s duly adopted sexual misconduct policy and/or child and youth protection policy] [Sexual abuse as defined in Section D-10.0401c] shall be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules.”

Rationale

A recent ruling by a synod permanent judicial commission effectively indicated that actions in violation of a council’s sexual misconduct policy are not under the jurisdiction of the Rules of Discipline unless those actions are explicitly specified as contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires “all councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy” (Book of Order, G-3.0106). In order to meet this requirement, actions or omissions in violation of these policies must have the capacity to be addressed through our disciplinary process; otherwise the policies are unenforceable. Furthermore, it should be implicit that actions that violate constitutionally required policies are by their very nature contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution. Decisions in prior disciplinary cases have supported this concept.

Sexual misconduct is both an injustice and a sin against God and our neighbor. The church is called to denounce sin and stand against injustice in the world, and has a specific responsibility to protect the victims and discipline unrighteousness. In addition, the church has had to discipline some of its members in this regard, and has come under the scrutiny of society and been subjected to litigation for failing to properly discipline its members. A person who engages in sexual misconduct is violating the scriptural imperative to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:39) and a person in ordered ministry who engages in sexual misconduct is violating their constitutional ordination vows to act as a friend among their colleagues in ministry; promote the peace, unity, and purity of the church; and show the love and justice of Jesus Christ (Book of Order, W-4.0404).

The members and congregations of the Presbytery of North Alabama wish to stringently affirm that sexual misconduct is sin. We believe past failure to confront this behavior has led to injustice and discord within the church, and scrutiny and litigation from without. We humbly ask the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take an unequivocal stand for justice by equating this sin as an implicit violation of scriptural norms and constitutional ordination vows.

Concurrences to Item 06-04 from the Presbyteries of Albany, Boise, de Cristo, Grand Canyon, and Huntingdon.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-04

Advice on Item 06-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-04 with the following comment.

“While sexual misconduct is not condoned by Scriptures or the Constitution of the PC(USA), adding this language to the Book of Order is unnecessary. All councils and judicial commissions are admonished to consider sexual misconduct as contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the PC(USA).”

Scriptures and the Constitution do not condone sexual misconduct or the abuse and endangerment of children and youth. Many acts involve impermissible sexual overtures, force, and misconduct. The assembly is reminded that the Constitution is not an enumeration of specific permitted or prohibited conduct, but rather a guide for all councils in administering their mission. Each council should be mindful that any act of sexual misconduct or child abuse is in violation of the Constitution. By singling out a particular violation of a particular policy, an inference might be made that violations of other policies are not contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution.

Councils have the authority to establish and enforce their policies. Not all violations of a particular policy may be found to be contrary to Scripture or the Constitution. Violation of a council's sexual misconduct and/or child and youth protection
policy may be procedural and may not rise to the level of a constitutional offense. The Rules of Discipline set forth the process for determining proof of an alleged offense, including sexual misconduct.

The assembly may consider admonishing all councils and judicial commissions that sexual misconduct is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution and that all councils are required to adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and/or child/youth protection policy (G-3.0106).

Alternatively, the assembly may consider referral of this item to the Task Force on the Rules of Discipline for report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-04**

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-04.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) agrees that any act or omission prohibited by the council of authority’s duly adopted sexual misconduct policy and/or child and youth protection policy should be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules. ACWC agrees with this overture that past failure to confront sexual misconduct has led to injustice and discord within the church, and scrutiny and litigation from without.

Because all sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power, certain populations are more vulnerable to such abuse. For instance, children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers are often the targets of sexual misconduct. Gender inequities rooted in theological misunderstandings based in patriarchy leave women within the church particularly vulnerable to sexual misconduct, not only from other clergy, but also to sexual harassment from male members of their congregations. It is essential that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) take an unequivocal stand for justice by equating sexual misconduct to be an implicit violation of scriptural norms and constitutional ordination vows.

**OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-04**

Comment on Item 06-04—From the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

OGA advises that all items, including Item 06-04, amending the Rules of Discipline, be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which is currently revising the Rules of Discipline as a whole and will report with suggested changes to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

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**Item 06-05**

[The assembly approved Item 06-05 as amended. See pp. 70, 71.]

On Amending G-2.0503 with Additional Language—From the Presbytery of Tropical Florida.

The Presbytery of Tropical Florida respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

[Shall G-2.0503 be amended by inserting the following paragraph after G-2.0503(5): [Text to be added is shown as italic.]:

[“When ministers of Word and Sacrament are called to a validated ministry within the bounds of another presbytery, permission to labor outside the bounds of the presbytery of membership and within the bounds of the presbytery where the ministry is located shall be obtained from both presbyteries. Such permission shall be reviewed annually.”]

[Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0306 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italics.]:

“Every minister of the Word and Sacrament shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his or her work is situated or of the presbytery where she or he resides. [The presbytery may grant a minister permission to engage in work validated ministry that is outside its geographic bounds or which is not under its jurisdiction, but no presbytery shall permit a minister to engage in work that is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery and which is properly within the responsibility of another presbytery without consent of that presbytery. Such permission shall be obtained from both presbyteries and shall be reviewed and renewed annually.]”]
The current Form of Government lacks clarity with regard to the seeking of and granting of permission for a minister member of a presbytery to labor beyond the geographic boundaries of the presbytery of membership. This overture provides clarity to the seeking of permission to labor within the geographic bounds of a presbytery beyond that of the minister of Word and Sacrament’s membership.

As “the presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district” (G-3.0301), the presbytery needs to have knowledge of and oversight for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) witness within its geographic district. Without the Form of Government making it clear that permission must be granted by the presbytery for all validated ministry taking place within its bounds, the particular corporate witness of a presbytery within a certain district may lack unity of strategy for mission under the Word. The addition of this paragraph to the Form of Government enhances the presbytery’s capacity for unity in its corporate witness as strategy for mission under the Word.

Concurrences to Item 06-05 from the Presbyteries of Central Florida, de Cristo, Greater Atlanta, Huntingdon, and Wabash Valley.

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**ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-05**

Advice on Item 06-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-05 with the following modifications.

- **Shall G-2.0503 be amended by inserting the following paragraph after G-2.0503 (5):**

  When ministers of Word and Sacrament are called to a validated ministry within the bounds of another presbytery, permission to labor outside the bounds of the presbytery of membership and within the bounds of the presbytery where the ministry is located shall be obtained from both presbyteries. Such permission shall be reviewed annually.

- **Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0306 be amended as follows:**

  Every minister of the Word and Sacrament shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his or her work is situated or of the presbytery where she or he resides. The presbytery may grant a minister permission to engage in work that is outside its geographic bounds or which is not under its jurisdiction, but no presbytery shall permit a minister to engage in work that is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery and which is properly within the responsibility of another presbytery without consent of that presbytery. Such permission shall be obtained from both presbyteries and shall be reviewed and renewed annually.

Item 06-05 seeks to amend G-2.0503, but the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the amendment is more appropriate at G-3.0306, which deals with the membership of a presbytery. Item 06-05 seeks to return to the Book of Order the mechanism for seeking permission to labor beyond the geographic bounds of membership of the minister of the Word and Sacrament. The alternate text suggested by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution is based on the language that was in the 2009–2011 edition of the Book of Order.

The Form of Government (G-3.0306) establishes that each presbytery determines the ministers who are its members and validates the ministries in which they are to be engaged, following the criteria of G-2.0503a(1)–(5) and the policy developed by the presbytery for validating the ministries of its members.

It is the responsibility of the presbytery to maintain its membership rolls, provide oversight for its members, and validate the ministry with which they are engaged. Section G-3.0306 currently says that membership ordinarily is where the work is situated or where the member resides. The proposed text gives direction to those situations that are outside the ordinary and preferred circumstance.

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**Item 06-06**

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-06. See pp. 69, 71.]

On Amending G-6.04e to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote to Amend the Constitution—From the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest.

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:
Shall G-6.04e be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of a majority two-thirds of all the presbyteries. The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment.”

**Rationale**

A constitution should provide stability and require broad consensus to change. The current practice of requiring only a majority of all presbyteries to vote in the affirmative treats constitutional change as a simple motion. This does not provide stability or require broad consensus, nor does it adequately protect the unity of the body or the rights of the minority. Requiring two-thirds of presbyteries to vote in the affirmative for a change in the *Book of Order* would:

1. Better balance the tension between the following parliamentary principles:
   a. The unity of the body shall be protected;
   b. The rights of the minority shall be protected;
   c. The will of the majority shall prevail.
2. Restore the threshold for constitutional change to the norms of *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

**Concurrences to Item 06-06 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Foothills, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, and Palo Duro.**

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**ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-06**

*Advice on Item 06-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-06.

Item 06-06 would change the requirements for ratification of amendments to the *Book of Order* from the present (simple) majority of the presbyteries to a two-thirds vote of presbyteries. Approval of this overture would invert the historic constitutional rights of the majority and minority.

Since 1797, the Presbyterian church has understood that while the gathered assembly seek together to find and to represent the will of Christ (F-3.0204), that a majority shall govern (F-3.0205). This overture creates a scenario in which a proposed amendment might receive the affirmative votes of a majority of the presbyteries and fail, thereby substituting the discernment of a minority for that of the whole exercised through majority vote.

The process to amend the *Book of Order* has a long history of governance by a majority that protects the rights of the minority while enabling the majority to exercise its judgment regarding the will of Christ. While there are a few instances within the *Book of Order* that require more than a majority vote (such as G-2.0610 “Accommodation to Particular Circumstances”), these are usually for specific exceptions to rules and requirements established by majority vote.

The concerns over minority viewpoints have been considered previously. For example:

1. The Report of the Special Committee on Historic Principles, Conscience and Church Government (adopted by the UPCUSA General Assembly, 1983) states, “The church protects its own minority point of view as if it were protecting its future, recognizing that the dissenter may well represent the will of God. The church makes explicit provisions for the protection of those whose positions are in the minority” (http://oga.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/pdf/historic-principles.pdf, p. 8).
2. The 1952 General Assembly (PCUSA) considered the rights of a majority to decide issues, stating, “It is of the very essence of the Presbyterian Church’s faith that a majority of Christians are more likely to understand the will of God a right than are a minority.” The rights of a minority, who are less than a majority, should not block an action of the majority.
3. In 1989, 1993, 1998, and 2000, the General Assembly considered requests to require a supermajority vote for some or all of the steps in the process of amending the *Book of Order*.
4. Most recently, the concept was considered in Item 03-06 by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and Item 04-03 by the 221st General Assembly (2014), both of which rejected increasing the approval requirements to a two-thirds vote.
The overture also raises a question of procedural justice in that (1) every provision of our current Book of Order, adopted by a simple majority vote of the presbyteries, would be shielded from amendment by a higher standard than that by which they were adopted; and (2) this overture, if approved, would enshrine its own judgment by a simple majority vote.

The rationale for the overture seeks to conform the Book of Order to the standards set by Roberts’ Rules of Order for amending constitutional documents, and by implication raises the issue of why the Constitution holds a different standard for the Book of Order. Roberts’ envisions a constitution that is a single document with a single purpose. We have two documents with different purposes. The Book of Confessions, which contains the theological foundations of our faith and life, has a higher threshold of amendment, similar to Roberts’ standard. The Book of Order, however, contains both foundational and contextual guidance. As such it needs to be more responsive to changing contexts of ministry. The current time frame for amending the Book of Order is from 16 to 28 months. Establishing higher thresholds or longer time frames for the approval of such amendments impedes the church’s ability both to respond to current needs and to correct errors.

Section G-6.01 states that the current procedures for amendment “are understood as a means to faithfulness” to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeking to be “the church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God” in the power of the Spirit” (F-2.02). Those procedures include the balancing of majority and minority rights by requiring a majority of both the General Assembly and the presbyteries for amendments to the Book of Order. Our Historic Principles of Church Order acknowledge that councils may err (F-3.0107). Providing reasonable opportunity to correct past errors is a means of our collective and evolving faithfulness. One of the principles underlying our polity is that the Spirit speaks authoritatively through the Word in every age, and that the judgment of the church in one age carries no greater weight than any other—as if the Spirit spoke more authoritatively through one assembly than another.

The ACC notes that Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (pp.400–402) uses the terms “majority” and “two-thirds vote.” These are the terms used throughout the Book of Order and in this rationale.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-06.

ACSWP disagrees with this proposal to require a \( \frac{2}{3} \) affirmative vote to amend the Constitution because it limits the denomination from moving at the call of the Holy Spirit to change, as well as prioritizes the minority voices who might hold the denomination hostage to inertia.

We concur with the Advice and Counsel prepared by the Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns (ACWC) that demonstrates the extensive history and disapproval of this constitutional change. It is not in the church’s best interests to bind the Holy Spirit in such a way that makes it more difficult for the PC(USA) to adapt to changing times and the urgency of reformation.

Change is always difficult, and institutional change is probably the hardest type of change. When the Holy Spirit calls our denomination to change, it requires the us to take a risk that we might fail. If a majority of presbyteries are willing to venture toward a proposed change, then we should listen to the majority. We see the consequences of minority control at many points in the body politic; our church can set a more creative example, following our motto, “ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda.”

The proponents are rightly concerned for stability and broad consensus, but many aspects of the church’s internal culture contribute to its tilt toward stability. We honor elders and are led by them in many places, and have many small jurisdictions that add to our “decently and in order” caution about process. We are not clear what actual problem this change would solve.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-06.

In addition to requiring a supermajority of the presbyteries to approve an amendment, this overture seems to propose requiring a second General Assembly (GA) vote, and the delay of another year—becoming effective not a year after adjournment of the General Assembly that proposes it, but after the close of the General Assembly two years later. (So, it seems that the GA following the General Assembly for Constitutional Change proposed in Item 06-06 will also have to deal with amendments.) Not very nimble or adaptable in a changing world.
Supermajorities are required in *Robert’s Rules of Order* primarily to protect the rights of minorities to be heard. This would extend the power to a minority to obstruct change that the majority favors, threatening the principle that “a majority shall govern” (*Book of Order*, F-3.0205).

The Foothills authors have made reference to the few times that the United States Constitution has been amended, in contrast to the fairly regular amendment of the *Book of Order*; however, this is not an apt analogy. Governing the U.S.A. requires thousands of federal laws and regulations in addition to a Constitution, not to mention fifty state constitutions and thousands more state and local laws.

The proposed “approval process” isn’t entirely clear. Does this mean that presbyteries would vote on the whole *Book of Order* as it would be amended by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), with the amendment proposed in Item 06-06 and any others coming out of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), and that this approval would have to be made by a 2/3 supermajority and the 224th General Assembly (2020)—in order to establish a baseline Constitution (Part 2) that is forever after harder to amend? Or just that this amendment would need 2/3? It could be pretty challenging to get a 2/3 vote for effectively freezing every single provision in the current *Book of Order*; and would seem to require a 2/3 vote for every amendment proposed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Would they all have to wait until 2020 to take effect? (In response to a question, the Presbytery of Inland Northwest authors were unclear about what they were proposing, but did not seem to be contemplating a vote on the whole *Book of Order*.)

In either case, the General Assembly does not have the power to set aside the provisions of the current *Book of Order* in order to do this. At the point of voting on this proposed amendment, it would be subject to the simple majority of the presbyteries.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) does not have the power to instruct the 224th General Assembly (2020) that it “shall vote to ratify.”

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**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-06**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 06-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-06.

The Presbytery of the Foothills brought this same (04-03) and multiple other overtures to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The Way Forward Committee voted 74-2 to disapprove with comment 04-01, 04-02, 04-03, 04-04, 04-05, 04-06, 04-09, 04-10, and 04-13, which included “… calling on us all to recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to advocate with all of our voice for, in the words of Moderator Edmiston to Assembly Committee 4, ‘that which breaks God’s heart in our neighborhoods’ and seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor, marginalized, and excluded in our communities.” The comment went on to say, “By disapproving these overtures with comment, we can help move toward a more faithful, more just, and more hopeful vision of who we are as Christ’s church … through invitations, education, prayerful consideration, and not through constitutional changes.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove the overtures named above, including Item 04-03.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advised the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove the overtures named above, including Item 04-03;

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly advised the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove the overtures named above, including Item 04-03;

And, the General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully reminded the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that one General Assembly cannot bind subsequent General Assemblies, and further stating, “Historically, actions that require supermajority of approval of presbyteries have not passed because it limits access to and limits participation in the decision-making process of the church. In effect, it limits the ability of assemblies to discern the will of God. The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the *Book of Order* (Form of Government).”

In plenary, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) voted 505-35 to disapprove the overtures named above, including Item 04-03 regarding required two-thirds majority vote to amend the constitution.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns thereby advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-06.
06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

CÓGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-06

Comment on Item 06-06—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

CÓGA respectfully urges the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-06. The foundational documents of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have always been considered in order of significance: first and foundational is Scripture; secondly, we rely on our Confessions as to what Scripture leads us to believe and do; and, finally, we utilize the Book of Order to assist us to live out our beliefs. A change to the Book of Confessions requires a 2/3 affirmative vote of the presbyteries. To require a 2/3 vote to change the Book of Order would, in essence equate our rules and our theology—thus elevating the rules that should always be subordinate to Scripture and theology.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk…” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). CÓGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 06-06

Comment on Item 06-06—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture asks the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to change the threshold for ratifying changes to the Book of Order from a simple majority of presbyteries (what it is now) to a 2/3 majority of presbyteries. This change would match the higher majority required for changes to the Book of Confessions. In F-2.02, the church says that “the process for changing the confessions of the church is deliberately demanding” reflecting the fact that “confessional statements are subordinate standards [to the Scriptures] in the church” that are used “to instruct, counsel with, and discipline” ordained persons who reject the faith expressed there.

The Book of Order guides how the church navigates power and responsibilities, relations among councils, and orders its life. The GACOR reminds commissioners that the church is called to “a new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms” (F-1.0404). Adding an extra barrier to reform will negatively impact that openness we claim as foundational. Closing opportunity for reform is not Presbyterian. Creating a high approval threshold puts limits on changes and will bind and limit future General Assembly’s decisions.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 06-07

[Item 06-07 was answered by the action taken on Item 06-09. See pp. 70, 71.]

On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d When Former Ministers of the Word and Sacrament Who Renounced Jurisdiction While Being Accused in a Disciplinary Case Wish to Work for the PC(USA) Again—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall the fourth paragraph of G-2.0509 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

   “Whenever a former minister of the Word and Sacrament has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former minister of the Word and Sacrament shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward and resubmits to the disciplinary process the council governing that congregation or entity has thoroughly inquired into the circumstances surrounding the renunciation of jurisdiction, determined that the person is suited to the work proposed to be undertaken, and received concurrence from the next higher council.”

2. Shall D-10.0401d be amended to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

   “For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament comes forward in self accusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509) who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church, no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”

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Rationale

Our presbytery’s initial lengthy title for this overture was: “On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d to Restore Victims’ Rights to the Process for When Former Ministers of Word and Sacrament Who Renounced Jurisdiction While Being Accused in a Disciplinary Case Wish to Work if or for the PC(USA) Again.”

Rationale for Overture and Brief History of Recent Amendments to G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d

What is now G-2.0509 arose initially in response to a disciplinary case. On October 27, 2012, a (former) teaching elder, who is acknowledged to be a very charismatic leader and popular speaker at the Montreat Conference Center about youth ministry, chose to renounce his membership in the PC(USA) while he was formally accused of sexual abuse. As required by the Book of Order, his renunciation caused the entire investigation/judicial process to be shut down (D-3.0106). However, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta and the Presbytery of Western Reserve formed a joint administrative commission (AC) to make “pastoral inquiry” and “seek to reach a determination of the truth” in this matter, which is permitted when someone accused of sexual abuse renounces jurisdiction [G-3.0109b(6)]. The AC concluded that the accused sexually abused at least five minors between 1984 and 1995, and may have molested more.1 The AC noted how the accused had avoided being held accountable for decades in a variety of congregations and also a synod camp. In response to overtures from these two presbyteries, G-2.0509 was amended in 2014–2015 to prohibit any teaching elder who has been accused in a formal judicial process and subsequently chosen to renounce jurisdiction from being permitted to work for any entity under the PC(USA)’s jurisdiction in either a paid or volunteer capacity, which appeared to be a permanent ban.

In 2016, the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry considered overtures from three different presbyteries that all intended to allow such former teaching elders to be able to work in or for the PC(USA) again, by either:

- deleting the permanent ban altogether (Item 06-02),
- requiring the person to rejoin the church (Item 06-07), or
- requiring the person to not only rejoin the church, but to come forward in self-accusation, plead guilty to all charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former teaching elder had renounced jurisdiction, have censure imposed without trial and with no participation from victims required, and complete appropriate rehabilitation (Item 06-10, from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area).

The assembly committee recommended passing Item 06-07, to require rejoining the church.

The full 222nd General Assembly (2016) in plenary session decided to reject language in Item 06-07. Immediately thereafter, a motion was made from the floor to pass language in Item 06-10 as written. Almost immediately, a motion to amend language in 06-10 was made. At that point during the General Assembly, each speaker was limited to only sixty seconds to speak, and roughly half a dozen commissioners in total spoke, alternating in favor of or in opposition to the amendment. Motion was then made and passed to move all previous motions, which ended all further debate. The General Assembly then passed Item 06-10 as amended. A commissioner then asked if debate could be reopened, saying that neither he nor other commissioners around him understood what the General Assembly had just passed. The General Assembly declined to reconsider the motion, and moved on to debate other matters such as Middle East issues and divestment from fossil fuels. A majority of presbyteries then ratified what had become known as Amendment 16-D, Parts 1 and 2, which are now G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d, respectively.

How the Book of Order’s Currently Mandated Disciplinary Process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d Is Inconsistent with the Preamble of the Rules of Discipline

Recently adopted language in the Book of Order may seem to be merely a compassionate response to former ministers of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case, who may have done so because of pressing family or medical reasons, for example. The current process allows former teaching elders to rejoin the church, but does not require them to face accusations until sometime in the future when they themselves choose to come forward, in self-accusation, to resume the disciplinary process. However, requiring the disciplinary process to resume only when the accused chooses to come forward in self-accusation is inconsistent with five out of seven of the purposes of discipline stated in the Preamble of the Rules of Discipline (D-1.0101), because such a process (1) tramples on victim’s rights, (2) is not likely to remove causes of suspicion, and (3) is not likely to bring perpetrators of offenses to repentance, especially if many years pass between when the accused renounces jurisdiction and when the accused chooses to resume the disciplinary process.

The Preamble of the Rules of Discipline state that three of the purposes of discipline are:

- “to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved;”
- “to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses;”
- “to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings.” (D-1.0101)
When an accusation is made, victims have a right to see a fair and impartial investigation go forward with all deliberate speed (up to and including a trial, if necessary), so that, whatever the outcome of the disciplinary process, victims feel free to put memories of painful events in the past, and move on with their lives. However, under the current process in the Book of Order, victims (and perhaps their families or friends) may feel compelled to have to constantly prepare to testify about abusive events, just in case they ever receive notice from a new investigating committee that the accused wants to resume the disciplinary process, which could be at any time in the future of the accused’s choosing. It is cruel, inhumane, and anything but “speedy,” to expect victims to keep hanging on to evidence of abuse and to relive painful memories for months, years, or even decades in the future, on the perhaps slim chance that the accused might rejoin the church and choose to resubmit to the disciplinary process. In the words of a theological seminary advisory delegate to the 2016 General Assembly (2016), the process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d as now written “punishes victims.”

The Preamble of the Rules of Discipline also states that a fourth purpose of discipline is “to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division” (Ibid). However, requiring a disciplinary process to go forward at any time in the future only of the accused’s choosing is not likely to remove suspicions about the accused. If charges are not filed against the accused because an investigating committee finds insufficient evidence to prove an accusation “beyond a reasonable doubt” (D-11.0403a), or the accused is found not guilty after a trial, others will likely be divided in their conclusions as to whether the accused was truly innocent, or whether the accused could not be proved guilty because of any number of obstructive issues, such as the following:

- Perhaps the trail of evidence went cold between the time of initial accusation and the time that the accused came forward in self-accusation.
- Perhaps evidence that the initial investigating committee had collected before the disciplinary process was shut down when the accused renounced had gotten lost by the time the accused came forward in self-accusation.
- Perhaps key witnesses were no longer available, able, or alive, to testify.
- Perhaps memories had faded (e.g., a person diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment accused a minister of the Word and Sacrament of elder abuse, and the accused did not come forward to resume the disciplinary process until after the accuser developed full dementia).

A predator could deliberately wait to resume the disciplinary process until after it became public knowledge that a key witness had perhaps just moved overseas to serve in the Peace Corps for a few years, or was about to start a family, or had been killed in a car accident. Allowing the accused to resume the disciplinary process at a distant time in the future of the accused’s choosing is not likely to remove doubts about the accused’s integrity, so causes of discord and division will remain.

The Preamble of the Rules of Discipline also states that a fifth purpose of discipline is “to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration” (Ibid). However, the standard of proof in a disciplinary case, “guilt beyond a reasonable doubt,” is a high bar to meet. The more time that elapses between when the accused renounces jurisdiction and when the accused both rejoins the church and comes forward in self-accusation, the more likely that the accused will be found not guilty. Keeping the current process in place would likely mean that those who actually did commit the offenses alleged, and were found not guilty (or not even charged), will not get the help or additional counseling that they need to be able to repent and make meaningful, positive, consistent, and lasting changes to their behavior. A predator could even cite such a verdict of “not guilty” to potential employers as evidence that he or she should be eligible to be hired.

It would be odd to keep the current procedure in the Book of Order in place when the procedure conflicts with most of the purposes of discipline in the Preamble. If the current process is ever used in the future, the contradiction between principles in the Preamble and facts of the process may be quite glaring by the time the moderator is required to read the first two paragraphs of the Preamble of the Rules of Discipline at the beginning of a trial (D-11.0402a).

Why an Accused’s Right to a Trial Cannot Reasonably Be Unlimited

During deliberations of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry, participants expressed concern that one who is accused must maintain the right to a fair trial (citing D-11.0101). The current process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d gives former ministers of the Word and Sacrament the right to resume the disciplinary process, up to and including a trial, only when they themselves feel ready to face accusations, at any time in the future they choose, regardless of circumstances that may arise in the meantime. However, this apparent conception of a right without any limit is not consistent with how rights are generally understood in legal communities. In legal communities, a right is something that can always be reasonably exercised by the accused, but the accused is also free to act in ways that waive the right, or make the right impossible to be reasonably recognized. For example, in Book of Order, D-10.0203e:

- The accused has the right to remain silent, because what the accused says (or does not say) is entirely the accused’s choice. However, if the accused says something self-incriminatory, the judicial process has no obligation to ignore what the accused said. Instead, the accused is said to have waived the right to remain silent.
The accused also has the right to be represented by counsel. Within the PC(USA), it is very reasonable to assume that at least one qualified member of the PC(USA) can be found, somewhere, who would be willing to act as counsel for the accused. However, if the accused chooses not to be represented by counsel, and winds up losing the case, the judicial process has no obligation to redo the judicial proceeding with the accused having counsel for a second time around. Instead, the accused is said to have waived the right to be represented by counsel.

The current process that requires the disciplinary process to resume before the accused can do any more work in or for the church has some potential to hold former ministers of the Word and Sacrament accountable in the future for their actions. However, the more time that goes by between when the accused renounces jurisdiction and whenever in the future the accused may choose to both rejoin the church and resume the disciplinary process, the more likely that a subsequent investigation and trial will fail to uphold victims’ rights and achieve reconciliation for all. Such a trial would not be fair to all original participants. Therefore, while it makes sense to create the possibility for reconciliation and redemption through a future disciplinary process, it does not make sense to grant someone who renounced jurisdiction while being accused the right to resume the disciplinary process (and possible subsequent trial) only at any time of the accused’s choosing in the future.

**How the PC(USA) Can Maintain the Integrity of Its Professional Ministry and Keep the Public’s Trust**

Two back-to-back General Assemblies, along with a majority of presbyteries, have concluded that the church needs to do something more to hold its ministers of the Word and Sacrament, who are professionals, accountable when they are accused of misconduct. (No state licensing board, national organization that credentials professionals, or secular court system we know of allows one who is accused, acting alone, to stop a disciplinary or judicial process merely by quitting, as D-3.0106 does.)

With respect to amending D-10.0401d, which states when the disciplinary process may resume:

- This overture keeps open the possibility of achieving reconciliation through resuming the disciplinary process at a time in the future of the accused’s choosing, if the accused comes forward in self-accusation. However, if the accused waits too long to rejoin the church, there is a possibility that the disciplinary process will not be able to gather all evidence available at the time of the initial accusation and hear from all parties involved to be able to achieve reconciliation.

- This overture also opens the possibility of having the accused resume the disciplinary process whenever the accused rejoins the church, if another member of the PC(USA) re-files the initial accusation. Part of becoming a member of the church should be the willingness to be subject to the church’s discipline. The current process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d is strange in that former ministers of the Word and Sacrament are permitted to rejoin the church, but not have to be concerned about the disciplinary process unless and until they themselves feel ready to come forward in self-accusation. Removing the requirement for the accused to have to come forward in self-accusation for the disciplinary process to resume would make it less likely that someone who is accused could freely cross paths with victims as a protected member of the church, which could make victims relive painful memories and feel unsafe in the church.

However, this overture does not require a former minister of the Word and Sacrament to rejoin the church (or even to go through a disciplinary process) to be able to work in or for the PC(USA) again. Section G-2.0509 as amended would only require that “the council governing that congregation or entity has thoroughly inquired into the circumstances surrounding the renunciation of jurisdiction, determined that the person is suited to the work proposed to be undertaken, and received concurrence from the next higher council.”

- With respect to making a thorough inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the renunciation of jurisdiction:
  - One part of doing a thorough background check is to see whether a person was ever a minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction. At the bottom of the www.pcusa.org website, immediately below the heading for the “Office of the General Assembly (OGA),” is a link to the Minister Directory (http://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/online-minister-directory/). Clicking on the link at the bottom of this page (“Visit the online Minister Directory,” at: https://ogaapps.pcusa.org/directories/-/minister), you can type in the last and/or first name of a person. A person who has renounced jurisdiction will have their current status listed as “Removed by The ABC Presbytery.” That presbytery should be contacted to find out if the person had renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case, a fact that is supposed to be reported to the presbytery (D-3.0106).
  - A council should ask the accused about the renunciation. However, every council should know that not all people who have been accused are truthful.
  - Knowledgeable personnel of the council where the former minister of the Word and Sacrament renounced jurisdiction should also be asked whatever information is necessary to thoroughly investigate the renunciation of jurisdiction, including perhaps the names and contact information of other people involved. While the investigating committee process is presumed confidential before the accused renounces jurisdiction, there is nothing in the Book of Order that requires a council to either answer questions fully or to withhold any information as confidential after a person renounces jurisdiction.

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• With respect to determining whether the person is suited to the work proposed to be undertaken, a council has a variety of options. For example:
  ○ A council may request advice from higher councils that may have greater expertise in matters of clergy misconduct on how they should proceed.
  ○ A council may request the accused to resubmit to the disciplinary process. (A council should make clear to victims that they are welcome to participate, but should not feel compelled to relive painful memories and feel re-victimized again.)
  ○ If an investigating committee decides to file a charge, and a council feels that it itself cannot carry out a trial in a thorough, fair, and impartial way, that council may request a reference from the next higher council to conduct the trial and make a decision on the lower council’s behalf (D-4.0000).
  ○ A council may recognize that a disciplinary process/trial that is fair to all original participants is no longer possible, and request that the accused undergo a psychological evaluation (or forensic psychological evaluation).

• With respect to a lower council seeking a concurrence from the next higher council, we believe this would also be a wise practice.
  ○ Lower councils often do not have as much experience and expertise as higher councils to handle cases of clergy misconduct. In particular, sessions of congregations often do not have resources like a presbytery has, such as a committee on ministry, committee on ethics, or pastoral misconduct response committee; people with experience serving on investigating committees or permanent judicial commissions; or professionally trained executive/general presbyters or stated clerks.
  ○ A higher council would likely provide an independent assessment of the accused’s suitability for a particular position since the higher council would not be hiring the individual. Requiring lower councils to obtain a concurrence from a higher council would prevent lower councils from performing perfunctory investigations to fill a position quickly when a more thorough investigation could reveal “red flags.”

After doing a thorough background check, if a council (or the next higher council) concludes that it cannot determine that the accused is suitable to be hired to work in a particular position, paid or volunteer, in which the accused can be “involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ’s Church” (c.f. G-1.0304), consistently with thoughtful policies for sexual misconduct and child protection (G-3.0106), then that council has a duty to protect the vulnerable, as well as to avoid future civil and criminal liability, and not hire the accused for that particular position.

Endnotes

1. The following is a link to the minutes of the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta on August 17, 2013. Appendix V (on pages A-34 through A-67) contains a Summary Report of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta Administrative Commission: http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3181744/August_17__2013_Minutes.pdf

2. Possible outcomes of a disciplinary case are “guilty” or “not guilty,” or the disciplinary process ends when an investigating committee finds insufficient evidence to prove guilt and does not file charges (D-10.0202k), or the accused renounces jurisdiction (D-3.0106).

3. The Book of Order states that “Proof beyond a reasonable doubt occurs when the comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the case are true” (D-11.0403a). For comparison, the State of Minnesota defines guilt beyond a reasonable doubt as: “Proof beyond a reasonable doubt is such proof as ordinarily prudent men and women would act upon in their most important affairs. A reasonable doubt is a doubt based upon reason and common sense. It does not mean a fanciful or capricious doubt, nor does it mean beyond all possibility of doubt.”

4. The other two of seven purposes of discipline listed in the Book of Order are “to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ;” and “to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community” (Ibid).

5. These same two rights are also recognized in the 5th and 6th amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

6. One could make an argument that all presbyters (both ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament) should have exactly the same standards of accountability since both kinds of presbyters govern the church (F-3.0202, F-3.0208), and “when elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office” (G-2.0301). However, ministers of the Word and Sacrament are required to be trained and examined over many years before they are credentialed by presbyteries G-2.05, G-2.06, after which they have special authorities and responsibilities that ruling elders do not, such as to moderate congregational and session meetings (G-1.0504, G-3.0201), being required to maintain relationships of trust and confidentiality (G-4.0301), and shaping worship services by selecting the Scriptures to be read, preparing the sermons and the prayers to be offered, selecting music to be sung, as well as printed worship aids or media presentations for a given service, and the use of drama, dance, and other art forms in a particular service of worship (W-2.0304). While both ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament serve on sessions, the larger role of a teaching elder is not the same as the role of a ruling elder within a congregation.

7. “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (Jas. 3:1); see also Book of Confessions, 5.167.
8. Licensing boards or national credentialing organizations for physicians, nurses, dentists, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers, attorneys, counselors, actuaries, and accountants usually choose to continue to investigate accusations of misconduct, regardless of whether the accused quits or chooses to participate or not, in order for these professions to maintain their integrity and keep the public’s trust.

9. As D-10.0401d is currently written, it is strange that the time limit between when an offense is alleged to have occurred and when a charge may be filed depends upon whether the person making the accusation is the accused coming forward in self-accusation (in which case D-10.0401d states there is no time limit) or whether the person making the accusation is any other member of the PC(USA) (in which case the same restrictions in D-3.0106 and time limits specified in D-10.0401a–c apply). Current language in D-10.0401d doesn’t make sense.

10. If the accuser is under the jurisdiction of a council that is different from the council that has jurisdiction over the accused, “it shall be the duty of the clerk of that session or the stated clerk of that presbytery to submit the written statement to the clerk of session or the stated clerk of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the member. The involved councils shall proceed cooperatively with judicial process” (D-10.0104).


“As the ICI Final Report (p. 85) states: ‘Molesters become very adept at hiding their behavior. Some are less skilled in maintaining secrecy, but most are able to abuse victims known to them for years without being detected. The social skill, charm, and charisma of many perpetrators is used in a dual way, both to gain access to potential victims and to dissuade adults from taking children’s allegations seriously.’”

“The ICI Final Report (pp. 85-86) identifies three predictable ways that the abuser reacts to allegations: denial, minimization, and counter-attack. Research suggests that offenders sometimes ‘minimize their behavior and its impact by admitting to the action but denying the motivation. For example, an abuser might say, “Yes, I did this, but I had no sexual intent.” “Yes, it happened, but I didn’t mean to hurt anyone.”’” (p. 85)

13. On pages A-47, A-51, and A-52 of the administrative commission’s report listed in footnote 2, there is a description of a troubling action by a session in April 1997. In summer 1996, a woman was hired to serve as parish associate serving as minister to middle schoolers for a congregation in Georgia. At the time of her hiring, she sent a letter to the congregation in which she disclosed that her husband was involved in a lawsuit in California alleging “inappropriate behavior with a young person while [her husband] was employed by a church in California.” She also stated: “I have assured the Session that [my husband] will not be involved in the youth ministry programs of the church.” However, when that session was informed that the lawsuit in California had been settled, the session voted unanimously to remove restrictions on [the husband] from participating with his wife in youth activities. Apparently, the session did not ask many questions about the lawsuit, or how many people had accused the individual of misconduct in California.

14. The Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis has been served with public nuisance claims and civil petitions, been charged with criminal child endangerment, and filed for bankruptcy (http://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/06/05/archdiocese-investigation).

Concurrences to Item 06-07 from the Presbyteries of Albany, de Cristo, Denver, Grand Canyon, and Wabash Valley.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-07

Advice on Item 06-07—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The proposed language of Item 06-07 would amend G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d. These are dealt with below as two separate parts.

Part 1, Recommendation 1 of Item 06-07, proposes to amend the fourth paragraph of G-2.0509. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Recommendation 1 of Item 06-07.


Part 1

The proposed amendment to G-2.0509 addresses the situation where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament wishes to perform work, “whether paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” but has renounced jurisdiction of the PC(USA) while a disciplinary proceeding was pending against him or her as the accused. This proposed amendment does not address the situation where a former minister renounced jurisdiction and left the PC(USA) when there was not a disciplinary proceeding against the former minister. The amendment also defines a council’s responsibilities to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the renunciation of jurisdiction, determine that the person is suited to the work proposed to be undertaken, and receive concurrence from the next higher council.

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Such a process runs counter to the constitutional understanding of restoration of a member by way of the disciplinary process. The Rules of Discipline are designed as the means, whenever possible, for restoring the relationships between the accuser, the accused, and the wider church community (see D-1.0101, D-12.0000). Renunciation of jurisdiction, by contrast, is self-repudiation of a person’s ordination vows and “carries with it a sense of fracture of relationship and injury to the body of Christ” (218th General Assembly (2008), Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 274, Item 04-21). The language in Recommendation 1 of Item 06-07, however, proposes a path separate from the disciplinary process for the renouncer to be restored to the larger church community. To bypass discipline in pursuit of restoration is to bypass restoration itself.

Further, the proposed language removes the council originally responsible for the disciplinary process from any authority over the path by which the former minister may enter into work. Doing so would place upon the reviewing council (which will likely not be familiar with the prior disciplinary case and may not have access to the case record) an unusually heavy burden of inquiry, assessment, examination, and decision and would in most instances disenfranchise the original council from efforts at restoration. The process is duplicative and cumbersome.

The committee recognizes that the particular circumstances governed by G-2.0509 will vary widely, and offers the following observations for the assembly’s consideration.

A former minister might wish to be engaged in the life of a congregation without becoming a member; might wish to become a member of a congregation; or might seek to restore her or his status in ordered ministry. Each situation poses different issues and each requires a different process and response.

**Performing Work Without Becoming a Member or Seeking to Return to Ordered Ministry**

All are welcome to participate in the *life and worship* of this church, (G-1.0403, emphasis added). This statement must be weighed against the seriousness of renouncing jurisdiction of the PC(USA) and refusing to remain subject to church discipline. When a minister of Word and Sacrament has renounced jurisdiction of the PC (USA), that person is no longer subject to the Constitution and, therefore, not subject to church discipline. If a person has renounced jurisdiction, but desires as a nonmember to attend and volunteer within a congregation or other entity subject to the jurisdiction of the PC(USA), that person is not ordinarily subject to church discipline. If the person wishes to serve in a volunteer or paid position that does not have religious qualifications, for example as a groundskeeper, the relationship of the person to the congregation or other entity may and should be handled as a matter of agreement, written contract, and civil employment law. The council or board considering such an agreement or contract should, after a proper investigation, determine whether that person is suited for the proposed work, and specify any conditions that should be imposed on the person in connection with the work.

**Becoming a Church Member**

When a former minister renounced jurisdiction while a disciplinary case against him or her was pending, and now desires to join a local congregation and resubmit to the jurisdiction and discipline of the PC(USA), the situation is different. By seeking membership, the former minister is agreeing to be subject to the jurisdiction and discipline of the PC(USA). The session should investigate, consult with, and examine the person, and craft appropriate conditions as necessary. Church membership is a session’s decision and therefore does not require concurrence by the next higher council.

**Return to Ordered Ministry**

When a former minister renounced jurisdiction while a disciplinary case against him or her was pending, and now desires to return to ordered ministry in the PC(USA), additional process is required. Renunciation is not the removal of a person’s status in ordered ministry, but a voluntary abandonment of it. A minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction may not be *restored* to ordered ministry and the office of minister of Word and Sacrament because the person voluntarily acted in a manner to negate that status. This is particularly true where the minister renounced while a disciplinary case was pending against him or her and thus refused to be subject to church discipline.

It is possible for a person who renounced jurisdiction to return to ordered ministry as a minister of the Word and Sacrament through one of two ways:

1. A person who has renounced jurisdiction while subject to a disciplinary process and who is a minister in good standing of another denomination may seek to have those credentials recognized under G-2.0505.

2. A person who has renounced jurisdiction while subject to a disciplinary process and who is not a minister in good standing in another denomination or whose credentials are not recognized by the PC(USA), must do so as a member of a congregation through the process of G-2.06.

In both instances, however, the person who was subject to a disciplinary proceeding as the accused at the time of renunciation shall submit to the disciplinary proceeding that was pending at the time the renunciation occurred. In submitting to the disciplinary process (which could include self-accusation [D-10.0401] as well as resumption of the disciplinary case pending

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at the time of renunciation), the former minister shall not be allowed to assert any defense or objection based on the passage of time, procedural deadlines, the time for bringing charges, or statutes of limitation. By halting the disciplinary process with renunciation, the accused must be deemed to have waived any argument, defense, or objection based on the passage of time or any procedural deadline.

The person shall be subject to any censure imposed in the disciplinary process, which may include temporary or permanent removal from ordered ministry or membership. A censure removing the person from membership or the exercise of ordained office shall prohibit the person from membership or serving as a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA) until and unless the person is restored as provided for in D-12.0200.

Any proposed amendments to the fourth paragraph of G-2.0509 should address all of these situations and issues.

Part 2

Recommendation 2 of Item 06-07 would amend D-10.0401d to add words to make clear the section applies only to a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction of the PC(US.) while a disciplinary proceeding was proceeding against him or her as the accused. There is a task force working on a revision to the Rules of Discipline. The amendment to D-10.0401d (Recommendation 2 of Item 06-7) should be referred to it.

Endnotes

1. Shall the fourth paragraph of G-2.0509 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.] “Whenever a former minister of the Word and Sacrament has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former minister of the Word and Sacrament shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward and resubmits to the disciplinary process in the council governing that congregation or entity has thoroughly inquired into the circumstances surrounding the renunciation of jurisdiction, determined that the person is suited to the work proposed to be undertaken, and received concurrence from the next higher council.”

2. Shall D-10.0401d be amended to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.] “For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church comes forward in self-accusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509), no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-07.

Pastors who renounce jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) while under investigation short change the process for justice for those who have been harmed by the pastor’s actions. If a pastor seeks to avoid punishment by renouncing jurisdiction and then wishes to return to ministry within any entity under the authority of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), then the process of return or reentry should include facing the charges, regardless of time limit, especially as the purpose of discipline is to restore the bonds of community that have been broken by the violations.

The Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns (ACWC) has done extensive study of the inadequacy of PC(USA) policies regarding sexual misconduct and offers both Items 06-19 and 11-09 as ways to be more effective in the adjudication of these situations. While the changes proposed in this item are an improvement, they are nevertheless inadequate. Approving Item 06-19 by this committee and Item 11-09 by the Social Justice committee will ensure that our denomination’s policies on sexual misconduct—and the process of reentry and return—are strengthened.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-07, Recommendation 1., with the action taken on Item 06-09. The ACWC advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Recommendation 2.

Two resolutions before the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Items 06-07 and 06-09, attempt to rectify problems created by amendments made at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to G-2.0509 regarding the discipline of former ministers who renounce jurisdiction and later want to come back to serve the church. The 2016 amendments created a situation in which the
administration of justice was impossible to carry out since ministers who renounce jurisdiction are no longer members of the PC(USA) and the Rules of Discipline therefore no longer apply to them.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) advises approval of Item 06-09 for its greater clarity of language in amending the Book of Order, G-2.0509. Additionally, ACWC advises approval of the changes to the Book of Order, D-10.0401d in Recommendation 2 of Item 06-07. ACWC also calls attention to Item 06-19, which amends the Book of Order, D-11.0403, so that, rather than sexual misconduct charges needing to be proven beyond a reasonable doubt (the standard of proof in criminal cases), sexual misconduct charges can instead be brought if proven according to the standard of clear and convincing evidence or evidence that the charge is highly likely, or around 75 percent, to be true).

In reviewing these and other related items of business brought before the assembly, ACWC has found this time-consuming, piecemeal, and confusing approach to Book of Order changes regarding sexual misconduct problematic. ACWC therefore strongly advises the approval of Item 11-09, which speaks to the need for a task force to undertake a comprehensive examination of Presbyterian policy, judicial process, and rules of discipline.

While ACWC supports the above changes, they are inadequate. Unless victims have the right to a fair and impartial investigation with all deliberate speed, they will never feel free to put memories of painful events in the past and move on with their lives. Under the current ruling, however, former teaching elders are allowed to rejoin the church but are not required to face accusations and resume the disciplinary process until a time in the future of their own choosing. Thus, a predator can deliberately wait until after key witnesses have moved on with their lives, perhaps even died, or the original evidence is no longer available.

Often sexual predators have charming, persuasive personality traits that allowed them to manipulate and seduce their victims. According to the PC(USA) Independent Committee of Inquiry investigating the actions of missionaries who molested children between 1945 and 1978 while working under the aegis of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission, “the social skill, charm, and charisma of many perpetrators is used in a dual way, both to gain access to potential victims and to dissuade adults from taking children’s allegations seriously.” Because most perpetrators are skilled in “denial, minimization, and counterattack,” they remain capable of manipulating public opinion many years after renouncing jurisdiction.

All sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power. As an advocacy committee for women, ACWC is concerned about gender inequities that leave women within the church vulnerable to sexual misconduct, not only from other clergy, but also to sexual harassment from male members of their congregations. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns also seeks protection for other vulnerable populations—children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers, for instance—who are more likely to be targets of sexual misconduct.

Too many questions remain: Should there be a time limit placed on how long a former minister can wait to come forward? Is it required that the accused go back to the original body of jurisdiction or is it possible to reenter through an entirely different presbytery? Should a minister who renounces jurisdiction be tried in absentia as is the case with most other professional organizations where investigation into accusations of misconduct continue, regardless of whether the accused quits or chooses to participate or not, in order for these professions to maintain their integrity and keep the public’s trust? It is time to revisit the Book of Order from the perspective of the victims of sexual misconduct to ensure that its provisions result in justice for victims in cases such as this one regarding ministers who have renounced jurisdiction.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-07

Comment on Item 06-07—From the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

OGA advises that all items, including Item 06-07, amending the Rules of Discipline, be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which is currently revising the Rules of Discipline as a whole and will report with suggested changes to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Item 06-08

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-08. See pp. 70, 71.]

Amending G-1.0304 to Allow Congregations to Elect Individuals as Ruling Elders Without Requiring Them to Assume a Seat on the Session—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.

The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-2.0301 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]
“As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including eccumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully may be individually commissioned or may serve as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office.”

**Rationale**

The Form of Government allows for a certain flexibility with respect to the election and ordination of deacons that it does not presently extend to the election and ordination of ruling elders. Section G-2.0202 allows congregations to elect individuals as deacons who do not serve on a board of deacons. In some cases, this is because a congregation has no board of deacons. In other cases, a congregation may have such a board, but may discern the need, from time-to-time, for a greater number of deacons to engage in the ministries of “compassion, witness, and service” that are the hallmarks of that order (G-2.0201).

Like deacons, ruling elders typically begin their ministry in term-limited service on an elected board, but their ordination does not end with that term of service. Ordination is for life. Ruling elders who have completed a term on the session often continue to serve their congregations in many and varied ways. They may also serve their presbytery, synod, or General Assembly as commissioners or as members of committees and working groups. They do not need to be in active service on their session in order to serve in such ways.

It sometimes occurs that congregations or councils beyond the session need the services of particular individuals as ruling elders, but those individuals are unable to immediately assume a term on the session. For example, the spouse or child of a pastor may decline to be nominated for a seat on the session that is moderated by their family member—thinking it a conflict of interest to do so—but may have much to offer a committee of their presbytery whose membership is limited to those who are ordained.

Situations also arise in which it may be advantageous for mission workers to be ordained as ruling elders prior to deployment, but whose deployment plans make immediate service on their home church’s session problematic.

As the church continues to explore new forms of mission through efforts such as 1,001 New Worshiping Communities and in new immigrant communities, situations sometimes arise in which it would be useful to designate promising leaders for service in fellowships that are not congregations in the usual sense. If such individuals could be received as members of a neighboring congregation, then elected by that congregation as ruling elders to exercise their ministry in the nontraditional community, the community’s work and witness, as well as the work and witness of the presbytery, would be enhanced.

Sessions may also need the services of a skilled individual to serve as their clerk, but unless there is currently a vacancy on the session, there is no way that person can be elected and ordained.

This proposal would not in any way bypass the ordinary means by which a congregation elects gifted members for ordained service. Those identified for service would still need to be nominated by the congregation’s nominating committee, elected by the congregation, examined by the session, and ordained in a service of worship. This path to ordination is, in fact, identical to the way in which deacons may presently be ordained without immediately assuming a seat on the board of deacons—which is why the language of the proposed amendment is identical to that used in G-2.0202.

It should be noted that, although the phrase “may be individually commissioned” may at first sound similar to the concept of “ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service” (G-2.1001), this proposed amendment seeks to accomplish something very different.

The effect of this proposed amendment is permissive rather than restrictive. It does not impose the model of individually commissioned ruling elders on any council, but rather provides flexibility for uncommon situations, allowing them to order their ministries in new and varied ways in service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Concurrences to Item 06-08 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Newton.**

**Concurrence to Item 06-08 from the Synod of the Northeast (with Additional Rationale):**

With Item 06-08, the synod concurred with the language of this overture, but added language to the Rationale, which is shown as italic below in paragraphs 3, 5, and 9 from the original Rationale.
The Form of Government allows for a certain flexibility with respect to the election and ordination of deacons that it does not presently extend to the election and ordination of ruling elders. Section G-2.0202 allows congregations to elect individuals as deacons who do not serve on a board of deacons. In some cases, this is because a congregation has no board of deacons. In other cases, a congregation may have such a board, but may discern the need, from time to time, for a greater number of deacons to engage in the ministries of “compassion, witness and service” that are the hallmarks of that order (G-2.0201).

Like deacons, ruling elders typically begin their ministry in term-limited service on an elected board, but their ordination does not end with that term of service. Ordination is for life. Ruling elders who have completed a term on the session often continue to serve their congregations in many and varied ways. They may also serve their presbytery, synod or General Assembly as commissioners or as members of committees and working groups. They do not need to be in active service on their session in order to serve in such ways.

It sometimes occurs that congregations or councils beyond the session need the services of particular individuals as ruling elders, but those individuals are unable to immediately assume a term on the session. For example, the spouse or child of a pastor may decline to be nominated for a seat on the session that is moderated by their family member—thinking it a conflict of interest to do so or the session bylaws or standing rules do not permit it. However, they may have much to offer a committee of their presbytery or a synod council whose membership is limited to those who are ordained.

Situations also arise in which it may be advantageous for mission workers to be ordained as ruling elders prior to deployment, but whose deployment plans make immediate service on their home church’s session problematic.

As the church continues to explore new forms of mission through efforts such as 1,001 New Worshiping Communities and in new immigrant communities, situations sometimes arise in which it would be useful to designate promising leaders for service in fellowships that are not congregations in the usual sense. If such individuals could be received as members of a neighboring congregation, then elected by that congregation as ruling elders to exercise their ministry in the nontraditional community, the community’s work and witness, as well as the work and witness of the presbytery or synod would be enhanced.

Sessions may also need the services of a skilled individual to serve as their clerk, but unless there is currently a vacancy on the session, there is no way that person can be elected and ordained.

This proposal would not in any way bypass the ordinary means by which a congregation elects gifted members for ordained service. Those identified for service would still need to be nominated by the congregation’s nominating committee, elected by the congregation, examined by the session and ordained in a service of worship. This path to ordination is, in fact, identical to the way in which deacons may presently be ordained without immediately assuming a seat on the board of deacons—which is why the language of the proposed amendment is identical to that used in G-2.0202.

It should be noted that, although the phrase “may be individually commissioned” may at first sound similar to the concept of “ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service” (G-2.1001), this proposed amendment seeks to accomplish something very different.

The effect of this proposed amendment is permissive rather than restrictive. It does not impose the model of individually commissioned ruling elders on any council in any presbytery or synod, but rather provides flexibility for uncommon situations, allowing them to order their ministries in new and varied ways in service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-08

Advice on Item 06-08—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-08.

The overture seeks to amend G-2.0301 to provide for the election of elders to individual commissions without requiring service on the session. The text of the proposed amendment is identical to Item 06-09 submitted to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). That assembly disapproved the overture.

The essential functions of ruling elders identified in G-2.0301 (exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline) are yoked to the practice of governance in the context of councils. The Constitution assumes such experience as a prerequisite to exercise governance in higher councils. Removing this requirement would deemphasize the essential governance function of ruling elders and incorporate other forms of service.

Within the life of a congregation, the only functions beyond elected service as a member of the session that require ordination as a ruling elder are: the authority to administer sacraments when trained and authorized by the presbytery (G-3.0301b); to exercise limited pastoral service when commissioned by the presbytery (G-2.1003), and to serve as commissioners to councils when elected (G-2.0301) [emphasis added]. Sessions already have the authority to commission members to exercise pastoral care, lead worship, and perform a variety of mission functions, none of which requires ordination as a ruling elder.
The rationale cites G-2.0202 as precedent for individual commissioning of ruling elders. However, the individual commissioning of deacons is not comparable to that of ruling elders. Each ordered ministry has its unique functions and requirements. Deacons do not exercise governing responsibility, and service as a deacon is explicitly under the authority and supervision of the session (G-2.0202). Individual commissions may be necessary and helpful in congregations that do not have a board of deacons. Every particular church must have a session (G-3.0101).

Election to service beyond the session introduces other concerns. Election to individual commissions invites congregations to elect ruling elders without function or accountability. Alternatively, election to functions beyond the congregation may lead to applying a different set of gifts and qualifications in the examination of the elder-elect. A person so examined and ordained might then—perhaps wrongly—be presumed to have gifts for service on a session.

Ordaining ruling elders to service beyond the congregation would constitute a substantive change to long-established Presbyterian polity that persons who serve in ordered ministries are elected to serve the body that elects them and are examined accordingly (F-3.0106). To elect and examine an elder for service within a higher council presents issues related to the roles and powers of sessions and higher councils. A request from a higher council may be seen as a directive to which the congregation and session must accede, pressuring a congregation to elect and a session to approve and ordain a person as an elder they believe is not properly qualified for the office. Conversely, the refusal of a congregation to elect or a session to approve and ordain a member at the higher council's request may be interpreted as obstructing the authority of the higher council.

Finally, the use of the term “individually commissioned” creates confusion with a presbytery’s authority to commission ruling elders to particular, limited, pastoral service (G-2.10). Commissions to pastoral functions such as regular preaching of the Word, administration of the sacraments, moderation of sessions, and performance of weddings are governed by the presbytery, not the session.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-08**

_Advice & Counsel on Item 06-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns._

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-08.

ACREC agrees with the advice from the ACC. People of color in majority culture churches are at risk of losing voice and given only a title. The full functions of the ordained office need to be preserved.

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-08**

_Advice & Counsel on Item 06-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns._

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-08.

The Office of the General Assembly is being asked to offer support in providing options for sessions to ordain elders even if there are no available positions on the session, or if the fellowship does not qualify to have a session under the current church structure.

During this time of lean resources in financial means and with insufficient numbers of people to do church work, both churches and fellowships need creative ways to utilize the resources that they do have. When there is a member who meets the qualifications of a ruling elder, avenues of ordination should be open to them. This will allow a diversity of voices in the leadership of the local church and throughout the denomination. According to PC(USA) research services, women currently make up approximately 57 percent of elders on sessions. While this is an encouraging number, the data is not inclusive of fellowships such as those in the 1,001 Worshiping Communities, and other categories of fellowships.

Congregations in the PC(USA) number just under 9,500. As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to seek ways to maintain the membership that we do have and to grow our numbers, we need to exercise methods of inclusiveness and not maintain structural systems of exclusiveness.

This item has an impact on gender justice, and women are disproportionately affected here, because, by observation, women make up the greater percentage smaller congregations, of fellowships, and worshipers in poor and immigrant communities.

**GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 06-08**

_Comment on Item 06-08—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)._  

Achieving the widest participation and diversity in representation in councils at all levels of the PC(USA) and denominational committees often rests on the ordination of ruling elders to serve on sessions. Unfortunately, this provides a limited pool
of leadership to other councils, committees, task forces, and commissions. When the General Assembly Committee on Repr "sentation (GACOR) reviewed data of synod assembly commissioners, 83 percent are ages 46 and over. There are synods that have more diverse age representation than others, however, most still remain in this higher age range.

Should this overture be approved, it ensures that the responsibility of ordination for ruling elders remains in the local congregation while providing opportunities for greater representation and diversity in higher governing councils, committees, task forces, and commissions.

*The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).*

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**Item 06-09**

[The assembly approved Item 06-09 as amended. See pp. 70, 71–72.]

*On Amending G-2.0509 Regarding Renunciation of Jurisdiction—From the Presbytery of Central Florida.*

The Presbytery of Central Florida overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Shall G-2.0509 be amended by striking the fourth paragraph and adding two new paragraphs to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

   “Whenever a former minister of the Word and Sacrament has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former minister of the Word and Sacrament shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward and resubmits to the disciplinary process.

   “No congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be permitted to employ, for pay or as a volunteer, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused.

   “Any former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction and later wants to be restored to office can be restored only through application to the presbytery in which he or she renounced jurisdiction for restoration to office, in which case the provisions of D-10.0401d and D-12.0200 shall apply.”

2. Shall D-10.0401d be amended to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

   [“For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament comes forward in self-accusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509) who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church, no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”]

3. Refer the question of permitting trials in absentia for those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding to the Office of the General Assembly and Rules of Discipline Task Force to bring a recommendation to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

**Rationale**

The amendments to G-2.0509, while intended to protect the church and its entities from ministers who have left the church without submitting to the constitutional process for establishing guilt or innocence and providing for repentance when repentance is needed, have instead created a situation in which the administration of justice, as defined by the amendment, is impossible to carry out. By definition of the section itself, a person who has renounced jurisdiction no longer holds membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The preamble to the Rules of Discipline defines the limits of church discipline as follows:

... The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings. ... (D-1.0101, emphasis added)
Since church discipline exists for the welfare of the believing community and applies to members of that community, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction is no longer a member by action of the presbytery that removes his or her name from its rolls. In any complaint, the Rules of Discipline would apply to the congregation or other entity which employed that former minister. Should a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who has renounced jurisdiction wish to be restored to the ordered ministry of minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder), the process for restoration is spelled out in the Rules of Discipline, D-12.0200.

Concurrences to Item 06-09 from the Presbyteries of Albany, de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Newton, North Alabama, Tropical Florida, and Wabash Valley.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-09

Advice on Item 06-09—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-09 with its response to Item 06-07.

Both Items 06-07 and 06-09 would amend G-2.0509 on renunciation of jurisdiction. Each proposes correcting a perceived flaw in the language of the last paragraph of G-2.0509. The approaches are different and do not achieve the same end. There is a comprehensive description of the issues related to renunciation of jurisdiction in the advice on Item 06-07 that will provide helpful background for consideration of this overture as well.

There are particular issues inherent in Item 06-09. The first sentence of Item 06-09 (Part A) addresses the actions of a congregation. The second sentence of Item 06-09 (Part B), addresses actions of a former minister. Each part is discussed separately below.

Part A: The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the first paragraph would place requirements on the congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA), rather than on a former minister who has renounced the jurisdiction of this church and, therefore, is no longer subject to its jurisdiction and discipline. Section G-2.0509 is about ministers of the Word and Sacrament and their actions in renouncing jurisdiction. Insertion of requirements for a congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA) interrupts the flow and sense of this section.

Part B: The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the second paragraph presents some matters of concern.

- Having struck the requirement for rejoining the church in the existing text of G-2.0509, if approved, the new language would eliminate any requirement for membership before “application” for restoration.

- It would require “application” to the presbytery. “Application” is not defined, nor are there any criteria for considering such an “application.”

- Most significantly, it assumes that renunciation of jurisdiction is equivalent to removal from ordered ministry in judicial process. A person who seeks to be restored after the censure of removal (D-12.0201) has satisfied him or herself to the discipline of the church and satisfied the requirements for restoration. A person who has renounced jurisdiction of this church in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding has avoided the discipline of this church. A 1989 authoritative interpretation specifies that one who renounces jurisdiction and seeks to return to ministry of the Word and Sacrament “should first come again under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a member of a particular church and then initiate the process and procedures found in G-2.06, Preparation for Ministry (formerly G-14.0300, Preparation for the Office of Minister of the Word and Sacrament).” The proposed language of Item 06-09 conflicts with this and would not require membership in the church.

Endnotes

1. “No congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be permitted to employ, for pay or as a volunteer, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused.”

2. “Any former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction and later wants to be restored to office can be restored only through application to the presbytery in which he or she renounced jurisdiction for restoration to office in which case the provisions of D-10.0401d and D-12.0200 shall apply.”

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 223rd General Assembly (2016) to approve Item 06-09.
Two resolutions before the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Items 06-07 and 06-09, attempt to rectify problems created by amendments made at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to G-2.0509 regarding the discipline of former ministers who renounce jurisdiction and later want to come back to serve the church. The 2016 amendments created a situation in which the administration of justice was impossible to carry out since ministers who renounce jurisdiction are no longer members of the PC(USA) and the Rules of Discipline therefore no longer apply to them.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) advises approval of Item 06-09 for its greater clarity of language in amending the Book of Order, G-2.0509. Additionally, ACWC advises approval of the changes to the Book of Order, D-10.0401d in Recommendation 2 of Item 06-07. ACWC also calls attention to Item 06-19, which amends the Book of Order, D-11.0403, so that, rather than sexual misconduct charges needing to be proven beyond a reasonable doubt (the standard of proof in criminal cases), sexual misconduct charges can instead be brought if proven according to the standard of clear and convincing evidence or evidence that the charge is highly likely, or around 75 percent, to be true).

In reviewing these and other related items of business brought before the assembly, ACWC has found this time-consuming, piecemeal, and confusing approach to Book of Order changes regarding sexual misconduct problematic. ACWC therefore strongly advises the approval of Item 11-09, which speaks to the need for a task force to undertake a comprehensive examination of Presbyterian policy, judicial process, and rules of discipline.

While ACWC supports the above changes, they are inadequate. Unless victims have the right to a fair and impartial investigation with all deliberate speed, they will never feel free to put memories of painful events in the past and move on with their lives. Under the current ruling, however, former teaching elders are allowed to rejoin the church but are not required to face accusations and resume the disciplinary process until a time in the future of their own choosing. Thus, a predator can deliberately wait until after key witnesses have moved on with their lives, perhaps even died, or the original evidence is no longer available.

Often sexual predators have charming, persuasive personality traits that allowed them to manipulate and seduce their victims. According to the PC(USA) Independent Committee of Inquiry investigating the actions of missionaries who molested children between 1945 and 1978 while working under the aegis of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission, “the social skill, charm, and charisma of many perpetrators is used in a dual way, both to gain access to potential victims and to dissuade adults from taking children’s allegations seriously.” Because most perpetrators are skilled in “denial, minimization, and counterattack,” they remain capable of manipulating public opinion many years after renouncing jurisdiction.

All sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power. As an advocacy committee for women, ACWC is concerned about gender inequities that leave women within the church vulnerable to sexual misconduct, not only from other clergy, but also to sexual harassment from male members of their congregations. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns also seeks protection for other vulnerable populations—children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers, for instance—who are more likely to be targets of sexual misconduct.

Too many questions remain: Should there be a time limit placed on how long a former minister can wait to come forward? Is it required that the accused go back to the original body of jurisdiction or is it possible to reenter through an entirely different presbytery? Should a minister who renounces jurisdiction be tried in absentia as is the case with most other professional organizations where investigation into accusations of misconduct continue, regardless of whether the accused quits or chooses to participate or not, in order for these professions to maintain their integrity and keep the public’s trust? It is time to revisit the Book of Order from the perspective of the victims of sexual misconduct to ensure that its provisions result in justice for victims in cases such as this one regarding ministers who have renounced jurisdiction.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-09

Comment on Item 06-09—From the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

OGA advises that all items, including Item 06-09, amending the Rules of Discipline, be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which is currently revising the Rules of Discipline as a whole and will report with suggested changes to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Item 06-10

[Item 06-10 was answered by the action taken on Item 06-03. See pp. 70, 72.]


The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:
1. Amend G-2.11 by adding a new section, G-2.1104 Administrative Personnel Association, to read as follows: amend G-3.0305, as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“G-2.1104 Administrative Personnel Association

“Administrative Personnel Association (APA) certified persons have been called to service within particular churches, governing bodies, and church-related entities. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication with the purpose to improve the quality of professionalism and to affirm the ministry of the lay church professional.

“Members of the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) include secretaries, administrative assistants, bookkeepers, and support staff in church-related settings.

“Certification is overseen and granted by the Administrative Personnel Association; the requirements for certification are reported to the appropriate body of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. A formal liaison relationship will be developed between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Administrative Personnel Association.

“a. Skills and Training

“Certified Administrative Personnel Administrators shall have skills and training in presbyterian polity, history, spiritual growth and development, office administration, presbyterian theology, General Assembly entities, and other areas of professional development beneficial to the individual member and the church body.

“b. Presbytery Responsibility

“The presbytery shall support the certification process by encouraging church support staff to seek certification and encouraging church sessions and presbytery councils to make continuing education funds and time available to support staff seeking certification.

“The presbytery shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing for recognition at presbytery at the time of their certification and by inviting certified employees to presbytery meetings, granting them the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Administrative Personnel Association members who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

“c. General Assembly Responsibility

“Names of those who have earned certification through the Administrative Personnel Association shall be transmitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, which will forward them to the Office of the General Assembly and to the Stated Clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.”

2. Amend G-3.0305 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

G-3.0305 Minutes and Records

“Minutes and other official records of the presbytery are the property of the presbytery, and are subject to the review specified in G-3.0108. The stated clerk is responsible for the preservation of the presbytery’s minutes and records. These records shall include the rolls of the presbytery’s membership and registers of all Certified Christian Educators, Certified Associate Christian Educators, Certified Administrative Personnel Association members, and ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service.”

Rationale

The Administrative Personnel Association (APA) has been a part of the Presbyterian church since 1975. Prior to the changes of the Form of Government, there was a healthy relationship between APA and the larger church. However, since the adoption of the new Form of Government, this forty-two-year-old relationship has changed in the following ways:

1. The Administrative Personnel Association continues to struggle with being identified as a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) organization because there is no clear identified line connecting us to the larger church. Even though we are currently recognized as a certified body by the larger church, it still doesn’t identify that we are PC(USA). As a result, this continues to put into question the status of our 501c3.

2. The lack of support and recognition from our leaders within the larger church that do not know or choose not to recognize our existence has also impacted the long-lasting relationship between APA and the PC(USA) church.
06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

The current reading of the Book of Order is too vague and places us in a category of “other.” Prior to the change, our organization was named and recognized in the Book of Order. We ask that after forty-two years of service to the church that we are named and recognized again in the Book of Order for our support and commitment to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Concurrence to Item 06-10 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-10

Advice on Item 06-10—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-10 with its response to Item 06-03.

Item 06-10 is substantially similar to Item 06-03. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice on the issues arising from both items can be found at Item 06-03.

If the assembly believes that the intent of these overtures is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the language of Item 06-10 is preferable to that of Item 06-03 for two reasons: (1) It specifies the responsibility of the General Assembly to receive and transmit names of certified administrative professionals (noting that the proper avenue for transmission should be through the Office of the General Assembly); and (2) it specifies that those individuals’ names be placed upon the registers of presbyteries.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-10

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-10. See ACWC’s Advice and Counsel Rationale for Item 06-03.

Item 06-11

[Item 06-11 was approved as amended. See pp. 69, 72.]

On Amending G-2.0401 Regarding the Composition of a Congregational Nominating Committee—From the Presbytery of Grace.

The Presbytery of Grace overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0401 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons

“Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. [Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the minimum size of the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and at least one of those three is a shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session, and the voting majority is comprised of those not currently serving on the session (members-at-large).] [Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee. The rule shall meet the following criteria: (1) the minimum size of the committee as specified in the rule shall be at least three persons; (2) at least one member of the committee shall be an elder currently serving on session; and (3) a majority of those persons on the committee who are eligible to vote shall consist of persons not currently serving on session.] The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.”
Rationale

This proposed amendment clarifies the somewhat ambiguous language regarding the nominating committee membership. Is the minimum size three members plus a ruling elder or three members including a ruling elder serving on the session? Does the statement intend to maintain a voting majority of members-at-large as in previous versions of the Form of Government?

The proposed changes set the minimum size of the nominating committee at three members, not including the pastor. This is ideal for small congregations yet also provides flexibility for churches to add more from this minimum. Churches that have a committee larger than the minimum three (and more than the minimum one session elder) are still required to provide a voting majority for members-at-large (those elected by the congregation but not currently serving on the session). The word “voting” simply means that the majority cannot include the pastor, who is without vote. If the intent is to not mandate that the majority be members-at-large, this phrase can easily be removed.

The goal is to provide clarity while preserving the overall permission-giving nature of the Form of Government.

Concurrences to Item 06-11 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, and Huntingdon.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-11.

Many of our small churches are comprised of people of color. ACREC appreciates the clarity of this amendment and the flexibility needed for small churches.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-11

Advice on Item 06-11—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-11 with amendment as follows. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. [Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the minimum size of the committee shall be at least three persons; (2) at least one member of the committee shall be an elder currently serving on session; and (3) a majority of those persons on the committee who are eligible to vote shall consist of persons not currently serving on session.] The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.”

The Presbytery of Grace presents proposed language to clarify the minimum size of a congregational nominating committee and the requirement that a majority of the voting members of a congregational nominating committee be members-at-large of the congregation.

The proposed amendment provides helpful clarification to G-2.0401. The minimum size of a congregational nominating committee shall be three members, at least one member of which must be a ruling elder in active service on the session. The minimum size of three is appropriate for smaller congregations. There is no maximum size for a congregational nominating committee.

The proposed amendment adds clarity and is consistent with past practice. The majority of a congregational nominating committee should be members-at-large of the congregation, not ruling elders currently serving on the session.
Item 06-12

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-12. See pp. 69, 72.]

On Amending G-3.0201, Composition and Responsibilities of the Session—From the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois.

The Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the first paragraph of G-3.0201 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are entitled to vote. The pastor shall be the moderator of the session, and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. In the case of the sickness or absence of the pastor or designated moderator, the pastor or designated moderator may appoint a member of the session to preside, or the session, after having obtained the approval of the pastor or designated moderator, may convene and elect another of its own members to preside. Such an appointment should not be routine and shall only be for a single meeting. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provisions for a moderator. Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.”

Rationale

In many presbyteries, we have a shortage of ministers. We also have many churches that are not served by a minister. We have numerous ministers who give of their time to moderate sessions that they do not serve as pastor. Many congregations and pastors are having conversations about part-time pastoral leadership, bi-vocational pastors, and temporary pastoral leadership. This results in the need for both moderators and flexibility.

While recent changes to Robert’s Rules of Order and the Book of Order allow the use of technology to allow for meetings to occur when members are physically separated, for many churches these are not viable options. We have hearing issues that make phone conferencing difficult. We have issues with technology and its accessibility in many of our congregations. While these options are good, and a step in the right direction, they aren’t practical or even functional for all congregations.

While good planning may reduce the need for this measure, there are emergencies and special circumstances. It is not always possible to reschedule a meeting, and some business that comes before the session comes on very short notice with a short turnaround needed. In those cases, this measure would allow for the work of the church to continue.

This measure is not intended to allow elders to be appointed to moderate the session of the congregation of which they are a member on a routine basis or for an indefinite period of time.

Concurrences to Item 06-12 from the Presbyteries of Blackhawk, de Cristo, and Denver.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-12

Advice on Item 06-12—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-12.

The overture seeks to expand the constitution to provide for a session member to moderate in the case of a moderator being sick or absent, allowing for a session to convene and elect one of its own members to preside. The rationale of the overture cites emergency and special circumstances where business is time sensitive and seeking the replacement of a moderator through the presbytery rule may not be practical.

The function of the moderator is to be the presence of presbytery and/or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in that council. The moderator's role is to make certain that the session continues as a council according to the Book of Order (Request 92-10, 21-091). The moderator of session, whether the pastor or moderator appointed by the presbytery, represents the whole church. The ruling elders of a church may not circumvent the moderator’s role by calling meetings in a manner contrary to the Book of Order. Each presbytery may provide by rule for these circumstances and it knows the ministry context of its congregations for which particular rules are needed.

The Constitution provides for a remedy (see G-3.0201) for cases where there is no installed pastor to moderate the session, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator. Emergencies and special circumstances are often those when the presence of the presbytery through its appointed moderator is particularly important. The cases of the sickness or absence of the pastor or designated moderator are ones where the presbytery needs to be involved and informed.
ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-12

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-12.

ACREC appreciates the connectional nature of the PC(USA). Churches with majority people of color and immigrant communities risk losing the necessary support needed from presbyteries if this recommendation is approved. Immigrant churches bring cultural contexts that need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the polity of our denomination.

Item 06-13

[The assembly referred Item 06-13 to the task force created in Item 06-NB. See pp. 70, 72.]

On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as Part of the Benefits Package—From the Presbytery of Boston.

The Presbytery of Boston overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to instruct the Board of Pensions to include twelve weeks of paid parental leave as part of the benefits package of all employees covered under their plans. This benefit shall be available to all parents of new children, regardless of how the child came to be in the family (including, but not limited to: birth, adoption, and long-term foster placement).

The Board of Pensions shall include in their paid parental leave policy the following:

- Twelve weeks of paid parental leave required for all members of BOP.
- Short-term disability coverage to meet part of the cost of paid leave.
- Financial assistance to help local congregations pay for a supply pastor during leave period.
- Paid leave to be given in the case of miscarriage, still birth, or infant death, up to the full twelve weeks, as needed.
- Timing of the parental leave may be taken concurrently or consecutively if two parents are present.

**Rationale**

The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay without using other forms of paid leave.¹

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014).²

As a denomination, we have affirmed the importance of supporting families. However, in practice, congregations are put in the precarious position of choosing between taking care of a new family, or taking care of the financial well-being of the congregation. Many churches cannot afford paid parental leave for their pastor(s) in addition to the cost of pulpit supply, yet many pastors cannot afford to be unpaid when they welcome a new member into the family. These choices are difficult ones that often lead to solutions that leave either the pastor or the congregation neglected, and lack witness to the love God, Parent of us all, has for the world. With the understanding that the Board of Pensions is well-resourced, this overture accepts responsibility for supporting the BOP, and asks that its financial resources be allocated in a way that supports its pastors in small, struggling, or otherwise financially insecure churches.

Without a paid parental leave policy, the PC(USA) forces parents to make a choice between proper health care for themselves and their children, and adequate income to provide for their families. Without a paid parental leave policy, we uphold false narratives that describe men as “bread-winners” and require them to leave the child-raising to their spouses. Without a paid parental leave policy, we continue to uphold antiquated and unequal traditions that not only reinforce gender stereotypes, bringing harm to families and children, but fail to account for the many different kinds of families our denomination lifts up and celebrates.

However, in our Brief Statement of Faith, we confess as a church, that the Holy Spirit

... calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.
In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,
praying, “Come, Lord Jesus! (Book of Confessions, 11.4)

With a paid parental leave policy, we have the opportunity to live into this calling of courage in our ministries as pastors
and congregations and in our daily lives as we grow our families and support one another in love. With a paid parental leave
policy, we unmask the idolatry of unequal practices and are free to live holy and joyful lives—lives wherein all parents can
bond with their children without fear of destitution, and the whole community can grow in love.

Supporting Statistics:

The lack of any kind of paid parental leave creates problems for both parents because, while women are medically cleared
to return to work after about at least six weeks (if birth went perfectly), the majority of daycares refuse children before six
weeks of age. This puts parents in a lose-lose situation as they must risk their health, their child’s care, and their families’
overall well-being if proper paid leave is unavailable. Elsewhere in creation, we observe that God’s creatures naturally keep
their offspring close early in life.3 This policy simply acknowledges the health and financial needs of a new or growing family.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of paid parental leave for both parents and their children. An increase of 10
weeks paid parental leave has been associated with a 10 percent decrease in neonatal and infant mortality rate,4 and parental
leave has been shown to be a cost-effective method for improving child health more generally.5 However, the benefits to child
health and the decrease in infant mortality are only seen with an increase in paid parental leave.6 Moreover, studies that have
analyzed the long-term benefits of paid parental leave have found benefits to women’s mental health in older age and a decrease
in high school dropout rates among their children.7

At least half of the contemporary seminary graduates are women, and a large portion of graduates (male and female) are
in their child-bearing years.8 Some of these female colleagues must negotiate lower pay to receive adequate paid maternity
leave in their calls, if they can get the maternity leave. Some of our female colleagues are being told they must prove they are
worth the maternity leave. Many men have no leave guaranteed at all. This is a matter of gender justice in our denomination.
Because women are the ones giving birth, most studies have focused on the relationship between a mother and her child.
However, increases in paid parental leave continue to be met by increases in use of that leave among all parents, allowing
parents of all genders to spend more time on their child’s care, which has demonstrated health benefits for the child. Indeed, it
has been shown that when fathers—or non-birthing parents—are offered comparable paid parental leave, the length of leave
they take increases and their involvement in a child’s care after the leave period increases.9 It is wholly regrettable that non-
birthing parents (historically, men) have been denied such crucial bonding and care time with their families for so long. The
need for a just paid parental leave policy at this time is urgent as more and more pastors reach retirement age and more and
more younger pastors—those in their prime parenting years—seek and negotiate calls.

Across the United States, a mere 14 percent of people have access to paid family leave.10 As stated above, this justice issue
looms large for many workers, and the PC(USA) is not currently acting as a faithful leader. In working toward a solution, it is
the profound hope of many young pastors that the denomination will see the opportunity to lead the world to a more faithful,
loving approach to family leave. With an awareness that the Board of Pensions is currently in good financial shape, many
pastors, young and old, believe they will be good stewards of their resources in offering this benefit.

Endnotes
3. To put this in perspective, it is illegal in twenty-two states to separate a puppy from its mother before eight weeks. We should be treating
humans with at least as much respect as we do dogs. Source: https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-laws-concerning-minimum-age-
sale-puppies.
4. Jody Heyman, Amy Raub, and Alison Earle, “Creating and Using New Data Sources to Analyze the Relationship Between Social Policy
F28.


ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) answer Item 06-13 by the action taken on Item 06-20.

See Item 06-20 for more information.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.


While the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns supports this overture in principle and recommends its approval, we encourage the Board of Pensions to take into consideration that many Presbyterian staff of Color as well as immigrants serve in smaller and/or financially strapped congregations due to systemic racism and underemployment in communities of color. Thus, it is of the utmost importance that the following two provisions included in the overture be established in a fair and just manner:

- Short-term disability coverage to meet part of the cost of paid leave.
- Financial assistance to help local congregations pay for a supply pastor during leave period.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-13.

Quality family leave policies are a clear gender justice concern, as childcare still falls heavily on women. Parental leave policies encourage all parents to participate as directly as women historically have by offering benefits to all parents employed by the PC(USA). As young women and young couples enter into ministry they need to be certain that they will be able to care for and bond with their child(ren) without causing a financial burden to their congregation. If a presbytery has not adopted a specific parental leave policy, churches and ministers are left scrambling to come to agreement on a leave policy, causing stress for both the church and especially for the parents to be.

Churches are not subject to the Family Medical Leave Act of 2003 (FMLA). Currently, the PC(USA) has no written denomination-wide policy regarding parental leave. Although the presbyteries provide guidance on minimal compensation, the role of negotiation for parental leave typically falls to a minister and their congregation. By leaving out this very important detail, young people, especially young mothers, are left fighting to get even one or two weeks paid leave to spend with their newborn. By the PC(USA) providing twelve weeks paid maternity leave, churches and parents will be unburdened of the stress of negotiations, negotiations that many times do not begin until a person is pregnant.

As Christians we are called to care for God’s creation, including all of God’s children. Most daycares, both in-home and centers, do not accept babies under the age of six weeks. In order to properly care for God’s children, parents need to be able to take time off to care for and bond with their baby without worrying about loss of income.
This overture provides the PC(USA) an opportunity to be a leader in providing support to new parents.

**BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 06-13**

*Comment on Item 06-13—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).*

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acted to urge “the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance” (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 292). In response to the 2016 action, the Board of Pensions reviewed its employment policies and is in full compliance with the General Assembly resolution.

While the Board fully supports the underlying values of Items 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, and 06-17, the Board advises the disapproval of all four items, due to numerous practical and technical concerns. Two previous General Assemblies addressed recommendations on this subject and those actions should be ratified and affirmed.

*Comment Specific to Item 06-13, On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as Part of the Benefits Package*

This overture recommends that the General Assembly instruct the Board of Pensions to provide twelve weeks of paid parental leave to all members of the Benefits Plan.

First, the issue of parental leave is an employer-based decision and must remain so for legal and practical reasons. The Board does not make human resource policy for the church or the church-related employers. The 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) addressed the church’s human resource policy on parental and family leave and has defined a position to be urged for all bodies of the church. The Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of churches and other PC(USA) employers who enroll their ministers and lay employees in the Benefits Plan. Each congregation and other church employer is responsible for salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies.

Second, the concept of mandating benefits for all employees is in direct contradiction to the concept of a menu-based plan that allows each congregation or other employer to structure its employment policies and benefits to best fit its context. The Board is actively working to develop solutions to the affordability of medical and retirement benefits for church employers so that broader coverage will be provided to all church employees. The Board introduced benefit choice flexibility beginning in January 2017, following conversations with thousands of Presbyterians that led to a complete restructuring of the Benefits Plan. This innovation has resulted in 19 percent growth in employees receiving benefits from the Board, the first growth in a generation. Regrettably, and notwithstanding these changes to the Benefits Plan programs, many churches and other church-related employers do not enroll their employees for benefits with the Board of Pensions, so the benefits proposed in the overture does not provide a universal solution to the paid leave concern for many church employees.

Third, earlier General Assembly actions addressed “family leave,” not simply “parental leave.” The former is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard.

Finally, there is no source of funds within the Board to provide for the payment of this type of family leave. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this use. While the Board does not believe this overture is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the Board decide to implement such a plan based on the request in this Overture, it would require charging dues annually to provide a funding source. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000 and the median lay income of $41,000, the cost of a family leave program would exceed $10 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of employees (ministers and laity) utilized the benefit.
Comment Specific to Item 06-14, On Amending G-2.0804, “Terms of Call,” to Include Paid Family Leave

As written, this overture has no impact on the Board. No mention is made as to source of funding and the Board is not mentioned in implementation. In which case the Board defers to the General Assembly to take whatever action it deems appropriate for congregations’ terms of call for installed pastors.

If the intent of the overture (in contrast to the words) is for the Board to provide a family leave benefit, there is no source of funds held by the Board to provide for the payments this overture contemplates. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this salary replacement benefit.

While the Board does not believe this overture is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the General Assembly request the Board to implement such a plan based on the request in the overture, it would need to charge annual dues to fund the benefit. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000, the cost of such a program would exceed $5 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of ministers utilized the benefit.

Finally, the Board would like to share a practical concern. The Board has seen clearly that economics drive behavior in the congregation. The change to a menu-based plan that allows congregations to structure what is appropriate for their context has led to a substantial increase in participation in the Benefits Plan. Conversely, the number of new minister members in the plan continues to decline. While the Board supports the underlying values of the overture, employing organizations should retain the right of setting terms of call that are better suited for the needs of their situation and employees.

Comment Specific to Item 06-15, On Amending G-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave

This overture recommends an amendment to the Book of Order to mandate minimum compensation terms for Christian educators and associate Christian educators that include participation in the Board of Pensions and paid family leave of at least twelve weeks. The Rationale only discusses the paid family leave part of the proposed amendment to the Book of Order. No mention is made as to what participation in Board of Pensions benefits programs is sought.

The Board’s response to the recommendation to mandate paid family leave of at least twelve weeks is addressed in response to Item 06-14 and the Board’s introductory comments.

While the Board does not believe a paid family leave is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the General Assembly request the Board to implement such a plan based on the request in this overture, it would need to charge annual dues to fund the benefit. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000, the cost of such a program would exceed $5 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of ministers utilized the benefit. Adding certified Christian educators would increase that cost.

With respect to the overture’s recommendation to add “Board of Pensions participation,” the Board fully supports universal medical and retirement benefits coverage of all church workers and is actively working on developing solutions to their affordability with the hope of encouraging broader participation by the church’s employers. Employee benefits are human resource decisions to be determined by each church or other church-related employer based on the financial wherewithal of the employer and the needs of their employees.

The Board introduced benefit choice flexibility beginning in January 2017, following conversations with thousands of Presbyterians that led to a complete restructuring of the Benefits Plan. Since January 2017, the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides two participation options for churches: Pastor’s Participation, a bundled benefits program consisting of enrollment in the core Benefits Plan programs: the defined benefit pension, PPO medical, death, and disability plan, which is required for installed pastors and voluntary for all other ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and a menu-based program of benefits selected by the employer and subsidized at levels determined by the employer, subject to certain plan minimums. The menu-based participation options allow an employer to offer its non-installed ministers and lay employees a benefits program consisting of as little as elective deferrals to the 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan to full benefits coverage for the defined benefits pension, PPO medical, and death and disability plan coverage equivalent to Pastor’s Participation.

The Board’s flexibility initiative has resulted in 19 percent growth in employees receiving benefits from the Board, the first growth in a generation. This experience leads the Board to conclude that the concept of mandating specific benefits packages for all employees is not realistic for church employers at this time.

If the intent of the overture is to mandate the equivalent of Pastor’s Participation benefits and dues, this must be defined as such and other questions are raised. The Board offers several additional programs for which participation is limited to ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Is the intent of this overture to expand participation in those programs to Christian educators? What other components of ministers’ programs are sought? Would CREDO be included (at a cost of $5,000 per person per conference)? How would median pension minimums and accruals be defined? What about educational debt relief (up to $25,000 per minister)? Would we include access to these benefits in non-parish settings with review by the presbytery? Would this proposal include qualification for Pathways to Renewal at $7,000 per person per year? Who should pay for the dues increase to subsidize this proposal because Christian educators as a group have a lower median effective salary than ministers?
If the intent of the overture is to mandate that certified Christian educators have the privileges and responsibilities of ministers of Word and Sacrament, these questions inevitably shift into ecclesiastical decisions about the roles in ordered ministry.

Without defining what is meant by “Board of Pensions participation” or otherwise specifying the type of participation for Christian educators in the Benefits Plan programs, the projected cost of the overture for employers of Christian educators cannot be ascertained.

The Board supports a response to the overture that encourages all church employers to participate in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) programs and to consider offering menu-based coverage options, but allows each congregation or other employer to structure its employment policies and benefits to best fit its context.

Comment Specific to Item 06-17, On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA)

As noted in the Board’s other comments on the subject of parental leave, the Board defers to the 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) policies, particularly the broader reference to family leave rather than parental leave. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard. Family leave is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement.

While the Board takes no position on this overture as it relates to the councils of the church, the Board is compelled to comment on the statements in the Rationale that the denomination should ask the Board of Pensions to establish a new benefit for parental leave. The specific comment to Item 06-013 addresses the Board’s concerns. In summary, the Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of congregations; each congregation is responsible for its own salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies. The Board estimates that fewer than 10 percent of eligible employees are members of the Benefits Plan. If a church or other church-related employer is unable to afford to provide its employees with Benefits Plan coverage under the new flexible menu-based option, it is unlikely that it would also be able to afford a family leave benefit. Thus, a mandate for Plan members would not in any way provide the universal coverage that the overture seeks.

Comment on Item 6-20, A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies

The Board of Pensions supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental level policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay. The 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Item 05-10, acted to urge “the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292). For this 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Board of Pensions responded to Item 05-10 and reported the employment policies were reviewed, and are in full compliance with the General Assembly resolution.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 06-13

Comment on Item 06-13—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) acknowledges that the procedures of employment matter. Unfortunately, in the area of parental and family leave, the denominational instruction is not as clear. The committee continues to support actions from the 221st and 222nd General Assemblies (2014) and (2016) concerning the suggested family leave policies that, due to the PC(USA) governance structure, are often left at the discretion of the governing bodies that are responsible for employment. Often governing bodies and individual congregations do not have parental/family leave policies in place and must do so if and when the case arises (putting the individual requesting the leave in a precarious position). This can result in decision-making that focuses on the financial cost of the leave rather than the care of the leader and family. A PC(USA) policy would provide the framework for individuals needing parental or family leave. Committees on representation at the presbytery and synod levels or the committees tasked with such work should serve as a resource to their governing bodies concerning employment practices.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).
Item 06-14

[The assembly referred Item 06-14 to the task force created in Item 06-NB. See pp. 70, 72.]


The Presbytery of Boston overtures the General Assembly to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Amend the last sentence of G-2.0804 to read as follows: (Text to be added is shown as italics.)

“The call shall include participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly, and paid family leave of at least twelve weeks.”

Rationale

The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay without using other forms of paid leave.1

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014).2

As a denomination, we have affirmed the importance of supporting families. However, in practice, congregations are put in the precarious position of choosing between taking care of a new family, or taking care of the financial well-being of the congregation. Many churches cannot afford paid parental leave for their pastor(s) in addition to the cost of pulpit supply, yet many pastors cannot afford to be unpaid when they welcome a new member into the family. These choices are difficult ones that often lead to solutions which leave either the pastor or the congregation neglected, and lack witness to the love God, Parent of us all, has for the world.

Without a paid parental leave policy, the PC(USA) forces parents to make a choice between proper health-care for themselves and their children, and adequate income to provide for their families. Without a paid parental leave policy, we uphold false narratives that describe men as “bread-winners” and require them to leave the child-raising to their spouses. Without a paid parental leave policy, we continue to uphold antiquated and unequal traditions that not only reinforce gender stereotypes, bringing harm to families and children, but fail to account for the many different kinds of families our denomination lifts up and celebrates.

However, in our Brief Statement of Faith, we confess as a church, that the Holy Spirit...

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the Spirit gives us courage
  to pray without ceasing,
  to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
  to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
  to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
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In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
  and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,
  praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Book of Confessions, 11.4)

With a paid parental leave policy, we have the opportunity to live into this calling of courage in our ministries as pastors and congregations and in our daily lives as we grow our families and support one another in love. With a paid parental leave policy, we unmask the idolatry of unequal practices and are free to live holy and joyful lives—lives wherein all parents can bond with their children without fear of destitution, and the whole community can grow in love.

Supporting Statistics:

The lack of any kind of paid parental leave creates problems for both parents because, while women are medically cleared to return to work after about at least six weeks (if birth went perfectly), the majority of daycares refuse children before six weeks of age. This puts parents in a lose-lose situation as they must risk their health, their child’s care, and their families’ overall well-being if proper paid leave is unavailable. Elsewhere in creation, we observe that God’s creatures naturally keep their offspring close early in life.3 This policy simply acknowledges the health and financial needs of a new or growing family.
Numerous studies have shown the benefits of paid parental leave for both parents and their children. An increase of 10 weeks paid maternal leave has been associated with a 10 percent decrease in neonatal and infant mortality rate, and parental leave has been shown to be a cost-effective method for improving child health more generally. However, the benefits to child health and the decrease in infant mortality are only seen with an increase in paid parental leave. Moreover, studies that have analyzed the long-term benefits of paid parental leave have found benefits to women’s mental health in older age and a decrease in high school dropout rates among their children.

At least half of the contemporary seminary graduates are women, and a large portion of graduates (male and female) are in their child-bearing years. Some of these female colleagues must negotiate lower pay to receive adequate paid maternity leave in their calls, if they can get the maternity leave. Some of our female colleagues are being told they must prove they are worth the maternity leave. Many men have no leave guaranteed at all. This is a matter of gender justice in our denomination. Because women are the ones giving birth, most studies have focused on the relationship between a mother and her child. However, increases in paid parental leave continue to be met by increases in use of that leave among all parents, allowing parents of all genders to spend more time on their child’s care, which has demonstrated health benefits for the child. Indeed, it has been shown that when fathers—or non-birthing parents—are offered comparable paid parental leave, the length of leave they take increases and their involvement in a child’s care after the leave period increases. It is wholly regrettable that non-birthing parents (historically, men) have been denied such crucial bonding and care time with their families for so long. The need for a just paid parental leave policy at this time is urgent as more and more pastors reach retirement age and more and more younger pastors—those in their prime parenting years—seek and negotiate calls.

Across the United States, a mere 14 percent of people have access to paid family leave. As stated above, this justice issue looms large for many workers, and the PC(USA) is not currently acting as a faithful leader. In working toward a solution, it is the profound hope of many young pastors that the denomination will see the opportunity to lead the world to a more faithful, loving approach to family leave.

Endnotes
3. To put this in perspective, it is illegal in twenty-two states to separate a puppy from its mother before eight weeks. We should be treating humans with at least as much respect as we do dogs. Source: https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-laws-concerning-minimum-age-sale-puppies.

Concurrences to Item 06-14 from the Presbyteries of Albany, De Cristo, Denver, and Hudson River.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-14

Advice on Item 06-14—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-14.

The recommendation for disapproval by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution is not an argument against “paid family leave of at least twelve weeks,” but merely that it is not necessary to write this into the Constitution to accomplish what Item 06-14 desires, that terms of call include this provision.

Inserting this specific requirement into the Constitution reverses the direction of the current Form of Government, which illuminates practices required by the Constitution but leaves to councils their specific implementation. The proposed amendments (Item 06-14 and Item 06-15) are attached to the constitutional requirement for presbyteries to establish minimum terms of call.
The specific implementation of these terms of call has been left to the presbyteries to determine. Presbyteries already have the authority to include paid family leave in their requirements for terms of call. “Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church” (F-3.0209).

The Form of Government requires each council to develop a manual of administrative operations. This manual should include personnel policies, where matters like paid time off are best defined. The Constitution envisions these policies and minimums for terms of call being developed in consultation with sessions, giving attention to any guidance offered by the synod or General Assembly (such as the call by previous General Assemblies to provide paid family leave). Through this process, presbyteries fulfill the expectation of the Constitution “concerning mission, budget, staffing and fair employment practices, and matters of equitable compensation” (G-3.0106, emphasis added).

In previous versions of the Form of Government, a form for terms of call was defined that specifically listed what was to be included. These specifics were removed when Chapter 14 of the old Form of Government was revised in the first decade of the 2000s. The current Form of Government further refined this approach. The only specific requirement about terms of call that remains in the Constitution is the mandate for participation by installed ministers in the benefits plan of the denomination.

Presbyteries have various provisions in terms of call packages beyond basic compensation, benefits, and allowances, such as sabbatical leave and paid time off for service to higher councils. Starting to list specific items in terms of call packages within the Constitution will be an invitation to begin to insert other items that are perceived to be missing from the list, but likewise not necessary to be included for them to be enacted.

The preferred way to accomplish the intent of Item 06-14 and Item 06-15 is for presbyteries, through their established procedures, to include paid family leave in the minimum terms of call that accomplish the above-highlighted constitutional goals.

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ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-14

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-14—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.


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ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-14

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-14—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.


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BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 06-14

Comment on Item 06-14—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental level policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acted to urge “the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292). In response to the 2016 action, the Board of Pensions reviewed its employment policies and is in full compliance with the General Assembly resolution.

While the Board fully supports the underlying values of Items 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, and 06-17, the Board advises the disapproval of all four items, due to numerous practical and technical concerns. Two previous General Assemblies addressed recommendations on this subject and those actions should be ratified and affirmed.
This overture recommends that the General Assembly instruct the Board of Pensions to provide twelve weeks of paid parental leave to all members of the Benefits Plan.

First, the issue of parental leave is an employer-based decision and must remain so for legal and practical reasons. The Board does not make human resource policy for the church or the church-related employers. The 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) addressed the church’s human resource policy on parental and family leave and has defined a position to be urged for all bodies of the church. The Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of churches and other PC(USA) employers who enroll their ministers and lay employees in the Benefits Plan. Each congregation and other church employer is responsible for salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies.

Second, the concept of mandating benefits for all employees is in direct contradiction to the concept of a menu based plan that allows each congregation or other employer to structure its employment policies and benefits to best fit its context. The Board is actively working to develop solutions to the affordability of medical and retirement benefits for church employers so that broader coverage will be provided to all church employees. The Board introduced benefit choice flexibility beginning in January 2017, following conversations with thousands of Presbyterians that led to a complete restructuring of the Benefits Plan. This innovation has resulted in 19 percent growth in employees receiving benefits from the Board, the first growth in a generation. Regrettably, and notwithstanding these changes to the Benefits Plan programs, many churches and other church-related employers do not enroll their employees for benefits with the Board of Pensions, so the benefits proposed in the overture does not provide a universal solution to the paid leave concern for many church employees.

Third, earlier General Assembly actions addressed “family leave,” not simply “parental leave.” The former is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard.

Finally, there is no source of funds within the Board to provide for the payment of this type of family leave. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this use. While the Board does not believe this overture is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the Board decide to implement such a plan based on the request in this Overture, it would require charging dues annually to provide a funding source. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000 and the median lay income of $41,000, the cost of a family leave program would exceed $10 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of employees (ministers and laity) utilized the benefit.

Comment Specific to Item 06-14, On Amending G-2.0804, “Terms of Call,” to Include Paid Family Leave

As written, this overture has no impact on the Board. No mention is made as to source of funding and the Board is not mentioned in implementation. In which case the Board defers to the General Assembly to take whatever action it deems appropriate for congregations’ terms of call for installed pastors.

If the intent of the overture (in contrast to the words) is for the Board to provide a family leave benefit, there is no source of funds held by the Board to provide for the payments this overture contemplates. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this salary replacement benefit.

While the Board does not believe this overture is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the General Assembly request the Board to implement such a plan based on the request in the overture, it would need to charge annual due to fund the benefit. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000, the cost of such a program would exceed $5 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of ministers utilized the benefit.

Finally, the Board would like to share a practical concern. The Board has seen clearly that economics drive behavior in the congregation. The change to a menu-based plan that allows congregations to structure what is appropriate for their context has led to a substantial increase in participation in the Benefits Plan. Conversely, the number of new minister members in the plan continues to decline. While the Board supports the underlying values of the overture, employing organizations should retain the right of setting terms of call that are better suited for the needs of their situation and employees.

Comment Specific to Item 06-15, On Amending G-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave

This overture recommends an amendment to the Book of Order to mandate minimum compensation terms for Christian educators and associate Christian educators that include participation in the Board of Pensions and paid family leave of at least twelve weeks. The Rationale only discusses the paid family leave part of the proposed amendment to the Book of Order. No mention is made as to what participation in Board of Pensions benefits programs is sought.
The Board’s response to the recommendation to mandate paid family leave of at least twelve weeks is addressed in response to Item 06-14 and the Board’s introductory comments.

While the Board does not believe a paid family leave is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the General Assembly request the Board to implement such a plan based on the request in this overture, it would need to charge annual dues to fund the benefit. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000, the cost of such a program would exceed $5 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of ministers utilized the benefit. Adding certified Christian educators would increase that cost.

With respect to the overture’s recommendation to add “Board of Pensions participation,” the Board fully supports universal medical and retirement benefits coverage of all church workers and is actively working on developing solutions to their affordability with the hope of encouraging broader participation by the church’s employers. Employee benefits are human resource decisions to be determined by each church or other church-related employer based on the financial wherewithal of the employer and the needs of their employees.

The Board introduced benefit choice flexibility beginning in January 2017, following conversations with thousands of Presbyterians that led to a complete restructuring of the Benefits Plan. Since January 2017, the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides two participation options for churches: Pastor’s Participation, a bundled benefits program consisting of enrollment in the core Benefits Plan programs: the defined benefit pension, PPO medical, death, and disability plan, which is required for installed pastors and voluntary for all other ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and a menu-based program of benefits selected by the employer and subsidized at levels determined by the employer, subject to certain plan minimums. The menu-based participation options allow an employer to offer its non-installed ministers and lay employees a benefits program consisting of as little as elective deferrals to the 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan to full benefits coverage for the defined benefits pension, PPO medical, and death and disability plan coverage equivalent to Pastor’s Participation.

The Board’s flexibility initiative has resulted in 19 percent growth in employees receiving benefits from the Board, the first growth in a generation. This experience leads the Board to conclude that the concept of mandating specific benefits packages for all employees is not realistic for church employers at this time.

If the intent of the overture is to mandate the equivalent of Pastor’s Participation benefits and dues, this must be defined as such and other questions are raised. The Board offers several additional programs for which participation is limited to ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Is the intent of this overture to expand participation in those programs to Christian educators? What other components of ministers’ programs are sought? Would CREDO be included (at a cost of $5,000 per person per conference). How would median pension minimums and accruals be defined? What about educational debt relief (up to $25,000 per minister)? Would we include access to these benefits in non-parish settings with review by the presbytery? Would this proposal include qualification for Pathways to Renewal at $7,000 per person per year? Who should pay for the dues increase to subsidize this proposal because Christian educators as a group have a lower median effective salary than ministers? If the intent of the overture is to mandate that certified Christian educators have the privileges and responsibilities of ministers of Word and Sacrament, these questions inevitably shift into ecclesiastical decisions about the roles in ordered ministry.

Without defining what is meant by “Board of Pensions participation” or otherwise specifying the type of participation for Christian educators in the Benefits Plan programs, the projected cost of the overture for employers of Christian educators cannot be ascertained.

The Board supports a response to the overture that encourages all church employers to participate in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) programs and to consider offering menu-based coverage options, but allows each congregation or other employer to structure its employment policies and benefits to best fit its context.

Comment Specific to Item 06-17, On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

As noted in the Board’s other comments on the subject of parental leave, the Board defers to the 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) policies, particularly the broader reference to family leave rather than parental leave. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard. Family leave is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement.

While the Board takes no position on this overture as it relates to the councils of the church, the Board is compelled to comment on the statements in the Rationale that the denomination should ask the Board of Pensions to establish a new benefit for parental leave. The specific comment to Item 06-013 addresses the Board’s concerns. In summary, the Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of congregations; each congregation is responsible for its own salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies. The Board estimates that fewer than 10 percent of eligible employees are members of the Benefits Plan. If a church or other church-related employer is unable to afford to provide its employees with Benefits Plan coverage under the new flexible menu-based option, it is unlikely that it would
also be able to afford a family leave benefit. Thus, a mandate for Plan members would not in any way provide the universal coverage that the overture seeks.

Comment on Item 6-20, A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies

The Board of Pensions supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental level policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay. The 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Item 05-10, acted to urge “the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292). For this 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Board of Pensions responded to Item 05-10 and reported the employment policies were reviewed, and are in full compliance with the General Assembly resolution.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 06-14

Comment on Item 06-14—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) acknowledges that the procedures of employment matter. Unfortunately, in the area of parental and family leave, the denominational instruction is not as clear. The committee continues to support actions from the 221st and 222nd General Assemblies (2014) and (2016) concerning the suggested family leave policies that, due to the PC(USA) governance structure, are often left at the discretion of the governing bodies that are responsible for employment. Often governing bodies and individual congregations do not have parental/family leave policies in place and must do so if and when the case arises (putting the individual requesting the leave in a precarious position). This can result in decision-making that focuses on the financial cost of the leave rather than the care of the leader and family. A PC(USA) policy would provide the framework for individuals needing parental or family leave. Committees on representation at the presbytery and synod levels or the committees tasked with such work should serve as a resource to their governing bodies concerning employment practices.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 06-15

[The assembly referred Item 06-15 to the task force created in Item 06-NB. See pp. 70, 72.]

On Amending G-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave—From the Presbytery of Boston.

The Presbytery of Boston overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend G-3.0303c to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“c. establish minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery, to include Board of Pensions participation and paid family leave of at least twelve weeks;”

Rationale

The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay without using other forms of paid leave.¹

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014).²

As a denomination, we have affirmed the importance of supporting families. However, in practice, congregations are put in the precarious position of choosing between taking care of a new family, or taking care of the financial well-being of the congregation. Many churches cannot afford paid parental leave for their pastor(s) in addition to the cost of pulpit supply, yet many pastors cannot afford to be unpaid when they welcome a new member into the family. These choices are difficult ones...
that often lead to solutions which leave either the pastor or the congregation neglected, and lack witness to the love God, Parent of us all, has for the world.

Without a paid parental leave policy, the PC(USA) forces parents to make a choice between proper health care for themselves and their children, and adequate income to provide for their families. Without a paid parental leave policy, we uphold false narratives that describe men as “bread-winners” and require them to leave the child-raising to their spouses. Without a paid parental leave policy, we continue to uphold antiquated and unequal traditions that not only reinforce gender stereotypes, bringing harm to families and children, but fail to account for the many different kinds of families our denomination lifts up and celebrates.

However, in our Brief Statement of Faith, we confess as a church, that the Holy Spirit

... calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,
praying, “Come, Lord Jesus! (Book of Confessions, 11.4)

With a paid parental leave policy, we have the opportunity to live into this calling of courage in our ministries as pastors and congregations and in our daily lives as we grow our families and support one another in love. With a paid parental leave policy, we unmask the idolatry of unequal practices and are free to live holy and joyful lives—lives wherein all parents can bond with their children without fear of destitution, and the whole community can grow in love.

Supporting Statistics:

The lack of any kind of paid parental leave creates problems for both parents because, while women are medically cleared to return to work after about at least six weeks (if birth went perfectly), the majority of daycares refuse children before six weeks of age. This puts parents in a lose-lose situation as they must risk their health, their child’s care, and their families’ overall well-being if proper paid leave is unavailable. Elsewhere in creation, we observe that God’s creatures naturally keep their offspring close early in life.3 This policy simply acknowledges the health and financial needs of a new or growing family.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of paid parental leave for both parents and their children. An increase of 10 weeks paid maternal leave has been associated with a 10 percent decrease in neonatal and infant mortality rate,4 and parental leave has been shown to be a cost-effective method for improving child health more generally.5 However, the benefits to child health and the decrease in infant mortality are only seen with an increase in paid parental leave.6 Moreover, studies that have analyzed the long-term benefits of paid parental leave have found benefits to women’s mental health in older age and a decrease in high school dropout rates among their children.7

At least half of the contemporary seminary graduates are women, and a large portion of graduates (male and female) are in their child-bearing years.8 Some of these female colleagues must negotiate lower pay to receive adequate paid maternity leave in their calls, if they can get the maternity leave. Some of our female colleagues are being told they must prove they are worth the maternity leave. Many men have no leave guaranteed at all. This is a matter of gender justice in our denomination. Because women are the ones giving birth, most studies have focused on the relationship between a mother and her child. However, increases in paid parental leave continue to be met by increases in use of that leave among all parents, allowing parents of all genders to spend more time on their child’s care, which has demonstrated health benefits for the child. Indeed, it has been shown that when fathers—or non-birthing parents—are offered comparable paid parental leave, the length of leave they take increases and their involvement in a child’s care after the leave period increases.9 It is wholly regrettable that non-birthing parents (historically, men) have been denied such crucial bonding and care time with their families for so long. The need for a just paid parental leave policy at this time is urgent as more and more pastors reach retirement age and more and more younger pastors—those in their prime parenting years—seek and negotiate calls.

Across the United States, a mere 14 percent of people have access to paid family leave.10 As stated above, this justice issue looms large for many workers, and the PC(USA) is not currently acting as a faithful leader. In working toward a solution, it is the profound hope of many young pastors that the denomination will see the opportunity to lead the world to a more faithful, loving approach to family leave.
Endnotes

3. To put this in perspective, it is illegal in twenty-two states to separate a puppy from its mother before eight weeks. We should be treating humans with at least as much respect as we do dogs. Source: https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-laws-concerning-minimum-age-sale-puppies.

Concurrences to Item 06-15 from the Presbyteries of Albany, De Cristo, Denver, and Hudson River.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-15

Advice on Item 06-15—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-15 with its response to Item 06-14.

The recommendation for disapproval by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution is not an argument against “paid family leave of at least twelve weeks,” but merely that it is not necessary to write this into the Constitution to accomplish what Item 06-14 desires, that terms of call include this provision.

Inserting this specific requirement into the Constitution reverses the direction of the current Form of Government, which illumines practices required by the Constitution but leaves to councils their specific implementation. The proposed amendments (Item 06-14 and Item 06-15) are attached to the constitutional requirement for presbyteries to establish minimum terms of call.

The specific implementation of these terms of call has been left to the presbyteries to determine. Presbyteries already have the authority to include paid family leave in their requirements for terms of call. “Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church” (F-3.0209).

The Form of Government requires each council to develop a manual of administrative operations. This manual should include personnel policies, where matters like paid time off are best defined. The Constitution envisions these policies and minimums for terms of call being developed in consultation with sessions, giving attention to any guidance offered by the synod or General Assembly (such as the call by previous General Assemblies to provide paid family leave). Through this process, presbyteries fulfill the expectation of the Constitution “concerning mission, budget, staffing and fair employment practices, and matters of equitable compensation” (G-3.0106, emphasis added).

In previous versions of the Form of Government, a form for terms of call was defined that specifically listed what was to be included. These specifics were removed when Chapter 14 of the old Form of Government was revised in the first decade of the 2000s. The current Form of Government further refined this approach. The only specific requirement about terms of call that remains in the Constitution is the mandate for participation by installed ministers in the benefits plan of the denomination.

Presbyteries have various provisions in terms of call packages beyond basic compensation, benefits, and allowances, such as sabbatical leave and paid time off for service to higher councils. Starting to list specific items in terms of call packages within the Constitution will be an invitation to begin to insert other items that are perceived to be missing from the list, but likewise not necessary to be included for them to be enacted.
The preferred way to accomplish the intent of Item 06-14 and Item 06-15 is for presbyteries, through their established procedures, to include paid family leave in the minimum terms of call that accomplish the above-highlighted constitutional goals.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-15

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-15—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.


ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-15

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-15—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.


BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 06-15

Comment on Item 06-15—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

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Comment Specific to Item 06-13, On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as Part of the Benefits Package

This overture recommends that the General Assembly instruct the Board of Pensions to provide twelve weeks of paid parental leave to all members of the Benefits Plan.

First, the issue of parental leave is an employer-based decision and must remain so for legal and practical reasons. The Board does not make human resource policy for the church or the church-related employers. The 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) addressed the church’s human resource policy on parental and family leave and has defined a position to be urged for all bodies of the church. The Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of churches and other PC(USA) employers who enroll their ministers and lay employees in the Benefits Plan. Each congregation and other church employer is responsible for salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies.

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This innovation has resulted in 19 percent growth in employees receiving benefits from the Board, the first growth in a generation. Regrettably, and notwithstanding these changes to the Benefits Plan programs, many churches and other church-related employers do not enroll their employees for benefits with the Board of Pensions, so the benefits proposed in the overture does not provide a universal solution to the paid leave concern for many church employees.

Third, earlier General Assembly actions addressed “family leave,” not simply “parental leave.” The former is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard.

Finally, there is no source of funds within the Board to provide for the payment of this type of family leave. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this use. While the Board does not believe this overture is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the Board decide to implement such a plan based on the request in this Overture, it would require charging dues annually to provide a funding source. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000 and the median lay income of $41,000, the cost of a family leave program would exceed $10 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of employees (ministers and laity) utilized the benefit.

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Comment Specific to Item 06-17, On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA)

As noted in the Board’s other comments on the subject of parental leave, the Board defers to the 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) policies, particularly the broader reference to family leave rather than parental leave. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard. Family leave is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement.

While the Board takes no position on this overture as it relates to the councils of the church, the Board is compelled to comment on the statements in the Rationale that the denomination should ask the Board of Pensions to establish a new benefit for parental leave. The specific comment to Item 06-013 addresses the Board’s concerns. In summary, the Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of congregations; each congregation is responsible for its own salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies. The Board estimates that fewer than 10 percent of eligible employees are members of the Benefits Plan. If a church or other church-related employer is unable to afford to provide its employees with Benefits Plan coverage under the new flexible menu-based option, it is unlikely that it would also be able to afford a family leave benefit. Thus, a mandate for Plan members would not in any way provide the universal coverage that the overture seeks.

Comment on Item 6-20, A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies

The Board of Pensions supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental level policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay. The 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Item 05-10, acted to urge “the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292). For this 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Board of Pensions responded to Item 05-10 and reported the employment policies were reviewed, and are in full compliance with the General Assembly resolution.

Item 06-16

[The assembly approved Item 06-16. See pp. 70, 73.]

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Amend G-3.0104 by adding the following statement as the last paragraph of that section to read as follows:

“No congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.”

Rationale

In his letter to the church in Rome, Paul reminds believers who sometimes disagree that “... each of us will be accountable to God. Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another” (Rom. 14:12–13). Likewise, the Apostle Peter urges Christians as servants of God, to “live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil” (1 Pet. 2:16). As the church seeks to learn anew how to appropriately engage with society, opportunities for growth abound as do opportunities to create more harm than good.

Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment has been a provision in the United States tax code prohibiting charitable organizations, including churches, from endorsing or opposing political candidates. This allows for charitable organizations to qualify for tax exemption and qualifies donations to these organizations as tax-exempt. In recent years, there has been discussion regarding the repeal of this amendment; those in favor of repeal claim that the amendment infringes on the first amendment rights of clergy and other leaders of religious and charitable organizations while those in favor of maintaining the statute fear that a repeal would lead to religious and charitable organizations becoming safe-havens for tax-exempt and un-reported political contributions.

While full repeal of the Johnson Amendment has not yet come to fruition, action has been taken to loosen the interpretation and implementation of the statute when churches and secular charitable organizations are found to be in violation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long supported the notion of the separation of church and state. We can see this throughout our Foundations of Presbyterian Polity. Section F-3.0101a and b affirms that “God alone is Lord of the conscience,” and that “We do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others.” Section F-3.0105 states that “… we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.” If a council or officer aligns themselves for, or against, a particular candidate, then they risk becoming a political body, rather than a theological one. In the current hyper-partisan political climate, it is paramount that the church maintain the ability to speak with authenticity and authority to all points of the political spectrum. To publicly and explicitly endorse or oppose a political candidate would compromise the ability of the church to do so. As is written in the Theological Declaration of Barmen, “We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God’s revelation” (Book of Confessions, 8.12). “We reject the false doctrine, as though the church were permitted to abandon the form of its message and order to its own pleasure or to changes in prevailing ideological and political conviction,” (8.18). And finally, “We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, apart from this ministry, could and were permitted to give to itself, or to allow to be given to it, special leaders vester with ruling powers” (Ibid., 8.21). Endorsing or opposing specific political candidates puts the church in danger of becoming havens for tax-exempt and un-reported contributions.

While it is clear that the principles of this overture are present in abundance throughout the Book of Order and Book of Confessions, there is no explicit guidance offered to governing bodies or to those in leadership positions regarding endorsing or opposing candidates running for political office. This amendment to the Book of Order precludes such activity while still allowing for churches and leaders to actively engage with secular issues that touch on the life of faith, to work towards bringing God’s reign of justice and peace ever closer to reality.

Concurrence to Item 06-16 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-16

Advice on Item 06-16—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly to disapprove Item 06-16.
The Presbytery of Western North Carolina summarizes the history of the “Johnson Amendment,” and anticipates change to that statute. Because the Johnson Amendment has not yet been revoked or altered, it is premature for the assembly to address anticipated statutory change. The overture would reverse long-standing foundational principles of our denomination and have long-reaching effects on the church.

Individual Discernment and Diversity of Religious Belief

Presbyterians begin with a firm and fundamental belief in the private discernment of religious belief. Section F-3.0101 sets forth and affirms the historic principle that “God alone is Lord of the conscience” and that “in all matters that respect religion” we consider the rights of private judgment … as universal and inalienable.” Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith, and church power in matters of religious belief is limited as explained in F-3.0107. This first historic principle of church order (F-3.0101) was affirmed and explained in the policy statement, “God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience.” The principle that God alone is Lord of the conscience both reflects and underlies many other foundational and confessional statements in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“Religious bodies and people of faith hold to a wide variety of convictions, ideas, and values that make important contributions to the shape and strength of public life. That life has been shaped by individuals and groups that have sought to create new forms, sustain traditional ones, challenge existing ideologies and reform or resist unjust institutions. Participation is thus viewed by the government sometimes as a blessing and at other times as a threat” (God Alone, p. 48; see also F-1.404). Because the individual is the bearer of conscience, it does not matter whether others of the same faith make the same conscientious claim. God Alone, p. 19. “Religious tolerance and pluralism are our political and societal norm. We do not perfectly achieve that norm and intolerance has not been eliminated…” (God Alone, p. 7).

Formation of Conscience in Community

While Presbyterians emphasize individual belief, we also recognize the importance of community and our shared expression of belief. Discourse and expressions of diversity within the church are important to formation of religious conscience. As Presbyterians, we recognize that “The formation of conscience occurs in community, but its exercise is very often finally an individual matter” (God Alone, p. 19). It is a fundamental principle for our church and our country that “The individual’s right to believe cannot be divorced from the right to exercise that belief in the company and community of others. For nearly every human being, the right to practice religion only as a solitary individual is virtually no right at all” (God Alone, p. 12). “The exercise of individual and corporate conscience must be affirmed as an integral aspect of religious liberty.”

Separation of Church and State

The freedom to express religious views in public is as important as the freedom to determine religious beliefs for oneself. For Reformed Christians, “faith demands engagement in the secular order and involvement in the political realm” (God Alone, p. 48). The so-called “separation between church and state” is “particularly misleading when used to advocate the separation of religion from politics or from any other dimension of the public order. The First Amendment has never meant separation of religion from community or separation of the church from public life. On their face, the religion clauses [of the U.S. Constitution] constitute an absolute prohibition on government participation in religious life; there is no hint that that barrier was even thought to isolate religion from the life of the republic” (God Alone, pp. 47–48).

Responsibility for Involvement in Public Life

The freedom and responsibility to express religious and moral views in public is an important part of our denominational principles and history. The Gospel demands that we share our faith and that we seek to be a community of faith witnessing to God’s good news and Christ’s teachings to the world in words and deeds. According to the Reformed tradition and standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “it is a limitation and denial of faith not to seek its expression in both a personal and public manner, in such ways as will not only influence, but transform the public order and involvement in the political realm” (God Alone, p. 48). This principle reflects our foundational statements (F-1.0301, F-1.0304, F-1.0404), other parts of the Book of Order (e.g., W-5.0304), and our long-standing and important history of social witness to world.

Endorsement or Opposition to Political Candidates

“For these reasons, limitations upon the freedom of religious bodies to participate in public life are illegitimate and unconstitutional. The church is bound to reject any regulation limiting church advocacy or particular legislation or endorsement of
candidates, or establishing religious qualifications for office holders” (God Alone, p. 50). Over the centuries, Presbyterians have stood up and spoken out against those who would silence the church and the faithful.

Internal Revenue Code provisions that limit tax-exempt religious organization from devoting “substantial” activity to attempts to influence legislation or participate or intervene in political campaigns on behalf of any candidate for public office, as well as recent public debate, heighten concerns about religious discourse about public life. There is a difference between discussion of issues and candidates, on one hand, and intervention in campaigns on behalf of specific candidates on the other” (God Alone, p. 50).

The 200th General Assembly (1988) specifically affirmed that: “We recognize that speaking out on issues will sometimes constitute implicit support or opposition to particular candidates or parties, where policy and platform differences are clearly drawn. Since such differences are the vital core of the political process, church participation should not be curtailed on that account; but we believe that it is generally unwise and imprudent for the church explicitly to support or oppose specific candidates, except in unusual circumstances” (God Alone, p. 50).

Each council should be mindful of these foundational principles and historical practice. “It is easy to step from advocating our vision to seeking to enforce it, from protecting religious liberty to requiring ‘right’ belief and action. The church must advocate its positions on public issues, but it should not seek to exercise political authority in its own right” (God Alone, p. 50).

Endnotes
1. God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience is a policy statement of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988), and affirmed or cited by numerous subsequent General Assemblies and entities of the church. Hereafter “God Alone.”
2. Section F-1.0301 states the “Calling of the Church” is to be a community of faith, a community of hope, a community of love, and a community of witness. “The Great Ends of the Church” (F-1.0304) include “the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.” Section F-1.0404 explains the “Church seeks a new openness to God's mission in the world.”
3. See, e.g., the Theological Declaration of Barmen and the Confession of 1967, which can be found in the Book of Confessions.
4. “The church is always obliged to respect claims of conscience lest it frustrate efforts to obey the will of God. We need not agree with the specific dictates of another’s conscience to respect and support the right to exercise that conscience. Paul told Christians that they were freed from Jewish dietary laws, but if the conscience of another is offended by eating certain foods, ‘for conscience sake—I mean his conscience, not yours—do not eat it’ (1 Corinthians 10:28–29). The obligation to respect the exercise of conscience is not only a dynamic of life within the church; it is both a demand and a dilemma of the First Amendment’s protection of religious freedom” (God Alone, p. 18).

The elimination of the “Johnson Amendment” was a primary goal the “Free Speech Fairness Act” https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/6195, which would allow endorsement or opposition to candidates of political parties, politicizing both the pulpit and church organizations as recipients of tax-deductible funds for partisan purposes.

The General Assembly spoke to the issues involved in the Tax Justice policy of 2014, reaffirming the principles behind the current 501.c.3 category, and further addressing the abuse of the 501.c.4 category of “social welfare institutions” for political purposes and personal enrichment:

Rules governing tax-exempt “social welfare organizations” (501(c)(4)s) should exclude or strictly limit the eligibility of donations for partisan political purposes, parties and candidates, and the individual and corporate donors to or through such organizations should be made public due to their influence on the political process (http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/acswp_tax_justice_42.pdf, p. 4).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) addressed this matter even more directly, responding to Supreme Court decisions in the Citizens United and Voting Rights Act cases, which intensified the role of money in politics:

[The Assembly:] Endorses the continuing prohibition of partisan political endorsements by religious organizations or their leadership and other measures to respect both religious liberty and the separation of church and state. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) strongly supports the freedom of religious organizations to speak on matters of policy, but personal endorsements and partisan ties may present the appearance of or opportunity for collusion, special treatment, and the violation of nonprofit tax status. https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Election-Protection-and-Integrity-in-Campaign-Finance-2016-ACSWP.pdf, pp. 2–3)

Theological issues around this question are addressed in Item 11-16 before this assembly, Honest Patriotism. While we appreciate the overture proponents’ invocation of The Theological Declaration of Barmen, perhaps the core understanding of the need for church/state differentiation is reflected in The Confession of 1967: “... Although nations may serve God’s purposes in history, the church which identifies the sovereignty of any one nation or any one way of life with the cause of God denies the Lordship of Christ and betrays its calling” (Book of Confessions, 9.45).

**Item 06-17**

[The assembly referred Item 06-17 to the task force created in Item 06-NB. See pp. 70, 73.]

*On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including Pastors, Certified Christian Educators, and Certified Associate Christian Educators—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.*

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Create (or amend existing) compensation guidelines for paid parental leave for all staff working under the General Assembly’s jurisdiction, where
   
   a. this benefit is available to all parents of a new child, regardless of how the child came to be in the family (including, but not limited to, birth, adoption, and fostering);
   
   b. at least twelve weeks of parental leave are fully paid;
   
   c. full leave is given in the case of miscarriage, still birth, or infant death; and
   
   d. if two parents are present, parental leave may be taken concurrently or consecutively.

2. Strongly encourage all councils of the church that they also implement similar minimum compensation guidelines for paid parental leave for all staff and personnel under their own jurisdictions.

3. Use its authority to review the acts of lower councils (G-3.0101; G-3.0108) to

   a. inquire of all synods if they themselves have adopted minimum guidelines for paid parental leave for all staff working under their jurisdictions that are “prudent and equitable, and … faithful to the mission of the whole church” (c.f., Book of Order, G-3.0108a);
b. inquire of each synod if it has similarly reviewed each presbytery’s paid parental leave policy for all personnel under its jurisdiction (e.g., all staff and installed pastors), and whether each presbytery under each synod’s jurisdiction has similarly reviewed each session’s paid parental leave policy for all personnel under its jurisdiction (e.g., all staff including Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators).

Rationale

Introduction

Our presbytery feels that establishing paid parental leave throughout our denomination, including all of the scenarios listed above, is necessary.

Too many leaders and staff in our denomination who are also trying to start families have suffered too much under inequitable practices as a result of having no standard paid parental leave. Paid parental leave is part of standard benefits packages in many professions outside the church where many members of the PC(USA) work, and as well as for pastors in some of our sibling denominations:

• United Methodist Church (UMC): Congregations are required to give eight weeks off, fully paid, and conferences (Methodist equivalent of presbyteries) pay for pulpit supply during those eight weeks. A pastor may request up to twelve to thirteen weeks off, although those additional weeks can be unpaid, also during which congregations become responsible for pulpit supply.

• Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA): While there is no denomination-wide parental leave policy, each synod (Lutheran equivalent of presbytery) adopts its own policy. Most synods suggest, but do not require, that pastors be granted six weeks off. Congregations are required to find and fund pulpit supply.

This overture began as a set of two overtures, to propose amending two sections of the Book of Order [Text to be added is shown as italics.]:

• To amend the last sentence of G-2.0804 as follows: “The call [to pastors] shall include participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly, and paid parental leave of at least 12 weeks.

• To amend G-3.0303c as follows: “establish minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery, to include Board of Pensions participation and paid parental leave of at least twelve weeks.”

Instead of amending the Book of Order this year, and instead of advocating for only pastors and certified educators, this overture proposes that the General Assembly establish this benefit for all personnel under its jurisdiction, strongly encourage all councils of the church to do the same, and then use each council’s authority to review the acts of a lower council to inquire whether all synods have adopted similar paid parental leave benefits for their own personnel, and whether each synod has reviewed the paid parental leave policies of all presbyteries under its jurisdiction, and whether each presbytery under each synod’s jurisdiction has reviewed the paid parental leave policies of all sessions under its jurisdiction. Our Book of Order describes administrative review as a process where higher councils may question the substance of acts of lower councils, e.g., not merely “checking a box” to see if a lower council has adopted and implemented a sexual misconduct policy (c.f., G-3.0106), but to review the substance of such policies to inquire (perhaps going so far as to ask tough, pointed questions) if the proceedings of a lower council “have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with this Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church” (G-3.0108).

However, instead of waiting for all councils of our denomination to act, and even longer for all to go through the formal administrative review process, it may be that the quickest way to establish paid parental leave for all leaders and staff in our denomination would be to ask the Board of Pensions to establish this new benefit, and charge additional dues as necessary. According to the Board of Pensions (BOP) (personal communication), an average of 254 children under age 1 (by birth or adoption) were added to the BOP benefits plan each year between 2012–2016.

In recent years, efforts to establish paid parental leave policies for church professionals and staff have been woefully inadequate throughout our denomination:

• The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay without using other forms of paid leave.¹

• The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission
Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014).2

The time to act to establish paid parental leave benefits for all staff of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is now.

Theological Basis

As a denomination, we have affirmed the importance of supporting families. However, in practice, congregations are put in the precarious position of choosing between either taking care of a new family, or taking care of the financial well-being of the congregation. With respect to pastors, for example, many churches cannot afford paid parental leave for their pastor(s) in addition to the cost of pulpit supply, yet many pastors cannot afford to be unpaid when they welcome a new member into the family. These choices are difficult ones that often lead to solutions that leave either the staff member or the congregation neglected, and lack witness to the love God, Parent of us all, has for the world. It is also vital to support staff and leaders in small, struggling, or otherwise financially insecure churches.

Without a paid parental leave policy, the PC(USA) forces parents to make a choice between proper health care for themselves and their children, and adequate income to provide for their families. Without a paid parental leave policy, we uphold false narratives that describe men as “bread-winners” and require them to leave the child-raising to their spouses. Without a paid parental leave policy, we continue to uphold antiquated and unequal traditions that not only reinforce gender stereotypes, bringing harm to families and children, but fail to account for the many different kinds of families our denomination lifts up and celebrates.

However, in our Book of Confessions, A Brief Statement of Faith, we confess as a church, that the Holy Spirit:

... calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.
In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,
praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Book of Confessions, 11.4)

With a paid parental leave policy, we have the opportunity to live into this calling of courage in our ministries and in our daily lives as we grow our families and support one another in love. With a paid parental leave policy, we unmask the idolatry of unequal practices and are free to live holy and joyful lives—lives wherein all parents can bond with their children without fear of destitution, and the whole community can grow in love.

Supporting Statistics

The lack of any kind of paid parental leave creates problems for both parents because, while women are medically cleared to return to work after about at least six weeks (if birth went perfectly), the majority of daycares refuse children before six weeks of age. This puts parents in a lose-lose situation as they must risk their health, their child’s care, and their families’ overall well-being if proper leave is unavailable. Elsewhere in creation, we observe that God’s creatures naturally keep their offspring close early in life.3 This policy simply acknowledges the health and financial needs of a new or growing family.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of paid parental leave for both parents and their children. An increase of 10 weeks paid maternal leave has been associated with a 10 percent decrease in neonatal and infant mortality rate,4 and parental leave has been shown to be a cost-effective method for improving child health more generally.5 However, the benefits to child health and the decrease in infant mortality are only seen with an increase in paid parental leave.6 Moreover, studies that have analyzed the long-term benefits of paid parental leave have found benefits to women’s mental health in older age and a decrease in high school dropout rates among their children.7

Returning to the example of pastors: At least half of the contemporary seminary graduates are women, and a large portion of graduates (male and female) are in their child-bearing years.8 Some of these female colleagues must negotiate lower pay to receive adequate paid maternity leave in their calls, if they can get the maternity leave. Some of our female colleagues are being told they must prove they are worth the maternity leave. Many men have no leave guaranteed at all. This is a matter of gender justice in our denomination. Because women are the ones giving birth, most studies have focused on the relationship between a mother and her child. However, increases in paid parental leave continue to be met by increases in use of that leave among all parents, allowing parents of all genders to spend more time on their child’s care, which has demonstrated health benefits for the child. Indeed, it has been shown that when fathers—or non-birthing parents—are offered comparable paid parental leave,

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the length of leave they take increases and their involvement in a child’s care after the leave period increases.\(^9\) It is wholly regrettable that non-birthing parents (historically, men) have been denied such crucial bonding and care time with their families for so long.

Across the United States, a mere 14 percent of people have access to paid family leave.\(^10\) As stated above, this justice issue looms large for many workers, and the PC(USA) is not currently acting as a faithful leader. In working toward a solution, it is the profound hope of many young church staff and leaders that the denomination will see the opportunity to lead the world to a more faithful, loving approach to family leave.

Endnotes
3. To put this in perspective, it is illegal in twenty-two states to separate a puppy from its mother before eight weeks. We should be treating humans with at least as much respect as we do dogs. Source: [https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-laws-concerning-minimum-age-sale-puppies](https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-laws-concerning-minimum-age-sale-puppies).

Concurrence to Item 06-17 from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-17**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 06-17—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.*


**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-17**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 06-17—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-17. See rationale for Item 06-13.

**BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 06-17**

*Comment on Item 06-17—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).*

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental level policies with the minimum of
led to a substantial increase in participation in the Benefits Plan. Conversely, the number of new minister members in the plan congregation. The change to a menu-based plan that allows congregations to structure what is appropriate for their context has none of which include this salary replacement benefit.

If the intent of the overture (in contrast to the words) is for the Board to provide a family leave benefit, there is no source of funds held by the Board to provide for the payments this overture contemplates. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this salary replacement benefit.

While the Board fully supports the underlying values of Items 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, and 06-17, the Board advises the disapproval of all four items, due to numerous practical and technical concerns. Two previous General Assemblies addressed recommendations on this subject and those actions should be ratified and affirmed.

Comment Specific to Item 06-13, On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as Part of the Benefits Package

This overture recommends that the General Assembly instruct the Board of Pensions to provide twelve weeks of paid parental leave to all members of the Benefits Plan.

First, the issue of parental leave is an employer-based decision and must remain so for legal and practical reasons. The Board does not make human resource policy for the church or the church-related employers. The 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) addressed the church’s human resource policy on parental and family leave and has defined a position to be urged for all bodies of the church. The Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of churches and other PC(USA) employers who enroll their ministers and lay employees in the Benefits Plan. Each congregation and other church employer is responsible for salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies.

Second, the concept of mandating benefits for all employees is in direct contradiction to the concept of a menu based plan that allows each congregation or other employer to structure its employment policies and benefits to best fit its context. The Board is actively working to develop solutions to the affordability of medical and retirement benefits for church employers so that broader coverage will be provided to all church employees. The Board introduced benefit choice flexibility beginning in January 2017, following conversations with thousands of Presbyterians that led to a complete restructuring of the Benefits Plan. This innovation has resulted in 19 percent growth in employees receiving benefits from the Board, the first growth in a generation. Regrettably, and notwithstanding these changes to the Benefits Plan programs, many churches and other church-related employers do not enroll their employees for benefits with the Board of Pensions, so the benefits proposed in the overture does not provide a universal solution to the paid leave concern for many church employees.

Third, earlier General Assembly actions addressed “family leave,” not simply “parental leave.” The former is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard.

Finally, there is no source of funds within the Board to provide for the payment of this type of family leave. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this use. While the Board does not believe this overture is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the Board decide to implement such a plan based on the request in this Overture, it would require charging dues annually to provide a funding source. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000 and the median lay income of $41,000, the cost of a family leave program would exceed $10 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of employees (ministers and laity) utilized the benefit.

Comment Specific to Item 06-14, On Amending G-2.0804, “Terms of Call,” to Include Paid Family Leave

As written, this overture has no impact on the Board. No mention is made as to source of funding and the Board is not mentioned in implementation. In which case the Board defers to the General Assembly to take whatever action it deems appropriate for congregations’ terms of call for installed pastors.

If the intent of the overture (in contrast to the words) is for the Board to provide a family leave benefit, there is no source of funds held by the Board to provide for the payments this overture contemplates. All Board funds have designated purposes, none of which include this salary replacement benefit.

While the Board does not believe this overture is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the General Assembly request the Board to implement such a plan based on the request in the overture, it would need to charge annual dues to fund the benefit. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000, the cost of such a program would exceed $5 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of ministers utilized the benefit.

Finally, the Board would like to share a practical concern. The Board has seen clearly that economics drive behavior in the congregation. The change to a menu-based plan that allows congregations to structure what is appropriate for their context has led to a substantial increase in participation in the Benefits Plan. Conversely, the number of new minister members in the plan...
continues to decline. While the Board supports the underlying values of the overture, employing organizations should retain the right of setting terms of call that are better suited for the needs of their situation and employees.

**Comment Specific to Item 06-15, On Amending G-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave**

This overture recommends an amendment to the *Book of Order* to mandate minimum compensation terms for Christian educators and associate Christian educators that include participation in the Board of Pensions and paid family leave of at least twelve weeks. The Rationale only discusses the paid family leave part of the proposed amendment to the *Book of Order*. No mention is made as to what participation in Board of Pensions benefits programs is sought.

The Board’s response to the recommendation to mandate paid family leave of at least twelve weeks is addressed in response to Item 06-14 and the Board’s introductory comments.

While the Board does not believe a paid family leave is rightly within the scope of its charge, should the General Assembly request the Board to implement such a plan based on the request in this overture, it would need to charge annual dues to fund the benefit. Based on median pastors’ income of $58,000, the cost of such a program would exceed $5 million annually if only between 4–5 percent of ministers utilized the benefit. Adding certified Christian educators would increase that cost.

With respect to the overture’s recommendation to add “Board of Pensions participation,” the Board fully supports universal medical and retirement benefits coverage of all church workers and is actively working on developing solutions to their affordability with the hope of encouraging broader participation by the church’s employers. Employee benefits are human resource decisions to be determined by each church or other church-related employer based on the financial wherewithal of the employer and the needs of their employees.

The Board introduced benefit choice flexibility beginning in January 2017, following conversations with thousands of Presbyterians that led to a complete restructuring of the Benefits Plan. Since January 2017, the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) provides two participation options for churches: Pastor’s Participation, a bundled benefits program consisting of enrollment in the core Benefits Plan programs: the defined benefit pension, PPO medical, death, and disability plan, which is required for installed pastors and voluntary for all other ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and a menu-based program of benefits selected by the employer and subsidized at levels determined by the employer, subject to certain plan minimums. The menu-based participation options allow an employer to offer its non-installed ministers and lay employees a benefits program consisting of as little as elective deferrals to the 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan to full benefits coverage for the defined benefits pension, PPO medical, and death and disability plan coverage equivalent to Pastor’s Participation.

The Board’s flexibility initiative has resulted in 19 percent growth in employees receiving benefits from the Board, the first growth in a generation. This experience leads the Board to conclude that the concept of mandating specific benefits packages for all employees is not realistic for church employers at this time.

If the intent of the overture is to mandate the equivalent of Pastor’s Participation benefits and dues, this must be defined as such and other questions are raised. The Board offers several additional programs for which participation is limited to ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Is the intent of this overture to expand participation in those programs to Christian educators? What other components of ministers’ programs are sought? Would CREDO be included (at a cost of $5,000 per person per conference). How would median pension minimums and accruals be defined? What about educational debt relief (up to $25,000 per minister)? Would we include access to these benefits in non-parish settings with review by the presbytery? Would this proposal include qualification for Pathways to Renewal at $7,000 per person per year? Who should pay for the dues increase to subsidize this proposal because Christian educators as a group have a lower median effective salary than ministers? If the intent of the overture is to mandate that certified Christian educators have the privileges and responsibilities of ministers of Word and Sacrament, these questions inevitably shift into ecclesiastical decisions about the roles in ordered ministry.

Without defining what is meant by “Board of Pensions participation” or otherwise specifying the type of participation for Christian educators in the Benefits Plan programs, the projected cost of the overture for employers of Christian educators cannot be ascertained.

The Board supports a response to the overture that encourages all church employers to participate in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) programs and to consider offering menu-based coverage options, but allows each congregation or other employer to structure its employment policies and benefits to best fit its context.

**Comment Specific to Item 06-17, On Establishing minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA)**

As noted in the Board’s other comments on the subject of parental leave, the Board defers to the 221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016) policies, particularly the broader reference to family leave rather than parental leave. Current General Assembly policy urges all employers to provide family leave, not merely parental leave, as the standard.
Family leave is significantly more expensive across an entire population as it includes care for aging parents and others and not simply birth, adoption, or long-term placement.

While the Board takes no position on this overture as it relates to the councils of the church, the Board is compelled to comment on the statements in the Rationale that the denomination should ask the Board of Pensions to establish a new benefit for parental leave. The specific comment to Item 06-013 addresses the Board’s concerns. In summary, the Board is not the employer of any church workers other than its own staff and has no mechanism to pay employees of congregations; each congregation is responsible for its own salary, wages, benefits, and leave policies. The Board estimates that fewer than 10 percent of eligible employees are members of the Benefits Plan. If a church or other church-related employer is unable to afford to provide its employees with Benefits Plan coverage under the new flexible menu-based option, it is unlikely that it would also be able to afford a family leave benefit. Thus, a mandate for Plan members would not in any way provide the universal coverage that the overture seeks.

Comment on Item 6-20, A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies

The Board of Pensions supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental level policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay. The 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Item 05-10, acted to urge “the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292). For this 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Board of Pensions responded to Item 05-10 and reported the employment policies were reviewed, and are in full compliance with the General Assembly resolution.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 06-17

Comment on Item 06-17—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) acknowledges that the procedures of employment matter. Unfortunately, in the area of parental and family leave, the denominational instruction is not as clear. The committee continues to support actions from the 221st and 222nd General Assemblies (2014) and (2016) concerning the suggested family leave policies that, due to the PC(USA) governance structure, are often left at the discretion of the governing bodies that are responsible for employment. Often governing bodies and individual congregations do not have parental/family leave policies in place and must do so if and when the case arises (putting the individual requesting the leave in a precarious position). This can result in decision-making that focuses on the financial cost of the leave rather than the care of the leader and family. A PC(USA) policy would provide the framework for individuals needing parental or family leave. Committees on representation at the presbytery and synod levels or the committees tasked with such work should serve as a resource to their governing bodies concerning employment practices.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 06-18

[Item 06-18, Advisory Committee Agency Summary, has been moved to Item 06-Info.]

Item 06-19

[The assembly referred Item 06-19 to the task force created in Item 06-NB. See pp. 70, 73.]

A Resolution to Amend the Book of Order, D-11.0403a—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend D-11.0403a as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“After careful deliberation, the session or permanent judicial commission shall vote on each charge separately and record the vote in its minutes. In order to find the accused guilty of a charge, the session or permanent judicial commission must find that the pertinent facts within that charge have been proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Proof beyond a reasonable doubt occurs...
when the comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction by clear and convincing evidence. Clear and convincing evidence occurs when it is substantially more likely than not that the material facts to prove the charge are true.”

**Rationale**

The standard of proof—“beyond a reasonable doubt”—is used in secular legal proceedings as the standard of proof in criminal cases. Requiring this level of proof in a church proceeding under the Rules of Discipline, particularly in a case involving sexual abuse, creates a daunting burden for those hearing the case and minimizes the lived experiences of victims.

It is this daunting burden and its hindering effects on cases of “sexual abuse of another person” (D-10.0401c) that cause us to call for “clear and convincing evidence” as the standard of proof instead.

There have been disciplinary cases involving ministers of Word and Sacrament who were accused of “sexual abuse of another person” in which the investigating committee found the witnesses credible (believable, trustworthy) and reliable (accurate), and were persuaded there was evidence sufficient to justify filing a charge of “sexual abuse of another person.” However, because of the high burden of D-11.0403a., committees declined to file the charge because they were not convinced they could prove the charge “beyond a reasonable doubt” at trial. Investigating committees in those situations are keenly aware of the cost to the governing body, i.e., a presbytery, should the case go to trial before a permanent judicial commission. Rather than working to obtain justice, the effort stops.

The uncertainty of the outcome due to the burden of proof plus the potential expense of a trial combine as powerful factors to inhibit cases going forth. These decisions being halted has resulted in adverse consequences for the survivors of the sexual abuse and others who were affected secondarily. Another dire consequence is that an offending pastor is not held accountable, and the governing body, i.e., presbytery, does not have the benefit of a finding of truth in a judicial case proceeding.

The PC(USA) may be the only mainline Protestant denomination to have this high standard, which reflects criminal statutes in secular law. (One lawyer reflecting on this in the 1990s for the then influential Alban Institute speculated that this standard was an artifact from the days of heresy trials when a guilty verdict could result in death.) A reasonable alternative is the standard of “clear and convincing evidence.” It is higher than “preponderance of the evidence,” which is typically used in secular civil cases, and sometimes understood as 51 percent of the evidence.

The “clear and convincing” language has been used in fact-finding inquiries, including by the PC(USA) (Final Report of the Independent Abuse Review Panel: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/iarp/pdfs/iarp_final_report.pdf, p. 504).

This standard requires that the evidence leads to a firm belief or conviction that it is highly probable that the charge is true. Some legal commentators assign 75 percent as the certainty required for this standard of proof.

It takes a lot of courage for persons who were sexually abused to come forward to their church and expose themselves to scrutiny and possible unwanted attention by filing a formal disciplinary accusation. It takes a lot of resilience and effort to participate in the protracted and difficult proceedings under the Rules of Discipline. The process does not encourage participation that is not serious, not well-intentioned, and not supported by evidence.

One fear in adopting “clear and convincing” might be that it will open a floodgate of claims. The fear of greatly incurred financial costs might be raised to object to the standard. It is a fear without substantiation to support it. It is more reasonable to anticipate that effectively holding accountable those who commit offenses in the church, especially those who commit the offense of “sexual abuse of another person,” is a reasonable, long-term investment in prevention. Not holding offenders accountable is an expensive risk-management strategy.

Another fear could be that it would invite false allegations. Since the 1990s when “sexual abuse of another person” was added to the Rules of Discipline, there have been only isolated instances of a malicious allegation. No statistics are maintained, but anecdotally the consensus among knowledgeable church officials is that such instances are quite few and will fall apart when an investigation committee performs its assignment with diligence.

Because we are the body of Jesus Christ, we need to consider the spiritual cost of not adjudicating legitimate cases of sexual abuse that do not lend themselves to the certainty of “beyond a reasonable doubt.” Failure to hold offenders accountable has resulted in loss of members (de-evangelism) and loss of our moral integrity and trustworthiness.

One effect of the “beyond a reasonable doubt” burden is that it can drive investigating committees to enter into plea deals with defendants who are guilty, but seek a lesser degree of censure in exchange for not mounting a defense at trial. This has resulted in disappointing outcomes in which the degree of censure that did not fit the nature of the disciplinary offense. A “clear and convincing” standard would encourage pursuit of a resolution based on the evidence and censures appropriate to the guilty behaviors.
It’s time to adopt a more realistic standard of proof that more closely conforms to the experiences of people victimized in our churches and better aligns with the Rules of Discipline.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-19

Comment on Item 06-19—From the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

OGA advises that all items, including Item 06-19, amending the Rules of Discipline, be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which is currently revising the Rules of Discipline as a whole and will report with suggested changes to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Item 06-20

[The assembly approved Item 06-20 as amended. See pp. 70, 73.]

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

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. **Commend the Presbyterian Mission Agency for their improvements and expansions of its Family Leave Policy.**

2. **[Strongly urge and recommend]** all synods, presbyteries, and congregations to create a Family Leave Policy that each member congregation can adopt, which includes at a minimum six [eight] [twelve] weeks paid leave [and an additional [six] [four] weeks unpaid leave] during a twelve-month period for new parents for the birth or adoption of or to care for a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.

3. Direct the other five agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their Family Leave Policies by the 224th General Assembly (2020) to reflect that which is equal to or better than the current Family Leave Policy of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

“[4. To direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to forward the details of its Family Leave Policies and other pertinent information to the synods, presbyteries, and congregations in order to facilitate and expedite the creation of fair and equitable family leave policies.]”

[Financial Implications: PILP $13,100; PPC $9,000. Total—$44,200]

Rationale

Quality Family Leave policies are clearly a gender justice concern, as caretaking still falls heavily on women. This is so, and perhaps even more likely, when inadequate policies create financially insecure situations for women and their families. When employers offer robust policies, not only women, but caretakers of all genders are granted security in times of such need, and broader participation of caretakers of all genders is more likely. This creates the potential not only for a more financially just situation for women and their families, but also for greater sharing of such responsibilities across gender lines.

In 2012, ACWC received feedback from Women’s Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as a result of listening visits done with women in leadership in the PC(USA) around the country. The first issue listed in the report was related to Family Leave policies, and this remains a concern for women today:

There is no consistency in regards to family leave policies. Some presbyteries have them for presbytery staff but not for congregations, for instance. Women have taken calls as single women, gotten married, become pregnant, and been told they have two weeks of sick leave. Some congregations rejoice with their pastor and are incredibly supportive, providing paid leave and a willingness to accommodate flexible schedules. However, this is not simply about maternity leave. There is a need for family leave policies for all church workers, as any illness of a family member may require leave time.1

The PC(USA) as an employer from the national level down to the local congregation has the opportunity to model just employment practices through Family Leave policies that encourage balance in life between work and family and are consistent with PC(USA) theology and policies on work and workers:

The church must seek to become a model employer by providing workers with adequate compensation, meaningful opportunities for participation in decision making, leisure time in which to participate in family and community life... The foundation upon which all just employment policies are built is access to employment at a level of compensation that allows people to live in dignity and security.... All conditions of paid employment, including compensation and working conditions, should sustain and nurture the dignity of individuals, the well- being of households and families ... 2

Beyond the church’s call to model just policies for employees, paid leave increases worker productivity, improves loyalty and morale, and may improve worker retention, which ultimately saves money through reduced turnover costs.3
While initially concerned about increased cost to the agency, the Presbyterian Mission Agency ultimately determined that being faithful to their commitments to workers and their families meant providing more than they had prior to 2018. As of January 1, 2018, the Presbyterian Mission Agency implemented the following Family Leave Policy:

**Presbyterian Mission Agency Paid Family and Medical Leave Policy Expansion—Effective 1/1/2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Leave</th>
<th>Use 1st</th>
<th>Then Next</th>
<th>Then 3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FMLA Parental Leave</td>
<td>4 weeks of leave at 100% of regular pay</td>
<td>Paid time-off (can keep up to 10 days of vacation)</td>
<td>Balance of 12 weeks of at 60% of regular pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMLA Family Leave</td>
<td>4 weeks of leave at 100% of regular pay</td>
<td>Paid time-off (can keep up to 10 days of vacation)</td>
<td>Balance of 12 weeks unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMLA Personal Medical</td>
<td>4 weeks of leave at 100% of regular pay</td>
<td>Paid time-off (can keep up to 10 days of vacation)</td>
<td>Balance of 12 weeks of at 60% of regular pay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The expansion provides for 4 weeks of 100% paid family or medical leave before an employee must use any of their paid time off, parental or disability benefits. Employees are eligible for the 4-week 100% paid leave once they meet the eligibility requirements for FMLA:

- Must be in conjunction with an approved Family Medical Leave (personal medical, family medical or parental leave) for leaves lasting 7 days or longer.
- Employees may use one 4-week 100% pay in a 12-month rolling period.
- Cannot be used for intermittent leave.
- Must work with HR and complete appropriate forms with required medical authorizations. **The 4-week paid leave will not be activated until all forms have been completed and HR has been notified.**

Example:

Donna goes out on parental leave for the birth of her child. Before she goes on leave she works with HR to get all paperwork completed (Leave Request Form, FMLA paperwork with doctor’s authorization.) She is approved for 12 weeks leave. FMLA tracking and 100% pay tracking starts on her first day of leave. She is paid 100% for the first 4 weeks. She is then paid 100% by using her available sick and vacation leave of 15 days. (She is keeping 10 vacation days for use later in the year.) So, she receives the first 7 weeks at 100% pay then goes to 60% pay for the balance of her leave, 5 weeks.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has put into practice its commitment to just employment policies, and the other national agencies of the denomination should be doing the same. The ACWC advocates for six weeks of paid and six weeks of unpaid leave, but the Presbyterian Mission Agencies’ generous vacation and sick day allowances supplement the four weeks they offer. While the General Assembly cannot force synods, presbyteries, or congregations to do the same, our Presbyterian policy and reformed theology calls for ensuring that all workers are cared for in times of sickness as well as health.

Endnotes


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**ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-20**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 06-20—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).*

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-20.

For several decades, including before reunion, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has called for women and men to be equal partners in the work of the church. In the United States, however, the care for dependents, including but not limited to, children, often but not exclusively falls to the oversight of women. For many who care for dependents, the cost and logistics can be prohibitive to full participation in the life of the church. Instead of being a blessing, care for children and others can be a barrier to living into their call from God to participate in the life of the church. This results in caretakers self-selecting out of leadership and assuming responsibility for the church’s mission. Requiring councils at all levels—congregational, mid councils, and national—to have a dependent care policy will be an important step towards ensuring that caretaker members, frequently women, have equal opportunity for service to the church.

The rationale for Item 06-20 provides extensive evidence of the vital role that family leave policies play in the lives of women. This issue is absolutely crucial to implementing PC(USA) commitment to just and equal treatment of women in church...
and society. If all governing bodies of the PC(USA) were to create family leave policies in accord with the terms in Recommendation 2 of Item 06-10, the caretaker could better consider and fulfill service in the church.

A 1965 PCUS statement reminded the church that women should be considered eligible for all elected officer positions. The statement also requires that the election process “shall be designed to provide for women on the same basis as men.”

In a 1971 UPCUSA statement, “men and women must act as equal partners and contribute to the ministry of the Church all the talent God has given them …” and “they [women] must accept all forms of service in the Church including leadership positions” In addition, the church is called to “challenge and change anything which interferes with a person’s full development and wholeness.”

A 1972 UPCUSA statement demonstrating the church’s awareness on the limited availability of quality childcare. This care for mothers with young children was not a new concern, but in the last four or more decades, the Presbyterian church to failed to live into its own call to support parents, traditionally viewed through the lens of motherhood, as an integral part of the life of the church.

In two 1999 PC(USA) statements, the church called the ordination of women to all offices in the church is reflected in “our belief that God works through all persons in a variety of ways without regard for a hierarchy based on gender.” In a second statement that year, the PC(USA) reaffirmed need for the full participation of women in the church so that “the image of God in women be fully recognized and valued.”

The 2001 “Resolution on the Ministry of Caregiving in Relation to Older Adults” approved at the 213th General Assembly (2001) affirms the corporate responsibility to care for those in need. Out of our vision of the church as a family and a recognition of changing social structures that has resulted in the kinship connectedness being stretched thin, the church is called to support through education and support of caregivers. However, this resolution stopped short of calling for councils to develop dependent care policies so that caregivers can participate in the church beyond the role of providing care for dependents.

The 2004 statement “Transforming Families” reminds the church that their duties to all people include “to provide for them, to keep them safe, to ensure that they will not be hungry or homeless, to prepare them for life, and to encourage their participation in the mission of the Triune God. In this way, families, individuals, and the entire church learn to live lives of service and love for the whole world.” In living into this vision, sessions were to review their programs and policies to ensure that they are family-friendly. Part of making your church family-friendly is to ensure that dependent care is available for any church event where caregivers are invited to participate. In Recommendation 3.h., all councils were to find flexible solutions and paid leave for those caring for dependents within their communities. This recommendation again does not extend to providing care for council activities so that caregivers can attend and fully participate in the life of the church.

Current FMLA (Family Medical Leave Allowance) guidelines call for a minimum of 12 weeks (6 weeks paid and 6 weeks unpaid). Item 06-20 calls upon all levels of the denomination to craft Family Leave Policies to cover all those employed, not just pastors or those employed by the six agencies. By requiring all employees to be covered, it reflects the reality that not all employees would be covered by terms of call as defined by the Book of Order. This mandate would also not require presbyteries to vote on constitutional changes, which would delay implementation.

Both the Presbyteries of Boston and the Twin Cities should be commended for submitting overtures to expand parental leave to twelve paid weeks. Item 06-14 cites the Brief Statement of Faith that “calls women and men to all ministries of the church.” Unless attention is paid and strategies applied to remedy caregiver inequalities between women and men, the PC(USA) will not be a place where women and men are truly called to all ministries of the church.

ACWC, in its continuing study of and advocacy for justice in family leave policies, recommends a minimum of six weeks paid and six weeks unpaid leave, and directs five church agencies to create family leave policies that are equal to or better than the policy of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. They applaud the PMA for putting into practice just employment policies and urge the rest of the church to do the same or better. Indeed, there will be concerns about increased costs, but the PMA “ultimately determined that being faithful to their commitments to workers and their families meant providing more than they had prior to 2018.” The Board of Pensions advises disapproval of Items 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-17, and 06-20, in part for “numerous practical and technical concerns.” ACSWP recognizes that these concerns often drive decision-making; however, a church is an institution unlike any other. Practical and technical concerns are meant to be overcome in the promotion of peace, love, and justice. Therefore, ACSWP advises approval of Item 06-20 for both its practical and justice-oriented improvement of family leave policies of the PC(USA).

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-20

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-20—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-20.
BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 06-20

Comment on Item 06-20—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board supports family leave and urges all employers within the PC(USA) family to adopt appropriate family leave policies as defined by the General Assembly. The General Assembly has addressed this issue in two policy statements. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental level policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acted to urge “the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292). In response to the 2016 action, the Board of Pensions reviewed its employment policies and is in full compliance with the General Assembly resolution.

While the Board fully supports the underlying values of Items 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, and 06-17, the Board advises the disapproval of all four items, due to numerous practical and technical concerns. Two previous General Assemblies addressed recommendations on this subject and those actions should be ratified and affirmed.

Item 06-21

[The assembly approved Item 06-21. See pp. 69, 73.]

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Findings and Recommendations as to Request 18-01.


Proposed Authoritative Interpretation: G-3.0104, G-3.0201

Request 18-01 comes from the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina, which asks whether a non-PC(USA) minister can moderate a session in those cases where the presbytery has accepted these pastors who have “satisfied the requirements of preparation ... [as] established by the presbytery’s own rule” as temporary members (G-2.0506).

There is no direct statement in the Constitution that authorizes a minister who is not a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to serve as moderator of the session, but there is an authoritative interpretation from 1992 that prohibits a non-Presbyterian minister from serving as moderator. However, G-2.0506 permits presbyteries to enroll a minister of another Christian church as a temporary member for a period of service, either in a temporary pastoral relationship or in an installed position (Formula of Agreement ministers only).

The function of the moderator of a session is more than simply to conduct the meeting according to standards of parliamentary procedure. The moderator is the presence of presbytery and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in that council. The moderator ensures that the session continues to be a council which at times acts as the whole church, as noted in F-3.0201 through F-3.0203:
● “The particular congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church, called the church” (F-3.0201).

● “This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament)” (F-3.0202).

● “These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation. These councils are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council ...” (F-3.0203).

The church expects its ministers to be guided by our polity and abide by its discipline so that they are equipped to define and interpret the Constitution in any setting where decisions are made relative to the denomination. Sessions must make decisions that are constitutional. Presbyterian ministers are accountable for the advice they give. Non-Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers cannot be so held.

The Book of Order defines a council as consisting of “presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament” (F-3.0202). Thus, a basic quality of our polity is that a council consists of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament making decisions together. The 1992 authoritative interpretation concluded that to permit ministers who are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to moderate sessions would jeopardize this fundamental principle of Presbyterian polity. The following situations of temporary membership in a presbytery for a period of service by ministers of other Christian churches are exceptions to this understanding.

1. Formula of Agreement Ministers: Installed Positions

The Constitution permits a presbytery to “enroll a minister of another Christian church who is serving temporarily in a validated ministry in this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement (Book of Order, Appendix B; G-5.0202), when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery’s own rule” (G-2.0506). Installed ministers have answered the constitutional questions of W-4.0404 and have thus placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), enabling them to serve as moderator.

2. Other Temporary Members: Temporary Pastoral Relationships

The presbytery may also appoint as moderator a minister of another Christian church when the following conditions have been met:

● service in a temporary pastoral relationship;

● enrollment as a temporary member of a presbytery, having affirmed the order and discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a manner satisfactory to the presbytery;

● has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service according to the presbytery’s own rules, including its “rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience” (G-3.0201). The presbytery may require training in Presbyterian polity and other areas in these rules.

This interpretation shall also apply to temporary members of presbytery serving as moderator of a congregational meeting.

Question Received

Request 18-01 from the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina asks the General Assembly to reconsider the 1992 Authoritative Interpretation, now attached to G-3.0104 and G-3.0201, that a presbytery may not appoint a minister who is not a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to regularly moderate a session. The specific request is:

That the Presbytery petition the General Assembly to reconsider the 1992 ruling that prohibits non-PC(USA) minister from moderating sessions in those cases where the presbytery has accepted these pastors “who have satisfied the requirement of preparation ... as established by the presbytery’s own rule” as temporary members.

Findings

Pursuant to G-3.0501c and G-6.02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the question presented.
The 1992 Authoritative Interpretation is based upon the basic principle of Presbyterian polity that “this church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament)” (F-3.0202). The 1992 Authoritative Interpretation’s advice that the moderator is the presence of the presbytery and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the congregation(s) being served remains an important foundational principle for the orderly governance of the councils of this church, especially given that a session is not a council unto itself, but at times is taking actions as if it were the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

A minister member of presbytery (or, another presbytery; see 1987 Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0201) installed in a pastoral relationship or appointed by the presbytery to serve as moderator has responded affirmatively to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation, including “will you be governed by our church’s polity, and ... abide by its discipline?” (W-4.0404e). They have submitted to the authority of the church and the procedures in place should something go wrong in the exercise of the responsibilities of moderator. Ministers who are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ordinarily have not made this commitment.

Since the 1992 Authoritative Interpretation was approved, two significant changes have taken place. In 1998, the Formula of Agreement was approved between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ, which includes a process for the orderly exchange of ministers. In 2010–2011, the Form of Government was revised to maximize flexibility in governance at all levels of the church.

Section G-2.0506 permits a presbytery to enroll ministers of another Christian church as temporary members for the duration of their service. The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina asks the General Assembly to reconsider the 1992 authoritative interpretation in light of the ability of a presbytery to enroll a minister of another Christian church as a member for the period of service, in order to meet its missional needs for oversight of its congregations being served by temporary pastoral relationships, including by a number of ministers of other denominations.

One group of temporary members of a presbytery are ministers who have been received under the provisions of the Process of Orderly Exchange of Ministers in the 1998 Formula of Agreement to serve in an installed relationship, having satisfied “the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery’s own rule” (G-2.0506). The act of installation includes giving affirmative answers to the ordination questions of W-4.0404. This places the minister under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and makes it possible for the minister to serve as the moderator. [However, the process notes the following: “Ministers serving in an orderly exchange should be temporary under this agreement. Should an ordained minister of one church intend to serve permanently in another church then the process of the transfer of ministerial status should be followed.”]

A second group of ministers of other Christian churches who may become temporary members according to the procedures of the presbytery may be serving in a temporary pastoral relationship (G-2.0504b). Such ministers may serve as the moderator if the presbytery has satisfied itself as to the minister’s preparation for such service. The presbytery may require training and preparation in Presbyterian polity and other areas in making this determination. The minister so received shall also affirm the order and discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the context of their service in a manner satisfactory to the presbytery. Such affirmation may include responding to the constitutional questions of W-4.0404(e), (g).

Item 06-22

[The assembly approved Item 06-22. See pp. 70, 73.]

Request 18-02 for Constitutional Interpretation to Resolve Tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202—From the Synod of the Northeast.

In response to Request 18-02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) the following:

1. That no authoritative interpretation of F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202 be approved.

2. That, if the assembly concurs with the intention of the request, that the assembly direct the Department of Constitutional Interpretation to develop language for constitutional amendment(s) that might accomplish the intended goal, and that the department be directed to consult with the Synod of the Northeast and to receive the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in drafting such an amendment. Among mechanisms that might be considered are the election of persons by congregations for limited, temporary service as ruling elders; non-congregational or quasi-congregational structures and processes for the election of ruling elders by worshiping communities and for their representation in higher councils; and other means by which we might live into the ideals of F-1.0403 and F-1.0404 to perform faithfully God’s mission in Jesus Christ.
Background

The request is a response to a referral from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on a similar request (Item 05-12) seeking to resolve a perceived tension between our constitutional commitments to unity in diversity (F-1.0403) and openness (F-1.0404) on the one hand, and our historic principle that we are governed by presbyters (F-3.0202) on the other. In its response, the assembly lauded the synod’s efforts to engage youth and members of immigrant worshiping communities and recommended that the Synod of the Northeast continue “their productive conversations regarding this issue and bring to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a tangible recommendation.” This request provides the proposed text of an authoritative interpretation, which the synod asks the assembly to approve.

Summary of Findings

1. The polity of the church is in service to its mission.

2. The proposed authoritative interpretation is flawed because it has the effect of amending the Constitution through authoritative interpretation, and because it conflicts with F-3.0106 regarding the right to elect those who govern.

3. The tension identified between F-1.0403 - F-1.0404, and F-3.0202 is not a constitutional tension, because F-1.0403 states that the Constitution may assert limits on the application of F-1.0403.

4. Section F-3.03 requires the Constitution be interpreted so as to give full and equal force to all provisions.

5. Some remedies already exist to mitigate the missional tension between F-1.0403–F-1.0404 and G-3.0202, but the 222nd General Assembly (2016) found that other remedies are necessary to realize the ideals of our polity.

Detailed Findings

1. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution affirms the foundational value of F-1.0403 and F-1.0404 to the mission of the church, and understands the frustration when other, equally foundational principles make fulfilling all of them difficult if not impossible. The very first article of our Constitution declares, “The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church” (F-1.01). The Constitution provides order, guidance, and accountability for the church’s participation in God’s mission in Christ. When the order impedes the mission, it is incumbent on the church to amend its order to enable it to pursue its mission.

In doing so, it is important that the church follow its own constitutional processes so that its order and its actions correspond, and that the decisions that result reflect the whole church’s discernment of the mind and will of Christ. This is especially true when addressing foundational principles. These ideals inform the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on this item.

Pursuant to G-3.0501c and G-6.02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the proposed authoritative interpretation:

2. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the particular mechanism presented by the synod is flawed for two important reasons:

   a. It seeks to use the power of authoritative interpretation to accomplish what should be accomplished through the process of constitutional amendment. The proposed authoritative interpretation establishes a troubling precedent in the interpretation of our Constitution by creating constitutional language that limits foundational principles in particular circumstances. That is, it carves out exceptions to duly adopted provisions through authoritative interpretation rather than by amendment. This abuses the power of assemblies to interpret the Constitution and preempts the voice of the presbyteries. It does more than interpret the Constitution; it substantively changes its meaning.

   b. The proposal would create a class of persons engaged in the government of the church who were elected by sessions, not congregations, to govern. This directly violates the historic principle of election by the people (F-3.0106). All persons exercising governance in the church have either been elected or received by the body in which their membership resides.

For these two reasons, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the language of the proposed authoritative interpretation should not be advanced by the assembly as either an authoritative interpretation or a proposed amendment.

3. With respect to the supposed tension between F-1.0403–F-1.0404 and F-3.0202, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the tension identified by the synod between these provisions exists in mission rather than in law. There is not a constitutional tension here because of the important sentence at the end of F-1.0403: “No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution” (Book of Order, F-1.0403, emphasis added).
The Constitution limits participation and representation in the governance of the church in several ways. Among these are requirements of profession of faith in Jesus Christ and membership in a congregation (G-1.0301), election by a community of God’s people (F-3.0106, G-2.0102), and the willingness, upon examination by a council, to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (G-2.0104b). The limitation of government by presbyters may impede the church’s ability to fulfill F-1.0403 and F-1.0404, but that is a limitation imposed by the Constitution itself rooted in essential and historic principles of Presbyterian government.

4. The synod requests the General Assembly to resolve the apparent tension between constitutional provisions by means of approving specific language of an authoritative interpretation. The interpretation, however, directly violates the intent of F-3.03, thereby weakening and potentially invalidating other provisions of the Constitution.

Section F-3.03 establishes that the Constitution is to be read as a whole, and that if tensions and ambiguities are identified, they must be resolved in a manner that gives effect to all provisions. The language of F-3.03 was drafted from an Authoritative Interpretation established by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in 2001 in its decision in Case 213-2: Session of Londonderry v. The Presbytery of Northern New England. That case arose directly from the tension presented in this request between our commitment to inclusiveness and our standards for ordination. The decision in that case states:

> It is not unusual for a document such as our Constitution, written at different periods of time and under different circumstances, to exhibit tensions and ambiguities in its provisions. Nevertheless, it is the task of governing bodies and judicial commissions to resolve them in such a way as to give effect to all provisions. It is not within the power of any governing body or judicial commission to declare a properly adopted provision of the Constitution to be invalid. The only appropriate avenue to change or remove a provision of the Constitution is through the process for amendment provided within the Constitution itself. (Minutes, 2001, Part I, 12.1028, emphasis added)

This authoritative interpretation, in part, was elevated to constitutional status with the adoption of the current Form of Government. Therefore, it is not permissible for any council to attempt to identify any section of the Book of Order as having a higher level of importance than other provisions. The Book of Order is to be read and interpreted in its entirety, and any perceived tensions and ambiguities must be resolved in a manner that gives effect to all provisions.

5. At the core of the proposed interpretation is a request to permit governance by persons under thirty years of age who have not been ordained as ruling elders. The provision that the church is to be governed by presbyters (ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament) is long established. Section F-3.0202 was first articulated in the Book of Order by one of our antecedent denominations in 1797. Furthermore, the requirement that commissioners be presbyters assures their consent to the ordered ministries’ constitutional questions.

The Book of Order already contains several provisions designed to mitigate the tension named by the synod. Congregations and sessions determine the persons who will serve in their ordered ministries and may nominate and elect any active member they have determined to be qualified according to the standards necessary for service. It is required under G-2.0401 that “the nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403).” Presbyteries and synods are required to adopt plans regarding the number and allocation of commissioners that include “a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103” (G-3.0301, G-3.0401). Councils may adjust the length of terms to make it possible for a younger member to serve.

The review of a congregation by the presbytery through consultative visits or the administrative review process can be avenues for raising concerns of representation and inclusiveness and developing strategies for addressing these concerns. Committees on representation in particular exist to keep issues of participation and inclusiveness at the forefront, including informing the work of nominating committees.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the ideals articulated in F-1.0403 and F-1.0404 have not been fully realized. Thus, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) urged all levels of councils “to actively consider ways to involve, in the whole life of the church, those previously left out from the table. This includes, but is not limited to, young adults, and those involved in new worshiping communities.” The Advisory Committee on the Constitution therefore advises that if the assembly concurs with the intent of the overture that it direct the Office of the General Assembly, Department of Constitutional Interpretation, as recommended in its advice above.

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**Item 06-23**

[The assembly approved Item 06-23. See pp. 70, 73.]

*Request 18-03 Advisory Committee on the Constitution Findings and Recommendations as to Request 18-03.*

In response to Request 18-03, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following authoritative interpretation of W-4.0605:
Each session who has authority over congregational property in accordance with G-4.02, shall not be compelled to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the session believes is contrary to “the session’s discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God” (W-4.0605). Other councils with authority over denominational property have similar responsibility for discernment and understanding.

There is nothing in the language of W-4.0605 that makes a session wedding policy or decision about a particular marriage service contingent upon a wedding decision by a pastor. The two decisions are made separately and need not be made in any particular sequence.

Sessions may adopt, and may only adopt, wedding policies that are consistent with the Constitution. Wedding policies should be applied prayerfully with the discernment of the Holy Spirit and understanding of the Word of God.

Questions Received

Request 18-03 from the Presbytery of National Capital presents the following questions upon which it seeks constitutional interpretation:

1. Does the session have authority to set policy regarding weddings on church property?
2. Are there items which may not be included in such a policy?

Findings

Pursuant to G-3.0501c and G-6.02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

1. With respect to the first question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the question presents a question for which interpretation of W-4.0605 is needed.

Historically, the session has authority to determine the use of congregational property under G-4.02. The session sets policy on worship times, educational usage, and weddings, among other things. The session has the authority to manage the property for the furtherance of its mission (G-3.0201c). This authority includes the use of the property for marriage services.

2. With respect to the second question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the question presents a question for which interpretation of W-4.0605 is advisable. Any wedding policy adopted by a session must not be a violation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution, including section F-1.0403.

Section W-4.0605 permits each session to determine the use of congregational property, and this allows a session to decide not to permit use of the property for marriage services. We recognize there is a tension between W-4.0605 and F-1.0403. Section F-1.0403 calls for unity in diversity and full participation in worship, but also recognizes there may be reasons stated in the Constitution, including those stated in W-4.0605, that may be a basis to deny participation and representation. (See Book of Confessions, Second Helvetic Confession, 5.129 and 5.241, and the Confession of 1967, 9.34.) This tension is unresolved and can only be addressed by individual councils through discernment of the Holy Spirit and the understanding of the Word of God.

Recent revisions of the Book of Order have tried to replace lists containing specific elements with broader guiding principles. To provide a list would presume it to be exhaustive.

Item 06-24

[In response to Item 06-24, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 70, 73–74.]

Alternate Resolution:

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directs the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Amend Section D-10.0401c(1) to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or”
2. Amend D-10.0401b as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person, the five-year time limit shall not apply. There is also no time limit for charging that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-10.0401c(1) or (2) failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk. Both charges may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.”

In response to a referral from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) (Item 06-16), the Office of the General Assembly recommends one of the following:

1. That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) refer Item 06-16 to the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which was appointed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to review and revise the entire Rules of Discipline in the Book of Order.

Or

2. If the 223rd General Assembly (2018) would like to immediately address the problems raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to Item 06-16 (see text of ACC Advice on Item 06-16 in the Rationale section below), the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Amend D-10.0401 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“When Sexual Abuse

“b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person, the five-year time limit shall not apply. Charges may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.

“Definition of Sexual Abuse

“Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to

“(1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years or older without the mental capacity to consent; or

“(2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position.

“(3) any person who knew or reasonably should have known of the danger or risk of sexual abuse as defined in (1) or (2) above posed by perpetrators with known histories of boundary violations and failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk.”

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2016: Item 06-16. A Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 49, 52, 378)

The following is the Advice from the ACC on Item 06-16:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that Item 06-16 from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns raises issues that the assembly should consider.

The overture seeks to extend the time limitation for filing charges in cases of alleged “gross negligence enabling the sexual abuse of another person” from the default time limit of five years to “within ten years of the date the person making the accusation attains the age of eighteen, or within five years of the date the person making the accusation discovers or reasonably should have discovered that gross negligence enabled the sexual abuse to occur, whichever later occurs.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution concurs with the intent of the recommendation and finds the intent consistent with the purposes of discipline. The recommendation, however, raises the following issues:

1. The recommendation proposes introducing legal terminology into the Rules of Discipline that is not constitutionally defined. “Gross negligence” and “enabling” are defined in particular jurisdictions of secular law, but are not defined in the Constitution. As with the term “sexual abuse” in D-10.0401c, a specific definition is warranted to justify the waiver or extension of time limits for filing charges.

2. A specific definition is also necessary to help identify the scope of persons to be held responsible for “gross negligence enabling the sexual abuse of another person.”
### Item 06-NB

[The assembly approved Item 06-NB as amended. See pp. 69, 74.]

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) appoint a six-person task force to study, work, pray, and discern on the issue of paid parental and family leave “[for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) employees, including but not limited to ministers,] to implement a faithful resolution with all the challenges associated with this.

**[The duties of this task force shall include but not be limited to:**

1. Gathering information from multiple sources regarding implementing paid family leave.

2. Entering into discussion with the Board of Pensions and other applicable bodies to discern how to most effectively implement and finance the recommendations of the committee, those being: Provide eight weeks of paid family leave and four weeks unpaid leave for plan participants.
[3. Seek other options similar in intent should programs implementing these recommendations prove economically unfeasible for employers and participants.

[4. Exploring how to encourage employers to extend love and compassion to these employees by granting appropriate requests for family leave time.

[5. Exploring how to provide financial assistance to help local congregations pay for moderator coverage and/or pastoral care during leave period within the local usual pay rate guidelines. This task force shall prepare a report with recommendations for implementation to be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

[6. In addition to the six task force members, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, and the Board of Pensions will advise the task force with voice, but will not have vote.]

This task force [will report to] [shall prepare a report with recommendations for implementation to be submitted to] the 224th General Assembly (2020).

[Financial Implications: Per Capita $13,344. Total—$26,688]

Item 06-Info

A. Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary

I. Narrative

Assigned Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee on Litigation is composed of six Presbyterian attorneys. Each General Assembly elects a class made up of two members to a six-year term. The General Assembly Nominating Committee nominates persons for the ACL who fit the criteria for eligibility. The Advisory Committee on Litigation was established by the 200th General Assembly (1988) to advise the Stated Clerk on matters relating to litigation.

The consultations typically take place via telephone or video conferencing after committee members have been provided copies of all pertinent pleadings, orders, and General Assembly policy information. The committee ordinarily meets face-to-face every two years. It is normally consulted whenever the Stated Clerk is asked to participate in litigation involving matters of civil and religious liberty, church and state relations, and other matters related to the mission and interests of the church.

The Advisory Committee on Litigation reviews each of the cases, amicus briefs, and General Assembly policy and constitution based on seventeen criteria and advises the Stated Clerk on the advisability of becoming an amici party in an amicus brief in the particular case.

II. Disposition of Cases Joined (2014–2016)


Petition for Certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court

On July 21, 2014, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of denominational religious partners on behalf of petitioners’ petition for a writ of certiorari on the question of “Whether the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment requires courts resolving a property dispute within a hierarchical church to give legal effect to a preexisting trust provision in the church’s canons.” The U.S. Supreme Court declined to accept the petition for a writ of certiorari on November 3, 2014.

EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch

U.S. Supreme Court

On December 10, 2014, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of faith-based, religious partners on behalf of petitioner, EEOC, agreeing that religious freedom in the workplace as specifically allowed under the religious accommodation provision of Title VII is as important to most believers as freedom from restrictions on religious practice imposed by the government. The case revolved around the denial of employment to a Muslim woman because she wore a head scarf during the interview and Abercrombie and Fitch had a policy against the wearing of head gear. There was
no discussion of any needed accommodation during the interview, so the Court of Appeals stated that the respondent did not have actual knowledge of a need for accommodation. On June 1, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court found in behalf of petitioner, finding that the Title VII religious accommodation provision requires that an employer may not make an applicant’s religious practice, confirmed or otherwise, a factor in employment decisions. There is no element of knowledge required on behalf of the employer to make a claim under the Title VII religious accommodation act.


**Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals**

On April 6, 2015, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of denominational religious partners in *State of Texas, et al v. United States of America, et. al.* The amicus brief, following General Assembly social policy, called for the lifting of an injunction that put four to five million United States immigrants at risk of deportation. The injunction was on an Executive Action (referred to in the brief as Immigration Guidance) that, among other things, offered a legal reprieve to the undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents who have lived in the country for at least five years. It also expanded the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that allowed immigrants under thirty years old who arrived as children to apply for a deportation deferral. Neither of these programs give undocumented persons legal status, but they do offer three years without the risk of deportation and the ability to work with authorization. Families would get to stay together and enjoy improved economic stability. On May 26, 2015, the Fifth Circuit denied the federal government’s motion for a stay of the District Court’s order of injunction. The federal government appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has agreed to hear the case.

On March 8, 2016, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of denominational religious partners in *State of Texas, et al v. United States of America, et. al.* in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. The amicus brief, following General Assembly social policy, called for the lifting of an injunction that put four to five million United States immigrants at risk of deportation. The Amici concurred with the United States that the secretary has the authority and discretion to defer removing particular undocumented persons.

On June 23, 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the lower-court injunction blocking the deferred action for undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents who have lived in the country for at least five years.

**III. Cases Joined 2016–2018**


*United States District Court*

*Eastern District of New York*

On February 16, 2017, the Reverend J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), joined other faith leaders in signing an amicus curiae brief opposing the president’s executive order creating a travel ban. The interfaith coalition of religious congregations, associations, and organizations united “to speak with one voice against the Executive Order issued on January 27, 2017, suspending the United States Refugee Admissions Program and halting entry into the United States by citizens of seven majority-Muslim nations,” the brief states.

The amicus brief supports a case brought by Hameed Khalid Darweesh, Haider Sameer Abdulkhaleq Alshawi, and others “similarly situated” after they were detained at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York immediately following President Donald Trump’s executive order issued to allegedly “protect the American people from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals admitted to the United States.” The executive order and subsequent detainment of refugees and others legally vetted to enter the United States prompted protests at airports and cities around the country. The class action suit brought by Darweesh and Alshawi is accompanied by other similar cases moving through the judicial system at different levels.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its General Assembly, has passed more than twenty pieces of policy in support of refugees and refugee resettlement since 1947. Among those policies is a 2016 action to respond to the biblical directive to provide for the stranger and the sojourner by advocating for and seeking to improve matters related to U.S. government resettlement policies.

The Administration eventually settled with the plaintiffs ensuring that all travelers who were barred from the country on the basis of the ban and have not since returned to the United States are informed of their right to reapply for a visa and provided with a list of free legal services organizations that can help them do so.


*U.S. Supreme Court*

U.S. Supreme Court with other interfaith religious institutions and organizations in opposition to the president’s Executive Order that was intended to stop all refugees from entering the United States as well as the nationals of six predominantly Muslim countries. The amicus brief addressed two major concerns—religion discrimination and restriction on refugee admission. On the issue of religious discrimination, the brief stated that by undermining the constitutional guarantees of free exercise and non-discrimination, the Executive Order harmed not only Muslims but members of all faiths, who rely on those basic constitutional rights to freely practice their religions.

The amicus brief also addressed how the ban inexplicably burdened refugees in that:

The Order further targets refugees—the most vulnerable and oppressed populations in the world. We are in the midst of the largest refugee crisis of our time. More than 21 million refugees have fled war, persecution, terrorism, enslavement, and other horrific abuses. Amici’s faiths compel them to aid refugees in crisis. Yet the Order precludes people of all faiths from fulfilling their moral and religious obligations toward refugees in desperate need of assistance. It already has had a devastating impact on faith-based refugee-assistance programs, and it will continue to do so unless enjoined. The decisions of the courts of appeals affirming the injunctions of the travel and refugee bans should be affirmed.

The amicus brief asked that the issues in the travel ban be found unconstitutional and terminated.

On October 10, 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated the lower court judgment and remanded to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit to dismiss the case as moot since the case was a challenge to a temporary executive order that expired on its own terms on September 24, 2017. The U.S. Supreme Court expressed no view on the merits of the appeal.

B. Advisory Committee on Litigation Self-Study

History

In 1987, the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) joined with the office of the Advisory Council on Church and Society to carry out a consultation on involvement in litigation in civil courts. Guidelines were prepared to assist the Stated Clerk in carrying out responsibilities in connection with possible participation in litigation in civil courts. In 1988, the Office of the General Assembly recommended that the General Assembly establish an Advisory Committee on Litigation (ACL) to advise the Stated Clerk on various matters of litigation for which the clerk is responsible under Organization for Mission, IV.B.2.b. This body was anticipated to strengthen the work of the Office of the General Assembly in dealing with matters such as the filing of briefs amicus curiae (friend of the court briefs), and other, more direct forms of participation in litigation in secular civil and criminal courts.

Purpose and Form

The Advisory Committee on Litigation is made up of six elected persons who are members of a PC(USA) council and ordinarily an attorney-at-law. These six elected persons are experienced in legal fields that relate to issues that may be the subject of legal proceedings in which the church is, or may become, interested. The committee advises the Stated Clerk regarding participation in litigation related to matters of civil and religious liberty, relations between church and state, and any other matters related to the mission and interest of the church.

Occasionally an issue will arise in a presbytery or synod where it will be appropriate for that council to join, or even draft, an amicus curiae brief in support of religious liberty or a position of interest to the governing body. An amicus curiae brief is literally a “friend of the court” brief. It may raise an issue not explicitly raised by the parties, but one quite relevant to the case. Usually such briefs are filed only with leave of the court. They are almost always limited to appellate level filings.

The Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gives the General Assembly Stated Clerk authority to join in such briefs on behalf of the General Assembly. Since 1988, the Advisory Committee on Litigation has advised the clerk on whether to join or file particular amicus curiae briefs. The General Assembly has approved seventeen criteria for use in determining whether to file a particular brief (see below).

When a case arises, the Advisory Committee on Litigation (ACL) reviews all the case material, any social policy of the General Assembly, and any procedure of the PC(USA) that may pertain to the case. They then apply the criteria in deciding how to advise the State Clerk. This process can take many hours of intense evaluation and may result in a recommendation that the Stated Clerk participate in, either directly as a party or by filing an amicus brief, in the litigation. The ACL may also advise that the Stated Clerk not participate in the particular litigation for a variety of reasons.

Over the years, the General Assembly has also occasionally requested that the Advisory Committee on Litigation be a resource in the development of social witness policy when that social witness policy may have secular legal implications.

When the General Assembly Stated Clerk is invited to join or file a brief that would have regional or local implications, the Assistant Stated Clerk will normally contact the Stated Clerk of the affected mid council. She will provide, upon request, copies of legal pleadings, relevant scriptural, confessional, or General Assembly social policy statements on the substantive issue. If there is a draft amicus brief, she will normally share that as well.
A presbytery or synod may join the General Assembly Stated Clerk on briefs if that fits within the social witness of the congregations within the presbytery or synod. The appropriate signatory on such a brief is typically the stated clerk as the ecclesiastical representative of mid council. A presbytery may provide by rule for some other person (such as an executive presbyter) who bears that responsibility. It is advisable for the mid council to develop a process and identify responsible officers or employees. If legal issue arises within a presbytery or synod that would benefit by the filing of an amicus brief, the General Assembly Stated Clerk will often join the presbytery upon request.

Self-Evaluation

1. In applying the criteria for evaluation of litigation, the Advisory Committee on Litigation has a thorough definition of its work and process for completing its work. Because of the nature of litigation, this usually is applied in a short time frame for each particular case involvement. However, the evaluation process happens continually for as long as the Stated Clerk is involved in a particular litigation.

2. The Advisory Committee on Litigation regularly evaluates it advice to the Stated Clerk as it applies to evolving civil law and evolving social policy of the PC(USA). The Stated Clerk may participate in conference calls and meetings of the Advisory Committee on Litigation. The Stated Clerk additionally employs an Assistant Stated Clerk as a liaison with the Advisory Committee on Litigation.

3. Since the Advisory Committee on Litigation advises only the Stated Clerk, the committee itself does not employ a strategy for communication with the church-at-large. The Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly does have a strategy for communication of any litigation in which the Stated Clerk participates through amicus briefs or as a direct party. The OGA has created a webpage that includes copies of all briefs filed by the Stated Clerk as an amicus or a direct party. Occasionally the Office of the General Assembly provides press releases that also points out General Assembly policy that guided the decision to join as an amici in a particular legal case.

4. The Advisory Committee on Litigation utilizes technology and their professional expertise to advise the Stated Clerk on any needs they may have to fulfill their function as an advisory committee.

5. The Advisory Committee on Litigation budget includes bi-annual, face-to-face meetings at which they review current, past, and future civil legal issues of interest to the PC(USA) and their evolving civil legal precedents and church social policy, legal research fees, conference calls and video conferencing, legal resources and representation to General Assembly.

Criteria for Evaluation of an Amicus Brief in Litigation

1. Does the case raise a significant religious or ethical issue of concern for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

2. Has the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through the General Assembly, the Church Constitution, or accepted biblical, confessional, and theological principles, advocated or adopted a position that is relevant to the issue or issues raised in the case?

3. Can the church’s position on the issue or issues be persuasively and effectively communicated in the amicus brief?

4. Does the amicus brief enunciate statements inconsistent with policies and positions approved by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the General Assembly or inconsistent with accepted theological principles? If such an inconsistency exists, can the church’s position be expressed in such a way as to accurately reflect the church’s position without compromising that position or the integrity of the amicus brief or should a separate amicus brief be prepared?

5. Is the proposed amicus brief well-written and practically and legally well-reasoned and persuasive?

6. Has the committee and the Stated Clerk been provided with adequate time to evaluate any proposed amicus brief and the issues presented?

7. Are the issues raised in the case based on a properly developed record and have key pleadings and lower court decisions been supplied?

8. What other organizations, including other religious entities, have been requested to join as amici?

9. Who has prepared the draft amicus brief and for what purpose?

10. Are there issues in the case that will need interpretation to presbyteries and congregations? Should pastors and governing bodies be notified of the case so that they may be able to answer questions? If yes, staff are instructed to notify.

11. Are the issues raised in the case of sufficient importance to justify participation?

12. Does the proposed amicus brief really add anything to the court's consideration of the issues presented?
13. Within the judicial system, is the level appropriate for the church’s participation?

14. What positions or views will other proposed amici take with respect to the issue or issues raised?

15. Is there a legislative remedy?

16. Criteria 1–5 are guidelines and in each case the committee will exercise its best judgment, but may also consider other factors in making its decision.

17. Is there a significant or passionate constituency within the PC(USA) who might disagree with the position of the brief?

Stated Clerk’s Comments
Self-Study of the Advisory Committee on Litigation

The Advisory Committee on Litigation is important to the public witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding theological, moral, and social justice concerns through the judicial system in the United States. Such witness requires knowledge of General Assembly policy and an understanding of the implications of particular judicial actions or inaction on how they are lived out in our society. The General Assembly empowered the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to make such witness after consultation and advice from the Advisory Committee on Litigation.

The Advisory Committee on Litigation was created to provide the legal advice and expertise to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. It is composed of six Presbyterian attorneys who advise the Stated Clerk on the legal and judicial implications of potential amicus briefs that the church is invited to enter from time to time to promote religious freedom, human rights, and social justice.

As the Stated Clerk responsible for making the decisions to engage in secular judicial actions as a form of social witness, I am grateful for the wisdom, commitment, and understanding that this committee offers. The advice from the committee has greatly enhanced my understanding of the secular judicial system and has enabled the church to make an important witness in a number of areas about which the General Assembly holds significant social policy.

The General Assembly Standing Rules require that a survey be sent to the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who are affected by the committee being reviewed. Below is my response as the only “client” of the Advisory Committee on Litigation.

V. Assessment Criteria

A. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership

1. Each committee or commission was created by the church and exists to serve and support the church’s mission in a particular area. Each committee or commission is expected to exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).

The Advisory Committee on Litigation serves to advise myself as Stated Clerk on the complicated connection between the social witness of the General Assembly and the secular judicial process. When a request is received by the Office of the General Assembly that I join an amicus brief in a secular judicial case, the Advisory Committee on Litigation reviews the request, General Assembly policies, the underlying case, whether it affects individuals or mid councils within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and then advises me.

The committee fulfills their charge and offers detailed advice to me on all of the issues presented in the particular amicus brief.

2. The basic process of the committee or commission should demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly. The committee or commission should exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which the committee or commission acts.

The Advisory Committee on Litigation has consistently advised me based on the criteria established by the General Assembly and appended as a part of this self-study. The members of the committee review complicated cases, briefs, and social policy often within a quick time frame and then honestly advise on the effects of any particular amicus witness.

3. The committee or commission should exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity.

The ACL received for its review several potential amicus opportunities for social witness from other agencies or committees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and meets occasionally with other General Assembly committees to discuss ongoing issues of interest to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
4. The committee or commission should provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly. The committee uses social policy passed by the General Assembly in its evaluation of potential amicus briefs in particular cases.

B. Effectiveness of Services

The services of the committee or commission are consistent with its assembly or constitutional mandate.

1. The committee or commission has a defined and consistent process for completing its work.

   The committee follows its established criteria and is available to advise the Stated Clerk either by email, conference call, or face-to-face meeting, often evaluating complicated issues. I am thankful to the members of the committee for their attention to highly complex issues often within a very short timeframe.

2. The committee or commission has a regular process of self-evaluation of its services.

   The committee files with the General Assembly a regular update of the judicial cases in which I joined as an amici party and gives an update on the secular outcome of the particular case.

3. The committee or commission employs a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large.

   The committee’s primary role is to advise the Stated Clerk only so that the committee itself does not have a major interpretive role to the church. However, the Office of the General Assembly has established a website that publishes the amicus briefs filed by the Stated Clerk.

4. The committee or commission utilizes current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.

   The Advisory Committee on Litigation makes regular and effective use of technology in its work so that most of the work is accomplished through electronic, telephonic, and video conferencing.

5. The committee or commission has developed a vision and plans for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and context of the PC(USA).

   The committee holds a face-to-face meeting every two years in which it reviews the General Assembly social policies and current issues before the judicial system. This has led to giving priority in briefs to issues of First Amendment Establishment and Free Exercise clause interpretations, human rights, and justice for immigrants.

Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2012 IV.B and IV.C.4

Organization for Mission, IV.B.1., IV.B.2.b.:

IV. General Assembly Officers and Committees and the Office of the General Assembly ...

B. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

1. The title of the Stated Clerk is “The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

2. Functions of the Stated Clerk [For functions related to General Assembly meetings, see Standing Rule H.2.) ...

   b. As an officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall preserve and defend the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and support the decisions, actions, and programs of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall give advisory opinions concerning the meaning of the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and shall give advisory opinions on the meaning of the actions of the General Assembly. When the Stated Clerk deems it necessary, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, the Stated Clerk may retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts. (Organization for Mission, IV.B.1.–2.)

Organization for Mission, IV.B.4.a.–f.:

4. Advisory Committee on Litigation

   a. The Advisory Committee on Litigation shall advise the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly in connection with instituting or participating in legal proceedings (see Functions of the Stated Clerk earlier in this section).

   b. The members of the committee shall ordinarily be attorneys, and the members shall be experienced in fields related to issues that may be the subject of legal proceedings in which the church is, or may become, interested. The committee shall be composed of six persons, elected by the General Assembly upon nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The advisory committee may invite other persons with special competency related to particular cases or situations to participate in the consideration of particular cases or issues. The members shall be evenly divided
into three classes, shall serve six-year terms, and shall be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. Members of this committee are exempted from the prohibition against service on more than one entity of the assembly set forth in Section IV.C.1.c. above.

c. The committee shall elect its own moderator and ordinarily shall meet at the call of the Stated Clerk. The committee may carry on its work by correspondence, telephone consultation (including conference telephone calls), or meetings.

d. The committee shall advise the Stated Clerk regarding participation in litigation related to matters of civil and religious liberty, relations between church and state, and any other matters related to the mission and interest of the church. The Advisory Committee on Litigation shall advise the Stated Clerk regarding the establishment and maintenance of a resource file of legal documents as a means of assisting the mid councils and agencies of the church in initiating or participating in litigation in the areas within the concerns of the committee.

e. The committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly, receive staff services as provided by the Stated Clerk, and designate a representative to the annual session of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule B.3.).

f. The committee shall report to each session of the General Assembly. (Organization for Mission, IV.C.4.a.–f.)

C. Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) Agency Summary

Assigned Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (“ACC”) is composed of nine voting members as established by the Book of Order, G-3.0501c and G-6.02. The nine voting members, teaching and ruling elders, are required by the current Manual of the General Assembly to be stated clerks or former stated clerks of synods or presbyteries, former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, polity professors, or other qualified persons with knowledge of and experience with the Constitution and polity of the church. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is a member ex-officio without vote.

With regard to questions requiring an interpretation of the Book of Order, the ACC’s responsibilities are set out in G-6.02 as follows:

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

With regard to proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the ACC’s mandated responsibilities are set out in G-6.04b, as follows:

b. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such proposals to amend the Book of Order to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (G-6.02), which shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At least sixty days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, the advisory committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations, which may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the committee. The General Assembly shall not consider any amendment until it has considered the report and any recommendations from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Process and Procedures, Responsibilities and Relationships

The ACC does not interpret the Constitution. The role of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, as its title suggests and as its constitutional mandate clearly establishes, is to advise the General Assembly. The ACC’s advice has no authority until and unless it is approved by the General Assembly. With respect to proposed amendments to the Constitution, the ACC focuses on clarity of proposed language and consistency of the proposed amendment with the Constitution. The ACC occasionally finds that the intent of the proposal is already inherent in other provisions of the Constitution or that it could be achieved by slight changes in language, by placing the amendment in a different section, or by different language entirely. On occasion, the ACC has suggested such changes in order to avoid inconsistencies within the Book of Order, and also to make as few changes as possible in existing paragraphs and in section numbering. At least sixty days prior to each General Assembly, the ACC is required to report its findings to the assembly. These findings may include advice for amended versions of any proposed changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the ACC.

With respect to requests for interpretation, as well as advice on overtures, the ACC seeks to provide advice that is based on constitutional study, not on the substance of the issues at hand. In many circumstances, the question has been answered by earlier interpretations and does not require action by the General Assembly. In these cases, the inquirer is notified of the standing interpretation. In order to make clear the questions raised, the ACC has focused the presentation of the request on the question presented, together with the ACC’s findings and advice. If the question was not clear from the request received, the ACC has sought clarification from the individual transmitting the request.
All overtures and reports containing proposed amendments and all requests for interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly must be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G- 6.02, G-6.04a). This 120-day time period allows the ACC time to consider and research carefully each proposed amendment and request.

The ACC completed its work for the 223rd General Assembly (2018) during two, face-to-face meetings and one teleconference. The initial meeting and orientation to ACC work was held on October 11–13, 2017, in St. Louis, Missouri. At a five-day meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, March 16–20, 2018, the ACC prepared its responses to constitutional issues to be considered by the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The ACC finalized its advice in a teleconference meeting on April 9, 2018.

After it has received and considered the advice of the ACC, the General Assembly is free to take whatever action it discerns reflects the will of Christ on proposed amendments, requests for interpretations, and referrals.

The primary focus of the ACC is to fulfill its constitutional function to provide advice to the General Assembly concerning overtures that seek to amend the Constitution, and concerning requests for interpretation of the Constitution.

**Self-Study**

Every six years, the ACC (and other entities) are required by the *Manual of the General Assembly* to complete a self-study. The ACC was required to complete a self-study for the 223rd General Assembly (2018). It was reported to the General Assembly in a timely fashion. The ACC is grateful for the assistance of the Office of Research Services.

**Consultations**

The ACC was invited to consult with the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which was appointed after the 222nd General Assembly (2016). A member of the ACC has been appointed as a liaison to that task force.

**Editorial Corrections**

The *Organization for Mission* provides, at Section IV.B.2.c., that the Stated Clerk shall prepared editorial changes in the *Book of Order*, which should be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, provided the changes do not alter the substance of the text approved by the presbyteries. No editorial changes have been made since the conclusion of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

**ACC Membership and OGA Staff Support**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution reluctantly received the resignation of Ruling Elder Moon Lee, Class of 2020 (Synod of the Northeast) early in 2018. Due to the timing of his resignation, no appointment was made to fill that vacancy.

On behalf of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution expresses its thanks and appreciation to Teaching Elders Daryl Fisher-Ogden, Daniel Saperstein, and Daniel S. Williams for their dedicated service to the church through their work on the ACC. Each has brought unique gifts to the committee process.

The ACC is grateful for the staff assistance of Ruling Elder Laurie Griffith, director for constitutional interpretation, Flor Velez-Diaz, manager of judicial process and social witness, and Diane Minter, Mid Council Ministries program assistant for administration.

Finally, the ACC is deeply grateful for the vision and witness of Stated Clerk J Herbert Nelson, II, who serves as an ex officio member of the ACC. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve with him.

**D. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission**

1. **Roster of Former Members (D-5.0206b)**
   a. **Class of 2016**

   Barbara Bundick, Synod of Lincoln Trails; A Bates Butler III, Synod of the Sun; Jay Lewis, Synod of the Trinity; Jeana Lungwitz. Synod of the Sun; Patrick Notley, Synod of the Northwest.

   b. **Class of 2014**

   Bradley C. Copeland, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; Meta Shoup Cramer, Synod of the Covenant; H. Clifford Looney, Synod of Alaska Northwest; Michael Lukens, Synod of Lakes and Prairies.
c. **Class of 2012**

Susan Cornman, Synod of Rocky Mountains; Gregory A. Goodwiller, Synod of Living Waters; Yun Jin Kim, Synod of Mid Atlantic; Tony Cook, Synod of the Pacific.

2. **Final Decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commission**

The Permanent Judicial Commission met in Louisville, Kentucky, on October 6–8, 2016; in San Antonio, Texas. Having received the final decisions from the commission from its clerk, the Stated Clerk now reports to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) the final decisions received in the following cases and advises the General Assembly that they will be included in the minutes:

a. **Remedial Appeal 222-07**

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PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Sylvia Kuzmak
Appellant,

v.

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey
Appellee.

DECISION AND ORDER

Remedial Case 222-07

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Arrival Statement

This remedial case comes before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on appeal filed by Sylvia Kuzmak (Appellant), from a May 19, 2015, Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast (SPJC). The Notice of Appeal was received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on July 15, 2015.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Appellant has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Appellant was present and was not represented by counsel. The Committee of Counsel for Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey (Appellee or Session), was represented by Kimberly Tsimbinos.

History

Appellant filed a complaint with Monmouth Presbytery (Presbytery) on November 18, 2013, alleging that the Session, at its August 20, 2013, meeting and in a letter to Appellant dated August 21, 2013, “did fail to take adequate corrective action to problems identified by [Appellant] after the June 9 [2013] congregational meeting.” The officers of the Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC) dismissed the Complaint on March 4, 2014, finding that the PPJC did not have jurisdiction over two of the delinquencies, Appellant had standing to file the Complaint, the Complaint was timely filed only as to some of the delinquencies, and the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted. Appellant appealed this decision to the full body on March 20, 2014. After a hearing on the preliminary questions, the PPJC dismissed the Complaint on April 27, 2014, finding that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted.

Appellant appealed the decision of the PPJC to the SPJC on June 27, 2014. The SPJC Moderator and Clerk answered all of the preliminary questions for appeal in the affirmative. After a hearing, the SPJC issued its Decision and Order on May 19, 2015, upholding the Decision of the PPJC that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted.
Specifications of Error

There are five (5) specifications of error raised by Appellant in the Notice of Appeal to the GAPJC dated July 11, 2015, most with sub parts. This Commission has elected to repeat below the specifications of error in substantially the same language used in the Notice of Appeal.

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation of the fourth criterion to accept a remedial case (D-6.0305), namely “the complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted.”

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 2: Injustice in the process or decision, due to the SPJC failing to give the Appellant an opportunity to know and to respond to their grounds for dismissal of the case.

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 3: Hastening to a decision before evidence or testimony is fully received.

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 4: Irregularity in the proceedings concerning establishing and sharing the record.

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 5: Injustice in the process or decision, due to the SPJC’s misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the complaint and the record of the case.

This specification is not sustained.

Decision

This Commission determines that Appellant failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. In arriving at this conclusion, this Commission must assume the truth of all facts alleged in the complaint and then determine whether those assumed facts warrant any relief. (See, McKittrick vs. The Session of West End Presbyterian Church of Albany, New York, Minutes, 2003, pp. 272-274).

As this Commission previously ruled:

Within our polity, certain responsibilities, and the power to implement those responsibilities, are assigned to councils. A council has the authority to act or not act in matters within its discretion. A delinquency may arise when a council fails to act when it is required to act under the Constitution. However, a council does not commit a delinquency when it refrains from exercising its power in discretionary matters, nor does a council commit a delinquency when it exercises its best judgment in a manner other than a member might wish. Buck vs. The Session of Morrow Presbyterian Church, 222-02.

The disciplinary process is not suitable to resolve all issues (See, D-1.0103). Important operational matters often are most efficiently managed by the process of administrative review by contacting the appropriate presbytery officials (See, G-3.0108). Appellant conceded that Appellee responded to the issues she raised, but claimed they were not cured. Appellant does not cite any constitutional articles that the responses violated. Session’s responses to Appellant’s issues were within its constitutional discretion.

Appellant has failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. The case is dismissed and the other specifications of error are not sustained.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission is upheld and this case is dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Session of First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey, report this Decision and Order to the Session at its first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Monmouth report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

The Synod of the Covenant commissioner position was vacant for this proceeding.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 222-07, Sylvia Kuzmak, Appellant (Complainant), v. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey, Appellee (Respondent), made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 9th day of April, 2016.

Dated this 9th day of April 2016

b. Remedial Appeal 222-08

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

The Session of the Rutgers
Presbyterian Church, New York, NY,
Complainant,

v.
The Presbyterian Foundation, The
Board of National Missions, and The Presbyterian
Mission Agency,
Respondents.

DECISION ON CHALLENGE TO PRELIMINARY ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
Remedial Case 222-08

Arrival Statement

This is a remedial case of original jurisdiction filed with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) by the Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York, NY (Complainant), against the Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of National Missions, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Respondents). The matter before this Commission is a Challenge to a November 13, 2015, Preliminary Order of the Executive Committee of the GAPJC (GAPJC EC) for Dismissal of the Complaint filed by the Complainant.

The GAPJC EC issued a Preliminary Order dismissing this Complaint on the grounds that the GAPJC does not have jurisdiction to hear the Complaint, the Complainant does not have standing to file the Complaint, and the Complaint does not state a claim upon which relief can be granted. With three of the four preliminary questions found in the negative, the GAPJC EC declined to reach the issue of timeliness.

Complainant’s Notice of Challenge under D-6.0306 was received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on December 10, 2015.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that Complainant’s Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal was properly and timely filed under the provisions of D-6.0306.

Appearances

Complainant was represented by John M. Griem Jr.; the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of National Missions were represented by Richard H.C. Clay; and the Presbyterian Mission Agency was represented by James A. Wilson.

History

The Jarvie Trust Agreement (Trust) was established in 1934 between The Jarvie Commonweal Fund (Jarvie Fund), a not-for-profit corporation formed to provide relief to older Protestants residing within fifty miles of New York City, and the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (BNM). The Jarvie Commonweal Service
(Jarvie Service) was an operation supported solely by the Jarvie Fund. The BNM entered into an agreement with the Presbyterian Foundation (Foundation) to provide asset management of the Jarvie Fund. In accordance with the Trust, the BNM assumed oversight of the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee (Jarvie Committee) and the BNM retained fiduciary responsibility. In 2009, the BNM and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entered into a letter agreement in which their respective roles were defined, including the roles for staffing and administrative services for the Jarvie Service.

In November 2013, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), informed the BNM that it would not renew the letter agreement to provide staffing and administrative services for the Jarvie Service, as this program was no longer aligned with the mission and work of the PMA. The PMA granted the BNM additional transition time to make new arrangements for staffing.

On May 14, 2015, BNM and PMA officials met with the Jarvie Service Executive Director and Assistant Director, informing them of the transition plans to a new third-party provider for the Jarvie Service and that their employer, the PMA, would no longer provide Jarvie Service staff. In a letter dated May 27, 2015, the Jarvie Committee notified the Jarvie Service beneficiaries of the transition and that it would take place over the next month and be fully completed by July 1, 2015.

The Complaint dated September 14, 2015, alleged various irregularities on the part of the Respondents, including eliminating the Director and staff of the Jarvie Service, outsourcing the servicing of its beneficiaries, and not providing the administration of its grant-making program and other functions. Complainant particularly points to the language of paragraph 2 of the Trust as a basis for its allegations:

The Board of National Missions is, to the extent of the income of the Trust Endowment, to assume all obligations, both of money and service, under present commitments of the Jarvie Commonweal Fund to its beneficiaries and, to this end, it (the Board) is to organize a Committee to be known as the James N. Jarvie Commonweal Service, and shall charge said committee with the duty of administering the commitments above assumed and of adding thereto-and continuing as outlined-herein, in fact and in spirit, the Jarvie concept of Old-Age Relief and Service.

Complainant specifically alleges the actions of the Respondents were in violation of the Respondents’ fiduciary duties as providers to and servicers of the Trust, in that the Respondents’ actions usurped the authority granted to the full Jarvie Committee under the Trust. The Respondents disagree.

Complainant states it has standing, in part, because its congregation is located near the center of the outreach area of the Jarvie Service, and it believes parishioners of the Rutgers Church are among the past, present or future beneficiaries of the Jarvie Service, either directly or indirectly, as individual recipients of its grant-making program or as volunteers in support of the Jarvie Service, its grant recipients and the Jarvie Committee.

On November 13, 2015, the GAPJC EC issued a Preliminary Order for Dismissal of the Complaint stating the GAPJC did not have jurisdiction, the Complainant did not have standing, and the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. Because three of the four preliminary questions were answered in the negative, the GAPJC EC did not reach the issue of timeliness.

Complainant filed a Challenge, which was received on December 10, 2015. On December 18, 2015, the GAPJC EC issued an Order accepting the Complainant’s Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal.

Decision

Trust agreements, including an alleged breach of fiduciary duty under such agreements, are typically interpreted under state law. Whether Respondents breached their fiduciary duties in this case rests on an interpretation of the Trust under New York law. Therefore, the Complaint does not state a claim upon which this Commission can grant relief. Consequently, it is unnecessary to reach the other preliminary questions (See, D-6.0306c). While a case could conceivably arise where an ecclesiastical determination of a trust provision falls within this Commission’s purview, this is not such a case.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church of New York, NY, report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

The Synod of the Covenant commissioner position was vacant for this proceeding.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedy Case 222-08, The Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church,
New York, NY, (Complainants) v. The Presbyterian Foundation, The Board of National Missions, and The Presbyterian Mission Agency (Respondents) made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 9th day of April 2016.

Dated this 9th day of April 2016.

c. Remedial Appeal 223-01

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, N.C.
The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, by and through its active Ruling Elders (aka The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, “D-Church,” by and through its active Ruling Elders)
Bob Briner, Brenda Bradshaw, Gilbert Broyles, Lloyd Candell, Bill Durant, William Eadie, Marjorie Heaver, Richard House, Mary Jameson, Henry Leissing, Marguerite Martin, Eloise Murray, William Nagle, Greg Pope, Dale Stephens, Marvin Thomason, all both Individually and as Ruling Elders
Appellants (Original Complainants)
v.
The Presbytery of Western North Carolina
Appellee (Original Respondent)

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (the GAPJC or this Commission) from a February 15, 2016, Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (SPJC). In that Decision, the SPJC dismissed the Appellants’ (originally the Complainants’) case for lack of standing and lack of a timely filing of the Complaint. Appellants appealed the SPJC’s dismissal of the Complaint to the GAPJC.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, Appellants have standing to file this appeal, the appeal was properly and timely filed, and the appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Forrest Norman and Larry Mobley appeared on behalf of Appellants. Greg Goodwiller and Robert Forsythe appeared on behalf of Appellee.

History

In October 2012, Appellants requested that the Presbytery of Western North Carolina (the Presbytery) grant their congregation dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In response, the Presbytery appointed an Administrative Commission (AC) to manage the dismissal process requested by Appellants. Pursuant to the AC’s request, on July 29, 2014, the Presbytery bestowed upon the AC additional general powers under G-3.03, and the powers of Chapter 6, “Church Property,” of the Presbyterian Church in the United States Book of Church Order, 1982–1983 because, following reunion in 1983, First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville elected to be governed by that provision under the church property exceptions of G-4.0208. On August 13, 2014, the AC, acting as the Presbytery, determined under G-4.0207 that there was a continuing congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, thereafter recognized as the “true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” and there was also a group seeking dismissal. On August 15, 2014, the AC sent a letter to the leaders of the group requesting dismissal, as well as the ministers and clerks of session of the Presbytery, informing them of its true church declaration, among other matters. Appellants did not file a complaint within 90 days from that declaration.

Appellants sent a letter to the Presbytery on May 19, 2015, challenging the authority of the AC and alleging a delinquency in failing to grant the Appellants’ dismissal request and requesting it be cured at the Presbytery’s July 28, 2015, meeting.
that meeting, the Presbytery did not take the action requested by Appellants. Appellants then filed a complaint with the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic on August 25, 2015, alleging that the Presbytery engaged in “delinquencies, irregularities and constitutional deviations” by failing to grant the dismissal they had requested in October 2012.

On December 3, 2015, the officers of the SPJC issued the Report of the SPJC Officers’ Findings regarding the Complaint, finding that, although the SPJC had jurisdiction over the Complaint and the Complaint stated a claim upon which relief could be granted, Appellants did not have standing to file the Complaint and the Complaint was not timely filed.

Appellants filed a Challenge to the Report of the SPJC Officers’ Findings with the SPJC on January 4, 2016. After a hearing on Appellants’ Challenge, the SPJC dismissed the Complaint on February 15, 2016, concluding that Appellants did not have standing to file the Complaint and that the Complaint was not timely filed.

Appellants appealed the SPJC’s dismissal of the Complaint to the GAPJC. By Preliminary Order for Hearing issued April 7, 2016, the officers of the GAPJC determined that, under the provisions of D-8.0301, this Commission has jurisdiction, the Appellants have standing to file this Appeal, the Appeal papers were properly and timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal set forth in D-8.0105.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in ruling that the Complaint was not timely filed.

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in ruling that the Complainants did not have standing.

Because of the above finding, this Commission does not reach the issue of standing (see Decision below).

Decision

Appellants alleged in their complaint both irregularities and delinquencies related to claims of: the Presbytery’s failure to act upon or bring to vote the dismissal request; the Presbytery’s grant of authority to the AC and subsequent grant of additional authority; the decision of the AC to identify a schism; and the AC’s declaration of one faction to be the true church. Appellants further alleged the Presbytery improperly deferred to those identified as the true church.

At its core, the issue in this case arises from the AC’s declaration of a true church. According to the Book of Order, “[i]f there is a schism within the membership of a congregation and the Presbytery is unable to effect a reconciliation or a division into separate congregations within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbytery shall determine if one of the factions is entitled to the property because it is identified by the Presbytery as the true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).” G-4.0207. In this case, the Presbytery delegated these powers to the AC at the July 29, 2014, meeting. The AC exercised these powers and declared those members of the First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville who wish to remain with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be the true church and thus entitled to the property. This decision was communicated to the leaders of the group requesting dismissal and to all ministers and clerks of session of the Presbytery by letter dated August 15, 2014.

The Book of Order requires “a complaint of an irregularity shall be filed within ninety days after the alleged irregularity has occurred; and a complaint of a delinquency shall be filed within ninety days after failure or refusal of respondent to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, provided that a written request to do so has been made prior to said meeting.” D-6.0202(a). The AC’s determination of the true church, communicated by letter dated August 15, 2014, set in motion the 90-day period. Appellants argued that the failure of the Presbytery to vote on the dismissal during the Presbytery meeting following their request to cure constituted a delinquency. Where there is no constitutional requirement to act, there can be no delinquency. (Edmunds v. Presbytery of Cape Fear, 1984, 107, 11.088). The allegations of irregularities were not timely filed because Appellants filed their complaint on August 25, 2015, well past the 90-day time period. See generally (Smith v. Presbytery of the Peaks, 2015, 222-04).

This Commission heard significant oral argument concerning standing; this decision, however, does not reach that preliminary question. This Commission is concerned about the silence of the Book of Order regarding the status of the faction that is not declared to be the true church pursuant to G-4.0207. This Commission encourages the General Assembly to provide additional guidance in addressing these issues.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby affirmed and this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the appellants be notified of this Decision and Order.
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina report this Decision to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Western North Carolina enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Terry Epling, Paul Hooker, and Kevin Nollette were excused from this meeting. Commissioner Sarah Thornburg was recused from this appeal and did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Concurrence of Jean C. Kennedy, June L. Lorenzo, and Susan C. McGhee

We concur with the Decision and Order of the GAPJC, save portions of the final paragraph of the decision. While we join this Commission in not reaching the preliminary question of standing, we do not agree with the recommendation for additional guidance on the provisions of G-4.0207.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 223-01, The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, N.C., (Complainants/Appellants) v. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina (Respondent/Appellee) made and announced at Louisville, Ky. this 8th day of October 2016.

Dated this 8th day of October 2016.

d. Remedial Appeal 223-02

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Rev. Patrick Laney, (Decision and Order
Appellant/Complainant, (Remedial Case 223-02
v. (v.

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (the GAPJC or this Commission) from an August 4, 2016, Decision and Order on Motion to Dismiss of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Living Waters (SPJC). In that Decision, the SPJC granted Appellant’s (originally the Complainant’s) Motion to Dismiss. Appellant appealed the SPJC’s dismissal of the Complaint to the GAPJC.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file this appeal, the appeal was properly and timely filed, and the appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under Book of Order D-8.0105.

Appearances

This case arises from Appellant’s allegation of errors by the SPJC in its decision to dismiss a remedial complaint against the North Alabama Presbytery (NAP) for denying Appellant’s request to be restored to his position as Executive Director of Maranatha Camp and Conference Center (Executive Director).

Appellant, Teaching Elder Patrick Laney, was called to the NAP executive staff position of Executive Director on August 1, 2014; the position did not require a teaching elder. He was received into Presbytery membership and began work on October 21, 2014. Conflict with the Maranatha Mission Team arose shortly thereafter and later between Appellant and Presbytery committees and the Executive Presbyter. These conflicts continued unabated through various attempts at reconciliation and counseling. The Presbytery Personnel Committee terminated his employment on August 3, 2015. Presbytery rescinded that action and restored him as Executive Director on August 24, 2015.

Appellant ceased working at the Maranatha Camp and Conference Center (Maranatha Camp) on December 1 and on December 6, 2015, formally requested his relationship with Presbytery and employment as Executive Director be “dissolved” subject to approval of a proposed severance package. He was placed on medical leave on December 15, 2015. The Presbytery Personnel Committee subsequently offered a severance package in return for Appellant’s resignation. He did not respond to the Committee and on December 23, 2015, his wife referred the Committee to Appellant’s legal counsel.

The Presbytery Personnel Committee terminated Appellant’s employment on January 12, 2016. Appellant filed a complaint against Presbytery that was received by the Synod on January 27, 2016, requesting a stay of enforcement of the termination, and that the Synod “provide for a true process of healing and reconciliation” between Appellant and NAP. The SPJC granted a stay on January 29, 2016, which was modified on March 30 and remained in effect until August 4, 2016.

The Presbytery, at a special meeting on April 9, 2016, voted to (i) suspend operations at the Maranatha Camp effective May 10; (ii) eliminate all staff positions at Maranatha Camp, retaining any staff necessary to wind down the Camp’s operation; and (iii) commend the Executive Presbyter for her actions regarding the Maranatha Camp and its personnel.

The Presbytery filed a motion to dismiss the complaint on May 5, 2016. Following Appellant’s attempt to amend the complaint and an additional motion to dismiss, as well as other filings, the SPJC held a hearing and granted the motion to dismiss through its Decision and Order dated August 4, 2016.

A Notice of Appeal and Request for Stay of Enforcement of the Decision of the SPJC was received by this Commission on August 17, 2016. On September 8, 2016, the GAPJC entered a stay of enforcement in accordance with Book of Order D-6.0103d(2), which restored the terms of the SPJC’s Order Denying in Part and Granting in Part a Request to Lift Stay of Enforcement. On September 23, 2016, Appellee filed a Request to Lift the Stay of Enforcement. Following a hearing on December 8, the Request was denied on December 13, 2016.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in concluding that the appellant’s remedial action should be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief could be granted pursuant to D-6.0305d of the Book of Order. This specification of error is sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in its failure to apply the appropriate provisions of the Book of Order, in its failure to apply the correct sections of appellee’s Manual of Administrative Operations to the facts of the case, and in its failure to recognize fatal contradictions to constitutional procedure in the appellee’s Personnel Manual and the job description given to the appellant consistent with Book of Order G-3.0106 and G-3.0110, and in the process the SPJC created injustice in the process and decision and committed errors of constitutional interpretation. In light of the decision on Specification of Error No. 1, this Commission does not reach a decision regarding this specification of error (see Decision below).

Decision

The SPJC erred in granting the motion to dismiss. The SPJC made a finding in its Decision and Order on Motion to Dismiss that the Complaint, as originally filed, stated a claim upon which relief could be granted. While acknowledging that the SPJC “would move forward to a trial” if it were possible to grant relief, the SPJC addressed only two remedies and concluded that “as a result of the Presbytery’s actions on April 9, 2016, there is no longer any relief which can be granted.”

While some of Presbytery’s actions cannot be undone, the SPJC may exercise its declaratory authority to provide future guidance to Presbytery. See generally (Wilber Tom, David Hawbecker, and Thomas Conrad v. Presbytery of San Francisco, 2012, 221-03).

In rendering this decision, this Commission concludes that the Complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted and the SPJC has the authority to grant relief as appropriate. This Commission makes no determination of the merits of this
case or whether Appellant will be able to prove the facts he alleges in his Complaint. See generally (Janet E. Wolfe v. Presbytery of Winnebago, 2008, 219-04).

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of Living Waters Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby reversed and the case remanded for further proceedings consistent with this Commission’s Decision.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of North Alabama report this Decision to the Presbytery of North Alabama at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of North Alabama enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Living Waters report this Decision to the Synod of Living Waters at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Living Waters enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioner Robin Roberts was recused from this appeal and did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 223-02, Rev. Patrick Laney, Appellant v. Presbytery of North Alabama, Appellee, made and announced at San Antonio, Tex., this 26th day of February 2017.

Dated this 26th day of February 2017.

c. Remedial Appeal 223-03

THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Dixie Lewellen,
Appellant/Complainant,

DECISION AND ORDER

v.

Remedial Case 223-03

Presbytery of Los Ranchos,
Appellee/Respondent.

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (the “GAPJC” or “the Commission”) from a June 10, 2016, Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii (the “SPJC”) granting the Presbytery of Los Ranchos’s Motion to Dismiss.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file this Appeal, the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Jack Guiso appeared on behalf of Appellant. Michael E. Williams appeared on behalf of Appellee.
History

On July 23, 2013, the congregation of St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Anaheim, California (St. Paul’s), and Reverend William Halliday requested dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO). The Presbytery of Los Ranchos (PLR) established a Joint Discernment Team (JDT). The JDT recommendation to Presbytery included the following actions: dismissing St. Paul’s to ECO, repayment of Synod Loan of $11,500, and dismissing Reverend Halliday to ECO. These recommendations of the JDT were adopted by Presbytery at its meeting on July 31, 2014. On September 15, 2014, several members of PLR filed a remedial complaint against Presbytery to the Synod regarding the terms of dismissal for several congregations, not including St. Paul’s. (Bucklin v. Presbytery of Los Ranchos).

On November 19, 2015, Presbytery leadership brought a motion to rescind the July 31, 2014, action of Presbytery. Presbytery declared the motion “controversial,” which triggered the Presbytery’s controversial issues policy that mandated that the motion would be considered no sooner than the next stated meeting. On February 25, 2016, the Presbytery voted to rescind the July 31, 2014, action.

On March 21, 2016, Appellant filed a complaint with the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii alleging that the action to rescind was irregular and unconstitutional. On May 5, 2016, Presbytery filed a motion to dismiss the complaint in its entirety. The SPJC granted that motion on June 10, 2016. Appellant filed the Notice of Appeal with the GAPJC on August 26, 2016.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred procedurally in the following ways:

a. The SPJC manifested prejudice by not finding a disqualifying conflict of interest regarding the title to the property of a dismissed congregation held by the synod with an interest in retaining title (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 1). This specification of error is not sustained.

b. The SPJC misconstrued the definition of a quorum and included ineligible attendees (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 2). This specification of error is not sustained.

c. The SPJC misstated the action being considered/contested (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 3). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

d. The SPJC issued contradictory findings on the jurisdictional question (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 4). This specification of error is not sustained.

e. The SPJC hastened to a decision before evidence or testimony was received and disregarded Claimant’s Amended Complaint (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 9). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

f. The SPJC failed to issue timely invitation for Claimant to submit briefs in response to Motion to Dismiss (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 10). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

g. The SPJC failed to comply with requirement that trials be conducted formally with full decorum (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 11). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

h. The SPJC failed to consider and vote on each alleged irregularity (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 12). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation in the following ways:

a. The SPJC misconstrued the standard for summary dismissal and failed to base its determination solely upon the assumed truth of the facts alleged in the complaint, after a thorough examination of the record and opportunity for all parties to be heard (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 5). This specification of error is sustained (see Decision below).

b. The SPJC elicited improper testimony on consultation with St. Paul’s about dismissal (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 6). This specification of error is sustained (see Decision below).

c. The SPJC disregarded Claimant’s allegation that Presbytery was not sufficiently informed when voting on the controversial issue of dismissal and not at all regarding transfer of property title (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 7). This specification of error is not sustained.

d. The SPJC refused Claimant the opportunity to be heard via opening statement, history, and interests in St. Paul’s (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 8). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).
e. The SPJC misconstrued the purpose and effect of a Stay of Enforcement in a remedial case which is intended solely to maintain the status quo until a decision on review is reached, not to allow parties time to amend or rescind their actions (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 13). This specification of error is sustained in part and not sustained in part (see Decision below).

f. The SPJC misconstrued the preconditions for rescinding an action when something has been done as a result of that action that cannot be undone (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 14). This specification of error is not sustained.

g. The SPJC misconstrued Robert’s Rules of Order by rescinding an action that included the resignation of Reverend Halliday (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 13). This specification of error is not sustained.

h. The SPJC misconstrued the prerogative of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos unilaterally to decline further contest of Bucklin v. Los Ranchos (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 16). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

i. The SPJC misconstrued that the power to decide or rescind issues under judicial review resides with the higher council, not reserved to Presbytery (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 17). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

j. The SPJC accepted as true that an action under judicial review can be rescinded simply for convenience without applying the standard (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 18). This specification of error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred by not applying civil law in the following ways:

a. The SPJC accepted as true that Presbytery is not subject to civil law involving breach of contract (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 19). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

b. The SPJC accepted as true that Presbytery is not subject to civil law involving timeliness of contract rescission (Appellant’s Specification of Error No. 20). This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Decision

In a case involving an appeal from a grant of a motion to dismiss, this Commission reviews the decision of the SPJC to determine if the dismissal was proper. In this case, the review led this Commission to focus on whether the complaint filed stated a claim upon which relief can be granted. In determining whether the Complaint states a claim that can be granted, the SPJC and this Commission must assume the truth of facts as alleged in the Complaint (McKittrick v. Session of West End Presbyterian Church, 2003, p. 272) and then determine whether those assumed facts warrant any relief.

Appellant alleges in Specification of Error 2e (Appellant’s Specification of Error 13) that Presbytery’s rescission of the July 31, 2014, action was irregular because Presbytery may have violated a judicial stay which had been entered in a case to which Presbytery was a party. Appellant’s arguments are focused on D-3.0102, which states “[w]hen a case, either remedial or disciplinary, has been transmitted to a permanent judicial commission, the electing council shall take no further judicial action in the case.” That provision, however, does not support Appellant’s position because Presbytery is not the electing council for the SPJC.

Notwithstanding, both parties admit that there was a stay in place, although a copy of the stay was not in the record on appeal. This case was decided on the basis of a motion to dismiss and the record does not provide information on whether evidence was presented as to the content and extent of the stay. If the stay did prohibit the actions taken by Presbytery, a claim that warranted relief may have been stated. In the proper circumstances, the SPJC could overturn the actions of Presbytery. For these reasons, Specification of Error 2e (Appellant’s Specification of Error 13) is sustained in part and not sustained in part.

Appellant further argues that the SPJC did not apply the appropriate standard of review. The decision of the SPJC after a hearing on Respondent’s motion to dismiss states: “Finding the Respondent’s arguments to be correct, the motion to dismiss is granted.” In its motion to dismiss, Respondent argued that Complainant could not meet her burden of proof by the preponderance of the evidence, citing D-7.0402a. This provision applies to the standard of review in trials where both parties have an opportunity to present evidence. As set forth above, the standard of review on a motion to dismiss requires the facts in the complaint to be taken as true precisely because they are the only facts available to the permanent judicial commission in absence of a trial or other evidentiary-type hearing. Because the SPJC was required to assume the truth of the factual allegations cited in the Complaint, the SPJC erred by failing to find that the Complaint, on its face, stated a claim that Presbytery had committed an irregularity in rescinding an action governed by a judicial stay entered in another case. The SPJC erred by relying on Appellee’s contention that Appellant could not meet her burden of proof as that is not the appropriate standard of review for a motion to dismiss.
Appellant contends that testimony was improperly considered by the SPJC regarding the veracity of facts alleged in the complaint. Again, the appropriate standard of review for a motion to dismiss is to first assume that the facts alleged are true, and then determine whether any relief can be granted. As stated by this Commission in (Hope, et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco 2006, p. 363), “[i]n relying on matters outside the complaint, the SPJC not only violated the standard set forth in McKittrick but also improperly determined the merits of disputed factual allegations without the benefit of a trial. As this Commission reminded stated clerks and moderators of permanent judicial commissions in 1990, the Book of Order contains no constitutional provision permitting ‘summary dismissal of any case’ where there are disputed factual allegations that, if proved, would entitle the complainant to some relief. Under those circumstances, ‘a dismissal is only appropriate after thorough examination of the record and opportunity for all parties to be heard’ (Minutes, 1990, p. 139).” Appellant alleged that, during the hearing, Respondent denied a fact set forth in the Complaint. If true, this denial should have triggered the factual dispute required to defeat the motion to dismiss. That assessment is a matter for the SPJC to determine following any proceedings that occur on remand of this case to the SPJC.

The Complaint alleges that Appellant did not receive timely notice regarding the SPJC’s procedure to hear Respondent’s motion to dismiss. Fair notice is defined as “a short and plain statement of the matters at issue as identified by the commission and of the time and place for a hearing upon the matters at issue.” (Minutes 2001, 149, 16.001-012, Req. 01-1). The record shows these considerations were met by the SPJC, and no error is found regarding the opportunity to be heard on the motion to dismiss.

On appeal a permanent judicial commission may consider only those matters that were part of the trial or hearing on appeal by the lower permanent judicial commission. (Congregation for Reconciliation v. Presbytery of Miami, 2000, 580, 12.071). In this case, no transcript was included in the record regarding the hearing on Respondent’s motion to dismiss. This Commission has found that whenever a lower permanent judicial commission conducts a hearing concerning a potential final disposition that might be the subject of a further appeal, it would be wise practice for a permanent judicial commission to create such a record, even though it is not specifically required by the Constitution. (Session of Second Presbyterian Church of Tulsa v. Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, 2006, 217-5, 377). Inasmuch as a hearing on a motion to dismiss is a hearing concerning a potential final disposition that could be the subject of appeal, the transcript of the hearing could have been beneficial to the resolution of this case on appeal. In addition, the brevity and absence of rationale in the SPJC Decision did not serve the judicial process well.

Finally, Appellant has alleged that the SPJC erred in failing to address civil law matters raised in the complaint. This Commission has ecclesiastical jurisdiction (See F-3.0108, G-3.0102) as granted in D-5.0202, which states: “[i]n the cases transmitted to it, the permanent judicial commission shall have only the powers prescribed by and conduct its proceedings according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).” This provision of the Book of Order precludes consideration of matters outside of those expressly granted to permanent judicial commissions.

Permanent judicial commissions have long-standing and broad authority to restate, group, consolidate, and summarize, but not omit, specifications of error presented in the appeal. A PJC may also consider those specifications of error set forth in briefs or at oral argument on appeal. This may be done for purposes of clarity or to eliminate redundancy. A PJC is not required, but rather encouraged, to provide rationale for each specification. (Presbytery of Greater Atlanta v. Ransom (2010, 219-02, 359, PC(USA)), Bolton v. Alamance Presbyterian Church (1995, 117, 11.053), Congregation for Reconciliation v. Presbytery of Miami (2000, 580, 12.071), and Hope, et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco (2006, 217-1, 455)). This Commission has chosen to restate and regroup the Specifications of Error presented on appeal for the purpose of clarity. It has given an explanation for those Specifications of Error that it determines are most pertinent to this Decision, and that provide guidance to lower councils. Given that the Commission has reversed and remanded the SPJC Decision, it does not find it necessary to give rationale for its rulings regarding the remaining Specifications of Error.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii be reversed and the case remanded for further proceedings consistent with this Commission’s Decision.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii report this Decision to the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos report this Decision to the Presbytery of Los Ranchos at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Los Ranchos enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioner Maurice Caskey was recused from this appeal and did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.
The Synod Permanent Judicial Commission created a great deal of consternation among the parties and this Commission by failing to include any substantive basis in fact or law for its decision on the Motion to Dismiss. With no guidance as to the basis for the decision, SPJC left everyone twisting in the wind. Particularly, SPJC sat in a unique position to enlighten the litigants on the issue of the Stay issued. Presumably the Stay, which SPJC itself issued, was considered, but presume is all we can do without so much as a copy of the document. GAPJC received over 1500 pages of record. It heard extensive arguments about the Stay, yet the salient document was not available. Permanent commissions are the backbone of the disciplinary system of the PC (USA). It is essential that every council in the gradual system of review conceived by the Book of Order issue ruling in such a manner as that the appellate council can ascertain the basis of the lower council’s decision. Without some findings coherently included in a decision, the reviewing council will have difficulty effectively doing its prescribed job.

Moreover, there are serious questions in the record about a potential conflict of interest on the part of the Synod. While we did not reach these issues in rendering our decision, potential conflict must be duly considered and there should never be any question that no conflict exists. The integrity of the judicial procedure for the church is at stake, and avoidance of even the appearance of any impropriety should be the standard.

Robin L. Roberts
Craig J. Lindsey

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 223-03, Dixie Lewellen, Appellant v. Presbytery of Los Ranchos, Appellee, made and announced at San Antonio, Tex., this 26th day of February 2017.

Dated this 26th day of February 2017.

E. Mid Councils’ Statements of Compliance with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions

Section IV.B.2.d. of the Organization for Mission requires that when a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission contains an order directed to another council, the Stated Clerk report to the General Assembly a statement of the council’s compliance. Below is a report of the statements of compliance received by the Stated Clerk from the councils for cases decided by the Permanent Judicial Commission during the year 2016–2018.

1. GAPJC Remedial Appeal 222-07, Sylvia Kuzmak, Appellant v. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission is upheld and this case is dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Session of First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey, report this Decision and Order to the Session at its first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Monmouth report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The Synod of the Northeast meets once every two years. This decision will be reported at the 2018 stated meeting, June 1, 2018. The decision will be posted on the synod website.

The Presbytery of Monmouth reported the decision at its’ stated meeting November 18, 2016. The First Presbyterian Church of Redbank did not comply with this order.


The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church of New York, NY, report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church of New York, New York, did not comply with this order.

3. GAPJC Remedial Appeal 223-01, First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, N.C., The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, by and through its active Ruling Elders (aka The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, "D-Church," by and through its active Ruling Elders)

Bob Briner, Brenda Bradshaw, Gilbert Broyles, Lloyd Candell, Bill Durant, William Eadie, Marjorie Heaver, Richard House, Mary Jamieson, Henry Leissing, Marguerite Martin, Eloise Murray, William Nagle, Greg Pope, Dale Stephens, Marvin Thompson, all both Individually and as Ruling Elders,

Appellants (Original Complainants), v. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina, Appellee (Original Respondent).

ORDER

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby affirmed and this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the appellants be notified of this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina report this Decision to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Western North Carolina enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic’s stated meeting, September 24, 2016, and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina’s stated meeting October 25, 2016. The First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville did not comply with this order.


ORDER

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of Living Waters Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby reversed and the case remanded for further proceedings consistent with this Commission's Decision.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of North Alabama report this Decision to the Presbytery of North Alabama at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of North Alabama enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Living Waters report this Decision to the Synod of Living Waters at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Living Waters enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of Living Waters’ stated meeting January 29, 2018, and the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Northern Alabama on October 24, 2017.


ORDER

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii be reversed and the case remanded for further proceedings consistent with this Commission's Decision.
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii report this Decision to the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos report this Decision to the Presbytery of Los Ranchos at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Los Ranchos enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii’s stated meeting on September 8, 2017, and at the Presbytery of Los Ranchos stated meeting on May 25, 2017.
Item 07-01

[The assembly approved Item 07-01 with amendment. See p. 15.]

On America’s Interfaith Context and the Church’s Challenge—From the Presbytery of Carlisle.

The Presbytery of Carlisle respectfully overtures the 223rd. General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Affirm and embrace the religiously diverse nature of the United States of America and the call of the Christian faith to love all of our neighbors—including those of other faiths—as we love ourselves.

2. Condemn all religiously inspired and motivated violence, prejudice, discrimination, and hate speech, in particular, those actions based upon anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim behaviors and language.

3. Affirm our positions as stated in “The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” 221st General Assembly (2014); “Toward a Christian Understanding of Christian-Muslim Relations,” 219th General Assembly (2010); “A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews: A Paper Committed to the Church for Study and Reflection,” 199th General Assembly (1987); and “A Study on Islam approved by the 199th General Assembly (1987).”

4. Call upon all Presbyterians to [continue to] live repentantly by seeking reconciliation with all religious groups who have been hurt by unjust actions and words of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with those who have hurt Presbyterians and ecumenical partners in the United States and overseas.

5. Encourage presbyteries to [create] [promote] interfait relations [committees or task forces to promote interfait relations, dialogue, and understanding] [by creating committees, task forces, or something of a similar nature].

6. Encourage congregations to engage in interfait conversations and partnerships in their communities.

7. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to encourage congregations to utilize the resources of the Office of Interfaith Relations to promote education about other religions and interfait dialogue.

Rationale

We Affirm and Embrace Our Nation’s Religious Diversity and Condemn Religiously Inspired and Motivated Violence and Hate Speech, in particular, Those Actions Based Upon Anti-Semitism and Anti-Muslim Behavior and Language

Our religious traditions and our nation’s Constitution are congruent in affirming our society’s religious diversity.

First, our nation’s Constitution and Bill of Rights were meant to establish a society that guarantees equality and religious freedom for all. As a result, our society is richly diverse in religious expression. In order to be a united nation—E Pluribus Unum (out of many, one)—“the many” are to be embraced and honored as residents of this country. Religiously inspired and motivated violent actions, prejudice, and hate speech have no place in American culture and life. Therefore, we condemn anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim behaviors and language.

In the United States, conflict and increasing rhetoric of hate and the politics of exclusion are evident throughout all levels of society. This rhetoric fuels criminal acts based on hateful bias. According to the most recent FBI statistics on acts of religious bias in the United States, in 2016 54 percent of all religiously biased hate crime is described as anti-Jewish, while the second highest is 21 percent for anti-Muslim hate crime. No other religious group exceeded 4 percent. Such behavior violates the deep core of the American spirit. It also contradicts Christ’s will for the world and the church.

We Reaffirm Our Traditional Positions

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ taught us that we are to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk. 12:31). He taught this without equivocation. As Presbyterians, we embrace Christ’s teaching in its full implications of extending God’s love to people of other faith traditions. “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) long has advocated positive relationships with people of other religious traditions.” Question 52 of The Study Catechism: Full Version asks: “How should I treat non-Christians and people of other religions?” The answer to the question repudiates any spirit of bigotry, hostility, or hatred directed against people of other faiths:

As much as I can, I should meet friendship with friendship, hostility with kindness, generosity with gratitude, persecution with forbearance, truth with agreement, and error with truth. I should express my faith with humility and devotion as the occasion requires, whether silently or openly, boldly or meekly, by word or by deed. I should avoid compromising the truth on
To welcome and accept others and to denounce all forms of hatred is a historical position that we Presbyterians express with firm conviction in many of our documents and position papers. The hostility toward Jews and Muslims in our society, in particular, calls for the church to reaffirm these historical positions and to stand in solidarity with Muslims and Jews in the face of hateful words, actions, and behavior. Prescient for its time, the 199th General Assembly (1987) called “on the appropriate agencies and governing bodies of the church, and on individual Presbyterians, to identify, expose, and counteract the bigotry and prejudice manifested in the United States against Arabs, Islam, Muslim peoples, and Muslim world …”

Our church has taken this relevant word of 1987 and expanded upon it. The 219th General Assembly (2010) called upon the church “through its agencies and governing bodies, to support Presbyterians in the practice of faithful witness with Muslims, by … asking appropriate bodies of the church, and individual Presbyterians, to identify and speak out against bigotry, prejudice, discrimination, and violence against Islam and Muslim peoples of all cultures, especially in the United States.”

We have also reaffirmed our commitment to oppose anti-Semitism. A resolution, approved in 1990 by the 202nd General Assembly (1990), stated: “We condemn anti-Semitism in the strongest possible terms. While affirming our close spiritual ties with the Jews, we wish to state unequivocally that authentic Christianity can have no complicity in anti-Semitic attitudes or actions of any kind.”

This strong denunciation of anti-Semitism followed a profound document published by the 199th General Assembly (1987), A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews: A Paper Commended to the Church for Study and Reflection. In this document the church reevaluated the historic and often harsh relationship that Christianity has had with the Jewish people. It stated that the church elected in Jesus Christ “has been grafted into the people of God established by the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Therefore, Christians have not replaced Jews. In addition, the document states, “We affirm that both the church and the Jewish people are elected by God for witness to the world and that the relationship of the church to contemporary Jews is based on that gracious and irrevocable election of both.” Again in the same document, the church acknowledged in repentance, the long complicity that the church has had with the “teaching of contempt” for the Jews, views which it now repudiates.

These statements of opposition to religiously motivated hate speech and actions require us, in our present context, to remember who we are as God’s people and to call upon the General Assembly to condemn all such hate speech and behavior.

We Call Upon Presbyterians to Live Repentantly and Seek Reconciliation

While we recognize the call to be prophetic, we also know that we too are held accountable for our thoughts and actions. “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) often has fostered a love for people of other religious traditions, but many times we have not. The first is cause for celebration, thanking God for the grace to be faithful. For the second, the church resolves to do better.” A prophetic people must be a repentant people. For the sake of being credible in our witness, it is important thus for us to note where we are estranged from people of other faiths and seek reconciliation where possible. The quest for social justice in our world is “one of the most compelling reasons for interreligious activity” and calls us “to explore interreligious opportunities for truth and reconciliation work, including formal acts of repentance for unjust actions of the church, past and present.”

We Form an Action Plan to Encourage Interfaith Dialogue and the Formation of Bodies and Organizations within Presbyteries and Congregations That Engage in Such Dialogue

In the present context of division in our society, we urge the General Assembly to affirm the necessity of dialogue and engagement with people of other religions. We believe that a concerted effort by Presbyterians to foster interfaith understanding can help in reminding Americans of our national identity as a religiously pluralistic and diverse nation. Dialogue leads to understanding and the discovery of our common humanity. Let us be clear, however, that dialogue in no way compromises our own faith convictions. All people, including Christians, have a worldview, a perspective; and to say, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth [and] in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,” means indeed that we have a particular perspective. Good interfaith dialogue requires that partners in conversation know where they stand and how they see the world. This is where we begin conversations, not from some a priori conclusion that we are all talking about the same thing, because we do not always believe the same thing or even mean the same thing, even if we use similar words. To engage in interfaith dialogue never requires selling out, compromising, or distorting our theological position only to arrive at some imagined common ground.

At the same time, interfaith dialogue is not about polemically defeating adherents of other faiths or trying to convince them that they are wrong and we are right. Religious scholar Diana Eck says that interdependence is a fact of global life, but that the world:

... is not yet interrelated in the sense of actively and intentionally creating the international, intercultural, and interreligious relationships that will sustain a world in which we depend on one another as much as we do. We share our communities and our world with men and women who worship in
various ways, who base their judgments on differing authorities, who recognize differing revelations, who speak of God in strikingly different ways or do not speak of God at all. Our task is to learn to collaborate with one another on issues that none of us can solve alone.13

If cooperation and dialogue can take place among states and economies, cannot the world’s religions do the same? We may not all agree on theology and issues, but we can agree to love one another. To love one another means to love those of other faiths too, pilgrims with us in the journey of life. We love them because God loves them and gave his Son for them. We love them regardless of their religion. We love them because “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8), and “those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also” (1 Jn. 4:21). Theologian Keith Ward has written:

Love entails making an attempt to understand and respect, so far as possible those who differ [on matters of belief]. So Christians have a duty to encourage inter-faith conversation, and this is especially important in areas where ethnic and religious markers of identity coincide and increase the dangers of social violence.13

Understanding others is key to mitigating the volatility that religion can ignite. Appreciating another religious perspective can lead to greater understanding and cooperation in solving problems.

To accomplish this end, we ask the General Assembly to encourage presbyteries to create interfaith relations committees or task forces to promote interfaith relations, dialogue, and understanding. We ask the General Assembly to encourage congregations to engage in interfaith conversations and partnerships, and we ask the General Assembly to direct the Stated Clerk to encourage congregations to utilize the resources of the Office of Interfaith Relations to promote education about other religions and interfaith dialogue.

Conclusion

We call upon the General Assembly: (1) to affirm and embrace our nation’s religious diversity and condemn all religiously inspired and motivated violence, prejudice, discrimination, and hate speech, in particular, those actions based upon anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim behaviors and language; (2) to affirm our traditional positions on interfaith relations; (3) to call upon all Presbyterians to live repentantly by seeking reconciliation with all religious groups who have been hurt by unjust actions and words of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and (4) to form an action plan to encourage interfaith dialogue and the formation of bodies and organizations within presbyteries and congregations that engage in such dialogue.

Endnotes


Concurrences to Item 07-01 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, de Cristo, and Great Rivers.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 07-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 07-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 7-01 calls for greater engagement in interfaith conversations and in countering hate speech, particularly against Jews and Muslims.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval as amended below: [Text to be added is shown with an underline and with brackets.]
“4. Call upon all Presbyterians to live repentantly by seeking reconciliation with all religious groups who have been hurt by unjust actions and words of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and with those who have hurt Presbyterians and ecumenical partners, in the United States and overseas.”

Interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and shared worship to the degree possible enrich our Christian faith and help us fulfill our calling as peacemakers. Public solidarity and acts of welcome to those of other faiths are part of the social witness of the church and need not compromise the Gospel, as the rationale to this overture notes. It is particularly important that we be ready to counter hate speech and hateful acts, and this is best done on the base of existing friendly relationships. The proponents of this overture rightly underline the importance of inter-religious work in any increasingly diverse society.

In today’s United States, immigration has become an increasingly contentious concern, even with largely Christian would-be immigrants from Latin America. Efforts to “ban” Muslims from the United States, or to restrict immigration from predominantly Muslim countries, clearly damage interfaith as well as international relations. Some proportion of the U.S. population believes Christianity, or a form of Christianity, is under attack, perhaps primarily by secular forces and trends, but also in some measure by immigrants.

While interfaith conversations may sometimes seem innocuous and unthreatening, they require honesty and repentance, as well as prophetic truth-telling. The overture calls us to be repentant for hurting others with “unjust actions and words of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” which are undefined. Because of the focus on Jewish and Muslim relations, however, the clear complement to this overture would seem to be item 12-05, which deals forthrightly with what is frequently “the elephant in the room:” Israeli and Palestinian relations.

There is danger in eliding around the problems that have prevented the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from adopting more than a study document on Jewish-Christian relations (the 1987 and a 2010 paper (not mentioned) both have study status, but have raised Christological and other “stumbling blocks” in the past). Our documents and study material on Christian-Muslim relations do not yet explore the range of issues raised in the Christian-Jewish studies, but this overture should be encouragement for that exploration, and that with Asian and other indigenous faiths as well.

The amendment proposed in Recommendation 4 is meant to reflect the mutuality needed, and to help distinguish repentance for particular or systemic biases from forms of guilt that inhibit honesty.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 07-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 07-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 07-01. This overture aligns with the core values of ACREC, including:

1. combating racism, prejudices, and bigotry across religious lines (in togetherness);
2. building bridges of understanding among all people of different faiths;
3. commitment to human diversity;
4. creating venues of innovation/partnerships in dealing with world & societal issues;
5. advocacy for world peace and solidarity.

ACREC suggests adding a biblical mandate to this rationale that includes Jesus’ prayer for the unity of humanity in John 17, along with Isaiah 56, calling for the gathering of all God’s people, including the “other.”

Item 07-02

[The assembly approved Item 07-02. See pp. 12, 15.]

Churches to Invite to send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations nominates the following churches to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to invite to the 224th General Assembly (2020):

International: Evangelical Church of Vietnam, Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, Waldensian Church, Presbyterian Church of
Mozambique (IPM), Ethiopia Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY), The United Church of Jamaica and Cayman Islands, United Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPUB), Evangelical Church of the River Plate.

United States and/or Canada: African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Community of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Greek Orthodox Church Archdiocese of North America, United Church of Canada.

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations nominates to each General Assembly churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the subsequent assembly (Standing Rule B.2.g.). Ten overseas churches and five churches from within the United States are recommended. Of the overseas churches, we recommend at least one church from each area staffed by the Worldwide Ministries Division. Of the churches within the United States, we recommend at least one church from Full Communion and or Covenant Relationships, and at least one church in our conciliar relationships.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 07-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 07-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 07-02 with comment.

ACWC advises that this item be approved with the following comment and commitment:

The Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) report is a project created to assess the status of women at all levels of the church. Through this study, gender biases are exposed within the PC(USA) for women as leaders in ordered ministry. One example is named here:

Eight out of ten female teaching elders in the denomination have experienced gender bias in the form of discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or prejudicial statements. Almost three out of four female teaching elders have a harder time in being accepted in leadership roles within the denomination due to their gender. Four out of ten female teaching elders feel that their gender has contributed to their being overlooked for a promotion to a higher-status position within the PC(USA). (Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA), p. 4. (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/))

Many of the PC(USA)’s ecumenical partners have not expressed nor displayed their commitment to gender justice in leadership. Our ecumenical and interfaith partners should display a similar commitment to gender justice as the PC(USA), if we invite them not only as partners but as advisors in our denominational decision-making. Moving forward, we would also request that each of our ecumenical advisor partners consider all genders when considering whom will serve as their delegates, better reflecting our common commitment to gender justice and equality.

Item 07-03

[The assembly referred Item 07-03 to the 224th General Assembly (2020). See pp. 12, 15.]


The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):


2. Express its gratitude to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) representatives on the dialogue: the Reverend Cynthia Campbell, Ph.D., and the Reverend David Gambrell, Ph.D., for their leadership and service on the dialogue team.

Rationale

Item 07-04

[The assembly approved Item 07-04. See pp. 12, 15.]

_Episcopal Church and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Dialogue Report—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations._

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) receive the report of the Episcopal Presbyterian Dialogue (as shown below) and extend its gratitude to the PC(USA) members of the dialogue team.

**THE EPISCOPAL PRESBYTERIAN BILATERAL DIALOGUE REPORT (2009–2018)**

The Participants


We would like to note the Reverend Dennis James Hughes, Ph.D., entered into the joy of God’s kingdom on Easter morning, Sunday, April 16, 2017, at his home in Edmonds, Washington. He was 73.

Meetings

The dialogue team met on the following dates, November 2010 (Louisville), May 2011 (Washington, D.C.), December 2011 (San Diego), May 2012 (Chicago), May 2013 (Seattle), January 2014 (Chicago), November 2014 (Denver), May 2015 (phone), November 2015 (Berkeley), September 2016 (Chicago), April 2017 (Baltimore), and October 2017 (Chicago).

Issues Addressed

In our search for greater understanding of each other’s history, polity, and practice, this committee has explored many topics, including:

- Demographic similarities and dissimilarities of our denominations;
- Historical, cultural, and social factors that shape our understanding of one another, which go back as far as our shared history in Scotland;
- Our varied understandings of liturgy, its role in worship, as well as liturgical oversight;
- Understanding of the sacraments and sacramentals;
- What confirmation means in our two communions, in relation to baptism and membership;
- The nature and shared mission of the Church as incarnated in each of our churches;
- Our current ecumenical engagements, as well as finding common ground through our shared full communion agreements (i.e. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church).

In accordance with the mandate given us in the agreement adopted by the PC(USA) General Assembly in 2008 and ratified by the presbyteries in 2009 and the TEC General Convention in 2009, we focused our discussions on paragraphs 3, 4, and 7 of the agreement. This included extended conversations about:

- Threefold ordered ministry, as well as the expression of ordered ministries at the local level (congregation and diocese);
- The historic episcopate as well as the embodiment of episkopē;
The dialogue confirmed that historically, Anglicanism and Presbyterianism grew up as cousins, if not siblings, in England, Scotland, and later in Ireland and Wales, and these traditions were transplanted into the American context during the colonial period. Having had common roots in Britain, as well as in the colonies, and being generally of similar socioeconomic and educational levels, Presbyterians and Episcopalians have over the years engaged in conversations towards unity on and off since the 1890s. Many times, the breakdown in eumcenuical dialogue and potential full communion agreements had less to do with theology or ecclesiology, but more to do with cultural and socioeconomic factors.

What the committee has discovered through this ongoing dialogue is that we have a shared DNA. Like fraternal twins that were separated during the 18th century, we each developed in ways that could be divergent and kept us from being reunited or in full communion. The committee, however, views the two churches as complimentary, perhaps by divine institution. We firmly hold that neither church, in any means, is deficient. For instance, we found both churches exercise episkopé communally, collegially, and personally, yet in different, and we think, complimentary ways. In addition, the committee affirmed the fullness of the baptismal ministry in each church’s members, and that members who transfer should be welcomed as members without the need of confirmation or laying on of hands. We remain committed to overcoming the institutional division of our two churches and to find the unity required by God so we all may fully engage in the mission of God and be a living witness of the holy communion we already share in Christ.

As we reflect on our time together and what we have learned about each other, we cannot help but also address the role our co-chair, the Reverend Dr. Dennis Hughes, had in the process. He valiantly remained engaged in the dialogue until his last days. For us, his sisters and brothers on the Episcopal Presbyterian Dialogue, Dennis was an embodiment of the ecumenical movement, and passionate about Christ’s prayer that all churches be one. Dennis’ life experiences—personal, academic, and pastoral—constantly informed and enlightened our work together. His stories and words of wisdom many times brought us back to our common theology and liturgical expressions in baptism and holy communion, and what the practical implications were regarding our unified witness to our Lord. In his perspective, our two churches were already in full communion; for in Christ we are one (Ephesians 4:4–6). However, we obscure the visible reality constantly by putting other things as more important above Christ and the mission of God that we are to incarnate as Christ’s one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. It is in Dennis’ persistence in the Gospel that continues on in, with, and through us—as he fulfilled his baptism and now is numbered among the great cloud of witnesses, encouraging both of our communions in our next steps to make God’s reality our own.

Bilateral Dialogue History

It has been more fifty years since the Reverend Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, proposed in a sermon at Grace Episcopal Cathedral, San Francisco, the establishment of a dialogue between the Protestant Episcopal Church and the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, in the hope that this would result in a united church that would be “truly catholic, truly reformed, and truly evangelical.” This would later be expanded to include the United Methodist Church and, subsequently, seven other denominations, including three historically black Methodist denominations. This would give rise to the Consultation on Church Union, which would subsequently be succeeded in this vision in 2001 by Churches Uniting in Christ, with ten denominations from the Reformed, Anglican, Methodist, and Moravian traditions.

Born alike in the ferment of the Reformation Era of pre-Stuart Britain, Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism grew up as cousins, if not siblings, in England, Scotland, and later in Ireland and Wales, and the colonists brought their preferences to the New World. While the episcopal polity of the Church of England suffered there from years of neglect by the home country—never did an English bishop visit the colonies in the nearly 200 years from the Jamestown settlement until the American Revolution, nor were the colonies permitted to have a bishop of their own—the Church of England was actually established as the state church in several colonies.

While some of the newly independent Americans were Presbyterian by conviction, others, though Episcopalian by preference, came to favor Presbyterian polity as a matter of necessity. In 1782, William White of Philadelphia wrote a tract entitled, The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered, in which he advocated a Presbyterian polity for the new denomination that would take the place of the previous state Church of England, it being unlikely in his view that the newly independent Americans would be able to procure bishops ordained in the “historic succession” from their former English mentors. Many of White’s ideas in this treatise became part of the new Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, including the representation of lay people at every level of its governance, White was subsequently elected as bishop of Pennsylvania, consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury and recognized as the first Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal
Church at its organizing convention in 1789. The 1784 consecration of Samuel Seabury to be bishop of Connecticut by non-juring Scottish bishops had rendered moot the question of where the American church would find bishops in the “historic episcopate.” Having had common roots in Britain, as well as in the colonies, and being generally of similar socioeconomic and educational levels, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, as those formerly loyal to the Church of England were now called, have over the years enjoyed a great degree of interpersonal relationship, with varying degrees of mutual respect and understanding. Over the years there has never been a time when some in both denominations have not looked toward the establishment of greater unity between them.

The definitive statement of the basis for church union in the Episcopal Church, indeed in Anglicanism as a whole, is the so-called Chicago Quadrilateral of 1886 (better known since its adoption by the worldwide Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in 1888 as the Lambeth Quadrilateral. Originally an invitation by the American Episcopal Bishops to discussions of union with various other church bodies, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. alone responded. Despite a proposal in 1946 for organic church union, there were no permanent results of these discussions and as Gibson Winter observed long before the current round of bilateral discussions, “The fact, however, that these two churches had once enjoyed a brief courtship is probably one of the main lessons for the second courtship forty years later.”[Presbyterian-Episcopal Negotiations the U.S.A (1937–1946)]. Several courtships later, the members of the Presbyterian/Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue are in agreement, as well as with the conviction that this dialogue must not fade into what Gibson called “polite exchanges of resolutions of friendship.” The potential benefits are too great, the consequences of inaction too dire; the need for wholeness and Godly vision too urgent!

Consultation on Church Union to Churches Uniting in Christ

The more recent movement of Presbyterian/Episcopal dialogue begun within the wider purview of the Consultation on Church Union’s development of the document, Churches in Covenant Communion: The Church of Christ Uniting, which ultimately produced in 1985 The COCU Consensus—In Quest of a Church Uniting, a second draft of which was approved by the COCU plenary meeting in St. Louis in 1988. This draft was ultimately deemed inadequate by both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church in the USA because of disagreements over the conclusions of Section VII “MINISTRY.” This lack of resolution over its primary document foreshadowed the institutional end of COCU and its transformation in January 2001 into Churches Uniting in Christ, a new relationship between nine, member churches and one Partner in Mission and Ministry (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) with the Roman Catholic Church as an observer body.

With authorization from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) [PC(USA)] and the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (TEC), both partners in CUIC, the two denominations entered once again into a formal bilateral dialogue. At their initial meeting, held concurrently with the inauguration of CUIC in January 2001, it was decided that the dialogue’s conversations would take place within the larger context of CUIC’s Ministry Task Force, which was to focus its work on revisiting the issues of Chapter VII of The COCU Consensus, eventually developing a report on Mutual Recognition and Mutual Reconciliation of Ministry (MRIRM).


The previous dialogue team met twice annually since its first meeting in January 2001. It has met in various venues of each denomination including seminaries (Fuller, Louisville) and middle judicatory offices, with diocesan bishops, General presbyters, and parochial clergy, including twice at Indian Hill Presbyterian-Episcopal Church in Cincinnati and once at St. Matthew’s Episcopal/Wilton Presbyterian Church in Wilton, Connecticut. It has met with prominent theologians (e.g. the Rev. Drs. Mudge, Small, and Wright) of each tradition, as well as in conjunction with the Ministry Task Force of CUIC (of which the Presbyterian co-convener is a member). During this time, the Episcopal co-convener served two, two-year terms as an ecumenical member of the General Assembly Council of the PC(USA) and as an ecumenical advisor to the PC(USA)’s Richmond General Assembly. A member of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of TEC during much of his tenure as co-convener, he also has met several times with the CUIC Coordinating Council of CUIC in his capacity as a member of CUIC’s Local and Regional Task Force, and he will serve as proxy for the presiding bishop of TEC at the meeting of Heads of Communion at CUIC’s forthcoming Plenary Session I, St. Louis. The Rev. Drs. Phillip Wickeri and George Telford have served as members of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations of the PC(USA).

The dialogue had extensively examined relevant documents and deliberations from the past and present both in the United States and abroad, including the Formula of Agreement between the PC(USA) and the ELCA, UCC, and RCA denominations, the Call to Common Mission document between TEC and the ELCA, and the Mutual Recognition and Mutual Reconciliation document of CUIC. At every meeting of the dialogue, members have worshipped together using rites approved by either denomination or according to the authorized CUIC liturgy, with ordained ministers of each denomination officiating.

Among the most significant achievements of the dialogue was the co-sponsorship with CUIC of a Consultation on Episcope held in St. Louis in October 2006. Although the dialogue identified the need for such a serious theological consultation and requested the sponsorship of CUIC, the latter organization did “the heavy lifting” in terms of organizing and producing the consultation. In addition to opening and closing remarks by representatives of the Disciples of Christ and the Methodist tradition, there were five scholarly papers presented; one by an Episcopalian, two from the Reformed Tradition (PC(USA) and UCC) and one each by a member of the ELCA and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. These papers, together with
three Bible studies by the Reverend John Ford (RC) and other related presentations have been published in Call to Unity—Resourcing the Church for Ecumenical Ministry, generously published by the Council on Christianity Unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

At its initial meeting in Memphis in January 2001, members of the dialogue present all agreed that both churches were within the “apostolic succession.” Although it might appear that it should have been “easy sledding” from there, the dialogue was still unable to agree on a basis for full mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministry. Disagreements centered on the concepts of “personal” and “corporate” episcope. Episcopalians believe that a necessary mark of the church is a continuous passage of episcope through the laying-on-of-hands by bishops in direct, individual succession from apostolic times. Presbyterians, citing a “pre-Ignatian” model, believe that episcope has been passed on corporately from apostolic times through the laying-on-of-hands within the presbyterate. Of concern to Presbyterians was the feeling that CUIC MRMRM proposal failed to recognize the significance of the presbyterate, which Episcopalians felt that they had done in the United States through the requirement of lay involvement and approval at virtually every level of ecclesiastical governance, albeit their lay people are not ordained as elders.

Mutual recognition and reconciliation seems to rest upon mutual acceptance of the concepts of “personal” and “corporate” episcope. Until this matter is mutually resolved, it will be difficult to move into full altar and pulpit fellowship, the place where mutual ministry between the denominations seems most likely to have an effect at the parish level; the basic level of ministry in both denominations. Because of that, the dialogue had met with collaborating congregations of each denomination and sought to encourage church leaders to initiate and nourish additional relationships of that type; particularly in planting new congregations. Although full mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministry still eluded them, they believed we have found a way in which to encourage preliminary altar and pulpit fellowship and, hence, to allow our congregations of both denominations to commonly pursue the mission and ministry of Christ’s One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; a reality which we believe already exists in the Mind of God.

To that end, the Episcopal Presbyterian Dialogue requested the respective authorizing bodies the following agreement (see below) as well as reconstitute the dialogue for future deliberations. In addition, they recommended that both of our Heads of Communion commit themselves publicly to this effort and, if it seems good to them, that they arrange a public celebration of our progress and our hope for the future.

The Agreement between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and ratified by our presbyteries in 2009. The 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church approved the agreement in 2009. Both churches authorized another round of dialogue to continue to address theological and missional issues.

As a result of the dialogue, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Reverend Gradye Parsons, and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, stood together at the Lord’s Table and led the congregation in receiving Holy Communion at the 221st General Assembly (2014).

APPENDIX

Agreement Between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. We acknowledge one another’s churches as churches belonging to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church;

2. We acknowledge that in our churches the Word of God is authentically preached and the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are duly administered;

3. We acknowledge one another’s ordained ministries as given by God and instruments of grace, and look forward to the time when the reconciliation of our churches makes possible the full interchangeability of ministers;

4. We acknowledge that personal and collegial oversight (episcope) is embodied and exercised in our churches in a variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal, as a visible sign of the Church’s unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry.

5. We agree that authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested and approved by the diocesan bishop and local presbytery;

6. We agree that The Episcopal Church will invite members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to receive Holy Communion in their churches and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will invite members of The Episcopal Church to receive Holy Communion in their churches. We encourage the members of our churches to accept this Eucharistic hospitality and thus express their unity with each other in the one Body of Christ;

7. We agree to continue to dialogue in the areas such as diaconal ministries, historic episcopate, the office of elder, etc. that would lead to full reconciliation of our ministries and interchangeability of our ministers.
8. We encourage diocesan bishops and presbyteries to provide regular occasion for planning, discussing, resourcing for missional, educational and liturgical life together. In addition, to explore possibilities for new church development and redevelopment together.

9. We agree to develop a process to support and implement the above recommendations.²

10. We affirm these proposals mark an important step in moving toward the full, visible unity of the Church. We know that beyond this commitment lies a move from the recognition to the reconciliation of churches and ministries within the wider fellowship of the universal Church.

Endnotes

1. Because we do not yet have reconciliation and full interchangeability of ordained ministries, all authorization for these special opportunities must confirm to the Book of Common Worship and the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Book of Common Prayer and the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church.

2. Guidelines will be developed by each of the communions.

Rationale


Item 07-05

[The assembly approved Item 07-05 as amended. See pp. 12, 15–16.]

Prospectus for the Third Round of Dialogue Between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Direct that the bilateral dialogue be continued and meet until 2024, a year in which both the General Assembly and the General Convention will meet, and report back to those bodies at that time.

2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and The Episcopal Church’s Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations work with the committee in fulfilling Paragraph 9 of the Agreement by developing and publishing mission and polity guidelines and resources for joint Episcopal and Presbyterian ministries and missions, such as how dioceses and presbyteries may collaborate in creating new worshipping communities and ecumenical congregations.

3. Direct that the next round of dialogue cover the following:

- What does membership mean amid the shifting American religious context (relating to paragraph 1 and 6 of the agreement)?

- What can lead to full reconciliation of ordered ministries, including the implications to our global ecumenical relationships? This would include seeking out and consulting the wisdom of other national and international Reformed-Anglican dialogues, including recently published reports of member judicatories in our communions and standing bilateral bodies of national/international churches (e.g., the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church) (relating to Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 of the agreement).

- [Recognizing we are in a post-Christendom world, and using] [Using] a historic and socioeconomic lens, explore and examine how our ecclesiological identities, doctrines, systems, and institutions have been used with prejudicial power to “other-ize” and exclude people from our denominations, especially in the areas of class and race. What “idols” do we have that prevents us from fully participating in God’s mission and reconcile all things, including our two denominations, to God (relating, again, to Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 of the agreement)?

Rationale

We have discovered that in our conversations we have gained much from the opportunity to spend extended time in dialogue, building trust, learning from each other, and finding the ability to be bold in questioning and challenging our own and each other’s assumptions. We believe that continuing our conversation and exploration holds the promise of yielding enhanced understanding and guidance for our two denominations to explore in moving toward greater implementation and celebration of the unity God has already established in the Body of Christ, our common home.
Advice & Counsel on Item 07-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 07-05 with amendment to remove the first phrase of the last point: “Recognizing we are in a post Christendom world” and starting the paragraph the sentence with “using a historic and socioeconomic lens:

● [Recognizing we are in a post-Christendom world, and], [u][U]sing a historic and socioeconomic lens, explore and examine how our ecclesiological identities, doctrines, systems, and institutions have been used with prejudicial power to “otherize” and exclude people from our denominations, especially in the areas of class and race. What “idols” do we have that prevents us from fully participating in God’s mission and reconcile all things, including our two denominations, to God (relating, again, to Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 of the agreement)?"

We approve the overture because ACREC’s commitment to church unity and ecumenical relations are an integral part of its advocacy values. We also approve it for the shared commitment to peace, justice, reconciliation, and rights for people of color from other sibling or cousin denominations, which will be affirming and empowering to all.

Our rationale for amending it is because the expression “Post Christendom world” is single-sighted, and at least partially inaccurate. While Christianity may be declining in both Europe and North America, which are considered a “Global North,” Christianity in Global South is flourishing and growing. In many countries in Africa and Asia; Christianity is living its prime time, not post time. When we say “post Christendom,” we must assume that there was a Christendom world. Did we ever have a Christendom?

Item 07-06

[The assembly referred Item 07-06 to the 224th General Assembly (2020). See pp. 12, 16.]

Prospectus for the Ninth Round of Dialogue Between Reformed Churches in the United States and United States Conference of Bishops—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the Prospectus for the Ninth Round of Dialogue between Reformed Churches in the United States and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and request a report to the 226th General Assembly (2024).

Prospectus for the Catholic-Reformed Dialogue

Round Nine

The Ecumenical Officers (or their designees) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops met via video conference on February 5 and 9, 2018 to review the eighth round of dialogue and consider proposals for the ninth round. The following prospectus is offered to our churches for consideration and approval of a ninth round of dialogue. It is expected that each church will review and authorize through the appropriate ecclesiastical channels a ninth round of dialogue based upon this prospectus.

Reformed Churches in the United States and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (and their predecessor bodies) have been in formal dialogue for over fifty years. The last twenty years have focused on theological convergences and divergences around Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry. Three significant papers were produced from Rounds Seven and Eight—These Living Waters; This Bread of Life, and The One Body of Christ: Ministry in Service to the Church and the World. Round Seven also produced an Agreement of Mutual Recognition of Baptism between the USCCB and the participating Reformed Churches.

A major achievement of the most recent round of dialogue was the mutual acknowledgement of each other’s ministries and the affirmation that we “recognize in one another the work of God, the presence of Jesus Christ, the movement of the Holy Spirit, our mutual service to a broken world, and our fidelity to the gospel that we all profess” (The One Body, 70). The mutual acknowledgement of ministry presents a historically significant moment and a germane occasion to consider anew how our ministry to the church and the world is informed by our understandings of justification and justice. It presents an opportunity to build upon the immediately previous rounds of national dialogue on the sacraments and ecclesiology by considering the relationship between Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry and our commitments to justification and justice.

Furthermore, turning our attention to the relationship between justification and justice presents an opportunity for this national dialogue to connect with the international dialogue. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Communion of Reformed Churches’ most recent dialogue focused on “Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian
Community as an Agent for Justice” (2011-2015). In July 2017, the World Communion of Reformed Churches signed an Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. We intend to “build upon the faithful labors of these dialogues to discern and claim the gifts and challenges of our current situation” by continuing conversation around “church unity, ministry, the sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics” (The One Body, 65, 67).

It is the expectation that signs of hope for visible unity might be found as we turn our focus to our mutual calling to live as a people justified by faith giving witness to God’s intention of a world marked by justice.

We envision that the proposed dialogue will begin in the fall of 2018 and conclude no later than 2023. Among the tasks that the dialogue will carry out are the following:

1. Review the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and the WCRC Association with JDDJ and consider the implications for our Churches within the context of the United States.
2. Building on the work accomplished in the previous rounds of our dialogues, explore how justification and justice are related to the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, and to mission and ministry.
3. Examine the ways in which the discovery of new areas of convergence and our joint work in justice offer fresh possibilities for understanding unity. What are the implications for ecclesiology?

**Rationale**


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**Item 07-07**

[The assembly approved Item 07-07 as amended. See pp. 15, 16.]

*Commissioners’ Resolution. On Covenant Agreement Between the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) ask that the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, in partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, [develop] [explore the possibility of developing] a covenant relationship with GMIM. This covenant relationship will be developed in consultation with presbyteries having significant Indonesian and Minahasan-speaking members. A [final] report is to be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

**Rationale**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) are denominations with common roots in the Reformed tradition and both share membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches. GMIM is an Indonesian denomination founded by the Dutch Missionary Society in 1831. In 1934, GMIM obtained independence from the Dutch Reformed Church. In the 1960s the PC(USA) sent missionaries to Indonesia to serve the GMIM Church and established formal relationships between the two churches. In the 1970s Indonesians began immigrating to the United States in great numbers. Among these migrants were many Minahasan-speaking persons who had roots in GMIM.

Minahasan-speaking persons were welcomed into the PC(USA) congregations and presbyteries. Many found a need to worship in language and ethnic specific fellowships and congregations. This allowed them to hold onto specific Minahasan faith practices related to language, liturgy, and lifestyle. For Minahasan-speaking persons, faith and church life extends to every aspect of their life and is a central part of their communities. At times when there is not a PC(USA) congregation that is able to embrace the full cultural and linguistic faith tradition of Minahasan-speaking members, they may leave for other Indonesian churches outside the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions. In addition, when PC(USA) Minahasan-speaking fellowships and congregations are formed, it is often difficult to find Minahasan-speaking pastors to serve and care for the members.

In 2016, the GMIM General Assembly made a commitment and took formal action to nurture and care for diaspora members throughout the world. They began the process of entering into formal relationships with partner churches to share in the pastoral care of diaspora members living abroad. GMIM desires to work cooperatively with partners and not be in competition. With an understanding of mutuality in mission, GMIM desires to enter into covenant relationship with the PC(USA) and develop a process for supporting the PC(USA) in caring for Minahasan-speaking persons.

Mark A. Johnson, Presbytery of Scioto Valley
Vince Patton, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky
Item 07-A

[The assembly approved Item 07-A with comment. See p. 16.]

Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

Comment: Receive GACEIR 2017 Minutes, with one comment:
Page 8—Refers to presidential campaign of 2017 [sic], should be 2016.

Received GACEIR 2016 Minutes, with one comment:
Page 13—Executive Committee did not adjourn with prayer.

Item 07-Info

A. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

The following items were pulled from the Consent Agenda:

B. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations


Response: In progress. The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations has worked on developing a theological rationale for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) engagement in interfaith relationships. This rationale builds on the Interfaith Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations would like to invite further response and reflections from stakeholders within the PC(USA) as well as our ecumenical and interfaith partners before finalizing the rationale. Therefore, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations reports this as a referral in progress with the expectation that a final report will be submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

C. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations


Response: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directed GACEIR to encourage appropriate General Assembly entities to do the following: “Collaborate with councils at all levels (of the PCUSA) to work ecumenically and interreligiously in addressing such crucial issues as violent conflict between states, climate change, transnational terrorism, global economic system, global persecution of Christian minorities and LGBTQ persons, and extremist interreligious violence.”

Collaboration being central to its charge, GACEIR identified key features of effective collaboration, which build on the foundation of trusted relationships. These are an empowering vision, organizing for common purposes, frequent interpersonal communication among leaders, shared decision-making, truthful and transparent interpretation, effective use of social media, and mutual accountability in the stewardship of limited resources.

The subcommittee researched the issues within contemporary global contexts and created a document with several parts including brief working descriptions of each issue, identification of current General Assembly mission areas that relate to these issues, documentation of associated General Assembly policies, notifications of relevant Presbytery Mission Agency programs and offices currently addressing the issues, and whatever possible, references to ecumenical and interreligious partners with whom the PC(USA) is collaborating on the issues.

The GACEIR received the attached report from the Presbyterian Mission Agency about how they are working with ecumenical and interfaith partners on the above identified issues. We share it with the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for information and guidance for other councils of the PC(USA)—synods, presbyteries, sessions on ways to work with ecumenical and interfaith partners on critical global issues.

Given elements of persistent xenophobic and misogynistic mindsets within every faith group, including the PC(USA), and assuming their influence in perpetuating these global issues, GACEIR decided it is imperative, together with others throughout the PC(USA), to increase awareness of racial/cultural bias and white privilege. Committee members began self-examination by participating in an intense bias/privilege experiential training workshop.


Response: GACEIR was asked by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to encourage mid councils to enter into consultancies with neighboring ecumenical councils regarding shared administrative tasks. GACEIR worked with
Presbyterian Research Office in surveying mid councils within the PC(USA) and some of their ecumenical counterparts. While this is still a project in process, the survey provided some examples that may serve as models for other mid councils to emulate.

3. 2016 Referral: Item 07-06, 15. Commit to Further Reflection on the Nuanced Definitions of “Interfaith” and “Interreligious” for the Purpose of Clarity in Communications. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 448)

Response: The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations was asked to provide clarity about the use of the words “interfaith” and “interreligious,” and to provide direction about how the terms should be used in our work as a denomination.

Interreligious and interfaith are terms that are so close together in meaning that they are frequently used interchangeably. Interreligious refers more to the institutional aspects of religions and may include religions that do not necessarily claim faith. Interfaith points more towards the inner meaning and experience of faith and spiritual practices in different religious traditions.

While interreligious offers a broader base of relationships to include traditions that do not claim faith, our preference is to use interfaith as we engage people of faith in dialogue and relationships. We may use interreligious as we work cooperatively with organizations of different religious traditions for the common good.

B. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Committee Agency Summary and Narrative Report

1. Purpose

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations shall function to give a high profile to the vision of the ecumenical and interreligious involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church; plan and coordinate, in consultation with the agencies and governing bodies of the church, the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical and interreligious relations and work; connect the ecumenical and interreligious efforts of all governing body levels of the church; provide a common point for all ecumenical and interreligious efforts connecting us with those outside our church; keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, ecumenical, and denominational (organizational) parts of our ministries and commitments; articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments; and promote awareness of the role of the unity of all humankind in the search for the unity of the church; and promote the unity of the church as an exhibition of the kingdom to the world.

The committee is composed of sixteen members, elected by the General Assembly, four ecumenical representatives, the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.


Ruling Elder Diana Wright and Teaching Elder Robert Reynolds served as chair and vice-chair respectively. Ruling Elder Jeremiah Rosario, Teaching Elder Anne Weirich, and Ecumenical Representative from the Progressive National Baptist Convention, the Reverend Randall C Bailey, served as at-large executive committee members. The Executive Committee met in August 2016 to review the recommendations from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and to develop a workplan to recommend to the GACEIR organizing their work around three major area of work—Ecumenical and Interfaith Engagement with Councils of the PC(USA), Mid Council Ecumenical Engagement, and Interfaith Theological Rationale.

In addition to Rev. Bailey from the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Pastor Christopher Olkiewicz from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reverend Paul Janssen from the Reformed Church in America, and the Reverend Hyo-Jung Kim from the United Church of Christ were ecumenical representatives on GACEIR.

a. Meeting General Description

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations met in the Fall of 2016: Spring and Fall of 2017, and January of 2018. Each meeting included theological reflections around emerging issues in ecumenical and interfaith relations. A significant portion of the meetings were dedicated to the work of the subcommittees. In addition to meeting during the face-to-face meetings, subcommittees also met electronically between meetings.

b. GACER Activities, Reports, and Actions

(1) The Fall 2016 meeting included a presentation on “Thursdays in Black: Towards World Without Rape and Violence—An Ecumenical Responsibility” by Dr. Fulata Mbano-Moyo, World Council of Churches Program Executive for Women in Church and Society. Members of the wider Louisville community (including seminarians) and staff from the Presbyterian Center were invited to this presentation. The Fall 2016 meeting also focused its attention on developing a response to the World Communion of Reformed Churches Proposal to Associate with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of
Justification. They received input from theologians and pastors. This response was forwarded to the WCRC as input into the global discernment process.

(2) The Spring 2017 meeting focused on “Ecumenical and Interfaith Implications of U.S. Presidential Election and Political and Cultural Landscape of the U.S.” with presentations by Professor Shannon Craig-Snell of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and Professor Matissa Wilbon of Bellarmine University.

(3) The Fall 2017 meeting met at Stony Point Center. One of the primary purposes of meeting at Stony Point was to engage with the Community of Living Traditions that is housed at Stony Point. There were several opportunities to engage with members of the community who represented different faith traditions. The Reverend J.C. Austin led a plenary session on Antiracism and Anti-Bias training. Yavilah McCoy (CEO of Dimensions Educational Consulting, who is also a third-generation African American Jew) and Rabia Terri Harris (from the Community of the Living Traditions, who is also an Euro-American person who converted to Islam) presented to GACEIR on the role of race in the Jewish and Muslim communities. Rabia serves as a chaplain for the Community of Living Traditions at Stony Point. Both Yavilah and Rabia represent racial minorities in Judaism and Islam and shared their experiences and commitments breaking down barriers and building wholistic communities.

(4) The January 2018 meeting focused on completing its work for this biennial term and preparing reports and work for the 223rd General Assembly (2018). A Theological Rationale for Interfaith Relationships in the PC(USA) was presented and a plan for greater consultation within the PC(USA) and with ecumenical and interfaith partners was developed. Recommendations for Mid Council Ecumenical Engagement and PC(USA) Engagement in Ecumenical and Interfaith work around particular global issues were also presented. It was noted that further work on both of these areas need to be completed before final reports are given. They also heard and considered ecumenical and interfaith implications from recent delegation visits to South Korea and Palestine/Israel. GACEIR began to consider what role it might have in geopolitical conflicts that impact our ecumenical and interfaith relationships. They heard reports on a World Communion of Reformed Churches Consultation on Strengthening Communion and Human Sexuality. They received updates on the Way Forward Commission and All Agency Review Committee’s work and ecumenical and interfaith implications. They considered ecumenical and interfaith implications in proposed changes to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board governance structure.

(5) In all meetings, GACEIR received reports from OGA and PMA staff on their ecumenical and interfaith work, reports from bilateral dialogues and relationships, and updates on ecumenical agencies. GACEIR selected persons and councils to receive the Ecumenical and Interfaith Service Recognitions. They also recommended persons to receive the Eugene Carson Blake Scholarship to study at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

C. Christian Churches Together Ministry and Activities Report 2016–2018

See CCT Report.pdf. [See p. 672.]

D. National Council of Churches of Christ Report to PC(USA)


E. World Communion of Reformed Churches Report to PC(USA)

See WCRC Report.pdf. [See p. 682.]

F. World Council of Churches Report to PC(USA)

See WCC Report.pdf. [See p. 690.]
Christian Churches Together was created to provide an inclusive space where the major Christian traditions in our country could build bridges of understanding and engage in respectful dialogue. CCT includes the voices of traditions that historically have stayed apart from each other. From 2001 to 2016 CCT has provided unique opportunities for engagement on the topics of hunger/poverty, racism, immigration, criminal justice, and issues related to these major topics. These conversations are held in an atmosphere of respect and mutual admonition. During the last two years, the political and religious situation in our country has shifted dramatically; we have seen an increase in tensions and disagreements between Christians of progressive and conservative persuasions. Many churches who in the past were amicable to the possibility of engaging with other churches with whom they have substantial disagreement are now challenged by their constituencies.

The current divisive environment in our country forces us to consider what the right path towards promoting peace and unity is. Would engaging only those that look, think, and behave like us help us to bring about healing and unity in our nation?

A search for understanding and cooperation must be inclusive of all Christian traditions. The ministry of Christian unity must be inclusive of the experiences of all Christians; after all, it is the unity of the body of Christ that we are fostering. The values of the gospel compel us to take risks and seek that which is elusive in society. We can't afford to stay bunkered down in our safe and comfortable theological and religious constructs. Progressive, center, and conservative Christians must take risks for the sake of peace, justice, and unity.

Since its inception, CCT has emphasized the nurturing of relationships through deepening friendships and focusing on spiritual practices (prayer, liturgy, and sharing of testimonies). CCT’s dialogues have not focused strictly on historical, theological divisions.

For the last two years we focused our activities on the areas mentioned above. A key element of the ministry of CCT is the work and ministry of the executive director. His responsibilities include: organizing and providing leadership to the Annual Convocation, the CCT Latino Network, and the CCT Mission Network. The E.D. serves as an ambassador of CCT’s vision at church conferences, assemblies, synods,
etc. A considerable amount of his time is spent working closely with several of our participant organizations advocating in Congress for legislation that reflect CCT common principles and values in the areas of immigration, mass incarceration, hunger/poverty and racial justice. The executive director is currently serving as one of the four senior leaders in the Circle of Protection. The Circle of Protection is a network of more than 30 communions and organizations working on Capitol Hill to promote legislation and protect programs that benefit poor and hungry people in our country. The active participation of the executive director in all of these events (more than 30 during the last two years) served to embody and articulate the values, principles, and consensus of the churches.

In 2017 we began a process of evaluating CCT’s vision and purpose. This process was in part initiated because of the lower than usual interest in the 2017 annual convocation. The steering committee decided that after ten years of existence it was necessary for CCT to take a closer look at our mission and purpose. A working group worked on this last year (2017), and the steering committee will receive their report at its spring meeting.

The main events held in 2016-18 were:

**Annual Convocation** - The most recent Annual Convocation was held in Anaheim, CA, on September 20-22. Approximately sixty people representing 33 of the 39 participant communions/organizations attended the convocation. The general theme was “A Conversation on Healing the Divisions in Church and Society”. The key sessions included the following topics: How to have a civil dialogue that can build up church and society, What must the U.S. Church do to be a faithful instruments of Racial Justice and reconciliation in our country?, The role of CCT in the current ecumenical landscape and, Renewing (perfecting) the narrative of CCT. At the final session, the majority of the participants expressed their strong support of the work of CCT and its contributions to the search for Christian unity. The participants committed themselves to encourage their communions to strengthen their participation and support of CCT.

**Forum on The Persecuted Church** – In March of 2017, CCT held a forum on the persecuted church. More than 30 church leaders attended the forum, held in Newark, NJ. The dialogue among the different traditions revealed a strong consensus on the churches' concerns for the persecuted church. A common statement (pastoral letter) was prepared and forwarded to ecumenical bodies around the world and to churches who are directly affected by persecution. This statement is available at CCT’s website.

**CCT Latino Network**- Fifteen senior Latino/a leaders met in Orlando, FL, in April of 2017. They spent two days considering the issue of immigration reform, sharing best practices (pastoral and advocacy), and in fellowship. At times these conversations on immigration were tense, reflecting the current socio-political situation in our country. The next CCT Latino Network gathering will be held in San Antonio, TX, on April 3-4, 2018.

**CCT Mission Network**- The steering committee approved the creation of a Global Mission Network. The purpose of the network is to bring together the senior staff/leadership from each of the communions for mutual learning and relationship building. The network had their first gathering on December 2017 in Grand Rapids, MI. Eight senior mission staff represented their communions. These eight leaders represented protestant and Evangelical/Pentecostal denominations. The main topic of conversation was the new reality of reverse missions. Reverse mission refers to a large number of Christians coming to the USA from countries around the world and the impact they are having in American Christianity. The participants are committed to meeting again and reaching out to their counterparts in the communions.
that were not present. They will also reach out to Orthodox communions and the USCCB; as their participation in this network, it is very important.

**Immigration Reform and DACA** – CCT’s staff as well as leaders from many of its communions have been actively involved in numerous actions on Capitol Hill in support of “dreamers” and immigration reform.

**Relationship building with Historic Back churches and churches of the African diaspora** – During the last two years CCT actively reached out to churches of the Methodist-Episcopal tradition. A closer relationship was particularly developed with leaders of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The purpose of this approach to African American communions was primarily to explore the possibilities of cooperation on racial justice efforts. These efforts were not as successful as we had hoped. The leadership of the CCT communions and CCT’s executive director are committed to continuing to support the work of racial justice. CCT’s executive director recently worked in the drafting of a Unity Statement on Racism and Poverty. This ecumenical document calls on our political leaders and the churches to the direct effect racism has on poverty. At the 2017 Annual Convocation, we received our membership the organization Hope for You. This organization is the social services arm of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. The RCCG is a denomination based in Nigeria that is expanding throughout the world. They have around 700 congregations and house churches in the USA.

To carry out the work of CCT it is critical that the communions/organizations maintain their financial support. Since its inception, CCT has been able to operate with a very modest operating budget. The financial contribution expected from the communions/organizations is minimal in comparison with the commitment of the churches/organizations to similar bodies. The reality is that even when these financial contributions are minimal, some communions often fail to fulfill their pledge.

The founding leaders had high hopes that CCT would offer new opportunities for the Church in our country to grow closer together. The genius of CCT is that it offers the opportunity for all the major Christian traditions to come face to face, to listen and learn from each other; Christian Churches Together has a unique vocation. I recognize that the vision of CCT has yet to be fully realized. There are several reasons for this, and this is not the appropriate place to expand on those. Nevertheless, I must emphasize that for the CCT vision to flourish we would need a deeper commitment from the communions and their leadership. We hope that the process of evaluating our vision and purpose will reveal new ways to deepen the level of engagement, increase the participation of the communions, and renew the commitment to be in relationship across our theological, social, and political differences.

Christian Churches Together can be a powerful instrument of the Holy Spirit to heal the divisions of the Church in our country. We must choose if we want to perpetuate polarization, or if we are willing to take risks and commit to a search for Christian unity that transcends our human limitations. God is always ready to empower the Church to be a faithful witness of the transformational power of the gospel.

The steering committee of CCT and its leadership are grateful for the active and faithful support of the Presbyterian Church USA.

Prepared by Rev. Carlos L. Malavé
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Report of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Since 1950, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) has served as a leading voice of witness to the living Christ. The Presbyterian Church (USA) is a founding member of the NCC. The NCC unifies a diverse covenant community of 38 member communions and over 30 million people in more than 100,000 congregations from Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Evangelical, historic African American and Living Peace traditions in a common commitment to advocate and represent God’s love and promise of unity in our public square. The NCC partners with secular and interfaith partners to advance a shared agenda of peace, progress, and positive change.

The National Council of Churches is a community of Christian communions which in response to the gospel revealed in the Scriptures confess Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, as Savior and Lord. These communions covenant with one another to manifest ever more fully the unity of the Church. Relying upon the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the communions come together as the Council in common mission, serving all creation to the glory of God.

Presently, Bishop W. Darin Moore of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church serves as chair of the NCC Governing Board and Dr. Jim Winkler serves as president and general secretary. The NCC owns the copyright to the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Holy Bible, conducts Faith & Order work, produces the International Sunday School Lesson for Christian Teaching, carries out interreligious dialogues, holds an annual Christian Unity Gathering, maintains an Intergenerational Think Tank, is a major sponsor of Ecumenical Advocacy Days, has resurrected Friendship Press, and works for justice and peace.

In recent years, the NCC has been restored to budgetary health. Member communions have contributed above and beyond the annual Ecumenical Commitment Fund (ECF) goal for four consecutive years and financial reserves have tripled. The PC(USA) has been one of the two most generous denominational supporters of the ECF each year and the Council is deeply grateful for this faithfulness which has enabled the ecumenical movement to continue.

NRSV Update

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) owns the copyright to the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Holy Bible. The NRSV was completed in 1992. In November 2017, the NCC and the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) agreed to work together to create an update of the NRSV.
SBL has developed text critical methods using new manuscripts, new text-critical resources, and new theories on manuscript primacy. SBL will use its text critical methods and SBL’s text critical editions as references in creation of the updated NRSV. The primary focus of the thirty-year review is on new text-critical and philological considerations that affect the English translation.

The current scholarly reconstructions of the biblical source texts are different from what they were when the NRSV was published. Important new tools, texts, and revised text-critical resources have been developed since 1989. And current understanding of some Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek terms differs from the understanding that informed the NRSV. Some, but not all, of these text-critical and philological differences are significant and impact translation.

For the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, text-critical developments in the last thirty years have been especially significant. The publication of the Judean Desert biblical texts and fragments has revealed a number of readings that differ from the medieval Hebrew traditions in the Masoretic Text, which was the basis of the NRSV.

In December 2020, SBL will deliver the proposed changes to the NCC. It is anticipated the updated NRSV will be available in 2021.

**Truth and Racial Justice Task Force**
Contrary to the will of God, the legacies of slavery are embedded in United States laws and practices—and in the church. Recognizing that the time is now to unmask racism and to take action for justice, the National Council of Churches Governing Board at its November 2016 meeting in Charleston, South Carolina called for a task force to address the brokenness of race.

The resulting task force, co-chaired by Mrs. Jacquelyn Dupont Walker, MSW, LCSW, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer of the United Church of Christ, first met in winter 2017. An impassioned vision emerged to issue a clarion call to the soul of the nation to tell the truth about racism in the United States. “The time is right,” asserts the task force vision statement, “for the National Council of Churches to join other partners seeking to identify, name, and address the trauma caused by racism in the United States—especially as it impacts people of African descent.” The statement continues, “...the complicity of white church members and leadership, and the impact of that complicity on faith communities of color has not yet been fully recognized in white communities...(H)ealing cannot be achieved without a complete confession of the truth as a prelude to reparative action and restorative justice.”

To launch this call to truth-telling and justice-seeking, the NCC held a major series of events to coincide with the national April 4, 2018 commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination: an April 3, 2018 ecumenical worship service at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, DC; an early morning April 4 silent march from the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial to the site of an all-day ACT to End Racism rally on the National Mall; and a Day of Advocacy on Capitol Hill on April 5.
Two member communions, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the United Church of Christ pledged to bring 5000 people to the rally. Key leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal, the American Baptist Churches, the Christian Methodist Episcopal, the Orthodox Church in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the United Methodist Church were present.


Partner organizations included the Conference of National Black Churches, the National African American Clergy Network, Sojourners, the New Baptist Covenant, Pax Christi, the Religious Action Center for Reformed Judaism, the Mennonite Central Committee, and others.

The NCC is not alone in this endeavor. Indeed, the timing of the initiative is due in part to the challenge of the World Council of Churches at the end of their 2016 solidarity visit to the United States related to race. The global nature of the challenge is highlighted by the United Nations naming 2015-2024 The International Decade for People of African Descent and calling attention in particular to the situation of persons of African descent in the United States.

In an effort, then, to eradicate racism and to move toward healing the wounds it has caused in society and the church, the NCC seeks to engage the full agency of its members and partners as a resource for inspiring clear commitments to racial equity and justice.

In all cases, this truth telling is but a prelude to deeper commitments to begin a healing process that, through the grace of God and the everlasting hope of the Risen Christ, can lead to the original dream of this great land: that all are created equal, free to live under the watchful eye of a Creator who endowed all with an inalienable right to a full life, a complete liberty and the pursuit of happiness for each and all.

**Christian Unity Gathering**

Each year, the NCC holds a Christian Unity Gathering (CUG). The November 8-9, 2017 CUG was held in Silver Spring, Maryland under the theme of “Resistance, Resilience, and Persistence.” 200 people, including 21 seminarians participated in workshops on racial justice, mass incarceration, and Middle East peacemaking.

Participants spent significant time at the new National Museum of African American History and Culture prior to an awards banquet highlighted by keynote speaker Ms. Vanita Gupta, chief executive of the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights. The J. Irwin Miller award for ecumenism was presented to Dr. Iva Carruthers, leader of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. Dr. Sayyid Syeed, longtime guiding light of the Islamic Society of North America was given an award for interfaith excellence. Rev. Osagyefo Sekou, Ms. Brittany Caine-Conley, and Rev. Seth Wispelwey were given awards in recognition of the courage and leadership they displayed in leading resistance to white nationalist marchers in Charlottesville, Virginia.
The next Christian Unity Gathering will take place October 15-17, 2018. More information will be available at www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us.

**Faith & Order**
The Convening Table on Theological Dialogue and Matters of Faith & Order has three study groups underway. The three groups—Climate and Conflict, Response to ‘Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World’ and ‘Who Do We Say That We Are,’ and Violence in an Age of Genocide. For the past four years, Faith & Order has presented a theological workshop at the outset of Ecumenical Advocacy Days. The topic of the 2018 workshop was “A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced People” was chaired by Dr. Raj Nardella of the PC(USA).

Faith & Order has contributed significantly to the efforts of the NCC with regard to racism, particularly in terms of writing and editing a new resource and the first publication of the renewed Friendship Press, “Uniting Against Racism.”

**Interreligious Relations and Collaboration**
The Convening Table on Interreligious Relations and Collaboration established three sub-groups to focus on dialogue (goals, best practices, dissemination of learnings); collaboration (ongoing theological engagement, common work on resources, identification of areas of concern); and national issues (NCC policy statement on interfaith relations update, information on interfaith trends, attention to policy issues).

Dialogues:

The Jewish-Christian dialogue met on November 1, 2017 at the Religious Action Center for Reformed Judaism in Washington, DC. The topics were the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and current trends in community identification and participation in our respective religious traditions. Another session was scheduled at the time of this writing for April 30-May 1 in Providence, Rhode Island where the focus will be on separation of church and state as well as on healing our society in matters of race.

The Muslim-Christian dialogue met on October 17, 2017 at Princeton Theological Seminary. The topics were Abraham in our respective scriptures, reinvigorating the dialogue, and ongoing public witness. New subgroups were proposed to identify pertinent issues and action items, to explore the possibility of a future joint delegation to the Middle East and future modes of public witness.

The Hindu-Christian dialogue will hold its inaugural session on July 17, 2018 at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. An initial planning meeting was held on January 31, 2019 with a co-convening organization, the Hindu Vedanta Society (LA), as well as with our co-sponsoring organization, the Guibord Center. A possible topic will be the meaning of illumination in various traditions around the table; other possible topics will include social and religious tensions in the US and other national but related contexts.
The Buddhist-Christian dialogue will tentatively hold its inaugural session in July 2018 at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. Building on preparatory work done by our Christian co-convener, a conference call was held on February 15 with two Buddhist co-conveners, and two other meetings are tentatively planned. Topics are yet to be determined.

**NCC Leadership Delegation to the Middle East**

From September 6-16, 2017, a delegation of ten representatives of NCC member churches traveled to Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine and Israel. NCC Chair Bishop Darin Moore and President/General Secretary Jim Winkler expressed solidarity with ecumenical colleagues, witnessed for peace alongside interfaith partners, and observed current on the ground realities to better inform ongoing advocacy.

In Lebanon, the NCC met with leaders of the Middle East Council of Churches and the National Evangelical Church. In Egypt, meetings were held with leaders of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Protestant Churches of Egypt, the Grand Mufti and other Muslim leaders and with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

In Palestine and Israel, the NCC met with Heads of the Jerusalem Churches, the Shalom Hartman Institute, Palestinian Authority officials, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, senior US Consular officials, and leaders of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs.

In each of the places visited, a primary message delivered by Middle East church leaders to the churches in the US was a request for prayer and solidarity. Fear, frustration, and anxiety among Christians, whose numbers are dwindling in the region due to extremist violence, political instability, and economic hardship, permeated the discussions. They shared a common human longing to be recognized with dignity and respect.

The NCC delegation believes peace can only come from the transformative power of prayer to God. The delegation affirmed a number of convictions including a belief our faith calls us to be active in the world, remembering our Lord’s teaching, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers.’ Christians in the US must be made more aware of the dire situation of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East.

US Christians must engage in public policy advocacy that supports the well-being of our church members in the Middle East. This includes constructive remedies for the extremist violence and responses to human rights violations throughout the region. US Christians must more forcefully speak out against the oppression of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine that has weighed heavily on the churches and denied the rights and dignity of their members as wee as of their Muslim brothers and sisters.

**Ecumenical Advocacy Days**

The NCC is a major sponsor of Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) an annual gathering in Washington, DC of hundreds of Christians from across the nation. The April 20-23, 2018 EAD theme was “A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced People.”

The 2018 keynote preacher was Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, vice president of Education and dean of Esperanza College at Eastern University in Pennsylvania. Other keynote speakers included Dr. Elizabeth
Ferris, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC and Rev. Julian DeShazier, senior pastor of University Church in Chicago.

**International Sunday School Lessons**

Through the Committee on the Uniform Series (CUS), the NCC develops an ongoing course of study and specific annual study plans that fulfill the objective of the Uniform Series (The International Sunday School Lessons for Christian Teaching). The primary product of the committee’s work is an annual Guide for Lesson Development that assists cooperating communions and writers in preparing materials for use in local churches.

The CUS is an ecumenical collaboration unlike almost any other project, serving the NCC and its 38 member communions. The work of the CUS is based on the RSV and NRSV translations of the Bible to produce instructional outlines for member communions and independent publishers. The product outcomes of the CUS guide Christian religious publishers in the development of curriculum and devotional materials for their own constituents.

For more than 140 years, the CUS has gathered to select a course of Bible lessons with an objective of ‘general study of the whole Bible....and to publish a list of such lessons’ that will guide faith formation and Christian discipleship. Today, the NCC through the CUS continues this ecumenical collaboration of providing curriculum designs for religious denominational and independent publishers.

Ultimately, the mission of the CUS is to assist and support the communication, faith formation, and character development of Christians. Development of curriculum outlines and educational designs is a major part of this ministry. The long and rich heritage of the Committee on the Uniform Series continues to inform, inspire, and guide the creation of common curricula for enduring understanding of faith and life in Jesus Christ.

**Action and Advocacy on Issues of Justice and Peace**

The voice, witness, and presence of the National Council of Churches and its member communions is called for on a daily basis on a host of issues both domestic and international. In particular, in recent years the NCC has been forthright in its support of an end of racism, the rights of migrants and refugees, an end to mass incarceration, programs that assist those living in poverty, peace in the Middle East, the abolition of nuclear weapons, measures to reduce gun violence, peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula, and normalization of relations with Cuba.

This work and ministry takes place through a variety of coalitions and networks including the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative, Creation Justice Ministries, the Washington Interreligious Staff Council, the Faithful Budget Campaign, the Interfaith Criminal Justice Coalition, the Circle of Protection, and Churches for Middle East Peace.
**Conclusion**
The roots of the modern ecumenical movement extend into the 19th century with the formation of bible societies, the YWCA and YMCA, the World Student Christian Federation, and missionary and Sunday School initiatives. The Federal Council of Churches, the predecessor body of the National Council, **was founded in 1908**. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has been a stalwart supporter of the NCC since the beginning and the PC(USA) has particular importance in the Council because of its faithfulness and clarity of voice. The NCC is extremely thankful for the support and active involvement of the PC(USA) in responding to the call by Jesus Christ to visible unity for the healing of the world.
Report from the World Communion of World Churches
to the 223rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Introduction

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what the will is of God, what is acceptable and good and perfect.” (Romans 12:2, NRSV).

Guided by this call of the Apostle Paul the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) embraced the theme “Living God, renew and transform us” urgently, prayerfully, humbly, joyfully and thoughtfully last summer in Leipzig, Germany. It was a significant, powerful and historic time for our Communion.

The inseparability of communion and justice was a guiding vision through the Council. The Declaration of Faith on Women’s Ordination moved us closer to living out our commitment to being just and inclusive. We reaffirmed the relevance of the Barmen Declaration and the Belhar and Accra confessions. Mission remains at the centre of our life as a Communion.

We emerged from the Council strengthened as a communion and reinvigorated in our ecumenical vocation and our call to transformative justice. There is no doubt that we are engaged in the struggle to bring the Reformation into the present tense. The unfinished theological agenda of the Reformation calls us to create space to hear and share the diversity of voices that make up our family.

The agenda before us is enormous and enormously challenging! We give thanks to the God of Life that we emerged not only renewed and encouraged in our vision but also gifted with extraordinary leadership, blessed with an Executive Committee that represents our diversity in age, gender, region and talent.

God has infused us with the hope necessary so that we might “be transformed by the renewing of our minds” so that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Thanks be to God.

Najla Kassab, President
Chris Ferguson, General Secretary
About the WCRC

The World Communion of Reformed Churches is comprised of 100 million Christians in Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting and Waldensian and other pre-Reformation churches. The WCRC, working with its 233 member churches, is active in supporting theology, justice, church unity and mission in 109 countries.

United in Christ and rooted in the historic Reformed traditions, the WCRC with its member churches believe that God calls Christians to be part of the transformation of the world through the love of Jesus Christ by meeting spiritual needs and fostering justice for all.

Member churches pay annual dues that support the core costs of the communion—governance, communication, travel and staff—while funds raised through partnerships and donations cover program activities.

The WCRC is active on many fronts, and the report below provides highlights of just some of its work. As will quickly be noted, much of the focus in the past two years has been in working toward, conducting and then following up on the General Council, an every-seven-year governance gathering of delegates of the WCRC’s member churches.

At the time of this writing, the WCRC was in the midst of creating a new strategic plan, which will guide its work through to the next General Council (expected in 2024). That plan was due to be discussed and decided upon at the first meeting of the recently elected Executive Committee in May.

Christian Unity: WCRC acts to overcome Reformation divisions

“Today is a historic day,” said Jerry Pillay, then president of the WCRC, at a ceremony on 5 July 2017 in Wittenberg, Germany, where Martin Luther lived and worked. “The documents we are signing today are significant and symbolic of the road we are to travel.”

Pillay was speaking as the WCRC formally associated itself with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, originally signed by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church on 31 October 1999.

The LWF and the WCRC also signed a “Wittenberg Witness,” pledging to work ever more closely together “with concrete actions, convinced that God’s Word leads us to deeper communion.”
“Today we are not only signing a statement, we are building a church together,” said Najla Kassab in her sermon at the service in the Stadtkirche (City Church), where Luther preached.

The ceremony took place in the year marking the 500th anniversary of Luther’s denunciation of church corruption in his 95 Theses, an event that helped set in motion the Reformation and centuries of division between Protestants and Catholics.

“The present achievement and commitment are viewed by Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists and Reformed as part of their pursuit of the full communion and common witness to the world which is the will of Christ for all Christians,” said Jong Chun Park, World Methodist Council president.

Pope Francis, in a message read by Bishop Brian Farrell, described the ceremony as “an eloquent sign of our commitment to walking together, as brothers and sisters in Christ, on a journey from conflict to communion, from division to reconciliation.”

**Gender Justice: WCRC promotes equality for women**

“A Declaration of Faith on the Ordination of Women” was adopted by the General Council after important group discussions were conducted through the Council’s discernment process.

“Hard conversations are still taking place about whether women should be allowed to take leadership positions in the church or not,” said Isabel Apawo Phiri. “There are still few women who are participating in leadership roles including the ordination of women.”

Church leaders, said Phiri, needed to use their authority to speak out against any form of injustice, starting from within the church itself.

“Christians must be an example. We must know that there is a way to be different from those who are governed by envy, rivalry and personal greed,” Elsa Tamez explained in a Bible study to the Council. “Discrimination and murder of women are tantamount to self-discrimination and suicide.”

“The proposals on the ordination of women and on the creation of a gender policy and its implementation have received very strong support from the delegates,” said Lisa Vander Wal, chair of the team tasked with summarizing discernment groups’ reports.

“The adoption of this declaration shows where we want to be on gender justice,” said Dora Arce Valentin, then WCRC executive secretary for justice and partnership. “It opens a deeper discussion within our churches, and it sets a frame for discussion around the role of women in ministry.”
The approval of this declaration constitutes an additional step in the establishment of equality between women and men within the WCRC. But “gender justice is not limited to the ordination of women,” stressed Chris Ferguson. The way is open for further work on gender equality with the WCRC committing to engage in a process to accompany its member churches.

**Communion: Strengthened through discernment**

“Church decision-making should look like church, not politics,” said Gradye Parsons, a member of the Discernment and Rules Planning Committee for the General Council. “And the process should make community, not fracture it.”

To achieve those goals, the General Council adopted a discernment-consensus process for decision making. After receiving written and verbal input together, participants discussed proposals in small groups and sent comments to a “Drafting Team” for incorporation into a final proposal which returned to the plenary for further discussion.

“Discernment Groups include voices from around the world,” Lucy Wambui Waweru said. “And every voice is heard.”

“Discernment truly is more about listening than speaking,” said Parsons. “It is important to listen to what others are saying. It is important to listen to what God is saying. And it’s important to consider your own thoughts with regard to the issue and in light of what you have heard.”

After discussing a final proposal in plenary, delegates were asked to show their feelings by holding up either an orange or blue card.

Annedore Held Venhaus appreciated the notion of the coloured cards. “I like how the cards express a feeling,” she said. “I feel warm to this idea, I feel cool to it. I found that very interesting.”

Waweru agreed. She also appreciated that giving consensus did not mean that a delegate was 100% supportive or opposed to a proposal.

“Consensus-building does not solve every issue,” she said. “But the important thing is that we all journey in the same direction. And that we journey together.”

**Leadership Development: Global Institute of Theology moulds future leaders**

They came from many nations, gathering at the top of what has been called the “holy hill.” The Global Institute of Theology (GIT) began at the Theological College for Church
and Diaconie in Wuppertal, Germany, before joining the General Council in Leipzig just over two weeks later.

Each GIT gathers 50 students for an intensive short-term academic programme designed to provide an opportunity to learn and do theology in an intercontextual and ecumenical way, situating the theological task in local, regional and world contexts.

The two locations were important for this GIT. “Wuppertal and Leipzig both played major roles in the history of German churches,” said Martin Engels, a former GIT student and now president of the Reformed Alliance (Germany). “The GIT connects history today and looks for new perspectives for our churches tomorrow.”

“The fact that the GIT coincides with the Council is a significant experience for these younger theologians, most of whom will serve their churches in various ministries, including ordained ministry, or be involved in the theological life of their churches when they return home,” said Aruna Gnanadason, GIT dean of students.

“Our time in Wuppertal was an absolutely amazing reality of the beauty of God’s diversity—from the thoughtful setting, to the imaginative worship experiences, courses, exposure visits, to the clear and loving model of leadership provided by our lecturers and coordinators,” said Sanya Beharry, a student from Trinidad and Tobago.

Shawn Harmon, a student in Louisville, felt that the wide-ranging issues about the idea of mission helped him comprehend the global witness of the church and the importance of partnership in mission. The nationalities, cultures and languages among participants were diverse, but one overwhelmingly clear fact was clear: “You won’t be the same theologian when you go back to your home country.”

Peace Initiatives: Working as a Communion for peace

The WCRC partners with its member churches to advocate for peace, justice and reconciliation in some of the most challenging areas of the world. This commitment to be peacemakers was strongly reaffirmed by the General Council.

Hong Jung Lee (Presbyterian Church in [South] Korea) said that the Korean peninsula’s “division is the starting point for a transformation towards reconciliation. We must keep our dream: someday, the Koreans will be reunited. One day, the children of the North and the South will grow together in a world without nuclear weapons.” The WCRC is engaged in a broad ecumenical effort to heal, reconcile and reunify Koreans through peaceful means.

The peace agreement in Colombia “is so important as it brings to an end a conflict that has drowned Colombia in a spiral of violence, poverty and death,” said Helis Barraza Diaz (Presbyterian Church of Colombia). The WCRC continues to support churches’ local
development and education programmes to build peace, with an emphasis on human rights, inclusivity, sustainability and care for creation.

“We need the church to be empowered,” a Presbyterian Church of South Sudan pastor said. “Church leaders, women and youth, need to be empowered to advocate for the peace initiatives in South Sudan. The church has already started it, they have done a lot for peace, especially at the grassroots.” The WCRC is working with its members, including the PC(USA), and other partners to support this important work.

The Council, stating that “the integrity of Christian faith and praxis is at stake,” urged its members to examine their mission, education and investment relationships with Israel and Palestine. “It is time for Israelis and Palestinians to live alongside each other in peace, security and justice,” the adopted resolution stated. “Many of us have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears the painful realities of life for Palestinians.”

Communion: Supporting sisters and brothers

The WCRC both responds and proactively seeks ways in which to support its member churches in times of need. This important aspect of communion-building can be as simple as issuing a call to prayer for a specific incident, but it can also be as complex as accompanying a member church as it works to bring justice, peace and reconciliation to a war-ravaged area over many years.

The WCRC also supports member churches particularly in the Global South through its Reformed Partnership Fund, which provides small grants and other resources to churches that carry out mission-related projects important to the life of a church and its surrounding community.

The General Council called the Communion to focus on specific issues of need in the coming years, including the following:

- promote networking among regions and local churches to share best practices regarding migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
- offer support to the victims of the on-going activities of insurgents in Nigeria, particularly as it affects women and children in internally displaced peoples’ camps, and in the rebuilding of devastated communities.
- develop right relationships with Indigenous Peoples by initiating a study towards seeking repentance of wrongdoing, an apology, and a process leading to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, including liturgical resources for use in churches.
- seek ways to accompany the churches in Central America in their efforts to counter violence and promote a culture of peace.
- engage with United States member churches to develop educational and liturgical resources that challenge complicity in white supremacy and foster a deepened sense that our salvation is bound up with one another.
**Leadership: Officers and Executive Committee**

Of the 22 members of the Executive Committee elected by the General Council, 10 are men and 12 women; 15 are ordained and 7 are lay people. Five of the members of the Executive Committee are young adults under 30 years of age, including one of the vice-presidents.

**Officers**

Najla Kassab, a minister in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, was elected WCRC president.

“With her experience and many gifts, Najla’s vision, insight, spiritual strength and grace make her the right person to lead us forward as president,” said Alison McDonald, the convener of the Nominating Committee.

The four vice-presidents are Samuel Ayete-Nyampong (Presbyterian Church of Ghana), Lisa Vander Wal (Reformed Church in America), Sylvana Maria Apituley (Protestant Church in West Indonesia) and Raissa Vieira Brasil (United Presbyterian Church of Brazil).

Johann Weusmann (Reformed Alliance (Germany)) was re-elected to a second term as general treasurer.

**Executive Committee Members**

Clayton Da Silva, Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil
Diana Erdélyi, Reformed Church in Hungary
Hilary Hagar, Presbyterian Church in Canada
Hefin Jones, Union of Welsh Independants
Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawon, Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago
Hong Jung Lee, Presbyterian Church of Korea
Coutinho Maravilhaos Moma, Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
Veronica Muchiri, Presbyterian Church of East Africa
J. Herbert Nelson, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Tibonge Ng’ambi, United Church of Zambia
Hannah North, Presbyterian Church Aotearoa New Zealand
Claudio Pasquet, Waldensian Evangelical Church
Khid-arn Prawate, Church of Christ in Thailand
Miliades Pua, Presbyterian Church of Colombia
Mary Ekinde Salle, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
Susan Thomas, Church of South India

In addition to those elected by the General Council, each of the WCRC’s five regional councils sends a representative to the Executive Committee as a full voting member.
Learn More

For more information on the WCRC, please visit the website—wcrc.ch—Facebook page—facebook.com/worldcommunion—or follow the WCRC on Twitter: @reformedcomunio. A monthly e-newsletter can be subscribed to on the website.
The World Council of Churches (WCC) was founded in 1948 in Amsterdam, where 143 churches declared “we intend to “stay together”. Today the WCC celebrates 70 years as a fellowship of 348 member churches in more than 110 countries, representing over 560 million Christians. The members include Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Old Catholic and United churches. The Presbyterian Church (USA), through its predecessor bodies, is a founding member of the WCC.

“The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the WCC is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe” (WCC constitution, article 3).

The WCC plays a special role in the one ecumenical movement helping to convene churches, councils, communions and specialized ministries. The WCC cooperates closely with the Roman Catholic Church and maintains relations with the World Evangelical Alliance and the Pentecostal World Fellowship. It represents the fellowship of churches with many United Nations agencies as well as other international organizations.

The Assembly, which takes place every 8 years, is the highest governing body of the WCC. It elects 7 presidents to represent the fellowship and a central committee of 150 members, which meets every 2 years, to provide direction. The central committee elects a moderator, 2 vice-moderators and an executive committee of 25 people, which meets biannually to provide oversight.

Every year the WCC publishes an annual review, audited financial reports and detailed programme reports (www.oikoumene.org). What follows are highlights from the life and work of the WCC since the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 2016.

Pilgrimage of justice and peace
Since the Tenth Assembly in 2013, the WCC has sought to fulfil its “primary purpose” as a pilgrimage of justice and peace – an invitation to all churches, partners and people of good will to engage their gifts in transforming action. Churches around the world have joined the journey, not as a new initiative, but as a way to continue working together for God’s justice and peace. As a strategic direction, the pilgrimage of justice and peace has a regional and thematic focus each year:

- 2016 focus on the Middle East with a thematic focus on religion and violence
- 2017 focus on Africa and with a thematic focus on peace building and reconciliation
- 2018 focus on Latin American and the Caribbean with a thematic focus on ecumenical diaconia and sustainable development

The regional and thematic foci are not short-term responses, but seek to encourage sustained reflection, cooperation, accompaniment and prayer among the fellowship of churches. The WCC also maintains focus on the following priority countries: Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan, North and South Korea, Palestine and Israel, Iraq, Syria and Ukraine.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
For over 100 years churches have expressed their commitment to being one in Christ through the week of prayer for Christian unity. Each year the theme, texts, reflections and prayer are prepared by churches in a different country and shared with the world-wide church. The WCC and the Roman Catholic Church supported the churches in Latvia, Germany and the Caribbean, that prepared the following themes:

- In 2016 the churches in Latvia prepared the theme “Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord” (cf. 1 Peter 2.9)
- In 2017 the churches in Germany prepared the theme “Reconciliation – the love of Christ compels us” (cf. 2 Corinthians 5.14-20)
- In 2018 the churches in the Caribbean prepared the theme “Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power” (cf. Exodus 15.6)
Central Committee in 2016 and 2018

New member churches

The central committee meeting in Trondheim, Norway (June 2016) received 3 new member churches; the central committee meeting in Geneva (June 2018), will receive 2 more; for a total of 350 member churches:

- Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Blantyre Synod [Malawi] – received in 2016
- Council of Baptist Churches in North East India – received in 2016
- Dutch Reformed Church [South Africa] – received in 2016
- Africa Brotherhood Church [Kenya] – to be received in 2018
- Community of Baptist Churches in Central Africa [DRC] – to be received in 2018

Policy documents and directions

“*The Gift of Being – Called to be the Church of All and for All*” – the study document was affirmed by the central committee in 2016, building on the 2003 document “A Church of All and for All” prepared by EDAN (Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network), which argued for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities. The new document goes beyond the paradigm of inclusion to affirming God’s gift of being and calling into question distinctions of disability and impairment.

“*Churches Recommit to Accelerate HIV Response*” – this pastoral letter was issued by the central committee in 2016. It builds on the ecumenical response to HIV with a renewed commitment to “End AIDS by 2030”; which for the churches means accompanying people and communities living with, or vulnerable to HIV every day, every month, every year until AIDS has been overcome.

“*Churches Commitment to Children*” – this initiative, together with “*Principles for Child-friendly Churches*”, was affirmed by the central committee in 2016. It seeks to engage churches in child protection, child participation and climate justice initiatives with children. It is supported by WCC-UNICEF global partnership focussed on ending violence against children.

“*Global Ecumenical Health Strategy*” – the central committee meeting in June 2018 will receive a new strategy to promote health and wholeness for all by strengthening the churches as healing communities. It builds on 50 years of promoting ‘primary health care’, with reference to the churches contribution to fighting AIDS and the crucial role that churches played in Ebola outbreak, promoting safe and dignified burial practices.

“*Called to Transformative Action – Ecumenical Diakonia*” – the central committee meeting in June 2108 will receive a paper on *diakonia* that offers a common theological foundation for the ecumenical movement’s continued commitment to sustainable development. The paper, in the form of a study document, promotes reflection on the churches’ faith-based and a rights-based approach to transformation.

Next WCC Assembly

The next Assembly will take place in 2021. The central committee meeting in June 2018 will decide the assembly venue and theme; allocate member church delegates; and determine the style and ethos of the next Assembly. The churches in Germany have invited the WCC to Karlsruhe. The churches in South African have invited to the WCC to Cape Town.

World Mission Conference

The World Conference on Mission and Evangelism took place in Arusha, Tanzania in March this year under the theme “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship. The conference issued the “Arusha Call to Discipleship”, affirming that discipleship is both a gift and a calling to be active collaborators with God for the transforming of the world; and articulating 12 commitments to transformation.

Looking ahead

The WCC is a vibrant fellowship of churches committed to responding to Christ prayer that “we may all be one, so that the world may believe” (cf. John 17.21). In 2019 the pilgrimage of justice and peace will draw attention to the people and churches of Asia. It will rekindle the historic ecumenical commitment to combatting racism with a focus on racism, discrimination and xenophobia. The search for unity and the quest for justice and peace are the hallmarks that define the life and work of the WCC and our cooperation with the Presbyterian Church (USA).
Item 08-01

[Item 08-01 was approved with amendment. See pp. 52, 53–54.]

*On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities That Focus on Renewable Energy—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.*

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to

1. Command the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation for creating fossil free options for participants, and the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee for increased engagement with companies in the fossil fuel industry—actions that embody the beginning of a faithful response to the devastating and urgent reality of climate change.

2. Recognize that by continuing to hold investments in the fossil-fuel companies that most egregiously contribute to the climate crisis, the PC(USA) is complicit in harming God’s creation and “the least of these” who are disproportionately affected by climate change.

3. Direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to divest from the fossil-fuel industry.

4. Direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to actively seek out and invest in securities of companies whose predominant focus is in renewable and/or energy efficiency.

5. Direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) about their progress in effecting Recommendations 3. and 4.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation from the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Affirm the need of urgent and robust responses to the threat of climate change, as well as the need for Presbyterian entities and individuals to pursue a comprehensive set of faithful responses.

2. Receive the report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) on its extensive engagement of corporations as well as its implementation of the criteria included in the directive from the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

3. Affirm the Guideline Metrics (see appendix, p. 740) MRTI developed for measuring progress towards compliance with General Assembly established criteria for all corporations, especially those that produce and/or heavily consume fossil fuels.

4. Direct MRTI to pursue/continue its engagement process with deliberate haste and continue to utilize its Guideline Metrics with corporations in the 2019 and 2020 proxy seasons and report back three years of metrics to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with divestment recommendations for the companies who are not moving towards compliance with the General Assembly’s criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Companies previously identified by MRTI for this focused engagement include, but are not limited to, Chevron, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Marathon Petroleum, Valero Energy, Phillips 66, Duke Energy, Ford, General Motors.

5. Commend all corporations who are working to address the risks of climate change by aligning and adopting policies and practices in line with Paris Accords including: reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved energy efficiency, incorporation of renewable energy and having robust disclosure of the risks related to the 2-degree warming scenario, and how they plan to manage operations in line with low carbon demand scenarios.

6. Commend the investing agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their work to provide options for congregations, mid councils, and individuals working for a fossil fuel-free future. Specifically, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for its Restoring Creation Loan program; the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its positive investments in renewables and its environmental investment option for plan members; and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation for its positive investments in renewables, and for providing, through its New Covenant Trust Company subsidiary, fossil free investment strategies for congregations, mid councils, and individuals.

7. Encourage continued respectful discussion and engagement in the church and civil society on the critical issue of climate change, and how it should be addressed, not only through the responsible use of investments, but also as individuals, churches, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) working together to reduce our carbon footprint.

*Rationale*

People on the front lines of climate change, particularly people of color, are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Countless individuals and organizations among “the least of these” have prophetically called upon the world to divest from fossil fuels. Earlier this year, for example, LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, one of the native water protectors at Standing Rock said, “We will be everywhere to let people know that there’s a better way to live, there’s a better way to live with the Earth,
with green energy, and that it’s time for us now to start divesting from fossil fuel, because we must save the water. We must save the water.” We are thus called to take prophetic action in light of these voices and the imminent dangers on which they shed light.

The PC(USA) has debated divestment from the fossil fuel industry during the last two General Assemblies [221st General Assembly (2014) and 222nd General Assembly (2016)].


• In 2016, the Presbytery of San Francisco sent the overture “On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment” with thirty-one presbyteries concurring (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 511ff, Item 09-01).

Prior to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), nine former Moderators signed a letter urging the commissioners to support the overture to divest. Their reasoning included, “because of the grave and urgent threat of climate change and the fossil fuel sector’s well-documented and unyielding refusal to change, it is no longer morally or ethically right for the PC(USA) to profit from companies that are creating ecological destruction and human suffering on such a monumental scale.”

Our denomination has already recognized the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy plan in a way that is both just and compassionate, not least of which includes the support of carbon neutrality in 2006. These statements have all been founded on the biblical call to love and care for creation.

We have actively worked as a denomination to reduce our use of fossil fuels and shrink our carbon footprint in our congregations and individual lives. These biblical and denominational mandates compel us to look at our collective investments.

As a denomination, we have long held that we cannot profit from the companies whose policies are harmful to any living thing. For nearly a century, the church has not invested in companies producing alcohol, tobacco, gambling, the military, or those that contribute to violations of human rights. The General Assembly thus declared in 1968, “the [Church’s] power to spend and to invest includes the power to refrain from spending or investing. The church has not only the right but the responsibility to be selective in the use of its funds.”

The General Assembly reinforced this form of stewardship in 1992, affirming that it does not and will not invest in any “sin stocks.” In addition to these broad industries, General Assemblies have also divested from the Duke Energy coal mining company because of its treatment of its workers; Chevron after it sold fuel to the South African apartheid government; Talisman Energy for building a pipeline in Sudan that threatened human rights; and Hewlett Packard, Caterpillar, and Motorola for profiting from human rights abuses in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Some of these divestment actions came after a long process of corporate engagement by the church’s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee. Other divestment decisions were made outside the realm of MRTI.

Climate change represents deep harm to the whole biosphere, including especially marginalized people, so it is imperative that we would divest from the industry most responsible for that harm, as outlined in the Carbon Underground 200th list.

And already as a denomination we are taking some steps. The PC(USA) Foundation has introduced financial products that provide comparable return on investment without supporting fossil fuel companies, and the Board of Pensions has a fossil-free option for their 403-B plan. Synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individuals have moved their investments to such funds, and we commend them for doing so.

But while these actions among individuals and various Presbyterian entities are faithful responses to the growing crisis of climate change, they fall far short of the institutional actions necessary to make a significant difference. It is time for fossil-free investments to be the norm instead of the option.

Endnotes


2. http://fossilfreeindexes.com/the-carbon-underground/ The Carbon Underground 200 is an annually updated listing of the top 100 public coal companies globally and the top 100 public oil and gas companies globally, ranked by the potential carbon emissions content of their reported reserves. The list is produced and maintained by Fossil Free Indexes, LLC.

Concurrence to Item 08-01 from the Presbytery of Blackhawk, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, de Cristo, Denver, Des Moines, Giddings-Lovejoy, Heartland, Long Island, Mid-Kentucky, Missouri River Valley, National Capital, New Brunswick, New York City, Northern New England, New Castle, Northern New York, Newton, Northwest Coast, Pacific, Palisades, Pittsburgh, Sacramento, San Jose, Shenandoah, Southeastern Illinois, Upper Ohio Valley, and Wabash Valley.

694  223rd General Assembly (2018)
Biblical Foundations for Divestment: Stewardship and Social Justice

Our faith calls us to be good stewards of the Earth and to work for the well-being of neighbors near and far. Humanity’s first God-given responsibility is to “serve and keep” the creation, acting in ways that sustain its capacity to support life (Genesis 2:15). Intertwined with this responsibility is the call of the prophets and of Jesus Christ to stand in solidarity with people who are poor and vulnerable, and ensure that all have enough to live healthy and dignified lives (Isa. 58:6–10; Mt. 25:34–36).

Today, climate change, primarily caused by burning fossil fuels, is the most serious and widespread threat to these core commitments of our faith. Vulnerable people around the world find their lives and livelihoods at risk as climate change reduces crop yields, intensifies water scarcity, threatens public health, and increases vulnerability to disasters. Here in our own state of North Carolina, in 2016 we witnessed two climate-change-related disasters: Hurricane Matthew—made stronger by a warmer ocean—devastated farms in the east, while unprecedented drought and forest fires threatened life and damaged air quality in the west. In this context, loving our neighbors compels us to limit further global warming—and therefore its humanitarian and ecological impacts—by transitioning to a renewable energy economy.

PC(USA) Social Witness Policy and the Science of Climate Change Mitigation

In 2008, the PC(USA) affirmed the goal of limiting the increase in Earth’s temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This commitment reflects a scientifically-informed judgement that more warming would have consequences that violate our values of practicing responsible environmental stewardship and ensuring that the hungry are fed.

Endorsing the two-degree limit means that the church must work toward the limitations on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are required to have a reasonable chance of meeting the target. To achieve this goal, scientists warn that humanity must:

• Leave at least 85 percent of known fossil fuel reserves unburned,
• Begin drastically reducing GHG emissions no later than 2020, and
• Shift to a renewable energy economy, mostly by 2050, and completely phase out fossil fuels by 2100.

While the PC(USA) has affirmed lifestyle changes and public policies directed toward achieving such reductions in GHG emissions, our witness is compromised by the fact that we continue to finance fossil fuel exploitation that threatens to raise Earth’s temperature beyond the limit we have affirmed.

Part of a Comprehensive and Compassionate Response to Climate Change

Divestment from fossil fuel companies is an essential part of the comprehensive response to climate change that the church has already initiated. This action can complement efforts to reduce personal and institutional GHG emissions, and legislative advocacy aimed at regulating GHG emissions and promoting renewable energy. Studies at both the global level and for the United States show that it is possible for us to transition completely to existing wind, water, and solar energy technologies by 2050. However, fossil fuel companies have blocked such a transition through their lobbying efforts. In 2016, oil and gas companies spent nearly $120 million to lobby the U.S. Congress. Therefore, investing in fossil fuel companies undermines our own legislative advocacy efforts by financing lobbying against policies that would make renewable energy and mass transit more economical and widely available.

In contrast, fossil fuel divestment—and clean energy reinvestment—supports our vision for a world where our global climate stays within bounds that allow Creation to flourish, and workers find dignified employment in renewable energy industries. In particular, divestment from fossil fuels and reinvestment in renewable energy and energy efficiency (as required by Recommendation 4) affords our church the opportunity to support worker re-training and creation of sustainable jobs in areas where fossil fuel jobs will be lost as the world shifts to renewable energy. In the process of reinvestment, the Presbytery of Salem encourages asset managers to actively seek out opportunities to invest in companies that are willing to locate in communities facing economic transition and re-train workers for jobs in the clean energy economy of the future.

In conclusion, our church has long affirmed that “divestment of holdings in a particular firm or a class of firms is … potentially an occasion for Christian witness to God’s call for justice and the renewal of society.” In this time of climate change, divesting from fossil fuel companies is such an occasion. This action will complement our church’s commitment to lifestyle changes and legislative advocacy by building public awareness and political will to regulate GHG emissions, while supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency. This, in turn, will help our congregations, and society as a whole, to care for the Earth and love our neighbors by relying on the energy God has so abundantly provided in sun, wind, and water.

Endnotes for Additional Rationale

likely to accept being directed, even by the General Assembly, for reasons they outline in the Board of Pensions’ comment.


All ACSWP members see this as an act of faithfulness to our loving Creator God, and some actively

Those bodies have already established fossil-free investment funds, but are highly un-

able to set aside


See policy cited in Note 2, pp. 1–4.


According to the Center for Responsive Politics, oil and gas companies alone spent nearly $120 million to lobby the U.S. Congress in 2016, or about $330,000 per day. See: Center for Responsive Politics. Oil & Gas Lobbying, 2016. Online at: http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/indusclient.php?id=E01&year=2016.


ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 08-01 would have the assembly direct the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions to divest summarily of all fossil fuel company securities in the top 200, measured by size of carbon-based energy reserves, and invest more in renewable energy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 08-01 be answered by the action taken on Item 08-08.

In a more perfect world, ACSWP would advise the General Assembly to approve measures and recommendations that have the urgency reflected in Item 8-01 and the practical strategies embodied in Item 08-08. But a perfect world would not be one impered by unchecked human consumption of all kinds, including pan-destructive fossil fuels.

Item 08-01 emphasizes one dramatic strategy that would symbolize our church’s refusal to accept the energy status quo, the dependence or even addiction to fossil fuels, even as the environmental costs become more and more apparent. Clearly divestment carries a message that lifts up the issue involved and the integrity of the actor. The church would be less complicit financially; we would not profit from a large category of large companies, if the financial agencies were willing to set aside their senses of fiduciary responsibility. Those bodies have already established fossil-free investment funds, but are highly unlikely to accept being directed, even by the General Assembly, for reasons they outline in the Board of Pensions’ comment.

One of the amendments ACSWP proposes to the MRTI report is a commendation of the forty or so presbyteries that concurred in this overture. All ACSWP members see this as an act of faithfulness to our loving Creator God, and some actively
supported this overture’s adoption in their own presbyteries. At the same time, as with the Advocacy Committees on Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns, ACSWP has a member on the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, MRTI, the body designated since 1971 to work on corporate social responsibility for the church. Thus, like many Presbyterian families, our committee was divided, with some fed up with incremental strategies and others willing to support MRTI’s deliberate, no short-cuts approach.

MRTI describes that company by company approach in Item 8-08. Divestment is always a possibility, but only after other efforts at corporate engagement are tried. MRTI faithfully follows General Assembly policy and criteria for divestment of 1984, and is employing those criteria with regard to companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine. But the avoidance of “sin stocks” and several categories of military securities are precisely by category, based on the nature of their businesses. This is the model desired for fossil fuel securities.

There was, in fact, a reasonably rapid divestment of military contractor securities in 1982, when MRTI brought that recommendation as a positive response to Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling (1980). That social witness policy not only started the Peacemaking Program, it called on all bodies of the church to take action in their areas. MRTI looked at its mixed record with big military contractors and nuclear warhead makers, and at the beginning of a military build-up, and recommended its own form of “economic conversion;” getting church monies out of companies who had every financial and business reason to grow their military contracts. How effective has that military-related divestment been? ACSWP wishes it were better known now, as it was and is a good thing that the PC(USA) does not profit from nuclear warhead-making and a lot of actual war-making.

The tipping point for ACSWP’s staying with MRTI has to do with our institutional role, which is to keep a prophetic edge within the structures. While it may not look like it in this case, MRTI does push not only companies, but our investment bodies themselves—and perhaps even those presbyteries supporting Item 08-03. While Item 08-02, which also calls for fossil free divestment, does respect the role of MRTI, Item 08-01 only cites it briefly. Ultimately ACSWP values MRTI highly, even when some of our members believe MRTI’s proposed actions do not go far enough. Welcome to an open, sometimes conflicted, yet loyal and democratic Body of Christ!

Item 08-08 is a report from the Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee (MRTI), responding to a directive from the 222nd General Assembly (2016), to develop a Guideline Metric for monitoring whether firms involved in extracting or consuming fossil fuel are making meaningful progress in moving toward a carbon-free future. The report recommends that MRTI continue in its dialogue with the management of energy firms, which would not be possible if Item 08-01 were approved, requiring the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions to divest from their stock.

ACSWP agrees with the proposers of both Item 08-01 and Item 08-08 that climate change is a very serious problem and that our economy needs to end fossil fuel consumption as quickly as possible. The overtures differ in their recommendations for action over the next few years.

Since it will take some time for the economies of the U.S. and the world to make the transition to a fossil free energy system, PC(USA), through MRTI and its coalition partners, can contribute to this transition with shareholder dialogue and pressure—such as proxy votes and selective divestment from firms that refuse to progress fast enough with the transition. The Guideline Metric that MRTI has developed can measure this progress and provide a framework for dialogue. Since the issuance of its report, MRTI has signed-on to the newly formed Climate Action 100+, with 256 institutional investors having $28 trillion in assets under management—one-third of the world’s invested assets. Together, these investors will be calling on the boards of companies to implement a strong governance framework for accountability, oversight and disclosure of climate change risks.

Reflecting the urgency of the issue and the grave concerns of those supporting the fossil free/divestment overture, MRTI should use these new sources of information and leverage to pressure for better corporate practices, including lobbying, and to accelerate the process of divestment from firms that will not change their ways.

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ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 08-01.

As full voting members of MRTI, ACREC disapproves of this recommendation. ACREC laments the harm caused by climate change and the disproportionately damaging effects on people of color and seeks to actively work toward a solution. However, ACREC also recognizes that no dialogue will lead to more harm and no ability to advocate for the people of color who are employed by these companies.

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ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 08-01.
ACWC understands that climate change is a crisis. The issue disproportionately impacts women, children, people of color, and the most marginalized in global society. As a full voting member of the Mission Responsibility through Investment Committee (MRTI), ACWC brings a critical, gender-justice lens to corporate engagements, committee discussions, and deliberations. ACWC has maintained a voice in this conversation through MRTI and advises disapproval of this item and requests that the committee see ACWC’s Advice and Counsel on Item 08-08, p. 53.

**BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 08-01**

*Comment on Item 08-01—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).*

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board shares a deep concern for God’s world and has worked actively to support the Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship developed by all six agencies of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 2016, the Board’s Pension Portfolio invested in a global fossil-free fund, the largest investment in such a fund ever made by a Presbyterian entity. The value of that investment as of December 31, 2017, was $116 million. In addition, the Board established a fossil-free mutual fund investment option for participants in the Board’s 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan (RSP). Despite significant promotion, only 148 of the 11,957 participants in the RSP have elected the fossil-free fund option.

Although the Board supports the environmental goal of all four overtures, it nonetheless recommends disapproval of Items 08-01 and 08-02 due to structural and technical concerns addressed in the specific comments below. The Board urges the approval of Items 08-03 and 08-10, which effectively provide a comprehensive response to climate change.

*Comment Specific to Item 08-01, On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities That Focus on Renewable Energy*

This overture seeks to bypass the work of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee of the General Assembly (MRTI) that has been highly effective in its engagement of climate change issues as directed by 222nd General Assembly (2016). MRTI’s process does not preclude divestment of bad actors, but provides a studied and deliberative process for such determinations. One of those steps is consultation with Presbyterians who might be affected by such action, a step that has not been addressed in this recommendation. By way of example, MRTI recommended divestment of certain United States companies engaged with Israeli military forces in Palestine. That recommendation was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014). MRTI is not recommending complete divestment from the entire fossil-fuel industry sector.

This overture fails to recognize the process through which individual companies are added to the church’s prohibited securities list. Each year, MRTI develops a recommended list of prohibited securities. At the Board of Pensions, this list is presented to the Investment Committee, the governance body entrusted with responsibility for the investment management of the Benefits Plan and Assistance and Education funds held by the Board. The Investment Committee determines whether to approve the list in whole or part and further can add additional securities as it determines such investment decisions are in the best interest of the members and beneficiaries of the Board’s funds. The resulting list is then distributed to all of the Board’s separate investment managers.

While the General Assembly may applaud and encourage such investments as the Pax Global Strategy fossil-free investment in the Board’s balanced investment portfolio, by law, the Investment Committee of the Board cannot be directed to make any particular investment. All investments are vetted through a rigorous diligence process and must meet the requirements of appropriate risk/return, diversification and established asset allocations required by the governance and legal requirements applicable to the Board’s funds. As a parallel, the General Assembly cannot direct individuals to make any particular investment. The Board established a fossil-free option for investment in the 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Program (RSP). Despite significant promotion, as of December 31, 2017, only 148 of the 11,957 participants in the RSP had selected the fossil-free fund.

Finally, as written, this overture is overly broad. There is no consensus definition of “the fossil-fuel industry.” This fact highlights the need for MRTI to undertake focused and specific work around engagement and the determination of when or if divestment in a specific company is appropriate.

*Comment Specific to Item 08-02, On Adding to the GA Divestment List All Companies That Meet Specific Listed Criteria*

Like Item 08-01, this overture seeks to bypass the work of the MRTI, which has been highly effective in its engagement of climate change issues as directed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). By way of example, MRTI recently led ecumenical coalitions in successfully passing shareholder resolutions with Exxon Mobil, including the need to report on the impacts of climate change to its business.
MRTI’s process does not preclude divestment of recalcitrant companies, but provides a process for such determinations. One of those steps in potential divestment is consultation with Presbyterians who might be affected by such action, a step that is not acknowledged in this recommendation. MRTI is not recommending divestment from the fossil fuel industry at this time. This overture seeks to substitute its recommendation for that of the MRTI members duly elected by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 3.a. calls out the Carbon Underground 200 list. This list is unreliable and does not meet the standards of due diligence and prudent investment required of the Board. Fossil Free Indexes LLC produces this list and provides the following warning on its website,

"THE INFORMATION, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES CONTAINED ON THIS WEB SITE MAY BE OUT OF DATE OR INCLUDE OMISSIONS, INACCURACIES OR OTHER ERRORS…. ALL INFORMATION, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED "AS-IS" WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND" [EMPHASIS in original].

Unlike Recommendation 3.a., Recommendations 3.b. and 3.c. each lack required specifics. Before any such discussion could occur, the advocates seeking to replace their judgment for MRTI are obligated to develop a list of companies that they believe meet the proposed criteria. Once developed, then the proper course would be to engage with MRTI to determine which of these companies are held by a PC(USA) entity and what the current state of engagement might be.

Comment Specific Item 08-03, On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change

The Board supports the approval of Item 08-03 as it represents a comprehensive response to climate change endorsing action at the denominational, congregational, and individual level. It affirms God’s call to stewardship and advocacy. It recognizes that those most deeply affected are those often in greatest economic need. It respects the long-established and effective research, corporate engagement, and divestment consideration process of the General Assembly Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investments.

Comment Specific Item 08-10, On Engaging Environmental Investments

The Board supports the approval of Item 08-10, which calls upon the PC(USA) agencies responsible for the investment of PC(USA) and Benefits Plan funds, to consider increasing investments in profitable alternative energy companies or companies that address consumer energy demands, because those requests promote advocacy while respecting the independent legal responsibilities and obligations of those agencies with respect to their investment decisions. The overture also respects the long-established and effective research, corporate engagement, and divestment consideration process of the General Assembly with the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment.

FOUNDATION COMMENT ON ITEM 08-01

Comment on Item 08-01—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation).

The Presbyterian Foundation agrees that climate change poses a profound threat to all of God’s creation, and that efforts to mitigate climate change are of great importance. To that end, the Foundation staff and elected leadership have worked with the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) for more than forty years to leverage our investments for corporate engagement with companies in the fuel and energy sector. In addition, the Foundation has invested at least 1 percent of its endowment holdings in renewable energy, has asked its investment managers to consider environmental factors in their selection process, and has worked with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to create Restoring Creation Loans that help congregations reduce energy consumption. It has also created fossil-free investment strategies through its subsidiary New Covenant Trust Company for those who desire such an approach. (Ten churches, mid councils, ministries, and individuals have taken advantage of these strategies since their inception in 2016.)

MRTI’s processes have employed active engagement with companies that have invited many of them into meaningful and ultimately fruitful conversations leading to incremental or in some cases immediate change. To this end, the Foundation joins the Board of Pensions in voicing our strong support for the MRTI process regarding this issue. MRTI’s report neither assumes nor precludes divestment, but rather outlines a process for assessing progress in corporate engagement work by which future divestment decisions could be made. It also proposes that the General Assembly not short-circuit its own process, giving MRTI time to use the time-tested, detailed procedures of corporate engagement to their full effect, and reports significant progress made through corporate engagements over the last two years. The Foundation supports MRTI’s approach.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-01

Comment on Item 08-01—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) asked the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to pursue its focused engagement process on climate changes issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The recommendations were to include possible selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy were not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.
The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) unanimously adopted the requested report from MRTI prior to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The MRTI report includes the biblical, moral, and scientific imperatives for the church to work toward mitigating climate change. It also outlines how MRTI has implemented the criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and applied it to its seven-step process included in the 196th General Assembly’s (1984) “The Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy” policy that guides MRTI’s work.

MRTI has developed a Guideline Metrics tool to implement the criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to frame MRTI’s engagements with all corporations, particularly in the oil, gas, and coal sectors. This tool has given MRTI the capability to precisely measure a company’s movement, or lack thereof, towards compliance with the General Assembly criteria as well as needed clarity to comply with “The Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy” policy. This will help MRTI isolate unresponsive companies who will be subject to divestment recommendations unless they make significant changes towards compliance with General Assembly criteria.

**Item 08-02**

(Item 08-02 was answered by the action taken on Item 08-01. See pp. 53, 54.)

*On Adding to the GA Divestment List All Companies That Meet Specific Listed Criteria—From the Presbytery of East Tennessee.*

The Presbytery of East Tennessee overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Acknowledge the faithful work of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Committee in its almost three decades of engagement with fossil fuel companies through participation in scores of unsuccessful shareholder resolutions on climate change.

2. Recognize that most fossil fuel companies have not responded to the engagement efforts of MRTI since 2014, and have not implemented the significant changes in behaviors that are necessary to address the urgent scientific demands of climate change.

3. Direct MRTI to add to the annual General Assembly Divestment List all companies that meet the following criteria below, and request the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, and all mid councils of the PC(USA), to selectively divest from each company in their portfolio:

   a. Appears on the most recent Carbon Underground 200 list.

   b. Derives more than 50 percent of its annual revenue from extraction, production, and distribution of fossil fuels.

   c. Has not reduced its combined product and production carbon footprint by 2.5 percent or more per year from 2005 levels, consistent with the U.S. COP21 Paris Agreement goal of reducing carbon emissions by 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

4. Call upon the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) to inform the affected companies and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this resolution.

**Rationale**

The impacts of human-caused climate change are real, serious, urgent, and immediate. They are affecting poor and fragile populations first and worst. The PC(USA) has advocated responsible energy policy for more than three decades. Fossil fuel companies have understood their role in these impacts for four decades. Most have chosen obstruction instead of action. While they refuse to use their immense profits to become part of the solution to climate change, they remain part of the problem. While they are part of the problem, they should not be part of the PC(USA) investment portfolio.

MRTI has a long-standing policy of phased selective divestment. The major publicly traded owners of fossil fuel reserves who continue to derive the majority of their revenues from fossil fuel production, and who have not reduced their carbon footprint consistent with scientific findings and the goals of the COP21 agreement fit the seven MRTI criteria for divestment. Those companies should be added to the annual MRTI divestment list in a fashion similar to that which is already done for tobacco and military related companies. It should be noted that such divestment action is not irrevocable. Companies that choose to diversify away from fossil fuels and into alternative energy, and who reduce their carbon footprint as required by science and world governments can be removed from future divestment lists.

Humanity’s first biblical mandate was to be stewards of the handiwork of our Creator God. Let us honor that mandate with our investments as well as with our words and our actions.

**Endnotes**

i. [https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/mrti-divestment-list-2015-2016/](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/mrti-divestment-list-2015-2016/) or current equivalent

ii. [http://fossilfreeindexes.com/research/the-carbon-underground/](http://fossilfreeindexes.com/research/the-carbon-underground/) or current equivalent
iii. http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/United%20States%20of%20America/1/U.S.%20Cover%20Note%20INDC%20and%20Accompanying%20Information.pdf


Concurrence to Item 08-02 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Denver, Greater Atlanta, Milwaukee, Twin Cities Area, Upper Ohio Valley, and Wabash Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 08-02.

ACSWP agrees that climate change is a very serious problem, but we oppose this overture because it would not be the most effective way that we can address the problem.

The proposal would end the ability of MRTI to engage with the fossil-fuel extraction industry (which ACSWP also commends—see A&C on 08-08). As directed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), MRTI has implemented a Guideline Metric to evaluate when firms all along the chain from fossil fuel to greenhouse gas (not merely the extraction phase) are making adequate progress on fighting climate change. It now has the mechanism to recommend selective divestment in accordance with the PC(USA)’s policy on investment, which has guided such decisions since the 1980s. The Item 08-02 proposal would also take MRTI and PC(USA) out of the several investor coalitions that are having increased success in pressuring the fossil fuel companies to revise their business models in line with the Paris Accord. See Item 08-08: MRTI’s report and the ACSWP A&C on it.

Furthermore, Item 08-02 is factually incorrect in claiming that that the dialogue and coalitions have not had success. For instance, since the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the largest pro-environment coalition of investors from faith-based groups, universities, and unions has been joined in several proxy votes by very large funds like Black Rock and Vanguard.

If Exxon-Mobil or other firms do not make adequate progress, as measured with MRTI’s Guideline Metrics, then they should recommend divestment. But now, when engagement is showing results, is not the time to walk away from the table with all the firms in the industry.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 08-02.

As full voting members of MRTI, ACREC disapproves this recommendation. ACREC laments the harm caused by climate change and the disproportionately damaging effects on people of color and seeks to actively work toward a solution. However, ACREC also recognizes that no dialogue will lead to more harm and no ability to advocate for the people of color who are employed by these companies.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 08-02.
ACWC understands that climate change is a crisis. The issue disproportionately impacts women, children, people of color, and the most marginalized in global society. As a full voting member of the Mission Responsibility through Investment Committee (MRTI), ACWC brings a critical, gender-justice lens to corporate engagements, committee discussions, and deliberations. ACWC has maintained a voice in this conversation through MRTI and advises disapproval of this item and requests that the committee see ACWC’s Advice and Counsel on Item 08-08, p. 53.

**BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 08-02**

Comment on Item 08-02—*From the Board of Pensions (BOP).*

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board shares a deep concern for God’s world and has worked actively to support the Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship developed by all six agencies of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 2016, the Board’s Pension Portfolio invested in a global fossil-free fund, the largest investment in such a fund ever made by a Presbyterian entity. The value of that investment as of December 31, 2017, was $116 million. In addition, the Board established a fossil-free mutual fund investment option for participants in the Board’s 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan (RSP). Despite significant promotion, only 148 of the 11,957 participants in the RSP have elected the fossil-free fund option.

Although the Board supports the environmental goal of all four overtures, it nonetheless recommends disapproval of Items 08-01 and 08-02 due to structural and technical concerns addressed in the specific comments below. The Board urges the approval of Items 08-03 and 08-10, which effectively provide a comprehensive response to climate change.

Comment Specific to Item 08-01, On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities That Focus on Renewable Energy

This overture seeks to bypass the work of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee of the General Assembly (MRTI) that has been highly effective in its engagement of climate change issues as directed by 222nd General Assembly (2016). MRTI’s process does not preclude divestment of bad actors, but provides a studied and deliberative process for such determinations. One of those steps is consultation with Presbyterians who might be affected by such action, a step that has not been addressed in this recommendation. By way of example, MRTI recommended divestment of certain United States companies engaged with Israeli military forces in Palestine. That recommendation was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014). MRTI is not recommending complete divestment from the entire fossil-fuel industry sector.

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Unlike Recommendation 3.a., Recommendations 3.b. and 3.c. each lack required specifics. Before any such discussion could occur, the advocates seeking to replace their judgment for MRTI are obligated to develop a list of companies that they believe meet the proposed criteria. Once developed, then the proper course would be to engage with MRTI to determine which of these companies are held by a PC(USA) entity and what the current state of engagement might be.

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The Board supports the approval of Item 08-10, which calls upon the PC(USA) agencies responsible for the investment of PC(USA) and Benefits Plan funds, to consider increasing investments in profitable alternative energy companies or companies that address consumer energy demands, because those requests promote advocacy while respecting the independent legal responsibilities and obligations of those agencies with respect to their investment decisions. The overture also respects the long-established and effective research, corporate engagement, and divestment consideration process of the General Assembly with the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment.

FOUNDATION COMMENT ON ITEM 08-02

Comment on Item 08-02—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation).

The Presbyterian Foundation agrees that climate change poses a profound threat to all of God’s creation, and that efforts to mitigate climate change are of great importance. To that end, the Foundation staff and elected leadership have worked with the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) for more than forty years to leverage our investments for corporate engagement with companies in the fuel and energy sector. In addition, the Foundation has invested at least 1 percent of its endowment holdings in renewable energy, has asked its investment managers to consider environmental factors in their selection process, and has worked with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to create Restoring Creation Loans that help congregations reduce energy consumption. It has also created fossil-free investment strategies through its subsidiary New Covenant Trust Company for those who desire such an approach. (Ten churches, mid councils, ministries, and individuals have taken advantage of these strategies since their inception in 2016.)

MRTI’s processes have employed active engagement with companies that have invited many of them into meaningful and ultimately fruitful conversations leading to incremental or in some cases immediate change. To this end, the Foundation joins the Board of Pensions in voicing our strong support for the MRTI process regarding this issue. MRTI’s report neither assumes nor precludes divestment, but rather outlines a process for assessing progress in corporate engagement work by which future divestment decisions could be made. It also proposes that the General Assembly not short-circuit its own process, giving MRTI time to use the time-tested, detailed procedures of corporate engagement to their full effect, and reports significant progress made through corporate engagements over the last two years. The Foundation supports MRTI’s approach.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-02

Comment on Item 08-02—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

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selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy were not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) unanimously adopted the requested report from MRTI prior to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The MRTI report includes the biblical, moral, and scientific imperatives for the church to work toward mitigating climate change. It also outlines how MRTI has implemented the criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and applied it to its seven-step process included in the 196th General Assembly’s (1984) “The Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy” policy that guides MRTI’s work.

MRTI has developed a Guideline Metrics tool to implement the criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to frame MRTI’s engagements with all corporations, particularly in the oil, gas, and coal sectors. This tool has given MRTI the capability to precisely measure a company’s movement, or lack thereof, towards compliance with the General Assembly criteria as well as needed clarity to comply with “The Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy” policy. This will help MRTI isolate unresponsive companies who will be subject to divestment recommendations unless they make significant changes towards compliance with General Assembly criteria.

Item 08-03

[The assembly approved Item 08-03 as amended. See pp. 53, 54.]

On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to:

1. Express its profound concern about the detrimental effects of climate change on all God’s creation, including those living in poverty, the elderly and children, and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases.

2. Proclaim that we recognize the Gospel’s call to shift to a just, compassionate, and sustainable energy plan.

3. Acknowledge that this compels us to implement strategies and actions that engage climate change and offer the realistic prospect of changing our destructive behaviors that contribute to the issue.

4. Call upon congregations and councils of the church to develop ways for those who disagree on climate change to be in dialogue with one another, seeking together to find and represent the will of Christ; affirm the need for dialogue and discernment, not only within and among our congregations, but also all parties outside our denomination, seeking faithful individual and collective responses to address climate change, trusting that we share a common belief in the need to respond.

5. Affirm that we have a duty to assure that our response to climate change does not endanger the economic progress and improvements in living conditions that have been made among all of God’s people, most notably the impoverished, but instead enables that progress to continue.

6. Affirm that is both possible and practical to effect meaningful change; urge individuals, congregations, councils of the church, and institutions (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of General Assembly, camps, conference centers, colleges, and theological seminaries) to initiate, continue, and build upon steps to reduce our carbon footprint and to continue adoption of lower-carbon and zero-carbon technologies and lifestyles.

7. Commend the Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment (“MRTI”) for its long history of corporate engagement on climate change issues.

8. Instruct MRTI to continue that engagement, applying the long-standing PC(USA) principles related to corporate engagement and consideration of divestment.

9. Acknowledge that our response must not be limited to corporate engagement, and that engagement also requires us to develop, advocate, and implement faithful responses that alter harmful individual, institutional, and corporate behaviors that contribute to climate change.

10. Affirm the steps already taken by the Presbyterian Foundation, Board of Pensions, and Presbyterian Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc. to leverage investments to help care for God’s creation and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change by urging these groups to establish and enhance programs to target climate change solutions, such as the “Restoring Creation Loan” program, which allows congregations to renovate their buildings using energy-efficient products to conserve energy, lower costs, and reduce carbon emissions.
11. Commend congregations that have committed to the “earth care pledge” and encourage all congregations to consider joining the Earthcare Congregation Network of the PC(USA).

12. Advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gases through the use of alternative, cleaner energy sources, such as [natural gas, nuclear, wind, solar, and industrial-scale power storage], even if only as a bridge to the long-term future.

13. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in collaboration with Congregational Ministries Publishing, The Thoughtful Christian, and other organizations with parallel goals, to develop a policy paper and educational materials to assist congregations and councils of the church to understand the impact of climate change and in taking individual and collective action to slow climate change, including: shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, federal, and international levels for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (including policies to price greenhouse gas emissions); and local efforts to reduce carbon footprint, consistent with the 2006 call for denominational carbon neutrality, and the 2008 “Power to Change” recommendations.

14. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC (USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $8,100 (2020) $7,800. Total—$15,900]

Rationale

Our denomination has long recognized our obligation to be faithful stewards of God’s creation (including General Assembly actions in 1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, and 2008). We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its effect on the “least of these,” and the need to take action by reducing energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels. Now is the time to move from symbolism to education and behavioral changes.

We must also adopt in our individual, congregational, and denominational lives meaningful approaches that address climate change. As Christians, we have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. Climate change is such an issue.

This overture exhorts us to unite all Presbyterians to engage climate change with responsible, meaningful, and lasting actions that will make a difference in the future of God’s creation. Through the actions called for in this overture, the PC (USA) will demonstrate the depth of our theological understanding of the stewardship of God’s creation and community by promoting faithful actions that unite us in addressing the issues of climate change.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

Ecology and justice are implicit in the story of creation itself: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). This Scripture affirms four values that characterize “a new faithfulness” reflecting God’s love for the world: sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity. These values also highlight the inherent tensions. We cannot address only the good of the creation without also considering the good of the community. We cannot address only the good of the community without considering the good of creation. Global climate change, regardless of its cause, threatens both the community and the earth over which we are stewards. Our call is to address these threats responsibly, with meaningful effect, while promoting economic justice.

A Proposed Response

From our perspective, the consistent, rational, and equitable global pricing of emissions would enlist market forces to drive changes in consumption necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also provide the economic incentive necessary to promote investment in low-carbon or zero-carbon infrastructure and technologies. Affordable energy would continue to be available to drive responsible economic development, while global emissions driven by consumption would decline. We thus address our dual responsibility to promote the well-being of the disadvantaged and the protection of the earth.

We also recognize that this pricing system must originate with the secular authorities, not PC(USA). This overture, therefore, also highlights many actions that we as individuals, congregations, and institutions can take on our own authority, and that some among us are already taking. We urge broader adoption of these actions.

Summary

We Presbyterians approach creation with the twin perspectives of responsible use and sustainable care. An ethic of stewardship therefore must consider creation both as a good in itself and as a resource for economic justice. The responsibility of holding wealth is directed toward an ethic of engagement that seeks to use wealth to transform injustice and immorality rather than shunning such engagement. Action to bring about that outcome is a faithful response to the urgent climate change issues that are before us.
Concurrences to Item 08-03 from the Presbyteries of Abingdon, Cimarron, de Cristo, Detroit, Giddings-Lovejoy, Grace, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Mission, Missouri River Valley, Palo Duro, San Fernando, Upper Ohio Valley, and Wabash Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-03.

We share its recognition of the importance of the problem of climate change and appreciate its recommendations for a multiprong approach to encourage the many dimensions of change that our economy and society need to undertake to address the problem.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-03. As full voting members of MRTI, ACREC approves this recommendation. ACREC laments the harm caused by climate change and the disproportionately damaging effects on people of color and seeks to actively work toward a solution. However, ACREC also recognizes that no dialogue will lead to more harm and no ability to advocate for the people of color who are employed by these companies as is mentioned in Recommendation 5. ACREC also agrees with the educational component of this overture as consumer behavior is a significant factor of climate change.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 08-03

Comment on Item 08-03—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board shares a deep concern for God’s world and has worked actively to support the Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship developed by all six agencies of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 2016, the Board’s Pension Portfolio invested in a global fossil-free fund, the largest investment in such a fund ever made by a Presbyterian entity. The value of that investment as of December 31, 2017, was $116 million. In addition, the Board established a fossil-free mutual fund investment option for participants in the Board’s 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan (RSP). Despite significant promotion, only 148 of the 11,957 participants in the RSP have elected the fossil-free fund option.

Although the Board supports the environmental goal of all four overtures, it nonetheless recommends disapproval of Items 08-01 and 08-02 due to structural and technical concerns addressed in the specific comments below. The Board urges the approval of Items 08-03 and 08-10, which effectively provide a comprehensive response to climate change.

Comment Specific to Item 08-01, On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities That Focus on Renewable Energy

This overture seeks to bypass the work of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee of the General Assembly (MRTI) that has been highly effective in its engagement of climate change issues as directed by 222nd General Assembly (2016). MRTI’s process does not preclude divestment of bad actors, but provides a studied and deliberative process for such determinations. One of those steps is consultation with Presbyterians who might be affected by such action, a step that has not been addressed in this recommendation. By way of example, MRTI recommended divestment of certain United States companies engaged with Israeli military forces in Palestine. That recommendation was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014). MRTI is not recommending complete divestment from the entire fossil-fuel industry sector.

This overture fails to recognize the process through which individual companies are added to the church’s prohibited securities list. Each year, MRTI develops a recommended list of prohibited securities. At the Board of Pensions, this list is presented to the Investment Committee, the governance body entrusted with responsibility for the investment management of the Benefits Plan and Assistance and Education funds held by the Board. The Investment Committee determines whether to approve the list in whole or part and further can add additional securities as it determines such investment decisions are in the
best interest of the members and beneficiaries of the Board’s funds. The resulting list is then distributed to all of the Board’s separate investment managers.

While the General Assembly may applaud and encourage such investments as the Pax Global Strategy fossil-free investment in the Board’s balanced investment portfolio, by law, the Investment Committee of the Board cannot be directed to make any particular investment. All investments are vetted through a rigorous diligence process and must meet the requirements of appropriate risk/return, diversification and established asset allocations required by the governance and legal requirements applicable to the Board’s funds. As a parallel, the General Assembly cannot direct individuals to make any particular investment. The Board established a fossil-free option for investment in the 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Program (RSP). Despite significant promotion, as of December 31, 2017, only 148 of the 11,957 participants in the RSP had selected the fossil-free fund.

Finally, as written, this overture is overly broad. There is no consensus definition of “the fossil-fuel industry.” This fact highlights the need for MRTI to undertake focused and specific work around engagement and the determination of when or if divestment in a specific company is appropriate.

Comment Specific to Item 08-02, On Adding to the GA Divestment List All Companies That Meet Specific Listed Criteria

Like Item 08-01, this overture seeks to bypass the work of the MRTI, which has been highly effective in its engagement of climate change issues as directed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). By way of example, MRTI recently led ecumenical coalitions in successfully passing shareholder resolutions with Exxon Mobil, including the need to report on the impacts of climate change to its business.

MRTI’s process does not preclude divestment of recalcitrant companies, but provides a process for such determinations. One of those steps in potential divestment is consultation with Presbyterians who might be affected by such action, a step that is not acknowledged in this recommendation. MRTI is not recommending divestment from the fossil fuel industry at this time. This overture seeks to substitute its recommendation for that of the MRTI members duly elected by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 3.a. calls out the Carbon Underground 200 list. This list is unreliable and does not meet the standards of due diligence and prudent investment required of the Board. Fossil Free Indexes LLC produces this list and provides the following warning on its website,

"... materials published by Fossil Free Indexes on this Web Site solely for personal, informational, and non-commercial use …, and "THE INFORMATION, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES CONTAINED ON THIS WEB SITE MAY BE OUT OF DATE OR INCLUDE OMISSIONS, INACCURACIES OR OTHER ERRORS…. ALL INFORMATION, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED “AS-IS” WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND" [EMPHASIS in original]."

Unlike Recommendation 3.a., Recommendations 3.b. and 3.c. each lack required specifics. Before any such discussion could occur, the advocates seeking to replace their judgment for MRTI are obligated to develop a list of companies that they believe meet the proposed criteria. Once developed, then the proper course would be to engage with MRTI to determine which of these companies are held by a PC(USA) entity and what the current state of engagement might be.

Comment Specific Item 08-03, On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change

The Board supports the approval of Item 08-03 as it represents a comprehensive response to climate change endorsing action at the denominational, congregational, and individual level. It affirms God’s call to stewardship and advocacy. It recognizes that those most deeply affected are those often in greatest economic need. It respects the long-established and effective research, corporate engagement, and divestment consideration process of the General Assembly Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investments.

Comment Specific Item 08-10, On Engaging Environmental Investments

The Board supports the approval of Item 08-10, which calls upon the PC(USA) agencies responsible for the investment of PC(USA) and Benefits Plan funds, to consider increasing investments in profitable alternative energy companies or companies that address consumer energy demands, because those requests promote advocacy while respecting the independent legal responsibilities and obligations of those agencies with respect to their investment decisions. The overture also respects the long-established and effective research, corporate engagement, and divestment consideration process of the General Assembly with the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-03

Comment on Item 08-03—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

Staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency attend the Conference of Parties (COP) on Climate Change every year to learn and advocate for climate change policies and their effect on vulnerable populations.
Item 08-04

[Item 08-04 was answered by the action taken on Item 08-05. See pp. 52, 54.]

On Renewing Our Call to Promote Environmental Justice—From the Presbytery of Newton.

The Presbytery of Newton overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

1. Renew our denomination’s call to promote environmental justice and oppose environmental injustice in all its forms.
2. Listen to the perspectives and voices of people most impacted by environmental injustice, including environmental racism.
3. In accordance with the Gospel, position the church’s approach to environmental problems primarily as responses to the voices most directly impacted by environmental injustice and the cry of God’s creation for environmental justice.

Rationale

Jesus stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Lk, 4:16–18).

History of PC(USA) Actions

The Presbyterian church has long been a proponent of action to promote social and environmental justice. Presbyterian General Assemblies have been speaking on issues of environmental protection and justice since the late 1960s. Their witness has ranged broadly from drinking water safety and acid rain, to protecting endangered species, to cleaning up dirty power plants, to climate change and U.S. energy policy. The major policy statements on environmental issues were in 1971, 1990, and 2008, and on energy in 1981.

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) approved a policy statement on “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice.” The policy affirmed that “... restored creation is not a short-term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment ...” (Minutes, 1990, Part I, p. 647). One of the norms identified for keeping and healing God’s creation is sustainability. It is to be promoted in conjunction with sufficiency, participation by those normally excluded, connecting economic justice with environmental concerns, and solidarity so that community can be achieved by diminishing the gap between the rich and poor. “Restoring Creation” also addressed global warming.

The 207th General Assembly (1995) approved a resolution on “Hazardous Waste, Race, and the Environment” that amended the 1990 “Restoring Creation” policy, calling for advocacy on environmental justice concerns on behalf of and with the poor and people of color, and “the development of public policies that result in reducing the generation of hazardous wastes and reduction in the use of hazardous substances” (Minutes, 1995, Part I, pp. 492–93). The underlying basis for this resolution was the unfortunate fact that some individuals, groups, and communities are at special risk from environmental threats. This is especially the case for low-income persons, the working poor, people of color, and indigenous peoples whose livelihoods and health may be imperiled by resource extraction, waste disposal, and pollution in their neighborhoods and hazards in their workplace. A special culprit in causing many of these problems were and are the fossil fuel and power companies whose activities have included mountain top removal to access coal, pollution of water and earth from fracking for oil and natural gas, and releases of air and water pollution by oil refineries and chemical plants, as well as the location of toxic waste facilities.

The commissioners at the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved “The Power to Change: U.S. Policy and Global Warming” which pronounced policy recommendations on climate change with a commitment to “stand with ‘the least of these’ (Matt. 25:40) and advocate for the poor and oppressed in present and future generations who are often the victims of environmental injustice and who are least able to mitigate the impact of global warming that will fall disproportionately upon them” (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 935, electronic file; see also https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/1537).

Environmental Justice, Injustice and Racism

Environmental justice is a concept first articulated by Dr. Robert Bullard to denote the movement to resolve the problems created by the confluence of environmental destruction, racism, and poverty. The U.S. EPA defines environmental justice as:

...the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. ... It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work. (https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice)

Thus, environmental justice calls for (1) equal treatment with respect to exposure to environmental hazards and (2) equal opportunity to be heard with respect to environmental matters.
Subsumed in the rubric of environmental injustice is environmental racism, a term, first coined by the Reverend Benjamin Chavis in 1981, and used to describe the disproportionate burden of environmental problems that people of color experience. In his landmark national study, *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States*, he showed statistically that in the United States people of color are more likely to live in areas more exposed to pollutants in the air, ground, and water. Also, it has been found that environmental catastrophes, such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes, disproportionately impact people of color because these communities are more likely to live in substandard housing and within floodplains; and people of color generally have fewer resources to escape environmental disasters. Moreover, undocumented immigrants in the United States are less likely to seek government assistance in recovery efforts, because they fear detention and deportation.

*Current Challenges*

We live in a time when the environmental regulations that protect our air and water and that are designed to lessen the rate of climate change are being subjected to an all-out assault at the federal level. Although they do so imperfectly, such regulations do tend to lessen the impacts of environmentally hazardous conditions on minorities and the poor and create the opportunity for their voices to be heard.

More significantly, the impacts of environmental injustice are being magnified by and focused upon the poor and minorities by the increasingly evident impacts of global warming/climate change that have exacerbated devastating heat waves, flooding, hurricanes, and wildfires. These impacts are only expected to increase as global temperatures continue to climb.

Dr. Robert Bullard, a Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy and Administration of Justice at Texas Southern University, explains how Hurricane Harvey exposed the environmental racism embedded in Houston, Texas:

... [W]hen we look at the color of vulnerability and we look at which communities are actually at greatest risk from disasters and floods like this, historically, it’s been low-income communities and communities of color, communities that live in low-lying areas that are areas that are very prone to flooding. And it’s very difficult to get insurance, not just flood insurance, but regular insurance, because of redlining. So, what Harvey has done is to expose those inequalities that existed before the storm. (https://www.democracynow.org/2017/9/5/will_houston_s_post_harvey_recovery)

Also in 2017, similar effects have been visited upon the poor and minorities in Florida and the Virgin Islands by Hurricane Irma and by virtually everyone in Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria.

On a larger scale, it is the impoverished and minority people from the Global South who bear the brunt of climate change. A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for example, predicts that rising temperatures will significantly reduce the growing seasons and available arable land in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East, thus exacerbating hunger, poverty, and competition for scarce resources. A recent study by Columbia University’s Lamont-Doherty Observatory projects that by 2080 combined heat and humidity will render much of these areas uninhabitable, an area where one half of the world’s population lives.

To make matters worse, those who bear the brunt of environmental problems often find their voices silenced by those who see the problem of environmental damage only through privileged eyes. We live in a time when money talks and the voices of those without it are not heard.

The church must combat these problems on both fronts—work to minimize environmental problems and do so by listening to the voices of those most disproportionately impacted. Unfortunately, the call for a long-term commitment to address these matters has seen the passage of decades when the world’s time to address these matters has dwindled away. The increasing intensity of the effects of climate change and highly credible predictions that these effects are accelerating tell us that the time to prevent catastrophic changes in God’s wonderful creation is rapidly passing. God’s creation is calling out to us to deal with these issues with a sense of urgency that was absent in the past. Our church and our monies need to speak out to give voice in aid of the victims of environmental injustice with a renewed strength and enthusiasm.

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mt. 25:40).

*Concurrence to Item 08-04 from the Presbytery of de Cristo and the Synod of the Sun.*

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-04

*Advice & Counsel on Item 08-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-04.

As full voting members of MRTI, ACREC approves this recommendation. ACREC laments the harm caused by climate change and the disproportionately damaging effects on people of color and seeks to actively work toward a solution. However, ACREC also recognizes that no dialogue will lead to more harm and no ability to advocate for the people of color who are employed by these companies as is mentioned in Recommendation 2. ACREC also agrees with the educational component of this overture as consumer behavior is a significant factor of climate change.
Advice & Counsel on Item 08-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-04.

ACSWP endorses and agrees with the premise of this overture, namely, that climate change and release of toxic materials in the environment has a disproportionately bad effect on poor and non-white persons, in the U.S. and abroad, especially in the Global South. Item 08-04 and Item 08-05 could be combined, as they are very similar, even to the point that both start their Rationales with the same quote from the Gospel of Luke.

Item 08-04 names the evil of environmental racism and recognizes that it happens as structural racism, even when we, the perpetrators, harbor no obvious racial animosity.

A combination of the items could say that environmental justice can contribute to a solution to the problem of environmental racism.

Item 08-05

[The assembly approved Item 08-05 as amended. See pp. 52, 54.]

On Responding to Environmental Racism [and to Promote Environmental Justice]—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.

The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

1. Renew our denomination’s call to promote environmental justice and oppose environmental injustice in all its forms.

2. Take action to respond to environmental racism [and environmental injustice] in all its forms.

   a. To provide educational resources to churches and mid councils about environmental racism and injustice.

   b. To provide information and resources to enable the buildings and operations of our churches to be more environmentally sound.

3. Listen to the perspectives and voices of people most impacted by environmental racism [with awareness to cultural diversity domestically and internationally].

4. In accordance with the Gospel, position the church’s approach to environmental problems to include responses to the voices most directly impacted by environmental racism.

Rationale

“[Jesus] stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free’ ” (Lk, 4:16–18).

Environmental racism is a term, first coined by the Reverend Benjamin Chavis in 1981, used to describe the disproportionate burden of environmental problems that people of color take on. People of color are more likely to live in areas more exposed to pollutants in the air, ground, and water. Environmental catastrophes, such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes, disproportionately impact people of color, as these communities are more likely to live in substandard housing and within floodplains. And people of color generally have fewer resources to escape environmental disasters. Moreover, undocumented migrants in the United States are less likely seek government assistance in recovery efforts, as they fear detention and deportation.1

“Environmental racism” is closely related to “environmental justice,” a concept first articulated by Dr. Robert Bullard, to connote the movement to resolve the problems created by the confluence of environmental destruction, racism, and poverty.

Bullard, a Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy and Administration of Justice at Texas Southern University, explains how Hurricane Harvey exposed and exacerbated the environmental racism embedded in Houston, Texas: “when we look at the color of vulnerability and we look at which communities are actually at greatest risk from disasters and floods like this, historically, it’s been low-income communities and communities of color, communities that live in low-lying areas that are areas that are very prone to flooding. And it’s very difficult to get insurance, not just flood insurance, but regular insurance, because of redlining. So, what Harvey has done is to expose those inequalities that existed before the storm.”2
After Harvey, Hurricanes Irma and Maria exposed environmental racism issues in Puerto Rico (PR). Immediately after the storm there were suggestions that the money spent on recovery was harming the U.S. budget, and the death count was minimized, as if Puerto Ricans dying as a result of Maria were insignificant to people dying as a result of Katrina. Five months after the storm, full power has yet to be restored to the island. The challenges in Puerto Rico are so many at this time as a result of Maria, especially in the area of public health. Puerto Ricans with chronic health conditions, using medical machinery, are dying every day due to the instability of the power grid. A report from Commit to PR, an organization of medical doctors form the U.S. helping the island, reported that 62 percent of the applications submitted to FEMA have been denied. A recent report from the Department of Health, shows that suicides in PR increased 55 percent in the last four months of 2017, when compared to same period in 2016. The EPA and local environmental agencies, have issued several warnings of the dangers in several water bodies. Raw sewage is pouring into rivers, and reservoirs. Unfortunately, many islanders living in the central part of the island are drinking water from contaminated sources.

New Jersey faces environmental racism issues with the economic engine that is the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. We all benefit from the activity at the ports, buying the products that are shipped into this country. Yet, port-adjacent cities like Newark and Elizabeth bear the burdens of pollution, poor working conditions, and low wages resulting from the ports, but reap few of the benefits. Port pollution is an environmental and health injustice—increasing asthma, heart disease, and cancer rates in port-adjacent communities where a majority of residents are low income and of color. A majority of the goods leaving the port (85 percent) are moved on average by 14,000 diesel drayage truck trips per day along major highways and local roads within the region to nearby warehouses, assembly facilities, and retailers. Unfortunately, port trucks are some of oldest and dirtiest trucks on the road, spewing harmful diesel pollution and greenhouse gases.

At a larger scale, it is people from the Global South who bear the brunt of climate change. A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for example, predicts that rising temperatures will significantly reduce the growing season in Africa, thus exacerbating hunger and poverty.

To make matters worse, those who bear the brunt of environmental problems often find their voices silenced by many white environmentalists and polluters alike, who see the problem of environmental damage only through privileged eyes. The church must combat these problems on both fronts—work to minimize environmental problems and do so by listening to the voices of those most disproportionately impacted.

Endnotes
1. We commend the following study guide for more information about Environmental Racism: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/environmentalracismecumenicalstudyguide.pdf.

Concurrence to Item 08-05 from the Presbyteries of Boston and Hudson River.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-05

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-05.

ACSWP endorses and agrees with the premise of this overture, namely, that climate change and release of toxic materials in the environment has a disproportionately bad effect on poor and non-white persons, in the U.S. and abroad, especially in the Global South. Item 08-04 and Item 08-05 could be combined, as they are very similar, even to the point that both start their Rationales with the same quote from the Gospel of Luke.

Item 08-04 names the evil of environmental racism and recognizes that it happens as structural racism, even when we, the perpetrators, harbor no obvious racial animosity.

A combination of the items could say that environmental justice can contribute to a solution to the problem of environmental racism.
Advice & Counsel on Item 08-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-05.

As full voting members of MRTI, ACREC approves this recommendation. ACREC laments the harm caused by climate change and the disproportionately damaging effects on people of color and seeks to actively work toward a solution. However, ACREC also recognizes that no dialogue will lead to more harm and no ability to advocate for the people of color who are employed by these companies as is mentioned in Recommendation 2. ACREC also agrees with the educational component of this overture, as consumer behavior is a significant factor of climate change.

— PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-05

Comment on Item 08-05—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Public Witness suggests that our definition of environmental racism deal specifically with the theft of indigenous land and connect to the overture passed at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) “On Making Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.” (Business Item 11-08, https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6350). Understanding racism as connected to colonization would aid the denomination as we assess the struggle for indigenous sovereignty from Standing Rock to Puerto Rico.

Item 08-06

[The assembly approved Item 08-06. See pp. 12, 55.]

The Earth Is the Lord’s—Not Ours to Ruin: Priorities for a New Moral Era—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.

The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Call upon the whole church to raise a prophetic voice regarding the urgency of healing the climate of the earth, our home and God’s gift for the future of all life, human and nonhuman.

2. Call upon the whole church to engage prayerfully with the following priorities as we seek to initiate a new moral era:

   a. Let our clergy accept the mantle of moral leadership. Now is the time for clergy to speak from their pulpits about the moral obligation of our generation to protect God’s creation. Let the world know that we who follow Jesus will not back away from God’s call to protect our common home. When the powers that be deny or obscure the truth, we followers of Jesus will proclaim the truth to protect our common home.

   b. Let all of us incarnate the changes for which we long. Now is the time for congregations and for every person of faith to set a moral example through our own words and actions. As individuals and as communities, let us commit to making decisions of integrity in our energy choices, even as we commit to hold all our religious, political, corporate, and global leaders accountable to do the same.

   c. Let us proclaim truth in the public square. We are now living in a John 18:37 moment, in which we must hold to the truth we understand from the Bible and from the sacred book of nature, recognizing that when truth is compromised, only power prevails.

   • Let our communities of faith be bold and courageous as we address one of the greatest moral challenges that the world has ever faced.

   • Let us do all we can to change America's understanding of the story that our generation is writing. Let us begin a new story—a story that is not dependent on increased greenhouse gas emissions or on wealth for the few and misery for the many.

This overture was inspired and based on the resolution, “The Earth Is the Lord’s—Not Ours to Wreck, Imperatives for a New Moral Era” passed by the United Church of Christ National Synod on July 3, 2017. Now is the time to encourage deeper ecumenical cooperation to lift up our collective moral voice.

Accepting that it is up to us, whether in the streets, at our State Houses, in the halls of power, with our phones, emails, technology, and social media by committing our time, financial resources, and prayers—let us pour ourselves out to bend the moral arc of justice, with joy in our hearts, beauty in our sights, and hope for the children.
God’s great gift of Creation—the context in which all life seeks fulfillment—is in crisis. Driven by material aspiration, humanity’s use of fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution has broken Creation’s balance. The scale of Creation’s demise is dramatically expanding beyond our comprehension. Never has the earth and the climate changed so quickly. While the leaders of every country in the world recognize this reality, our current Administration ignores science, defunds the Environmental Protection Agency, and withdraws from the Paris Climate Accord. As people of faith, recognizing that the earth is the Lord’s, it falls upon our generation to embrace the priorities set forth in this resolution—priorities that constitute a new moral era. The current climate crisis is an opportunity for which the church was born.

The leaders of more than 190 countries have signed the Paris Climate Accord, acknowledging the critical role every country must play if the life-sustaining climate of the earth is to continue to sustain life as we have always known it. The accord brings all countries together to work on combating climate change and adapting to its effects, with a particular effort on helping the least of these, who are affected most severely. As Christians we are meant to be in relationship, and withdrawing from the Accord breaks our relationship with all countries in this effort. Our cities, states, businesses, and colleges and universities are stepping up to provide American leadership. As of October 1, 2017, 15 states, 455 cities, 1,747 businesses, and 325 institutions of higher learning belong to networks that support the Paris Accord. Additionally, 20 states, 110 cities, and 1,300+ businesses have set greenhouse gases reduction targets (https://www.americaspledgeonclimate.com/). For more than fifty years the Presbyterian church, along with religious leaders from other faiths and denominations, has issued statements on the goodness of Creation and our call to act as responsible stewards, all of which has been an insufficient witness. This historic moment provides Christian communities with a powerful opportunity to bear witness to the sacredness of God’s Creation and the urgent call to preserve it.

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) approved “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice.” It stated:

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

• respond to the cry of creation, human and nonhuman;
• engage in the effort to make the 1990s the “turnaround decade,” not only for reasons of prudence or survival, but because the endangered planet is God's creation; and
• draw upon all the resources of biblical faith and the Reformed tradition for empowerment and guidance in this adventure.

This was the response to:

Creation cries out in this time of ecological crisis.

• Abuse of nature and injustice to people place the future in grave jeopardy.
• Population triples in this century.
• Biological systems suffer diminished capacity to renew themselves.
• Finite minerals are mined and pumped as if inexhaustible.
• Peasants are forced onto marginal lands, and soil erodes.
• The rich - poor gap grows wider.
• Wastes and poisons exceed nature's capacity to absorb them.
• Greenhouse gases pose threat of global warming.

Finally,

The 202nd General Assembly (1990)

• recognizes and accepts restoring creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level;
• understands this to be a new focus for initiative in mission program and a concern with major implications for infusion into theological work, evangelism, education, justice, and peacemaking, worship and liturgy, public witness, global mission, and congregational service and action at the local community level;
• recognizes that restoring creation is not a short-term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment, and which has profound implications for the life, work, and witness of Christian people and church agencies.

While the 1990s were designated the “turnaround decade,” creation continues to cry for many of the same reasons identified in 1990. It is time for the church to renew its focus on creation cares as a mission initiative that infuses all of our work, particularly our preaching of the Word, and our speaking truth to power.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved “The Power to Change,” which urged the whole church to “become models of energy-efficient institutions and proponents of renewable energy” and to advocate “before local, state, and federal
governments for public policies that encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.” It is time to study the recommendations in this resolution again in light of our current environmental situation. In the accompanying letter, Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly at the time, wrote: “Can we hear the grave warnings in reports like this one from Christians who have carefully studied these matters? And then can we act as stewards of God’s earth, witnessing to Christ in the re-direction of our lives toward a more sustainable future? I pray that we can, and that our church’s good work can help in this great change.”

Scripture informs this work as well, from creation in pain, to understanding our vocation, to understanding that advocacy is a requirement:

Romans 8:19–22 (NRSV):

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now.

Psalm 8:3–8 (NRSV):

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

John 18:37–38 (NRSV):

Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate asked him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no case against him.”

For a deeper understanding of the biblical and theological foundations for earth care, see “And the Leaves of the Tree Are for the Healing of the Nations” by Carol Johnston. (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/and-leaves-tree-are-healing-nations/).

Concurrence to Item from the Presbytery of Boston, de Cristo, and Northern New York.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-06.

ACSWP endorses this overture for its pro-environment content, speaking truth to power, and for its explicit ecumenical link in supporting a similar resolution in 2017 by the 18th Synod of the United Church of Christ (http://synod.uccpages.org/res21.html).

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-06.

ACREC deeply laments the harmful effects of climate change on God’s creation and the disproportionate effects it has had on people of color. We strongly support the work to educate the church as consumers and caretakers of God’s good earth.

Item 08-07

[The assembly approved Item 08-07. See pp. 53, 55.]

Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

In fulfillment of the 221st General Assembly (2014)’s assignment regarding sustainable development (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 1021ff, Item 15-02), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the affirmation and recommendations below.

I. Affirmation and Description of Precautionary Responsibilities
To manage the risks to health and safety from new and existing technologies, we need the Precautionary Principle or precautionary approach, based on the principles of sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity as developed in Christian environmental ethics. The precautionary approach gains urgency as accelerating climate change increases the uncertainty of weather trends affecting the entire biosphere and as major advances in genetics and artificial intelligence reopen questions of human nature and purpose.

The current concept of precautionary principle dates to a 1991 international conference of 35 scientists, lawyers, policymakers, and environmentalists from the United States, Canada, and Europe—the Wingspread Consensus:

... When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not [yet] fully established scientifically.

In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof. The process of applying the Precautionary Principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action [i.e. no commercial introduction of the new technology].

(http://sehn.org/wingspread-conference-on-the-precautionary-principle/)

In other words, regulators should not designate a product or process as Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) until there is enough research to reach a scientific consensus that it is safe. Too often governments have done the reverse, allowing a product to be on the market unless and until there is scientific consensus that it is unsafe—usually after tragedies make the headlines and result in product liability lawsuits. As Christians in the Reformed tradition, we believe governments are instituted to protect the common good and that regulation is an essential protective tool.

The precautionary principle does not entail halting technological progress, but affirms the priority of the integrity of creation and the protection of the human and other lives within it. It shifts the burden of proof toward those whose actions could harm people or destabilize or irreversibly disrupt natural patterns and processes. It does not tell us when reasonable people would agree that the burden of proof has been met, although as a principle, it warns against depending upon the climate of opinion in a given society.

Precautionary approaches, sound science, and risk-benefit analysis are all related aspects of a rational approach to determining public policy on issues like toxic chemicals, nanotechnology, geo-engineering, genetically engineered crops and genetically modified organisms in food. Indeed, application of the precautionary principle should include using sound science and forms of risk-benefit analysis, insofar as appropriate data are available, as part of determining whether to restrain or prohibit a given product or activity. Reason and science can never be enemies of the God whom we worship in Spirit and in truth. Respect for the truth embodied in creation urges us to support and restore the regenerative processes of nature whenever possible, and to support the scientific vocation as it explores the infinite scope of God’s cosmic work. There are also a myriad of technological vocations to serve the common good in the application of scientific discovery.

Market forces can help motivate technological progress from which we may all benefit, but they cannot reliably determine long-term rewards and risks of potential harm, given the uneven distribution of burdens and benefits and the partial availability and uneven distribution of knowledge. In retrospect, the climate change crisis reflects the widespread failure of market systems to assess and reduce the impacts of fossil fuel use. Programs such as Superfund pay for cleaning up some of the most egregiously polluted areas, and require their own studies of how toxins interact in groundwater, earth, and atmosphere over time. Geo-engineering proposals to remediate or protect the atmosphere or oceans from overall climate change effects, through such things as increasing cloud cover or adding iron filings to ocean water, pose enormous and potentially irreversible risks of their own.

If one person or one company bears all the costs and risks, as well as the benefits, from some activity or product, then there is little case for public policy intervention. That person can evaluate and make her own decision. Problems arise when the beneficiaries do not bear the costs or risks. Economists call these effects on others or nature, “externalities,” and the market may not factor these costs and risks into the price of a given product. To protect society, government regulation or taxation is usually needed to get those benefitting from the activity to take sufficient account of the costs and risks to others. For example: with GMO (genetically modified organism) grain, the company selling it has clear financial benefits, as may the farmer growing it. If, however, the GMO pollen blows to neighboring farms and contaminates their crops, it harms the neighbors, and then some regulation is appropriate.

GMO products or those containing potentially dangerous chemicals and nano-particles, like some food, cosmetics, and household chemicals, may pose risks to consumer health and to the environment. Research has yielded partial but not complete understanding of those risks, so people and communities need to decide how to balance the known benefits against the uncertain risks. Requiring full disclosure of product contents, including whether some chemical is in nano form, empowers democratic participation in decision-making but does not fully address the problem.

Information is costly and unevenly distributed, and the maldistribution of information often correlates with the uneven distribution of benefits and risks, especially for new products. Thus, if “risk-benefit” analysis alone is used to determine the regulatory response to a new product or process, the analysis is intrinsically biased to underestimate the

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risks posed by the product and allow those immediately or directly benefitting to proceed with marketing the product. Further, the nature of public exposure or consumption of products and the complexity of processes of preparation or manufacture require different kinds of testing by different regulatory agencies.

Hence, implementing the precautionary principle means that the government regulator has to insist on adequate investigation (by government or private sector) and attention to the full costs and risks to society and the biosphere that the product may pose. Uncertainty about potential harm to people or the environment should not stop all progress, for that would deny too many of the benefits of new technology, but neither should that uncertainty allow possible risks and unequal benefits to be downplayed or ignored. This concept of precautionary responsibility also means that, when a decision is made to proceed, monitoring of both risks and benefits should continue in a meaningful and publicly accountable way.

Although much legal regulation in the U.S. is based on forms of the precautionary principle, in practice manufacturers seeking monetary benefit can often overwhelm and weaken the precautionary regulatory processes that might preemptively prevent harm. The history of industrial and technological development is marked by the corresponding growth of health and safety regulation. Christians have been active with U.S. civil society in raising public safety standards, notably following the Social Creed of the Churches in 1908, and as part of the environmental movement that spread across all nations experiencing pollution and other consequences of industrialization. Presbyterians have played a particularly significant role in conservation and wilderness preservation that is relevant to today’s new challenges.1

As documented in this policy statement’s survey of a wide range of studies, regulation in the U.S. has become too weak regarding threats to the environment and the glorious diversity of God’s world. Scientific research itself has been politicized and distorted by inappropriate ideological, commercial, and narrow religious interests. Precautionary concern has precedent in General Assembly environmental reports dating to 1971; such concern now merits more explicit and focused attention.

The Psalmist intuited the interconnectedness of life in relation to God: “How wonderful are Thy works!” is sung in many ways. A resolution at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) applauded Pope Francis’s encyclical, Laudate Sí, a significant and powerful appeal to be aware of the incalculable impact of the loss of biodiversity. Our concern is not only the loss of resources but the diminution of life’s meaning. “Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us.”2

II. Recommendations for the Protection of Human Beings and the Earth

The General Assembly policies provide recommendations for public policy, personal discipleship, and congregational and other communal action, noting that any directives are binding on agencies of the church and are advisory to its members and other church councils. Insofar as most environmental risks are borne by large numbers of people, public policy is particularly important in this area.

A. Public Policies

The following policy directions are to be advocated by the Office of Public Witness (in Washington, D.C.), the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and other programs and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with support encouraged from members, congregations, councils, and ecumenical bodies:

1. Federal and state budgets should provide adequate funding for research by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the National Science Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control, and other regulatory and scientific monitoring bodies on the possibility of harmful effects on consumers, workers, and the environment from new technologies, such as nanoparticles, geo-engineering, toxic chemicals (in food additives and packaging, pesticides, herbicides, cleaners, etc.), and GE (genetically engineered) crops and GMOs in foods.

2. The mission of regulatory agencies should be respected by:
   a. Requiring corporations to track the effects of their products in cases where uncertain but potentially significant risks are identified.
   b. Maintaining open access to licensing and decision-making processes (consistent with patent protections) so that there is informed and democratic involvement of all potentially affected parties.
   c. Strengthening conflict of interest laws to ensure fairness in determining risks and benefits. In principle, no beneficiary should directly determine or make a decision leading to that individual, family, or commercial organization’s benefit. In practice, no recent employee or significant investor in an industry or industry trade...
association should be allowed to serve on the staff or board of the regulatory agency or bodies overseeing that industry or business.3

d. Ensuring the capacity of regulatory bodies to enforce regulations, to prosecute businesses and individuals responsible for endangering or damaging public health, and to ban or suspend the sale and use of products or processes without political interference if there is significant scientific basis for questioning their safety. The cases of neotininid pesticides and endocrine-disruptor chemicals and pharmaceuticals, for example, may merit such suspension.

3. Increased legislative and regulatory attention should be given to:

a. Review the GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) classification of products now being manufactured and marketed in nano forms, using the latest research, including the behavior of such particles in the waste stream.

b. Develop specific oversight mechanisms to account for the unique characteristics of nano materials.

c. Require labeling of all chemicals in foods, pesticides, herbicides, cleaners, medical products, packaging, etc., including a notation if the material is in nano form—nano-titanium dioxide, nano-silver, etc.4

d. Expand research and monitoring of the effects of climate change on toxins already released into the environment, and of their interaction with newer toxic products, such as some used in hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and fire suppression.

e. Continue research on the issue of the substantial equivalence of GMO and non-GMO crops and foods.

f. Reduce the hazards from cosmetics and hair care products by passage and enforcement of the Personal Care Products Safety Act with a stronger mandate to test chemical currently in use and without preempting or preventing stronger standards by state legislation.

g. Raise the threshold of acceptable risks for products whose “benefits” to users are not substantial, as with food additives that only affect food coloring.

h. Require at least U.S. labeling standards for export products and marketing, except when other countries’ standards exceed ours.

i. Require all publicity/infomercials/investor reports concerning products to note whether reported or advertised results include all evidence gathered.

4. Revive a National Commission on Bioethics, representing a range of perspectives and disciplines, with a mandate to evaluate all human genetic technologies involving manipulation of the genome, by CRISPR and other technologies, because these raise scientific, economic, ethical, and religious concerns.

5. Support international scientific and regulatory cooperation through such means as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which includes voluntary Paris Accords, and other global sustainability efforts (treated in prior energy and environmental policy of the church).

6. Increase civil and criminal penalties for accelerating climate change and develop laws regarding “crimes against the biosphere” or “crimes against future generations.” Require Environmental Impact Statements to take into account 100-year climate phenomena, which are becoming more frequent, and build in remediation in an explicit way.

B. Investment Responsibility

Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement, to do the following:

1. Determine which companies held by the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions are producing or selling GMO foods or GE seeds, toxic chemicals, or nano particles.

2. Pursue appropriate forms of corporate engagements to encourage these companies to take more fully into account the risks that these products pose to workers, consumers, and the environment, and to comply with the research, development, labeling, and marketing standards recommended above. (MRTI pursues similar goals in its dialogues with energy sector companies.)

3. Inform presbyteries and congregations about the findings of MRTI’s research and engagement, and encourage Presbyterian bodies and members, as consumers and shareholders, to advocate for responsible implementation of the precautionary principle.
Educate Presbyterians on the impact the churches have had in the growth of corporate responsibility practices, and on how our investments are instruments of mission through corporate dialogue on concerns about products made, sold, and used by the companies in which PC(USA) holds shares, wherever the location of production or sales.

4. By holding up the good performers as examples and pressing the others to improve—using shareholder resolutions and other measures (including possible divestment from unrepentant bad performers)—the church and its members use their assets and talents to make a difference.

C. Consumer Responsibility

Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Hunger Program’s office for Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns, and urge Earth Care congregations (http://presbyearthcare.org) and others, to encourage renewable energy use and such specific lifestyle practices as:

1. Choice, when possible of organic products, given still unknown cumulative and interactive effects of chemicals in pesticides, fertilizers, and growth hormones on wildlife and humans.

2. Phase out the use of plastic bottles, packaging (including phthalates added for durability), and other plastic goods not easily recyclable, thus reducing waste and preserving petroleum resources for higher value uses.

3. Limit and reduce exposure to CRT (cathode ray tube) and other screens, as these may affect the emotions and sleep capacity of users; moderation is recommended, but social impacts are generally beyond the scope of this report.5

D. Theology and Science Scholarship

1. Commend those Presbyterians and other Christians working on the intersections of scientific exploration and understandings of the Reformed and other religious traditions.

2. Create forums in seminaries and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-related colleges and universities to promote understanding of the nature of risks and rewards in the adoption of new technologies.6


E. Future Engagement

This report was necessarily limited in its treatment of certain emerging technologies that carry high potential environmental and public health risks, and of certain advances in robotics and artificial intelligence that have major social and other change dimensions. It was beyond our scope to address primarily biological problems, such as the spread of invasive species, or specifics of remediation, such as decontamination of radioactive groundwater. Thus, Christians and other persons of good will are encouraged to do the following:

1. Address large-scale risk factors proactively, drawing on both social and natural sciences and the humanities, and joining with advocacy groups and organizations as necessary.

2. Share their experiences in making public moral arguments with the larger church.

3. Recognize shared struggles with Native or First Peoples over specific sites or public preserves, and with others opposing the “environmental racism” that disproportionately exposes people of color (and other generally less wealthy citizens) to biohazards.

4. Join in ecumenical solidarity and witness through such partner bodies as Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Creation Justice Ministries.

Rationale


Presbyterians understand how religion, science, and technology come together and share a moral commitment and a sense of reverence for God’s presence in our world. Since the 1960’s, PC(USA) has played a strong role in ecumenical councils developing criteria for just, sustainable, and participatory decision-making by governments and corporations, particularly in the energy and environmental field. This was the background for the overture from the Presbytery of Southern New England that called on:
... the 221st General Assembly (2014) to affirm the vital importance of sustainable development through faithful stewardship of natural resources and the Precautionary Principle. Such methods of preventing irreversible ecological impacts are part of the basis for responsible, moral, and scientifically-informed human flourishing, affirming the sacred in societal and creation care, and protecting the earth for future generations. Additionally, the General Assembly direct[ed] the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to commission a study group of three to five persons to

1. review the precautionary or prevention principle in relation to emerging biotechnical developments and existing Presbyterian social witness policy on environmental ethics, and

2. prepare a study paper and resources for social media, with appropriate recommendations to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), for use by congregations throughout the denomination, enabling congregations to advocate for reform. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 1021)

This report is submitted in fulfillment of that assignment that, even while focusing on the three technologies cited (see below), was extremely broad and would ideally require on ongoing advisory committee devoted to the task. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) extended our mandate. A list of scientists, ethicists, legal scholars, and business experts consulted is in addendum B; their generosity and depth of expertise is not fully represented in this text, which has tried to make complicated material as accessible as possible.

In clearest of terms, to be part of a community is to share in its risks and rewards. The expectation is that any family or enterprise shares society’s benefits and does not bear a disproportionate burden of its risks and costs. This report is about how the agent of our community—our government—should seek to prevent undue risk from being inflicted on persons and creatures without their knowledge or consent, and to identify and limit risks of new technologies, even while allowing us to benefit from new technologies that are safe.

The social technology of democratic and accountable governance includes ways to evaluate risks for whole societies, based on ideas of the common good that originate in our faith. This study aims to help us think together about our role—as individual Presbyterians as well as our church as a part of the world church—in a time when the earth enters a more dangerous stage of climate change. The precautionary principle is no magic bullet to take account of the risk while enjoying reasonable amount of benefit from technology, but it is one approach that may help us, and one that reflects our reverence and stewardship of the blue-green planet entrusted to our care.

Definitions

The Precautionary Principle is, at its simplest, a modern restatement of the classical Hippocratic Oath, “I will keep them from harm and injustice,” which is often summarized as “First, do no harm.” The Precautionary Principle is more than a dictum for individual actions; it should also guide the behavior of institutions and nations. And, going beyond the Hippocratic Oath and its modern equivalents, it would avoid harm to the environment as well as to humans.

Although various definitions of the precautionary principle float about today in the public discourse and literature, this report sees it as the need to be extra cautious in allowing the introduction of new products and processes, and their continued sale, if their safety is not well-established by scientific research and, as far as possible, practical experience. This does not preclude the use of all technological advances, but when the possibly negative effects of a product are not well understood, then it is better to delay implementation and marketing, and to insist on ongoing tracking of uncertain risks, even after products are introduced. This is especially true when the people and other creatures at risk from negative effects are not the same as those deciding to buy and use the product.7

Theology

The glorious diversity of God’s world. The Psalmist intuited the interconnectedness of life in relation to God: “How wonderful are Thy works!” is sung in many ways. A resolution at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) applauded Pope Francis’s encyclical, Laudate Si, a significant and powerful appeal to be aware of the incalculable impact of the loss of biodiversity: it is not only the loss of resources but the diminution of life’s meaning. “Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us.”8 A human tendency to an ‘instrumentalist’ view of nature as purely serving our needs must give way to a theocentric view of all creation as have value and integrity before God.

Christianity has been accused of being the root cause of the earth’s ecological crisis. Lynn White famously declared, in 1967, that the fault lay in “an implicit faith in perpetual progress … indefensible apart from Judeo-Christian teleology”—our sense of God’s guiding human history in ways “that made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.”9 For White, as we look at humanity’s negative impact on our environment, “Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt.”10 It is true that some Christians have made indefensible use of Genesis 1:28 (RSV): “… fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over … every living thing that moves upon the earth.” James Watt, U.S. Secretary of the Interior under Ronald Reagan, wrote that he viewed the earth as “merely a temporary way station on the road to eternal life. ... The earth was put here by the Lord for His people to subdue and to use for profitable purposes on their way to the hereafter.”11 From such attitudes have arisen sins of colonialism and exploitation—of countries, resources, and human beings. Sin leads people to ignore the impacts of our behavior (and corresponding risks) on other people and on nature.
Yet, Christianity offers many resources for a much more ecologically positive theology. We know, for instance, that while we should seek for the common good of all humanity, we should also be respectful of all God’s creation, for God declared it good (Gen 1). We remember that, “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it” (Ps 24:1). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1990 approved the report “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice,” which remains a foundational policy for the denomination’s work in environmental ministry. The underlying theological principles were further developed in the report “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming” approved in 2008.

The eco-justice norms developed there may be summarized as follows:

- **SUSTAINABILITY:** “God’s call to earth-keeping.” “Sustainability is the capacity of the natural order and the socioeconomic order to thrive together.”
- **PARTICIPATION:** “Because the Creator’s intention is that nature’s gifts of sustenance be available to all members of the human family, all have a right and a responsibility to participate.”
- **SUFFICIENCY:** “A reasonably secure and fulfilling life for all.”
- **SOLIDARITY:** “Fundamental interdependence and unity with the Creator’s creatures,” human and non-human.

We see here a valuing of the biosphere for its own sake—God’s call to earth-keeping—but balanced by an acknowledgement that Christ “came that they [humans] may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn. 10:10). A foundation of our Christian faith is that God created all that is, and the “The Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and all those who live in it” (Ps. 24:1). We may conclude, as did the PC(USA) in 1996, that “no part of creation—whether other humans, other species, even the elements of soil and water is our property to use as we wish. They are to be treated with the values and ground rules of God, the ultimate owner. These values and ground rules are rooted in the fact that … God is love.”

In short, we are stewards of creation. The doctrine of stewardship is central to our Reformed tradition. While we often understand stewardship as a matter of dollars and cents, the doctrine is broader than that. It is an affirmation that creation belongs to God and that humankind is both gifted with and commanded to the responsibility of caring for and nurturing creation. In his Commentary on Genesis, John Calvin wrote:

> The custody of the garden was given in charge to Adam, to show that we possess the things which God has committed to our hands, on the condition that, being content with a frugal and moderate use of them, we should take care of what shall remain. Let [the one who possesses a field so partake of its yearly fruits [so as to] not suffer the ground to be injured by negligence; but [rather] endeavor to hand it down to posterity as [it was received], or even better cultivated. Let [the possessor] so feed on its fruits [as to] neither dissipate it by luxury, nor permit it to be marred or ruined by neglect … Let everyone regard [themselves] as the steward of God in all things which each one possesses.

Modern science has made us more aware than Calvin was of how much we are not just stewards, but integral parts, of nature. We now live in an “Anthropocene” era, where our species dominates nature to the point of resetting, or de-setting, the climate. Nevertheless, the key message remains. As faithful stewards, we must be mindful of how we use our gifts, integrating our technological skill with our imperative for earth care. As steward members of a single “earth community,” we share one future.

Seeking a balance between the well-being of humanity and the rest of nature is not easy, given just how much of the biosphere we have taken over for human use. A much-shared proverb tells us that “We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.” We need to remember that we borrow it—or indeed take it—from the rest of the biosphere, as well.

Each of us, whether Christian or not, has a responsibility for the common good of humanity and of all God’s creation, and there are many ways in which we can live out that responsibility. But individual responsibility is not enough. One significant corruption of sin is that it causes our care and attention to curve inwardly on the self, a phenomenon that St. Augustine called *incurvatus in se*. When this happens, even if we imagine that we are acting responsibly, we lose sight of the others whom our actions impact. When it comes to the risks and harms associated with new chemicals and industrial processes, it is not enough to counsel people to act with precaution. The powerful chronically, almost inevitably, ignore the weak and poor. This is why we have delegated to each of our governments the task of keeping its citizens safe and helping them to live together in community. We have, then, the responsibility to ensure that our governments are carrying out this duty with justice for all humanity and for all creation.

In Reformed theology, the second use of the law is to restrain evil. According to Calvin, this purpose is “by means of its fearful denunciations and the consequent dread of punishment, to curb those who, unless forced, have no regard for rectitude and justice.” One of the ways in which government carries out its duty to protect is through law and regulation. The Precautionary Principle can help guide our governments in carrying out that duty.

*Precautionary Principle and/or Risk-Benefit Analysis*
The precautionary principle is a way of thinking about risks and, especially, what to do about them. We know we should be cautious. But how cautious?

Risk-benefit analysis, done properly, can provide useful input to our thinking. Obviously for a product to be approved for sale by the government as well as the producer, the benefits should exceed the risks. The hard part, however, is that the full risks are typically less well known than the benefits, and they potentially occur to a wider range of people (not just the producer and customer) and over a longer time horizon, perhaps beyond the useful life of the product.

Therefore, we cannot leave the decisions about product safety completely up to risk-benefit analysis done by the producers. A company develops a new product to meet certain purposes—offering specific and relatively well-known benefits to consumers—and they do market research to figure how much profit they will make from selling the product. So, the benefits are relatively well known to the producer, and the promise of profits brings funding to publicize those benefits.

Without regulatory requirements, however, a company developing a new product would tend to give inadequate attention to estimating the risk of potential harm to consumers, workers, and especially third parties. Compared to the company and its marketers, these folks do not know in advance what is coming, are much more dispersed, and usually lack the expertise and funding to find out about the possible risks to them, especially if these would take years to emerge.

Economists since at least Adam Smith have recognized this problem—negative externalities—and have seen in these cases the need for government regulation or offsetting taxes.

For some potential costs, regulators could estimate the monetary value—potential property damage, health care bills, workdays lost, etc. In the absence of regulations, the producing company would tend to underinvest in finding out about and monetizing such risks. Also, they have a conflict of interest with regard to discovering and publicizing those risks.

A bigger issue concerns the non-monetary risks. These include, but are not limited to, potential damage to the ecosystem, possible mortality and morbidity that the medical system could not remedy, damage to the health of future generations, and possible disruption to the way of life for farms and businesses adjacent to companies using the technologies in question. Even if the monetized value of these costs is not zero, the benefits of a product, if great enough, can justify its usage, with proper restrictions and disclosure of those risks. Some social costs could be justified if the new technology would certainly increase the availability of nutritious food and decrease its financial cost, especially for low-income families. Market math cannot resolve these issues. They require political decisions informed by moral guidance, to which the church should contribute.

Except when there are environmental and other third-party concerns, consumers can decide for themselves If they are given accurate information. Although some products have clearance as Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS), we are still finding new information, and people can decide for themselves how much precaution to take with their own health. But they need to know what they are dealing with. People are paying increased attention to the food labels that current regulations require.223rd General Assembly (2018)

Disclosure of harmful potential does not automatically doom a product commercially, as we see from medication ads that [as required] go on at great length to disclose the potential harmful side effects for consumers to balance against the advertised and intended benefits.

Those most vulnerable to the downside risks are typically those least able to acquire information about the risks, least able economically to accommodate the risks, and least able politically to fight for protection or ex-post compensation. Jesus and the prophets tell us to care for these most vulnerable (Matthew 25 and elsewhere), so as Christians we must give their concerns particular attention in considering the precautionary principle.

Example Applications: Introduction

Each topic has its own particular issues, so rather than setting out general rules with many exceptions, we look at three areas of technology to illustrate how we can usefully apply the precautionary principle: toxic chemicals in food and commercial products, GE crops and GMO in food, and nano particles.

An area we do not consider is medicines, but the precautionary principle, perhaps by other names, has long been a central feature in FDA regulation of pharmaceutical products. Although the primary risk is to individual taking the medicine, burdens from bad choices lead also to socially costly long-term effects (e.g. thalidomide babies, defective silicone implants, opioid addiction).

Of course, the precautionary principle could also apply to climate change, but ACSWP and the church have already studied this (for instance, The Power to Change, 2008) and we continue advocating for appropriate reforms through MRTI and other avenues. The precautionary principle was applied to this issue a generation ago. Today, however, the scientific consensus has progressed beyond the precautionary phase, to where we should apply the common-sense principle—we are in a hole with the excess production of greenhouse gases and we need to stop digging. The questions now are what to do? And how fast? Burning less hydrocarbon to heat our buildings, generate electricity, and power transportation are obvious parts of the solution. The
precautionary principle is relevant to evaluating some of the radical proposals for technological fixes, like spreading iron filings in major parts of the ocean to encourage algae growth, putting giant sunshades in earth orbit, or creating more cloud cover. Each of these poses substantial risks to life on earth, but this report cannot give geoengineering adequate treatment.

**GRAS, FDA, and the Dangers of Limited Regulation**

In these discussions, the expression “generally recognized as safe”—GRAS—plays a key role. When manufacturers are allowed officially or in practice to say whether their product is GRAS, without requiring explicit action by a regulatory agency, it creates an obvious bias to allow products that are not acceptably safe. Even when government regulators decide what is GRAS, whether they do it right depends on whether the producers and marketers have excessive influence in the decision, whether the agency has adequate funding to conduct research and assess risks, and whether the discussions are sufficiently open to allow public debate.21

The FDA’s implementing regulations in 1996 for the Food Additives Amendment say: “General recognition of safety based upon scientific procedures shall require the same quantity and quality of scientific evidence as is required to obtain approval of a food additive regulation for the ingredient. General recognition of safety through scientific procedures shall ordinarily be based upon published studies which may be corroborated by unpublished studies and other data and information.”22

In the last half century, many concerns have risen about food additives that might cause cancer or adverse reproductive effects, and thus such additives face a higher bar for approval.22

The primary distinction between the requirements necessary for GRAS status and those necessary for food additive status is the element of “common scientific knowledge” that must characterize conclusions about GRAS status.23 The manufacturer must be prepared to “show that there is a consensus of expert opinion regarding the safety of the use of the substance.”24 Although unanimity is not required, “the existence of a severe conflict among experts regarding the safety of the use of a substance precludes a finding of general recognition.”25 A 1997 proposed clarification to the GRAS regulations, which remains the most current statement of agency policy, observed that “[t]he usual mechanism to establish that scientific information is generally available is to show that the information is published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.”26 The agency proposed new regulations defining GRAS in 1997, but then failed to finalize the regulations until it was sued by the Center for Food Safety in 2014 and finally agreed to settle the lawsuit by issuing the regulations in 2016.27

Ultimately, the agency left it up to the manufacturer to determine whether an added substance is GRAS or a “food additive” that must be approved. The manufacturer does not even need to tell the agency that it has added a substance to food and has concluded that it is GRAS.28 If the manufacturer declines to consult with FDA and if the agency finds out about the modification, the agency may exercise its powers to seize foods containing the additive as adulterated.29 Although FDA takes the position that a manufacturer claiming GRAS status for a substance has the burden of proving that it meets the GRAS criteria in an enforcement action,30 the agency as a practical matter has the burden of demonstrating to a court in an enforcement action that the substance is not GRAS.31

Independent watchdogs have criticized the GRAS system for being rife with industry conflicts of interest because the vast majority of GRAS determinations are made by either the manufacturers themselves or their hired consultants. Moreover, the current system that allows secret GRAS determinations makes it nearly impossible for FDA or manufacturers to assess the cumulative effect of all similar chemicals on consumers—as the law requires. It is unclear whether FDA will consider new kinds of GMO foods as GRAS, like they have done in the past. Moreover, a draft guidance by FDA, issued for comment in 2017, raised the question of whether new kinds of genetic engineering never used before, especially those used in genetically engineered animals, could be considered GRAS.32 In short, the GRAS system often does not protect the consumer from potential harm and does not even make public the information she would need to protect herself.

**Toxic Chemicals**

Many chemicals with positive uses in the household, agriculture, and industry have toxic effects when people and the environment are exposed to them. Some exposure is “accidental,” as with waste spills or pesticides and herbicides migrating to neighboring farms, although it is often no accident when the routine and allowable procedures fail to prevent serious problems.33 Other exposure is deliberate, as when chemicals are added to foods, packaging, or clothes to make them keep longer, retard flames, look better, or be cheaper to produce.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates chemicals in food, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical products. Any substance that is reasonably expected to become a component of food is a food additive that is subject to premarket approval by FDA, unless the substance is generally recognized as safe (GRAS) among experts qualified by scientific training and experience to evaluate its safety under the conditions of its intended use, or meets one of the other exclusions from the food additive definition in section 201(s) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA).34

The Food Additives Amendment of 1958 is the foundation for the U.S. food additive regulatory program, which oversees most substances added to food. Federal agencies made approximately 40 percent of the 6,000 safety decisions allowing about two-thirds of the substances currently used in food. Manufacturers and a trade association made the remaining decisions without...
FDA review by concluding that the substances were generally recognized as safe (GRAS). Robust premarket safety decisions are critical since FDA has limited resources to monitor potentially significant scientific developments and changing uses of a substance after it enters commerce, and FDA only has access to published data or data submitted to it. Since the late 1990s, FDA no longer promulgates rules for its decisions for food contact and GRAS substances. Rather it reviews manufacturers’ safety decisions and posts the results of the review on the agency’s website. This shift appears to have encouraged manufacturers to submit their decisions to FDA for review but has limited the public opportunity to provide input.35

In summary, for food additives the regulatory policy does not follow the precautionary principle in that there is considerable uncertainty about the safety of what chemicals are allowed. (A subsequent section discusses the issue of the nano versions of chemicals.) Strong requirements for detailed labeling of contents, however, do allow consumers to inform themselves and choose their degree of precaution. With food there is relatively little risk of injury to third parties. Manufacturers’ concerns about lawsuits and scandals also motivate them to be precautionary.

In theory the FDA can regulate chemicals in cosmetics36, but it only steps in if it has “reliable information” suggesting that a cosmetic creates a problem. That has usually meant that nothing is done before a public outcry, and beauty enhancement products today still contain lead, mercury, formaldehyde, and lesser-known “chemicals of concern.” Years can pass while the FDA investigates and deliberates. In practice, the safety of cosmetics and personal care products is left in the hands of the companies that make them. The law requires no specific tests before a company brings a new product with a new chemical composition to market, and it does not require companies to release whatever safety data they may collect.37

A bipartisan bill in the U.S. Senate, the Personal Care Products Safety Act, would require, among other things, that cosmetics makers pay annual fees to help finance new safety studies and enforcement. It would also give the FDA the authority to pull products off the shelves immediately when customers have reported bad reactions, without waiting for a review, which often takes many years. While this bill would take some steps in the right direction, it may reduce the chance for more proactive measures. It would require FDA to test each year for only five chemicals, while over a thousand chemicals are in production and need testing. It would prevent states from passing more restrictive standards, which California now has. Any endorsement of the bill should come with caveats recommending measures to strengthen it.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is charged with regulating most non-food, non-pharmaceutical toxic substances. The old Toxic Substances Control Act, passed in 1976, allowed thousands of untested chemicals to remain in non-food consumer goods without evidence of safety. The law was so weak that it kept the EPA from banning even asbestos, a known carcinogen, and other known hazardous materials. The law also forced the EPA to navigate a costly, cumbersome process if it wanted safety tests of a potentially dangerous chemical. In June 2016, Congress passed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, which updated the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act.

The new law, which received bipartisan support in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, includes many needed improvements, even if not all of those desired by critics of the old law:

• For the first time, requiring EPA to evaluate the safety of existing chemicals in commerce, starting with those most likely to cause risks. By November 2017 EPA had completed 1,148 new chemical reviews under the new law.

• Requiring EPA to evaluate new and existing chemicals against a new risk-based safety standard that includes explicit considerations for vulnerable populations.

• Empowering EPA to require the development of chemical information necessary to support these evaluations.

• Establishing clear and enforceable deadlines that ensure both timely review of prioritized chemicals and timely action on identified risks.

• Increasing the public transparency of chemical information by limiting unwarranted claims of confidentiality and allowing for the appropriate sharing of confidential information with states and health and environmental professionals.

• Providing a source of funding for EPA to carry out these significant new responsibilities.

We cannot yet judge the effectiveness of the new law, which will depend critically on how the EPA and other agencies implement the law. Many of its implementing regulations came into effect only in 2017. Many, if not most, EPA employees share a strong commitment to protecting the environment and human health. On the other hand, the current head of EPA and some senior officials there have in the past strongly opposed environmental and product regulation.38 To help get the intended benefits of the law, the PC(USA) should use its influence in Washington and elsewhere to encourage the full implementation of the law, along with adequate funding and recognition of scientific evidence.

While this report does not focus on climate change, as noted above, scientific research is revealing an increasing number of ways in which climate change increases the stress that toxic chemicals put on species and ecosystems, such as pollinators (bees, bats, butterflies, etc.) and the flowering plants they pollinate. The scientific consensus on the primary cause of the greater morbidity of honeybees and the collapse of many hives is a pesticide family called neonicotinoids, some of which are now
Genetically Engineered (GE) Crops and GMOs in Food

Genetically engineered (GE) crops have rapidly become dominant in U.S. agriculture. The Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that in 2017, 92 percent of all corn planted in the U.S. was genetically engineered (GE), up from 25 percent in 2000. The equivalent figures for soybean were 94 percent (up from 54 percent), and for cotton 96 percent (up from 61 percent). The benefits promised from adoption of GE crops include increased yields and reduced need for chemicals, as well as increased tolerance of drought or torrential-rain conditions, which may become more prevalent due to climate change.

On the other hand, the use of GE crops in the food chain (both directly for human foodstuffs and for animal feed) has caused concerns about possible negative dietary and environmental effects, as well as deleterious effects on the livelihoods and health of farmers and farm workers in both the U.S. and other countries (especially developing countries) to which U.S. GE crops are exported. Before we consider how the Precautionary Principle (PP) might usefully be applied, we should consider the technologies involved, the expected benefits and risks, and the current U.S. regulatory environment.

Although we do not analyze the issue here, we note that genetically engineered and modified animal species also present risks, perhaps even greater than GMO crops, and call for application of the precautionary principle. These aspects of what is sometimes called “industrial agriculture” have been addressed by prior assemblies.

Definitions. We use the term GMO (genetically modified organism) to refer to foodstuffs containing GE crops or animals. The USDA defines a genetically modified organism (GMO) as “an organism produced through genetic modification,” a definition that could cover all biotechnology, including traditional breeding techniques. Commonly and officially in some countries, however, GMO refers to GE organisms (plants, animals, microbes …) that have had genes “modified by introducing, eliminating, or rearranging specific genes using the methods of modern molecular biology, particularly those techniques referred to as recombinant DNA techniques.”

Traditional breeding techniques involved selecting seeds from plants with desired traits. Traits are expressions of genes. So, this artificial selection did, in fact, end up selecting genes, but it selected both those associated with desired traits, and those “along for the ride.” We might be shocked by some of the methods used in the 20th century—with exposure to X-rays or toxic chemicals—to encourage a range of gene-mutations from which to select. Given this background, many crop scientists question why genetic engineering should cause any more concern. The key difference, however, is that conventional breeding works with genes available within living specimens of the plant species being manipulated. Genetic engineering can, and often does, introduce genes from radically different species, using bacteria and viruses to introduce them into the target. The most common goals have been to make plants tolerant of herbicides or resistant to insects or other plant pests, and also to increase yield, either directly or as a side-benefit of such resistance. With herbicides—Round-Up is the most popular—farmers who do not buy the expensive patented seeds (and the herbicide) then face a double penalty of lost market share and potential crop damage if their neighbor does use Round-Up.

Even as regulation and public opinion struggle to deal appropriately with the current technology of genetic engineering, the technology itself is developing rapidly, with the advent of CRISPR—Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats. CRISPR directly edits the DNA of the target organism, and generally does not introduce DNA from another organism. Practitioners have great optimism over the potential benefits of CRISPR-edited crops. Several CRISPR gene-edited crops are expected to enter the market over the next few years. The new species created by CRISPR pose some of the same risks as conventional GMOs, but so far have gotten even less regulatory scrutiny.

To evaluate the potential benefits and risks of GE-crops, we can use the PC(USA)’s eco-justice norms of Sustainability, Participation, Sufficiency, and Solidarity, listed above. GE crops are clearly intended to contribute to both sufficiency (via crop yields) and sustainability (via reduction in chemicals). Both goals are vital in our age of rapidly growing population and environmental degradation. Do GE crops yield the promised benefits, and do so safely?

The most immediate concern for many consumers is whether GMO foods cause allergies, as in the 1996 introduction of a brazil-nut gene into soy beans, whose market introduction was canceled when there were allergic reactions. The existence of dietary impacts other than allergies is less substantiated and remains controversial.

This paper does not resolve that issue, but notes that such concerns reinforce requirements, deriving from the precautionary principle, for appropriate product labeling to enable consumers to be informed, and for ongoing monitoring of the dietary effects of GMO foods.
The next question, then, is whether GE crops have yielded the promised improvement in crop yields and reduction in chemical use. Once again, the findings are contested. A 2014 PLOS One review of published studies concluded that “GM technology adoption has reduced chemical pesticide use by 37%, increased crop yields by 22%, and increased farmer profits by 68%.”45 By contrast, a 2017 study by The New York Times used United Nations data to compare crop yields—food per acre—and pesticide use in the U.S. and Canada versus Western Europe, which “largely rejected genetic modification at the same time the United States and Canada were embracing it.” According to this study, yield trends have either been parallel or in Europe’s favor. Meanwhile, herbicide use in the U.S. has increased by 21 percent over the last two decades, while by contrast it has fallen 36 percent in France.46 This result suggests that other approaches than GE can yield an equivalent benefit.

In developing countries, we also need to look more for alternatives to GMOs, even though their gains in crop yields and profits are higher in than in developed countries. When the Gates Foundation recently announced a major initiative to develop technologies to help farmers in Africa and Asia adapt to environment change, Divine Ntiokam, founder of the Cameroon-based Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network, responded that “Many young people (in Africa) say they can't do farming because they don't have access to funding [to buy even basic seeds and complementary inputs] … If all these donors can actually go straight to the smallholder farmers, it’s going to be much more impactful.”57 We are reminded of the Precautionary Principle’s injunction to examine “the full range of alternatives.” While the need for more food for more people might call for a combination of approaches—perhaps including GE crops—we need to resist the temptation to jump to the newest (and often for corporations more profitable) technological fixes, without adequate consideration of more traditional, less costly and less risky options.

What about broader environmental impacts of GE crops? One widely discussed concern is that of horizontal gene transfer (HGT)—that genes introduced into GE crops might spread into neighboring crops (adversely affecting, for instance, organic farmers) and into wild plants (perhaps introducing insecticide resistance there). This, too, is a very controversial area. Some claim that GE-induced HGT will be lower than natural background levels of HGT,48 a point that ignores the concern that the potential impact of even rare HGT from GE plants may be greater than that from natural HGT. Others note examples such as the rapid contamination of supposedly non-GMO papaya after ringspot-resistant GE papaya was introduced in Hawaii in 1998.49 Again, the Precautionary Principle would suggest the need for more caution, more testing, and more ongoing tracking.

Another environmental question is the impact of GE crops on biodiversity. One argument is that GE crops, by increasing crop yields, will reduce the amount of land needed for agriculture and thus protect undisturbed lands for “in situ” biodiversity.50 Clearly, for that to be true, the yield-benefits of GE would have to be significant, the evidence for which is not clear, as noted above. Further, biodiversity is not just about saving wildland from agriculture. It is also about saving today’s wide variety of crop germelines, adapted to their local environments by years of breeding by local farmers.51 This genetic-heritage is being damaged by the increasing use of monocropping of GE variants, and yet is vital to future adaptation to environmental change.52

Such a concern reminds us that when new technology is introduced, the precautionary approach should be applied to not just the technology itself, but also to the economic and political environment in which it operates.53 This can and should extend to not just the impacts in the U.S., but also to, in particular, the developing world, as U.S. GE crops are either provided as food aid, or sold within the terms of Free Trade Agreements, which may adversely affect both local diets54 and the use (and even survival) of local seed. The 2006 PC(USA) report, Just Globalization, noted that “subsidies for domestic agriculture … make similar products from abroad noncompetitive” and that both subsidies and developed-country technologies [which would now include GE crops] create “risks as these countries lose their ability to be self-sufficient in … feeding their own citizens.”55 The 1996 PC(USA) report, Hope for a Global Future, concludes that “Trade rules that enable affluent nations to profit at the expense of poor nations or that do not contribute substantially to the reduction of poverty in all nations cannot be accepted ethically.”56

How well does U.S. regulation apply the Precautionary Principle to the concerns outlined above? According to the USDA, “The Federal government has a coordinated, risk-based system to ensure that new biotechnology products are safe for the environment and human and animal health” based on the 1986, Coordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology. “The Coordinated Framework is based upon existing laws designed to protect public health and the environment. The U.S. government has written new regulations, policies, and guidance to apply these laws to biotechnology-derived products.”57

On the other hand, some see U.S. regulation of GE crop and GMO foods as fragmentary, inadequate, and struggling to keep up with technological change. The USDA is still citing a 1986 framework in the face of rapidly evolving technology, although there were small updates in 1992.58 Further updates, requested by the White House in 201559, are not yet approved, much less implemented. A proposal in early 2017 was considered by some to be “underwhelming”.60

When GE crops first emerged, the government’s Office of Science and Technology Policy decided to fit such products into existing law, allocating regulatory responsibility to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The EPA has authority to regulate GE organisms that produce pesticides or toxic chemicals under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The USDA has powers relating to plant health and has used these powers to regulate GE crops developed using agrobacteria that introduce “foreign” DNA. The FDA has responsibility to keep food safe; companies may submit their products to a voluntary safety review. State laws play little role in regulating GMOs, but some municipal governments have banned GMO crops.61
The gaps in this approach—trying to use old regulations to address novel issues—are well illustrated by the 2016 development of a white mushroom, gene-edited to prevent browning, that completely “escaped” regulatory review, because the recently developed CRISPR-cas9 technique was used, which directly edited the mushroom DNA rather than introducing any “foreign” DNA. All CRISPR-edited crops similarly escape regulation now. Concerns with the adequacy of GMO regulation were evident, however, long before CRISPR complicated the picture.

One key issue was the use of the concept of “substantial equivalence.” In using regulations designed to follow health, safety, and environmental legislation covering conventional products, the assumption is that the focus should be on the nature of the products produced, and not on the process that produced them. The Office of Science and Technology Policy’s 1992 Statement of Scope adopted a risk-based approach under which agencies were supposed to exercise regulatory authority only when the “risk posed by the introduction [was] unreasonable”—the opposite of the precautionary principle—and regulatory oversight was supposed to focus on the characteristics and risks of the biotechnology product—not the process by which it was created.

The government’s approach followed the principle of “substantial equivalence” to long-established existing foods. The application of this idea to GM foods was developed by a Working Group established by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which recommended that only when there was no basis whatsoever for comparison with natural foods should the GM food be evaluated on the basis of “its own composition and properties.” The OECD working group applied “substantial equivalence” only to food safety, but it has since been applied also to environmental impacts of GE crops. There are no standardized tests to establish substantial equivalence, and critics regard substantial equivalence as a method of encouraging GM foods, while providing an excuse for regulatory agencies to avoid their responsibility to protect the public health and safety. Thus, current U.S. regulation of GE crops and of GM foods in general are not based on the Precautionary Principle, but by contrast on a rather loose assessment of risk. Furthermore, lack of adequate funding often hinders the research and enforcement needed to implement the laws and regulations.

These weaknesses in the regulatory environment show the need for fuller application of the Precautionary Principle. In line with our ecojustice norms of Sustainability, Participation, Sufficiency, and Solidarity, we believe that GE crops can be beneficial as long as they serve to:

- “Produce abundant, safe, and nutritious food.
- “Reduce harmful environmental inputs.
- “Provide healthful conditions for farm workers.
- “Protect the genetic make-up of native species.
- “Enhance crop genetic diversity.
- “Foster soil fertility.
- “Improve the lives of the poor and malnourished.
- “Maintain the economic viability of farmers and rural communities.”

In line with the Wingspread definition, the Precautionary Principle and the PC(USA)’s ethical norm of participation, regulators’ decision-making should include consultation of all those affected by GMO technology. Everyone must have access to adequate information. As the 2002 PC(USA) report We Are What We Eat noted in its brief consideration of GMOs, “people of faith are called to be informed about the issues through reliable sources of information, to raise questions, and to make responsible choices. Be cautious about media hype or fear campaigns. Rather, choose credible sources of information.” As Christians, we need to be well informed, to help all those affected be similarly informed, and to use this information in advocacy to ensure appropriate regulation of GE crops and GMO foods.

**NanoTechnology—Nonbiological Application**

Nano particles are a special type of chemical whose potential toxicity and beneficial uses, as well as risks, differ substantially from those of the non-nano forms of the same chemical. A material with familiar properties in solid form acts surprisingly differently when in the form of nano dust, with particle diameters of under 100 nanometers (billionths of a meter). Generally, the nano forms are more reactive because of the much higher ratio of surface area to volume and mass. Nano particles oxidize and make other chemical bonds much more quickly, even to the extent sometimes of becoming like an explosive. Nano particles also often absorb or reflect light very differently from the conventional particles of the same material.

[Due to the limitations on this study, we do not consider nano-biological products or entities like oil-eating bacteria that may, in fact, be genetically engineered. There are also ultras-mall machines that may called nanobots but that may be larger than nano implies, similarly beyond our scope.]
Nano silver has potent antibacterial properties, making it useful in medical applications, but it could possibly penetrate through skin and other membranes, enter the blood stream, and collect in various organs, where the long-term effects are not fully understood. Bandages for victims of burns and for postsurgical sites often contain nano silver now, which substantially reduces the likelihood of infections. Even though the long-term risks are not fully known, the short-term positive effects seem clear enough to justify continued use of nano silver in bandages.

Titanium dioxide is in many white consumer products, including sunscreen, toothpaste, powdered sugar, and various sweets—reflecting sunlight and making whites appear brighter. In some products, at least, some of the molecules are at nano scale, but this information is not usually included in the labels. Although titanium dioxide is not very reactive chemically, even at nano scale, and there has been no clear evidence of harm in the long-term, some consumer-safety advocates have campaigned against it. In response, Dunkin’ Donuts stopped including it in powdered sugar on their donuts in 2015. In terms of the precautionary principle, the non-substantive benefits of whiter looking sweets and toothpaste (in contrast to the benefit of infection-free wounds) would not justify the allowance for nano titanium dioxide in food, toothpaste, etc., especially without nano-specific labeling to inform consumers and let them decide.

Many industrial manufacturing uses of nano-particles involve fusing them back together, as in printed electronic circuits and ultra-thin films on glass or plastic, which then have unique and useful properties. Firms need to take adequate precautions for worker safety, but consumers and other third parties are not at risk, since the material in the final product is no longer in nano form.

A new frontier in nano engineering involves manipulating and aggregating nano particles into tiny structures. Regulatory agencies—it is not clear which ones—need to keep an eye on this technology as it develops and to do independent research on the risks that some nano structures could pose to human health and the environment.

Although EPA and FDA have started investigating the potential risks posed by nanoparticles, neither engineered nanoparticles nor the products and materials that contain them are subject to any special regulation regarding production, handling or labeling. EPA’s “A to Z Index of Environmental Topics” does not have a line for nano particles or nano technologies. A part of FDA, the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) has been doing research on the properties of nano materials as they are used in drug products, but it has not yet developed a regulatory framework to assess their safety and efficacy.

Given the potential for long delays in the evidence of harmful negative effects surfacing, for instance as nanoparticles of one sort or another accumulate in the liver or other organs, the precautionary principle would guide us in uncertain cases to restrain rather than allow the sale and use of nano materials in foods and skin products while researchers collect further evidence. This precautionary attitude is especially important where the reputed benefit of the products is only to enhance appearance, not to improve health or nutrition.

New Technologies to Watch

Some new technologies have not presented specific dangers and have no regulatory framework or agency. Yet some experts see potentials for grave danger. Two examples are artificial intelligence and human enhancement—possibly leading to the synthetic development of a species of post Homo sapiens.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is here already, but in benign forms so far—doing things that humans already do, but doing them faster, cheaper, and perhaps more carefully and thoroughly. Headline events are IBM computers beating humans at chess and Go, an even more complex game. Here, although the computers learn in ways and use strategies that even the best players find mystifying, the rules of the game are set by humans, and a board confines the scope and risks—gains or losses. AI there endangers only the egos of the grand masters.

AI is also getting real-world application in tasks such as reading the results of MRIs and other scans. Here the speed and thoroughness of AI pays off in finding tumors or other abnormalities that the human radiologist might miss. Then the human can look again at the spot found by AI and say, “ah, yes, we’re glad to find that.” Search engines and computerized personal assistant applications use algorithms that appear to learn based on pattern recognition and prediction.

Dangers may arise, however, when the AI would find something too complex for the human to understand and then, more quickly than a human could double check, would take real world action. Financial markets are an immanent example. AI models so far have not consistently outperformed the market, as far as reported, but firms are working on it. Once one or more firms has an AI model that they believe is a winner, it is hard to see how regulations could prevent its use, not only for making forecasts but also for directing trading in real time.

If one or two firms with small market-share portfolios did this, it would probably not cause a problem. Success would expand their market shares, however, and one can envision a time when a few firms wielding AI trading strategies dominated whole markets—stock, bonds, or derivatives. Then the interaction of competing AI strategies could drive wild gyrations in the...
markets. Regulation would have difficulty preventing this, since many firms already use computer automated trading to execute non-AI trading strategies. Perhaps the best remedy would be one proposed to discourage ultra-high frequency trading—a very low percentage tax on each trade (known as the Tobin tax), which would be too small to discourage buying or selling on the basis of fundamental values.

One military application is also often mentioned, that of programming autonomous (not simply remotely piloted) drones to fire on targets identified by their software. This might further integrate contemporary warfare into the world of videogames.

Human Enhancement

Another area of concern is human enhancement, meaning “any attempt to temporarily or permanently overcome the current limitations of the human body through natural or artificial means … whether or not the alteration results in characteristics and capacities that lie beyond the existing human range.”71 Therapeutic enhancements—such as contact lenses, hearing aids, insulin for diabetics, or an artificial hip or prosthetic limb—are widely accepted, but the borderline between therapeutic and “beyond normal” uses is unclear. Human growth hormone, for instance, can be used to treat a child’s pituitary disorder, or can be used to help a perfectly normal child grow taller than they would otherwise have done. Are both uses ethical? New technologies are making ethical decisions harder. “Existing human enhancement technologies include reproductive technology, embryo selection by pre-implantation, genetic diagnosis, physically enhancing drugs, cognitive enhancers, and plastic surgery. Emerging technologies include human genetic engineering [now including CRISPR’s carefully-directed editing] and neural implants, as well as speculative technologies such as mind Uploading.”72 Here we could face a dangerous extension of AI, if people link their brains up to programs whose machinations neither they nor anyone else fully understands. Interactions among a societal subset of AI-driven humanoids—competing or coordinating together—could create serious problems for all people.

New technologies might soon cross over into transhumanism, the idea of humans engineering a posthuman/superhuman future. Even without going this far, human enhancement clearly raises questions of economic justice (who will be able to afford enhancements?), of technological risk (do we really understand the long-term effects of enhancements? Steroids on steroids?), and of just what it means to be made “in the image of God.” While we may celebrate enhancements that improve human thriving, we need to apply the precautionary principle to their application when it endangers the meaning or even the survival of our species.73 Sociologists, AI scientists, and ethicists (Christians and others) need to think together about how to address these challenges.

Conclusions

God has charged us to take care of each other and of all creation. Through geological forces and evolution, God created our world and we should not casually put it at risk in order to meet some corporation’s quarterly earnings target or to do the bidding of a political donor. The precautionary principle should guide our nation’s regulatory decisions.

Although laws may set out with the precautionary principle, in practice the manufacturers seeking monetary benefit have often been able to overwhelm and weaken the precautionary regulatory processes that might preemptively prevent harm. Most exceptions to this pattern have been when introduction of a product causes demonstrable harm, often only brought to public attention with lawsuits. Manufacturers and government regulators should regularly update—tightening or relaxing—product safety ratings and restrictions as more research and experience become available. To enable democratic participation by all those affected, manufacturers and regulators need to make publicly available (and in readily accessible and readable form) information about the risks as well as benefits of any product or process.

Beyond strengthening public health and environmental protections, the precautionary principle is intended to deal with unintended consequences. Although our focus has been on improvements to the U.S. regulatory framework, by using the four major ethical categories developed within the ecumenical movement, the principles of sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity, we acknowledge the broad ways that technological developments—say, the “digital divide”—affect cultures, and how technologies can be used for social control rather than liberation. Democratic participation is conditioned by cultural capacity, and the most advanced corporations leave much conventional oversight and regulation (and taxation) by conflicted political processes far behind. This is to leave open, then, the question of how much transformation our own and other developed societies will need to undergo if we are to avert truly unmeasurable risks of climate changes interacting with dysfunctional or inadequate governments in the years immediately ahead.

Annex A: Historical Origins of the Precautionary Principle and Its Application in the United States and Europe

Many commentators argue that the precautionary principle originally emerged from Germany in the mid-1970s. A few argue that its development started at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. In any case, the first international treaty using the term precautionary principle came about after international conferences discussing the protection of the North Sea. At those meetings, Germany championed the concept. Initially, the parties did not even use the term “precaution,” but agreed that action should be taken to prevent “damage to the environment can be irreversible or remediable only at considerable expense and over long periods and that, therefore, coastal states and the EEC must not wait for proof of harmful effects before taking action.” Finally, in November 1987, at the second conference where the London Declaration was adopted, a “precautionary approach” was adopted (Ministerial Declaration for the Second International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea, Nov. 25, 1987).
The Precautionary Principle, although not always called exactly by that name, is now integrated into many international conventions74 and U.S. and European domestic laws and is embedded in many U.S. occupational safety and environmental laws. It is well described in the Wingspread Consensus Statement on the Precautionary Principle25:

When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.

The process of applying the Precautionary Principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action. (http://sehn.org/wingspread-conference-on-the-precautionary-principle/).

United States

In the United States, the principle, though not always using the term “precautionary principle” began to be stated in strong terms in worker health and safety law, then in environmental law, and finally rather weakly in food safety law. In fact, interpretations of what constitutes sufficient scientific evidence and how precautionary agencies should be are given their strongest expression in occupational health and safety law, The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, in particular, the General Duty Clause of the law stipulates that the employer must maintain a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm.26

The Clean Air Act of 1970 and its subsequent amendments require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to adopt measures to control air pollutants when the pollutants “may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare”77 (USC §7521(a)(1)). Absolute proof of endangerment is not required, but a reasonable belief may require action. The act moreover requires the EPA to set air quality standards to protect the most vulnerable populations, with “an adequate margin of safety.”78 (USC §7409(b)(1)).

In 2007, in Massachusetts v. EPA,79 the U.S. Supreme Court underscored that the EPA cannot arbitrarily decide not to take precautionary action, in this case on whether or not to regulate carbon dioxide as an air pollutant that causes global warming. The Court wrote:

Under the Act’s clear terms, EPA can avoid promulgating regulations only if it determines that greenhouse gases do not contribute to climate change or if it provides some reasonable explanation as to why it cannot or will not exercise its discretion to determine whether they do. It has refused to do so, offering instead a laundry list of reasons not to regulate, including the existence of voluntary Executive Branch programs providing a response to global warming and impairment of the President’s ability to negotiate with developing nations to reduce emissions. These policy judgments have nothing to do with whether greenhouse gas emissions contribute to climate change and do not amount to a reasoned justification for declining to form a scientific judgment. Nor can EPA avoid its statutory obligation by noting the uncertainty surrounding various features of climate change and concluding that it would therefore be better not to regulate at this time. (https://www.cnet.com/news/supreme-court-rules-epa-can-regulate-greenhouse-gases/).

In short, the Court ruled that the precautionary approach of the Clean Air Act requires the EPA to take action even if the politics of the time argues against such precautionary action. It is worth noting that this Court was rather conservative, and one might have expected that it would not have endorsed such a precautionary approach after three decades of antiregulatory rhetoric and practice in U.S. politics.

Nonetheless, in U.S. policymaking, cost-benefit analysis of regulations has often trumped the precautionary language in the laws of the U.S. An expansive definition of cost-benefit analysis has been forced on the agencies by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in both Republican and Democratic administrations. The OMB is supposed to review, not stop, regulations using cost-benefit analysis, but has often held up environmental and health regulations for years, well beyond the 120-day limit the OMB regulations stipulate. Even relatively minor regulations, such as the June 2011 proposal by the EPA to regulate nano pesticides languish and are effectively killed.81

Even major rules have languished in the White House offices of the OMB. Cass Sunstein, the first Obama Administration appointee to head the OMB, is one of the most vociferous critics of the Precautionary Principle and an ardent champion of cost-benefit analysis as the primary tool for assessing and making regulatory decisions. Only after he left the OMB, was the silica dust rule to protect workers from a potent carcinogen finally released after twelve years.

Europe

In Europe, the Precautionary Principle found its way into both law and practice between 1980 and the present. The 1992 treaty80 that created the European Union (EU) made the Precautionary Principle the bedrock of EU environmental policy:

Community policy on the environment shall aim at a high level of protection taking into account the diversity of situations in the various regions of the Community. It shall be based on the precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay. Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of other Community policies. (Article 130R[2])

Article 130R(3) calls for agencies to use “available scientific and technical data” and to assess “the potential benefits and costs of action or lack of action.”

The European Commission (EC) formed a Commission on the Precautionary Principle, which declared that it would be the policy of the European Union to use the Precautionary Principle “where preliminary objective scientific evaluation indicates that there are reasonable grounds for concern that the potentially dangerous effects on the environment, human, animal, or plant health may be inconsistent with the high level of protection chosen for the community”81

The resulting policies have created what some characterize as a “guilty until proven innocent” approach to approving new products.

The Precautionary Principle has been invoked by EU nations as part of the reason for opposing the importation of US beef raised using hormones prohibited in Europe and for the slow, careful adoption of genetically modified (GM) crops in Europe.82
Europe’s chemical safety law, REACH, was designed to incorporate the Precautionary Principle and has been staunchly criticized by some U.S. chemical industries and their supporters in the U.S. Congress. Nonetheless, it is unclear how actively the agency implementing the law is promoting the search of alternative chemicals that should be a part of the precautionary process.83, 84

Europe’s agricultural rules, relating to pesticides, food additives, hormones in beef, genetically modified food and antimicrobials, incorporate the Precautionary Principle and thus are criticized by US politicians as “non-tariff” barriers to free trade. Former Senator Max Baucus from Montana, while on a trip to Europe to promote a US–EU free trade agreement wrote in the Financial Times that he would work at “ensuring that regulatory process are streamlined and based on sound science … eliminating unfair barriers that keep our agricultural products out of the European market without any scientific justification—for example, blocking genetically engineered crops and beef and pork containing feed additives that have been deemed to be safe [in the United States]”85 Calls for “sound science” are often code for antiregulatory arguments, and often the same politicians arguing for “sound science” have cut the science budgets of agencies like the EPA when they have attempted to research alternatives to chemicals or other technologies currently being used in industry or agriculture.

This account of the precautionary principle’s formal uses does not include a survey of its adoption and application within the Christian churches, although such a survey is available from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. A brief policy summary of prior Presbyterian uses of the concept is found in Annex C. The United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America86 use the precautionary principle in their social teaching and policy work. More broadly, the World Council of Churches in the 1970s developed an ethical framework for debating the safety and sustainability of nuclear power (as well as the impacts of nuclear weapons), other energy technologies, and human genetic experimentation. Its ethical criteria were used and elaborated internationally though national councils of churches, assisting many developing nations in their dealings with developed nations, transnational institutions, and corporations.

We conclude with a brief quotation from the ecumenical report, Human Values and Advancing Technology:

Using science (by research) and technology (by application) we have solved many problems through concentrating effort on clearly defined sequences of tasks. Yet … a too narrow concentration of attention has frequently contributed to our failure to anticipate unintended consequences. Because these consequences are now arising on so large a scale, ways must be found to cope with major deficiencies in our policy-making process. …

Increased carbon dioxide appears to trigger a chain of events: warming of world climates, increased melting of polar ice caps, rising sea levels, and the consequent flooding of the world’s major seaports and fertile coastal plains. Scientists have estimated that the point of no return may be reached by the end of the century. … Public and private agencies must proceed immediately to develop and evaluate alternatives so that ultimate decisions can be made wisely and in time.”87

That precautionary and prescient statement from Cameron P. Hall, a Presbyterian minister then working for the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., was written in 1967.

Annex B

This report was developed by a task group of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy that included Dr. Steven Webb, an economist and primary final writer, Dr. Linda Eastwood, a physicist and theologian, and Dr. Christian Iosso, an ethicist and staff to the committee. The Reverend Ray Roberts, PhD, hosted two meetings of a reference group at the Westfield (N.J.) Presbyterian Church. The task group was enabled to focus on the regulatory nexus by Thomas McGarity, Esq., Professor of Law at the University of Texas and past director of the Center for Progressive Regulation, who met with the reference group at its second meeting. Dr. Jaydee Hanson, a consultant from the Center for Food Safety, provided research on ecumenical background and practical advocacy concerns. Dr. Roger Willer, an ethicist with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Dr. Donna Riley, Professor of Engineering Ethics Education at Purdue University, gave valuable comment.

The reference group that gathered in Westfield included Dr. Douglas Miller, a biochemist and pharmacologist with extensive corporate research and development experience; Dr. Eric Schaff, Esq., Northern N.J. Regional Director of the Environmental Protection Agency; Dr. William Menke, Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and The Earth Institute at Columbia University; Dr. Peter Sackman; Martha Smith, formerly of the Yale University Groundwater Project; the Reverend Dr. Susan DeGeorge, Esq., stated clerk of the Presbytery of Hudson River and Adjunct Professor of Law at Pace University; and Dr. Fred Hitzhusen, professor, Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics at The Ohio State University, joined the group by phone.

Annex C

The Precautionary Approach in Presbyterian Church Social Witness Policy

In 1971, versions of the precautionary principle marked a brief but strong resolution, “Christian Responsibility for Environmental Renewal,” prompted above all by pollution, technology, and consumption out of control. Values affirmed included: “rights of life over property rights, taming of technology in order to enhance quality of life, restraint in consumption, equitable distribution of resources, and modes of corporate decision accountable to the public and to existing communities.”

In this light, “the key to responsible stewardship of the environment is anticipation of potential hazards before they become critical.” More specifically, the General Assembly: “Urges the President and Congress to ensure more rigorous monitoring of environmental conditions and their social costs, adequate funding of research to develop benign products and production systems, phase out of wasteful or toxic technologies, testing of potentially dangerous substances or implements before their introduction into commercial use, and authority to ban those which are not “eco-safe.”

Additionally, church judicatories, agencies, and “community ecology centers” were to seek: “habits of economic development that shift the burden of proof of ecological safety to the proponents of any potentially hazardous or threatening enterprises.”

The 1981 Presbyterian Church energy policy, The Power to Speak Truth to Power, established an ethical framework for assessing major energy options and made a number of recommendations to church and society. One of these contains a version of the precautionary approach:
I. F. “The enforcement of rigorous environmental and human safeguards in the production and use of all forms of energy, with the burden of proof resting with claims that energy sufficiency is threatened, and that safety and environmental provisions are adequate.”

The 1989 theological study, *Keeping and Healing the Creation*, contained a discussion of sustainability that “reverses the burden of proof for technology, industry, and agriculture. … For decades we have been pressing hard against ecological limits … in instance after instance we have gone too far; now it is time to exercise restraint [that we] not disrupt natural balances or jeopardize the future.” Planning the transition to renewable resources should “take advantage of market mechanisms to encourage efficiency … but do not expect markets to anticipate the future … adequately, for their time frame is too short …” (p. 64).

The 1990 major environmental policy statement, *Restoring the Creation for Ecology and Justice*, built on the 1989 study, which is essentially its theological base. The proactive side of “healing” is emphasized, while pioneering thinking of the 1980 PCUS study, “The Energy Question: An Exploration of Meaning and Values,” is also recalled, lifting up the intrinsic value of “a great cosmic community, of which God and nature are also a part.”

In 1996, the assembly approved an even further reaching policy statement, *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, which became the basis for much Hunger Program and World Mission strategy for funding and international partnership. This statement emphasized a holistic approach to interdependence of economic, social, political, and spiritual factors for ecologically sustainable trade and globalization. It included recommendations for “full-cost pricing” and “polluter pays” principles to be incorporated in economic policy, along with increases in international regulation consistent with human rights and better governance and incentives for appropriate technologies. Relevant to the precautionary principle, which is usually included within sustainability, it extended that concern to “right to know” and transparency laws that strengthen citizen participation, women’s empowerment, and democratic accountability (pp. 103–5). The report overall had a sensitivity to process and structures of governance that built on religious, cultural, and educational values (including traditional wisdom) as well as international law and scientific values. Thus, it extends the precautionary principle to implementation as well as goals of minimizing risks and irreversible disruption.


Endnotes


3. Public interest groups have proposed that legislators voting on regulations affecting their donors or sources of campaign donations should be required to disclose those financial ties, which can be quite significant.


5. Some studies report potentially isolating, depressive, sleep-reducing, and addictive aspects of “small screen” exposure through excessive use of personal electronic devices.

6. A still helpful example can be found in Dieter Hessel, ed. *The Agricultural Mission of Churches and Land Grant Universities* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1980). Then-General Assembly Moderator John Conner convened professors and campus ministers from twelve, primarily Midwestern universities, to look at the land grant system’s contributions to research, appropriate technology, food sufficiency, and sustainability.

7. See, for instance, the 2016 report from the U.S. National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) on gene driven research.


10. Ibid., 1206.


18. The origin of this proverb is not known. Often said to be Native American, it may in fact have started with Wendell Berry. See [http://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/01/22/borrow-earth/](http://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/01/22/borrow-earth/).


22. The FDA’s implementing regulations in 1996 for the Food Additives Amendment say: “General recognition of safety based upon scientific procedures shall require the same quantity and quality of scientific evidence as is required to obtain approval of a food additive regulation for the ingredient. General recognition of safety through scientific procedures shall ordinarily be based upon published studies which may be corroborated by unpublished studies and other data and information.”


23. 21 C.F.R. § 170.30(a).


25. FDA, 1997 GRAS NPRM, at 18939.

26. FDA, 1997 GRAS NPRM, at 18,940. The agency recognized, however, that common knowledge in the scientific community could also be based upon “(1) publication of data and information in the secondary scientific literature, such as scientific review articles, textbooks, and compendia; (2) documentation of the opinion of an “expert panel” that is specifically convened for this purpose; or (3) the opinion or recommendation of an authoritative body.” Id., at 18,941.


30. FDA, 1997 GRAS NPRM, at 18939.

31. Peter B. Hutt & Richard Merrill, Food and Drug Law, at 333.


41. For example: [https://futurism.com/geneticists-have-used-crispr-gene-editing-to-create-crops-that-grow-more-food/](https://futurism.com/geneticists-have-used-crispr-gene-editing-to-create-crops-that-grow-more-food/)


51. This concern for biodiversity was embodied for a period in a seed repository at Ghost Ranch, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s conference center in Abiquiu, New Mexico. While many innovative practices remain, this aspect of the high-altitude desert farm has been suspended.


61. A 2014 summary of this regulatory environment may be found at https://www.loc.gov/law/help/restrictions-on-gmos/usa.php.


66. These criteria were proposed by agricultural scientists at University of California Davis: Ronald, Pamela C., and Raoul W. Adamchak. Tomorrow's Table: Organic Farming, Genetics, and the Future of Food. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. xi-xii.


70. A regulator would not be able to tell by observing transactions whether the firm was using AI programs or simply a trading algorithm designed by humans.


72. Ibid.


74. See, e.g., Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, June 14, 1992, 31 I.L.M. 874, 879 (“Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.”); Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Jan. 29, 2000, 39 I.L.M. 1027 Art. 10(6) (“Lack of scientific certainty due to insufficient relevant scientific information and knowledge regarding the extent of the potential adverse/effects of a living modified...
organism on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Part of import, taking also into account risks to human health, shall not prevent that party from taking a decision, as appropriate, with regard to the import of the living modified organism in question . . . in order to avoid or minimize such potential adverse effects.”).

U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, May 9, 1992, 21 I.L.M. 849, (“The Parties should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the cause of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures.”);

“The World Charter on Nature,” G.A. Res. 37/7, 11, U.N. Doc. A/RES/37/7 (Oct. 28, 1982) (“Activities which might have an impact on nature shall be controlled, and the best available technologies that minimize significant risks to nature or other adverse effects shall be used.”);

The London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter, 1996 Protocol to the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, Mar. 24, 2006, art. 3, para. 1 (“Appropriate preventative measures are [to be] taken when there is reason to believe that wastes or other matter introduced into the marine environment are likely to cause harm even when there is no conclusive evidence to provide a causal relation between inputs and their effects.”);


77. See the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. §7521(a)(1), “The Administrator shall by regulation prescribe (and from time to time revise) in accordance with the provisions of this section, standards applicable to the emission of any air pollutant from any class or classes of new motor vehicles or new motor vehicle engines, which in his judgment cause, or contribute to, air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare.” Other provisions in the Clean Air Act contain similar requirements, including the requirement that pollutants be controlled using the best available technology.

78. See the Clean Air Act 42 U.S.C. §7409(b)(1), “National primary ambient air quality standards, prescribed under subsection (a) of this section shall be ambient air quality standards the attainment and maintenance of which in the judgment of the Administrator, based on such criteria and allowing an adequate margin of safety, are requisite to protect the public health. Such primary standards may be revised in the same manner as promulgated.”

79. Massachusetts v. EPA, 127 S.Ct. 1438 (2007) p. 6. The Supreme Court remanded the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, which in turn ordered that “EPA’s denial of the International Center for Technology Assessment’s 1999 rulingmaking petition be vacated and Nos. 03-1361,03-1362, 03-1363, and 03-1364 be remanded for further proceedings consistent with the Supreme Court's opinion.”


ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-07. As some of the most likely to be harmed by a lack of regulations are women and people of color, ACREC approves this overture.

Item 08-08

[Item 08-08 was answered by the action taken on Item 08-01. See pp. 52, 55.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation from the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Affirm the need of urgent and robust responses to the threat of climate change, as well as the need for Presbyterian entities and individuals to pursue a comprehensive set of faithful responses.
2. Receive the report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) on its extensive engagement of corporations as well as its implementation of the criteria included in the directive from the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

3. Affirm the Guideline Metrics (see appendix) MRTI developed for measuring progress towards compliance with General Assembly established criteria for all corporations, especially those that produce and/or heavily consume fossil fuels.

4. Direct MRTI to pursue its engagement process with deliberate haste and utilize its Guideline Metrics with corporations in the 2019 and 2020 proxy seasons and report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with divestment recommendations for the companies who are not moving towards compliance with the General Assembly’s criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

5. Commend all corporations who are working to address the risks of climate change by aligning and adopting policies and practices in line with Paris Accords including: reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved energy efficiency, incorporation of renewable energy and having robust disclosure of the risks related to the 2-degree warming scenario, and how they plan to manage operations in line with low carbon demand scenarios.

6. Commend the investing agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their work to provide options for congregations, mid councils, and individuals working for a fossil fuel-free future. Specifically, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for its Restoring Creation Loan program; the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its positive investments in renewables and its environmental investment option for plan members; and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation for its positive investments in renewables, and for providing, through its New Covenant Trust Company subsidiary, fossil free investment strategies for congregations, mid councils, and individuals.

7. Encourage continued respectful discussion and engagement in the church and civil society on the critical issue of climate change, and how it should be addressed, not only through the responsible use of investments, but also as individuals, churches, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) working together to reduce our carbon footprint.

**Rationale**

These recommendations are in response to the following referral:


**Background:**

The 222nd General Assembly (2016)

... 2. Directs MRTI to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with recommendations, including possible selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 511–12)

In response to the referral from the last General Assembly, MRTI engaged in dialogues with fifty-nine companies; filed or co-filed shareholder resolutions with eighteen companies; established Guideline Metrics to measure progress with companies; and increased the allocation of committee and staff time to addressing environmental and climate change with corporations. In addition, the committee held seven meetings with various interest groups within the denomination to seek input and report progress. MRTI also hosted panel discussions at the NEXT Gathering and the Big Tent event with representatives from Fossil Free PCUSA and Faithful Action. MRTI is committed to continue this focus through the 224th General Assembly (2020) and beyond.

**Biblical, Theological, Ethical, and Policy Background**

MRTI understands that its role as a committee is to be guided by the Holy Spirit, which calls us into being and sustains us in relationship with one another. As Presbyterians, we understand that we operate within an ecclesial structure that seeks mutual responsibility and accountability. That understanding has distinctive theological and polity features that are simultaneously rewarding and frustrating. Theologically, we emphasize the power of communal discernment; the Holy Spirit is present in collective discussion, debate, and even conflict. Fundamentally, we acknowledge the asymmetry between humans and God, and therefore we believe that broad representation and diversity is pertinent to discerning God’s will for the church.
But, as we have rooted and ordered ourselves in process, the slow nature of committee and denominational discernment is likewise exasperating. It is in the communal process that we most deliberately engage in listening attentively to the Holy Spirit, where different thoughts and opinions are offered equitable voice, and assembled believers prayerfully seek to determine appropriate action for a particular moment and place.

Further, we are mindful of Item 11-03, passed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), which directs the church to: “Recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to locate ourselves with the poor, to advocate with all of our voice for the poor, and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor (in the soup kitchens and catholic worker houses, among the immigrants, with those working to end mass incarceration, and with those who seek to protect all of us, especially the poorest of the poor around the world, from the vagaries of climate change)” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 700). We are committed to honoring both the spirit and the letter of this directive, and to assure that we are hearing and centering our response around the voices of those most impacted by the crisis of climate change as we move forward.

We sought to be guided in our work by biblical and Reformed theological principals. As such, we understand the following:

Faithful concern for the environment is rooted in the Word of God, spoken into creation. Reformed Christians have always affirmed the sovereignty of God as the creator and sustainer of all life, over the whole of creation. Even before creating humans, God created the earth and the universe of which it is a part, and called it “very good” (Gen.1:31). Like other living creatures, humans are formed of the earth and intimately intertwined with all of God’s creation (Gen. 2:7, 9, 19). Creation is God’s handiwork, the earth and all that is in it, belongs to God (Ps. 24:1 and Ps. 104). Creation is also a gift, to which we respond with gratitude and faithful stewardship. As Christians who have covenanted in relationship with God, we are called by God to care and maintain the fragile order with which God has entrusted us (Gen. 2:15).

Creation cries out in this time of ecological crisis (Rom. 8:18–22). The sustainability of creation, human life, and well-being depend upon “the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained” (Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, 1990, p. 2). When creation is violated, so too are human communities, particularly the most vulnerable in our midst. Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40). Jesus exhorts us, as members of the human family, to show great care in the way that we treat the least, the lost, and the lonely of our world. As the church, we are called to respond to Jesus prodding through prophetic witness and action.

From the earliest days of the Reformed Tradition, we have understood ourselves to be political. As God is active in all spheres of life, so are we called to be engaged in society’s institutions. This is one of the most challenging aspects of being Presbyterian. It means taking seriously the call to live out our public theology faithfully within the boundaries of democratic church polity. As Presbyterians, we are expected to enter into complicated conversations and sometimes into making difficult decisions. For the last four years, for the members of MRTI, the issue at hand has been the relationships between Christians and the fossil fuel industry. A portion of PC(USA)-related assets is invested in the stocks and bonds of traditional, fossil fuel-based energy companies, making us partly responsible for their enormous footprint on earth, sky, and sea. MRTI firmly believes in the urgency of addressing climate change and the involvement of the PC(USA) and people of faith in reducing the carbon footprint of humanity, and in moving toward utilizing alternative forms of energy.

While the Reformed tradition insists on the Church being political, it also reminds us that as part of the body of Christ, we have diverse ministries, relationships, and commitments that lead us to embody politics in differing, though ultimately, complimentary ways. The unity of this body is not uniformity in either perspective or approach. Rather the unity of the body is in its purpose, to equip God’s people for works of service until we reach unity and maturity (Eph. 4:11–13). In pursuit of our calling, we recognize that members and communities within the PC(USA) have a common purpose in serving the cause of a just and sustainable Creation that reflects God’s promises of flourishing. And yet we will pursue that aim in different ways and at different levels on climate change and a host of other issues of social concern. There are, for example, supply side approaches that seek to reform or critique the practices of fossil fuel producers and there are demand side approaches that seek to encourage adoption of renewable energy and reordering of investment priorities among individuals, congregations, and other church-related bodies.

These diverse approaches are interdependent and faithful responses even as they appear at times to be tension. Each of them is required for the health of the body’s comprehensive witness on this consequential issue. Thus, we call for a posture of mutual forbearance reflective of 1 Corinthians 12:21, where we are reminded that the parts of the body are called to stay in relationships rather than in antagonism. For “the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need you!’, nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you!’”

In our diverse and faithful responses, we are being called, as one of our confessions reminds us, to use our abilities, possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to us by God for “the advancement of the common welfare.” That means that the church cannot evade “responsibility in economic affairs” (Book of Confessions, the Confession of 1967, 9:46). Using our own positionality and resources in a faithful way requires a critical balance. On the one hand, we reject the idolatry of unjust systems by unmasking the ways they hold human societies captive. And on the other, we must as stewards of Creation,
be creative participants in the shaping of just systems of human and Creational flourishing. So, we are called neither to embrace human systems uncritically, nor to abandon them lightly. Rather, we are called to engage them critically, and we believe this is what MRTI has faithfully done and will continue to deepen our commitment to doing.

Recent Developments

The mandate from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) builds on the recommendation from the 218th General Assembly (2008) for “the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to expand efforts to engage businesses on energy efficiency and conservation in manufacturing, transport, and product design; to work with companies on appropriate technology applications, including co-generation, wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, and low-head hydroelectric; to support solutions to the problem of nuclear waste; and to advocate that utilities establish incentives to reduce electricity, oil, and gas usage while also eliminating barriers for small power producers to interconnect with the power grid” (The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming, p. 2; see also Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 935). To follow such an economy-wide strategy of engagement, MRTI has stayed engaged with corporations that produce and consume energy and make equipment for others to do so.

The threat of climate change is real and urgent and we are running out of time to address it. The “2017 Global Carbon Budget” estimated we have thirty-two years to solve climate change. Scientists estimate that by 2050 we must keep global temperatures from rising 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The Fourth National Climate Change Assessment, from the U.S. government in 2017 is less explicitly prescriptive but its detailed diagnosis points even more strongly to the need for collective action throughout the economy.

Meanwhile, several recent news accounts detail how people are already dying for reasons directly related to climate. The summer of 2017 saw new temperature records across the western United States. Arizona saw temperatures so high airplanes could not fly. India and Pakistan recorded temperatures as high as 129.2 degrees Fahrenheit. One of the most rapidly warming cities in the United States happens to be Louisville, Kentucky, where the PC(USA) is headquartered.

Addressing the Issue

The most efficient way to discourage the burning of fossil fuels is to aggressively engage and challenge producers and consumers to reduce their carbon footprint. Applying pressure at only one point along this chain of fossil fuel production and consumption—say through divestment from fossil fuel-extracting companies—would be less efficient and ultimately slower. Just as defoliating acres of coca and poppies has not solved America’s drug problem, divesting from firms that extract fossil fuel is not likely to bring about the necessary reduction in our economy’s production of greenhouse gases. The root of the problem is on the demand side.

Investor advocacy by groups like MRTI, in coordination with others, can encourage efficient reduction of carbon burning. This strategy involves dialogue with companies all along the chain—extracting fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas), consuming fossil fuels (airlines, bus and trucking companies, electric utilities, etc.), and producing equipment that burns fossil fuels (manufacturers of automobiles, busses, trucks, heating and cooling equipment, airplanes, etc.)—to get them to move to more energy-efficient and non-fossil fuel technologies. Per the criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), firms that refuse to respond to the dialogue could face selective divestment. The transition to a carbon-neutral economy must involve most of these firms, along with new entrants, changing their product lines and production processes. Getting firms to recognize this and take corresponding actions is the goal of MRTI’s corporate engagement on climate and environment issues.

The investor advocacy of PC(USA) and others in the faith community will not suffice on its own to achieve change on such a scale. Mobilizing support from all classes of investors, who mostly focus on returns, will require informing them better about how the companies’ profitability depends on the response to climate change.

MRTI therefore presses firms to report annually on their view of and response to climate-change risks and opportunities, including the comprehensive outlook on energy reflected in the companies’ strategies. MRTI asks how a company’s strategy can remain resilient amidst significant changes (up or down) in demand for oil, gas, and coal, taking into account the carbon intensity of their reserves, and their location (ultra-deep waters, oil sands, etc.). MRTI asks firms to report the value of their assets with acknowledgement that should the economy of the U.S. and the world reduce fuel consumption to meet the 2-degree C limit on warming, they could not then extract all of their reserves. MRTI joins a wide range of investors with assets under management totaling $20 trillion, asking firms to report on carbon pricing scenarios and risk assessment of long-term projects and products, and on their goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing use of renewable energy sources. As more information is made available to the public, management on its own often sees the need for reforms, and investors gain the leverage to demand further improvements.

A holistic economic response to climate change also involves government regulation, which many companies spend lavishly to lobby against. Too often still, a company may say that it wants to reduce its carbon footprint while at the same time spending resources directly or via third parties to prevent regulations that would ensure carbon footprint reduction. MRTI
advocates for oversight and transparency about companies’ lobbying activity and political spending, including by trade associations to which the companies belong.

Positive investments also help the move to carbon neutrality. The Presbyterian Foundation has allocated at least 1 percent of the Presbyterian Endowment Fund for investments that target climate change solutions: clean energy equities funds or indexes, green bonds and real estate investments, renewable energy funds, clean tech venture capital, and sustainable forestry and agriculture.

Climate change must be addressed worldwide by policymakers, consumers, faith communities, and corporations. Since 2016, PCUSA has engaged more than thirty companies and filed thirteen shareholder resolutions on climate change issues. Companies have included large fossil fuel companies, like Exxon Mobil and Chevron, as well as companies representing the demand of fossil fuels, including Ford and GM auto companies; and some companies in the financial and insurance sectors, such as Bank of New York Mellon and AIG. Of the twenty-three U.S.-based companies on the Carbon Underground 200 list and owned by the Board of Pensions or Foundation, MRTI has engaged twelve since 2016. MRTI’s dialogue with energy companies in which we have investments also includes other important social witness issues, such as the diversity of board membership, indigenous rights, and human rights in Israel/ Palestine.

Implementation of 222nd General Assembly (2016) Criteria and Successful Outcomes

To operationalize the directive from the 222nd General Assembly (2016), MRTI developed and, since June 2017, has been using the Guideline Metrics, an instrument to help the committee and staff gauge whether a company has made “significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy.” Data are collected from company filings, annual reports, news articles, direct dialogue, and corporate disclosures through the Carbon Disclosure Project. The tool includes a rating system for companies. When the relevant information is collected, MRTI staff members assign one of the following ratings (based on the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility’s Hierarchy of Impact): Red—company has had a poor record of shareholder engagement, may not acknowledge importance of ESG issues; Orange—company acknowledges importance of ESG issues, may not adopt policies to address issues; Yellow—company shows some progress on shareholder engagement, begins to implement policy with programs/plans, goals and targets, develops metrics, and discloses information; Blue—company has a good track record of shareholder engagement, company benchmarks its progress against others in industry/sector; or Green—Company shows great efforts on shareholder engagement and actively addresses ESG issues with few concerns. This evaluation could lead to a recommendation for divestment if companies score low enough and indicate no willingness to change.

MRTI uses the Guideline Metrics to prepare for and measure the effectiveness of engagements with all companies, not only those extracting fossil fuel. The companies with whom to engage are chosen according to the policy priorities of MRTI and ecumenical partners, such as the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) and CERES, to which more than 60 faith-based groups belong. Our colleagues there have appreciated this pioneering effort, and many plan to use a similar model to guide their own corporate engagement.

The instrument follows criteria laid out in the 1984 General Assembly Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria [196th General Assembly (1984)], particularly criterion three:

The analysis supporting the proposed action:

a. should be clearly grounded in the church’s confession and unambiguously present in the social policy of the General Assembly;

b. should clearly define the behavior and stance of the corporate entities whose policies or practices are at issue; and

c. should state the ends sought through divestment. (The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria, p. 194)

Faith-based and socially responsible organizations engaging with corporations have contributed to the following outcomes with several target companies: (1) ExxonMobil sent a letter to the Trump administration encouraging staying in the Paris climate agreement, a remarkable departure from their previous stance; (2) the 2017 shareholder resolution calling on Exxon Mobil to complete reporting on climate change impacts received a majority vote, PC(USA) was a co-filer on this resolution and will follow up with the company; (3) PC(USA) engaged Phillips 66 on water issues and human rights, and the company subsequently published its first human rights policy in fall 2017; (4) PC(USA) filed a shareholder resolution with Noble Energy on climate change-related issues and also continues to engage the company on human rights concerns in Israel-Palestine related to its drilling for gas in the Eastern Mediterranean; (5) Marathon Petroleum released a sustainability report this year after MRTI co-filed a resolution in 2017, and Valero agreed to do the same.

In an effort to target as many companies as possible on climate change, MRTI also has engaged financial managers, like Bank of New York Mellon and JP Morgan Chase, to discuss how they review and vote for shareholder proposals on climate change. The financial management companies, Black Rock and Vanguard, were key contributors to the majority vote for the shareholder proposal at Exxon Mobil. These large players in the asset markets share our view that climate risk means financial risk. We expect them to be influential allies as we move forward.

Engaging Denomination as a Whole
There has also been significant development addressing climate change within the denomination itself, with new opportunities to engage Presbyterians across the country. The Board of Pensions made the Pax Global Environmental Markets Fund available to investors in the Retirement Savings Plan of the PC(USA) in January 2017. The Board of Pensions also committed $100 million to a fossil-free portfolio that invests worldwide in resource efficiency and environmental markets in 2017.

The Presbyterian Foundation Board of Trustees committed that at least 1 percent of the Foundation’s permanent endowment fund holdings will be invested in companies working on climate change solutions. In partnership with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Foundation has also made loans available for congregations to implement renewable energy or carbon reduction solutions. The Foundation’s subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, is providing fossil-free management strategies to congregations and other clients that desire a customized approach.

In addition, the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement has received several dozen requests from congregations seeking assistance developing socially responsible investment policies. MRTI recognizes that it is not alone within PC(USA) in working on the climate change issue and that its engagement with firms where we have investments is only one part of the necessary effort.

Review of General Assembly Criteria for Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy

The 196th General Assembly (1984) adopted the policy, “The Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy” (Minutes, UPCUSA, Part I, pp. 193–207). It included seven criteria suggested as a guide for making divestment recommendations, and to help guide trustees of related institutions and organizations throughout the church. This policy has guided MRTI’s work on the referral. A review of the criteria is included below:

1. The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one reflecting central aspects of the faith.

MRTI believes faithful caring for God’s creation is an essential element of our Christian vocation, and the current and future threat of climate change to God’s creation is well-established.

2. The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one that the church has addressed by a variety of educational and action efforts, such as: correspondence with companies, discussion with company managers and directors, statements, questions, and shareholder resolutions at stockholder meetings, and legal action against companies.

As summarized in the report, MRTI and its ecumenical partners for decades have engaged many corporations regarding environmental responsibility, particularly in climate change. This engagement has produced positive changes in corporate policies and practices and more engagement remains to be done.

3. The analysis supporting the proposed action: (a) should be clearly grounded in the church’s confession and unambiguously present in the social policy of the General Assembly; (b) should clearly define the behavior and stance of the corporate entities whose policies or practices are at issue; and (c) should state the ends sought through divestment.

MRTI’s work since the 222nd General Assembly (2016) has focused on key components of a robust response to climate change: governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy. MRTI approved an instrument based on these components that helps measure progress with companies in June 2017. These Guideline Metrics, based on the criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), clearly outline issues facing MRTI and the companies, and include an evaluation component that could lead to divestment if companies score low enough and indicate no willingness to change.

4. The decision should be taken after consultation with the ecumenical community, whenever possible. The implementation of a divestment action should ordinarily be in solidarity with other Christian bodies.

MRTI works with many partners both within and outside of the faith community. Engagements are frequently carried out in partnership. Some partners have adopted positions on divestment of fossil fuel companies. Other partners have not. All are committed to addressing the real and urgent crisis of climate change.

5. Efforts should be made to examine the probable effects and consequences of the action with affected communities, particularly Presbyterians.

Since 2016, MRTI has met with and discussed climate change issues and strategy for corporate engagement several times with Presbyterians from both Fossil Free PCUSA and Faithful Actions. Representatives from both groups attended MRTI meetings in February, June, and October 2017. These meetings and conversations have highlighted the importance of taking a multifaceted approach to climate change and corporate engagement.

6. The proposed action should be sufficiently precise that the effect of its application can be evaluated.

As outlined above, the committee formally approved the Guideline Metrics in 2017. This document, when completed for a specific company, provides a clear way to evaluate that company and its progress on environmental, social, and governance
issues. The tool includes research and data from the company, analysis from dialogues, as well as external sources and media reports to help paint a complete picture of companies across all sectors.

7. Any proposed divestment action should include provision for: (a) informing appropriate church constituencies; (b) giving appropriate public visibility to the action; (c) engaging other governing bodies and members in advocacy for the ends that prompt the divestment; and (d) giving pastoral care to those directly affected.

Since there is no divestment recommendation being brought to this General Assembly, no such provision has been made.

Appendix
PC(USA) Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment
Guideline Metrics for Companies

Company:

Peer Groups:

Background:

Resolutions:

Dialogues:

Key Issues:

Lead Issue Committee:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Metrics</th>
<th>[Company]</th>
<th>Notes on Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 1: Climate-related risks and opportunities identified over short, medium and long term (TCFD)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 2: The impact of climate-related risks and opportunities on the organization’s businesses, strategy and financial planning described (TCFD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 3: Business strategy in place to manage operations in manner consistent with limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius (GA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 4: Efforts made to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius (GA)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 5: Scenario analysis and measurement, including risk assessment on demand and supply, within key business processes and investment decisions incorporated, (GA)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 6: Puts price on carbon and uses price to make decisions on long-term projects (GA)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 7: Sets robust goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that include increase use of renewable energy sources (GA)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 8: Evidence of energy efficient investments (GA)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 9: Evidence of more rapid integration of new technologies designed to reduce the company’s overall carbon footprint (GA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 10: Organization discloses metrics used to assess climate-related risks and opportunities in line with its strategy and risk management process (TCFD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 11: Discloses Scope 1, Scope 2 and if appropriate, Scope 3 GHG emissions, and related risks (TCFD)</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 12: Describes the targets used to manage climate-related risks and opportunities and performance against targets, (TCFD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 13: Issues annual reports on the company’s view of and response to material climate change risks and opportunities (GA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 14: Provides outlook on energy (GA)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 15: Outlines how strategy can adjust for significant changes in demand for oil, gas and coal (GA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Metric 16: Carbon intensity of proven and probable reserves (including breakeven oil price) categorized by nature of projects’ environment (ultra-deep waters, oil sands, etc.) (GA)</td>
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</table>

Other possible areas of interest (from S&P):

17. Water use:

17a. Is water included in company’s business strategy planning?
17b. What are water usage requirements for the company?
| 17c. Does the company operate in water-stressed areas? |  |
| 17d. Are mitigation programs in place for efficient water use? |  |
| 17e. Is the company using or developing water-efficient technology for operations? |  |
| **18. Land and Biodiversity:** |  |
| 18a. Do operations adversely impact biodiversity? |  |
| 18b. Is there a corporate policy and risk management process in place concerning energy, land and biodiversity? |  |
| 18c. Do operations lead to deforestation? |  |
| **19. Possible Supply Issues** |  |
| 19a. Company evaluates impact of its products on the environment (MRTI) |  |
| **20. Regarding Waste:** |  |
| 20b. Solid waste reduction efforts are in place. (MRTI) |  |
| **21. Other comments** |  |

**Social**

1. Company has the following in place:
   a) Policy commitment to respect human rights
   b) A human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address their impacts on human rights
   c) Processes to enable the remediation of any adverse human rights impacts they cause or which they contribute (above from UN)
   d) Public commitment to prevent human trafficking and upholding human rights
   e) Evaluation of impact of its products on human rights (MRTI)
2. Do operations distress neighboring communities? If so, what steps are taken to mitigate those impacts? (S&P)
3. Risk management program includes environmental and social impacts on neighbors (e.g., emissions’ impact on local air quality, lending impact on local communities). (S&P)
4. Operations are considered from the perspective of their impact on local communities and society and employee safety. (S&P and MRTI)
5. Company regularly engages with customers to learn their needs and satisfaction. (S&P)
6. Do operations and/or products create reputational issues for the company? If so, how are those issues managed and mitigated? (S&P).
9. Corporate Human Rights Benchmark 2017 score
10. Additional human rights concerns?
11. Company takes steps in terms of occupational health, safety, and wellbeing and the advancement, protection and enforcement of human rights, including suppliers (S&P).
12. Other comments

**Governance**

1. CEO to employee pay ratio: [http://www.payscale.com/data-packages/ceo-pay/full-list](http://www.payscale.com/data-packages/ceo-pay/full-list)
2. Clearly defines board and management governance processes that acknowledge the scientific evidence of climate change (GA) and importance of other social issues.
3. Ensures adequate oversight of climate change risk (GA) and human rights issues
4. Strategic implications of a transition to low carbon energy system (GA)
5. Board member analysis (MRTI) (includes board diversity)
6. Engages constructively with public policymakers and other stakeholders [in support of cost-effective policy measures to mitigate climate change risks and support low-carbon investments] (GA)

7. Ensures there is broad oversight and transparency about the company’s lobbying activity and political spending, including activity by trade associations to which the company belongs, on climate change and related energy and regulatory issues (GA), and other human rights and social issues.

8. Company discloses positions on policy issues such as carbon pricing, renewable energy targets, and international negotiations on climate change (GA).

9. Company regularly engages with regulatory and other legal authorities to keep abreast of legal, regulatory and compliance developments. (S&P)

10. Relevant transparency (executive pay; drug pricing; spending on marketing vs R and D) (MRTI)

11. Company is transparent on which office to contact regarding environmental/ social concerns and includes contact information. (MRTI)

12. Other comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDP Scorecard</th>
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<tr>
<td>CDP Score</td>
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**Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many and what type of engagements?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Substance of engagements</td>
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**Recommendation**

Red: Overall, company has had poor record of shareholder engagement, poor record on ESG issues. Company may or may not acknowledge importance of ESG issues.

Orange: Company acknowledges importance of ESG issues, may or may not adopt policies to address the issues. Has conducted some shareholder engagement or is open to it. May not have displayed much progress in shareholder engagement.

Yellow: Company shows more progress on shareholder engagement; begins to implement policy with programs/plans, goals and targets; Develops metrics, starts measuring and disclosing information.

Blue: Good track record of shareholder engagement. Company benchmarks its progress against others in industry/sector; conducts independent verification of its data and operations. Policies, programs, goals and targets in place for ESG issues and regularly discloses information.

Green: Company showing great efforts on shareholder engagement; is actively addressing ESG issues and there are few concerns. Company’s strategic focus leads to demonstrable positive impact (Adopted from ICCR hierarchy of impact)

**Sources and Notes:**

General Assembly of the PC(USA) (GA). “Action on Fossil Fuel Divestment by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).” Excerpt from MRTI Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)’s Committee on Environmental and Immigration Issues. 2016. “Directs MRTI to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with recommendations, including possible selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.”

2008 General Assembly of the PCUSA (GA 2008). The 218th General Assembly (2008) received an MRTI report that included continued engagement with companies on Israel/ Palestine. In response, the GA recommended the following: “Call upon all corporations doing business in the region to confine their business activity solely to peaceful pursuits, and refrain from allowing their products or services to support or facilitate violent acts by Israelis or Palestinians against innocent civilians, construction and maintenance of settlements or Israeli-only roads in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, and construction of the Separation Barrier as it extends beyond the 1967 ‘Green Line’ into Palestinian territories.” (Minutes, 2008, Part 1, p. 1223)


PC(USA)’s Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), internal communication between MRTI committee members and staff.

Endnotes


ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-08

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 08-08 is the report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), which mainly focuses on the process they have begun of applying criteria for greener and renewable energy to companies represented in the securities portfolios of the General Assembly’s investing agencies.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that this item be approved as amended: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. [Text remains unchanged.]

“2. Commend all Presbyterians, including those involved in the Fossil Free movement and those concurring presbyteries, who are seeking to reduce the church’s energy footprint and make it less dependent on conventional, largely carbon-based energy sources and profits from them, and more invested in renewable energy, which is increasingly profitable and linked to technological innovation.]

“[2.] [3.] Receive the report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) on its extensive engagement of corporations as well as its implementation of the criteria included in the directive from the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

“[3.] [4.] Affirm the Guideline Metrics (see appendix) MRTI developed for measuring progress towards compliance with General Assembly established criteria for all corporations, especially those that produce and/or heavily consume fossil fuels.

“[5. Affirm a general guideline that Presbyterian investors and investment agencies not invest in short- or long-term bonds of companies or projects involved in fossil fuel extraction, production, and marketing as these are effectively loans that carry little influence with management or stockholders and yet benefit from processes causing climate change.]”

“[4.] [6.] Direct MRTI to pursue its engagement process with deliberate haste and utilize its Guideline Metrics with corporations in the 2019 and 2020 proxy seasons and report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with possible selective divestment recommendations for the companies who are not moving towards compliance with the General Assembly’s criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

“[5.] [7.] Commend all corporations who are working to address the risks of climate change by aligning and adopting policies and practices in line with Paris Accords including: reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved energy efficiency, incorporation of renewable energy and having robust disclosure of the risks related to the 2-degree warming scenario, and how they plan to manage operations in line with low carbon demand scenarios.
ACREC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-08. ACREC concurs with this report and recommendation. ACREC contributes to this transition with shareholders dialogue and pressure—such as proxy votes and selective divestment from firms that refuse to progress fast enough with the transition. The Guideline Metric that MRTI has developed can measure this progress and provide a framework for dialogue. Since the issuance of its report, MRTI has signed-on to the newly formed Climate Action 100+, with 256 institutional investors around the world, having $28 trillion in assets under management—one-third of the world's invested assets. Together, these investors will be calling on the boards of companies to implement a strong governance framework for accountability, oversight, and disclosure of climate change risks, and to take actions to protect our climate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across their production chain.

Reflecting the urgency of the issue and the grave concerns of those supporting the fossil free/divestment overture, MRTI should use these new sources of information and leverage to pressure for better corporate practices, including not lobbying against climate regulations, and to accelerate the process of divestment from firms that will not change their ways.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-08

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Committee advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-08.

As full voting members of MRTI, ACREC concurs with this report and recommendation. ACREC contributes to this transition with shareholders dialogue and pressure—such as proxy votes and selective divestment from firms that refuse to progress fast enough with the transition. The Guideline Metric that MRTI has developed can measure this progress and provide a framework for dialogue. Since the issuance of its report, MRTI has signed-on to the newly formed Climate Action 100+, with 256 institutional investors around the world, having $28 trillion in assets under management—one-third of the world's invested assets. Together, these investors will be calling on the boards of companies to implement a strong governance framework for accountability, oversight, and disclosure of climate change risks, and to take actions to protect our climate and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across their production chain.

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744 223rd General Assembly (2018)
Advice & Counsel on Item 08-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-02.

ACWC understands that climate change is a crisis. The issue disproportionately impacts women, children, people of color, and the most marginalized in global society. As a full voting member of the Mission Responsibility through Investment Committee (MRTI), ACWC brings a critical, gender-justice lens to corporate engagements, committee discussions, and deliberations. ACWC has maintained a voice in this conversation through MRTI and advises approval of MRTI’s recommendations.

Item 08-09

[The assembly answered Item 08-09 by the action taken on Item 08-12. See pp. 12, 55.]

Advocacy for Climate Change Action and a Thriving Lower-Carbon Economy—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Invite all our congregations to advocate for creation care by encouraging members and friends to regularly engage in respectful conversations with their federal elected officials to advocate for climate action. Congregations’ acts of engagement can include:
   a. approaching all conversations with the intent to build bridges of trust and respect;
   b. organizing ongoing calling, writing, and requesting visits with their elected officials, requesting climate action now;
   c. encouraging and supporting youth to independently engage with their representatives;
   d. educating their members and surrounding communities about climate impacts and solutions.

2. Encourage congregations to learn about and consider including in their conversations the concepts of “Carbon Fee and Dividend,” a just and effective approach to carbon pricing:
   a. An annually rising fee per ton of CO₂ is collected at the wellhead, mine, and border—the fee drives businesses to avoid cost, selecting and innovating for lower-carbon energy, products, and food.
   b. A monthly dividend paid to all families comes from returning all of the fee, strengthening families and keeping three-fifths of the country even or a little ahead. The buying power of the fee leads to more local, mainstreet jobs.
   c. Border tariffs protect our industry and compel other countries to follow our lead.

3. Invite congregations, presbyteries, synods, affinity groups, and the General Assembly to share their climate advocacy resources, successes, and encouragement.

4. Ask the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to inform the denomination and the larger public of this resolution.

Rationale

Prayer

This is a prayer inviting all of us to be the collective hands, feet, voice, and ears of Jesus. By listening for common values and building bridges of trust, appreciation, and optimism, we, one conversation at a time, open hearts to the blessing of all of us choosing to care for all of us—all Creation.

It is a prayer for grace—God’s love in motion, through our 9,451 congregations growing the community of voices supporting leadership by Congress. It is a prayer for a more just and healthy climate, economy, and families—and better relationships with our neighbors.

Recommendation 1.a. PC(USA) Joined Faith Community Call for Leadership and Building Bridges

On January 11, 2017, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), via its Office of Public Witness, joined other faith communities, including the Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, in a “Religious Community Letter to Trump Transition Team.” The letter calls for leadership:
... The United States can and must play a leadership role in addressing these environmental challenges which threaten our planet, our security, the health of our families, and the fate of communities throughout the world.

And the letter calls us:

As people of faith, we are uniquely able to serve as bridge-builders by finding common ground and reaching across political divides. ... We are rooted in the practice of emphasizing our common values in order to advance cooperation and overcome partisanship at both the national and international levels.

Better Angels\(^2\) is an organization that has shown success in facilitating and teaching others how to facilitate respectful “Red-Blue” conversations. Begun in 2016, it is a citizen’s movement to unify our divided nation.

**Recommendation 1.b. Congregations’ Organizing Ongoing Outreach to Their Federal Elected Representatives**

Showing our elected officials the political will for climate action requires relationship building, persistence, and their hearing from enough of their constituents that climate is important. Example activities include:

- Organizing members to each make one respectful phone call every month, with choices of an appreciation and a request for climate action. One call per month by many members can lead to multiple calls each and every day—those “rain drops” add up and make a difference, showing support for climate action.
- Writing to elected officials at the local office or email to the D.C. office (note D.C. letter processing delays).
- Letters to the editor of your local paper (read by thousands or 100s of thousands) builds support.
- Asking for visits with an elected official or staff. When planning a visit, invite those that will share a faith, civic, business, or military perspective, a climate impact, or a connection with your elected official.

**Recommendation 1.c. Youth**

Our youth have a powerful voice, are willing to be both respectful and direct, have the most at stake, and they have successfully swayed the hearts of representatives.\(^3\) Consider supporting independent youth advocacy through church, school or other organizations such as iMatter or 4H. iMatter\(^4\) helps youth prepare a climate report card and engage with city councils.

**Recommendation 1.d. Educating Members and Surrounding Communities on Climate Impacts and Solutions**

There are many reputable sources on climate, including the PC(USA)’s own work (see Section 3 below). Two additional perspectives of the current and growing harm from climate across the whole country are provided, and in Drawdown, a breadth of encouraging solutions.

The NOAA billions report\(^5\) shows accelerating climate impacts on everyone. From 1980, the data, maps, and time series show a steady increase of 10s to 100s of billions of dollars of extreme weather costs across the USA.

Our Children’s Trust lawsuit\(^6\) by 21 Youth v the U.S. Government includes a thirty-two-page declaration by Dr. James Hansen in 2015\(^7\) describing accelerating climate change and the need for urgent action.

Drawdown\(^8\) provides rigorous validation of effectiveness and financial viability of climate solutions. The top 100 range from energy, farming, and transportation, to educating and enhancing the rights of women and girls.

**Recommendation 2. Carbon Fee and Dividend: Just and Effective Carbon Pricing**

What policy will be just and effective? Regulations could mandate change. However, they are difficult to apply to every business in a whole economy, lack support, and provide no relief for families. How do we quickly transition all developed and developing countries to a just and thriving lower-carbon economy?

Because business causes about 90 percent of the U.S. carbon footprint,\(^9\) we need all businesses to have a compelling reason to avoid carbon in their buying, to improve their efficiency, and to offer lower-carbon energy and products.

Carbon pollution’s impact on society is an externalized, or “not paid” cost of all the businesses that produce or consume carbon, leading to emissions. Businesses, through their “carbon” supply chains (from fossil fuel to energy or products), externalize the carbon cost and capture or internalize the profits.

Since it’s the core behavior of business to avoid higher costs, economists recommend using price to internalize the cost of carbon and correct a “failure in the marketplace.” The CEO of the French Public Service Pension, Philippe Desfossés, says via World Bank: “I support putting a price on carbon because it fixes a market failure.”\(^10\)

However, some carbon pricing systems, such as Cap & Trade\(^11\) or Carbon Taxes with offsets\(^12\), may have prices that are too low, have regulatory gaps, cause harm to communities, have limited coverage, or enable polluters to buy their reductions rather than change.
Just and Effective Principles

A just and effective economy-wide carbon pricing system needs to satisfy at least the following principles:

• Effective Price: A price that continuously drives changes in business behavior across the entire economy.
• No Gaps: An inescapable approach impacting every business and consumer dependent on fossil fuels.
• Just: Keeping families and communities safe from the harmful impacts of increased cost.
• Global: Compelling change to the world economy without a treaty, and compliant with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

These principles are met by the combination of the carbon fee, dividend, and border rules.

Recommendation 2.a. the Carbon Fee

A carbon fee\textsuperscript{13} is a small and annually rising cost per ton of CO\textsubscript{2} added to the price of fossil fuels at the mine, well head, or border.

The fee is collected as a federal “excise tax,” but paid out each month as a dividend (below). The fee internalizes the societal cost of carbon for every business across the whole economy. The carbon fee is:

• Effectively priced: Predictable fee increases each year without limit.
• Fairly applied across all fossil fuels, based on the CO\textsubscript{2} content, at the source and border.
• Driving business to continuously invest to avoid the constantly rising costs of their fossil fuel based supply chain, innovating in energy, transportation, manufacturing, agriculture, and so on.
• No Gaps: fee is applied to all fossil fuel carbon at the source: well head, mine, and border.
• Simple, transparent, unavoidable. No regulatory tradings or cap systems subject to special interests.

The carbon fee leads to:

• Fifty percent less CO/year after twenty years, based on projections by REMI, the Regional Economic Modeling Inc’s studies, based on their tax policy work since 1985.\textsuperscript{14}
• Also based on REMI’s study, 230,000 fewer premature deaths over twenty years due to the reduction in fossil fuel use, reducing harm to those communities downstream, often low-income and people of color.\textsuperscript{15}

Recommendation 2.b. Monthly Dividend: Strengthening Families and Communities

A monthly dividend\textsuperscript{16} is paid to all families by dividing the fee evenly and returning all of the fee’s revenue each month. The dividend:

• is just; carbon dividend is perhaps the only climate policy that immediately and directly contributes to the strength of families and communities;
• can be spent for basic needs or, for example, to help further reduce a family’s carbon use and cost, such as investing in more efficient light bulbs, home insulation, or transportation;
• can be a source of funds pooled by a community choosing to self fund and locally control community justice projects, avoiding the risks to projects from changing federal, state, and grant agency priorities.

The carbon dividend leads to:

• keeping more than three-fifths of U.S. families even or a little ahead of added costs;\textsuperscript{17}
• increased spending power, leading to 2.8 million more local main-street jobs over the twenty-year period.\textsuperscript{18}

Impact example: slow and steady—and you get a dividend. From 2009–2011, gasoline increased approximately a dollar/gallon.\textsuperscript{19} A fee of 10$/ton of CO\textsubscript{2} adds about nine cents to a gallon of gas each year, taking more than ten years to do the same and increasing the dividend.\textsuperscript{20}
Recommendation 2.c. Border Tariff: Effectively Leading a Worldwide Lower-Carbon Economy

Global: With border rules, the Carbon Fee & Dividend compels global carbon pricing.

Where a country is not pricing carbon, the border adjustment would add the fee to energy imports and tariff imported products. We would also compensate our exporters to countries that do not price carbon to maintain parity. Countries will find the desire to avoid our import tariff a compelling reason to also price carbon.21

WTO supports environmental trade policy that treats trading partners the same as our own country.22

Carbon Fee and Dividend Compared to Cap and Trade—Support from Dr. James Hansen

An excellent explanation offered by James Hansen23 where Cap and Trade is compared to Fee and Dividend is available as excerpts from his book, Storms of My Grandchildren, as provided by Clive Ellsworth.24

Based on Citizen’s Climate Lobby’s comparison: Cap and Trade25 requires two complex regulatory systems to work and not be unintentionally “leaky,” have unintended bias, and not be “gamed.” The fees must be high enough and the cap low enough, and cover enough of the economy to have an impact.

Carbon Fee Proved by British Columbia since 2007.

Revenue neutral carbon pricing effectiveness is proved: Canadian province British Columbia implemented carbon pricing in 2007. Their carbon pricing policy’s experience shows the policy reducing emissions and improving their economy.26

Conservative Statesmen and Economists Support Carbon Dividends

The Conservative Case for Carbon Dividends27 also calling for returning all revenue from a carbon fee to citizens, is from former Secretaries of State & Treasury, James Baker and George Shultz, many presidential economic advisers, and others.

Build on Growing Political Will in Congress

U.S. House Representatives Carlos Curbello (R) and Ted Duetch (D) are both from districts in south Florida where high King Tides bring sunny day ocean water flooding to the local streets.28 In 2016 they worked together and founded the House Climate Solutions Caucus.29 Members wishing to join do what they did: find a partner across the aisle and join together. The caucus continues to grow and has positively impacted key votes.30

Citizen’s Climate Lobby hosts a June lobby day when about a thousand volunteers meet with more than 500 representatives, senators, or staff. Meetings are ranked as productive, uninterested, or in between. It is the experience of Citizens’ Climate Lobby that generally Democratic offices are in favor of climate action and, over the last few years, conversations with Republican offices have shown increased engagement.

• In 2014, Republican office meetings were 3 to 1 to the good—three times more productive versus uninterested.

• Improving each year, in 2017, those meetings were 20 to 1 to the good—twenty times more productive meetings versus uninterested.31

Recommendation 3. PC(USA) Foundation and an Invitation to Share Resources

Congregations, presbyteries, synods, affinity groups, and the General Assembly are invited to share their climate advocacy resources, successes, and encouragement.

Appreciation is also given for our ongoing creation care work, including the work represented by:

• The Power to Speak Truth to Power (1981).32

• Hope for a Global Future (1996).33

• Declaration for us to become Carbon Neutral (2006).34


• Presbyterians for Earth Care (formerly PRC) is a nationwide network that cares for God’s Creation.36, 37

Endnotes

Concurrence to Item 08-09 from the Presbytery of de Cristo and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).
The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-09.

With recognition that CO₂ emissions are a major contributor to harmful climate changes, these two overtures (Item 08-09 and Item 08-11) both advocate for carbon taxes, in different forms, to discourage the emissions of CO₂. Even though passing such a law has little chance in the current political environment, ACSWP supports this kind of policy as an ideal toward which our country should work as a part of our nation’s response to the environmental crisis. Both overtures show recognition that the problem with carbon is mainly on the demand side, which the rise in the after-tax price of carbon fuels would discourage.

Item 08-09 is the simpler and thus better carbon-tax proposal, because it taxes the carbon when it first enters the economy from out of the mine, the well, or the ship (imports). Compared to proposals that would tax the carbon at a point closer to consumption (like at the gasoline pump), would discourage CO₂ production upstream, as at the refining and transport phases. Commissioners may want to take other items from 08-12, but this A&C focuses on the main matter they share.

If this proposal came to the point of serious legislative discussion, it should be broadened in two ways. First, it should recognize that the carbon tax, while addressing efficiently the problem of global-average increased CO₂, the problem of environmental justice requires additional remedies to protect the places where poor and non-white persons live. A per capita distribution of the dividend would not adequately address this.

Second, it should include a tax on the carbon footprint of imported goods. Otherwise, US firms making carbon intensive products, say tires, would be at a competitive disadvantage vis a vis foreign firms making those products, and their production and the accompanying emission of CO₂ would simply move to foreign countries, with no net benefit to the global environment.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

ACREC laments the harm caused by climate change and the disproportionately damaging effects on people of color and seeks to actively work toward a solution. ACREC agrees with the educational component of this overture as consumer behavior is a significant factor of climate change.

Item 08-10

[Item 08-10 was answered by the action taken on Item 08-01. See pp. 53, 55.]

On Seeking Middle Ground on Fossil Fuels—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Request the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, and Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to consider an increasingly more diversified energy sector in their overall investment portfolios, which would increase exposure to potentially profitable alternative energy companies and/or companies with an active interest in changing the consumer market’s energy demand (e.g. automobile companies producing alternatively powered vehicles).

2. Direct Mission Responsibility Through Investments (MRTI) to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with recommendations, including possible selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

Rationale

Presbyterians are naturally inclined to seek middle ground and to be moderate and fair-minded in our actions. This overture is an attempt to seek that middle ground.

The action proposed in this overture is an attempt to honor our preference for finding shared values, and to press forward with the well-reasoned decisions of previous assemblies. For example, actions taken by the 223rd General Assembly (2016) endorse MRTI’s proven track record of engagement and, when appropriate, focused divestment from specific companies that fail to uphold the shared values of members of our PC(USA) congregations. MRTI should continue to call upon all corporations to increase their efforts to address climate change through vigorous action in line with well-defined expectations.
This overture is submitted in the hope that it encourages the assembly to avoid actions that may be perceived by many parishioners and others as being extreme and inflexible, vilifying faithful people who have worked hard in energy, industrial, chemical, and production industries. We believe that the most effective response is to speak with a prophetic voice calling for responsible care of God’s creation; and, at the same time, to uphold our pastoral responsibilities to care for and to love all of God’s children.

Concurrences to Item 08-10 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grace, and Muskingum.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-10

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-10—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-10.

It is similar to Item 08-03, from the same presbytery. Item 08-10 focuses more on investment in alternative technologies, but the two could be combined as endorsement of an array of measures to address the causes of climate change.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-10

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-10.

ACREC laments the disproportionate harm climate change has caused to people of color and seeks to advocate for all people of color—both landowners and those who work in the industry. Therefore, in concert with the rational of the overture we reiterate: “In the hope that this overture encourages the assembly to avoid actions that may be perceived by many parishioners and others as being extreme and inflexible, vilifying faithful people who have worked hard in energy, industrial, chemical, and production industries.”

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 08-10

Comment on Item 08-10—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions (Board) is an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), established by the church under a separate civil charter as the corporate body legally responsible for designing and administering the Benefits Plan and the Assistance and Education programs for the ministers and lay employees of PC(USA) churches and associated employers. The Board is required by law and its governance and plan documents to administer these programs and invest their funds for the sole and exclusive benefit of the members and their beneficiaries. The Board is exclusively managed and controlled by its board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. The Board maintains a close cooperative relationship with the other General Assembly agencies.

The Board shares a deep concern for God’s world and has worked actively to support the Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship developed by all six agencies of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 2016, the Board’s Pension Portfolio invested in a global fossil-free fund, the largest investment in such a fund ever made by a Presbyterian entity. The value of that investment as of December 31, 2017, was $116 million. In addition, the Board established a fossil-free mutual fund investment option for participants in the Board’s 403(b)(9) Retirement Savings Plan (RSP). Despite significant promotion, only 148 of the 11,957 participants in the RSP have elected the fossil-free fund option.

Although the Board supports the environmental goal of all four overtures, it nonetheless recommends disapproval of Items 08-01 and 08-02 due to structural and technical concerns addressed in the specific comments below. The Board urges the approval of Items 08-03 and 08-10, which effectively provide a comprehensive response to climate change.

Comment Specific to Item 08-01, On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities That Focus on Renewable Energy

This overture seeks to bypass the work of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee of the General Assembly (MRTI) that has been highly effective in its engagement of climate change issues as directed by 222nd General Assembly (2016). MRTI’s process does not preclude divestment of bad actors, but provides a studied and deliberative process for such determinations. One of those steps is consultation with Presbyterians who might be affected by such action, a step that has not been addressed in this recommendation. By way of example, MRTI recommended divestment of certain United States companies engaged with Israeli military forces in Palestine. That recommendation was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014). MRTI is not recommending complete divestment from the entire fossil-fuel industry sector.

This overture fails to recognize the process through which individual companies are added to the church’s prohibited
securities list. Each year, MRTI develops a recommended list of prohibited securities. At the Board of Pensions, this list is presented to the Investment Committee, the governance body entrusted with responsibility for the investment management of the Benefits Plan and Assistance and Education funds held by the Board. The Investment Committee determines whether to approve the list in whole or part and further can add additional securities as it determines such investment decisions are in the best interest of the members and beneficiaries of the Board’s funds. The resulting list is then distributed to all of the Board’s separate investment managers.

While the General Assembly may applaud and encourage such investments as the Pax Global Strategy fossil-free investment in the Board’s balanced investment portfolio, by law, the Investment Committee of the Board cannot be directed to make any particular investment. All investments are vetted through a rigorous diligence process and must meet the requirements of appropriate risk/return, diversification and established asset allocations required by the governance and legal requirements applicable to the Board’s funds. As a parallel, the General Assembly cannot direct individuals to make any particular investment. All investments are vetted through a rigorous diligence process and must meet the requirements of appropriate risk/return, diversification and asset allocations required by the governance and legal requirements applicable to the Board’s funds. As a parallel, the General Assembly cannot direct individuals to make any particular investment.

Finally, as written, this overture is overly broad. There is no consensus definition of “the fossil-fuel industry.” This fact highlights the need for MRTI to undertake focused and specific work around engagement and the determination of when or if divestment in a specific company is appropriate.

Comment Specific to Item 08-02, On Adding to the GA Divestment List All Companies That Meet Specific Listed Criteria

Like Item 08-01, this overture seeks to bypass the work of the MRTI, which has been highly effective in its engagement of climate change issues as directed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). By way of example, MRTI recently led ecumenical coalitions in successfully passing shareholder resolutions with Exxon Mobil, including the need to report on the impacts of climate change to its business.

MRTI’s process does not preclude divestment of recalcitrant companies, but provides a process for such determinations. One of those steps in potential divestment is consultation with Presbyterians who might be affected by such action, a step that is not acknowledged in this recommendation. MRTI is not recommending divestment of the fossil fuel industry at this time. This overture seeks to substitute its recommendation for that of the MRTI members duly elected by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 3.a. calls out the Carbon Underground 200 list. This list is unreliable and does not meet the standards of due diligence and prudent investment required of the Board. Fossil Free Indexes LLC produces this list and provides the following warning on its website,

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Unlike Recommendation 3.a., Recommendations 3.b. and 3.c. each lack required specifics. Before any such discussion could occur, the advocates seeking to replace their judgment for MRTI are obligated to develop a list of companies that they believe meet the proposed criteria. Once developed, then the proper course would be to engage with MRTI to determine which of these companies are held by a PC(USA) entity and what the current state of engagement might be.

Comment Specific Item 08-03, On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change

The Board supports the approval of Item 08-03 as it represents a comprehensive response to climate change endorsing action at the denominational, congregational, and individual level. It affirms God’s call to stewardship and advocacy. It recognizes that those most deeply affected are those often in greatest economic need. It respects the long-established and effective research, corporate engagement, and divestment consideration process of the General Assembly Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investments.

Comment Specific Item 08-10, On Engaging Environmental Investments

The Board supports the approval of Item 08-10, which calls upon the PC(USA) agencies responsible for the investment of PC(USA) and Benefits Plan funds, to consider increasing investments in profitable alternative energy companies or companies that address consumer energy demands, because those requests promote advocacy while respecting the independent legal responsibilities and obligations of those agencies with respect to their investment decisions. The overture also respects the long-established and effective research, corporate engagement, and divestment consideration process of the General Assembly with the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment.
Item 08-11

[The assembly approved Item 08-11 with amendment. See pp. 12, 55.]

On Regarding Use of Products Made of Polystyrene [Foam]—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to do the following:

1. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and other related agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to reduce, to the maximum extent feasible, use of products made of polystyrene[foam].

2. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Environmental Ministries, to communicate with the more than 9,000 congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urging them to reduce to the maximum extent feasible use of products made of polystyrene [foam].

Rationale

The production, use, and disposal of polystyrene (a substance more commonly known by the brand-name “Styrofoam”) is linked to adverse environmental and health effects.1, 2 According to the Environmental Production Agency, polystyrene is the fifth largest source of hazardous waste in the United States. Polystyrene is composed of Benzene and Styrene, both of which are known human carcinogens. Ninety thousand workers are estimated to be exposed to Styrene every year. This exposure can cause a variety of mutations to the central and peripheral nervous systems. Benzene and Styrene have been linked to incidences of both Parkinson’s disease and leukemia. Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are used in the production of polystyrene, cause damage to the ozone layer, and are now known to be three-to-five times more dangerous than originally believed. Thus, the California Integrated Waste Management Board ranks the environmental production costs of polystyrene as second worst in the United States. In addition, when polystyrene is used in a microwave oven, toxic chemicals are released, posing a potential threat to human health.

Products made of polystyrene are lightweight, and it is not economically viable in most communities to recycle these products. It is especially difficult to recycle polystyrene plates and cups used for food service due to the costs of grease removal and transportation. Used items therefore end up in landfills or as litter. Approximately 25–30 percent of landfill volume is dedicated to plastics, including polystyrene, which requires at least five hundred years to decompose. Polystyrene is a primary source of urban litter, and is a main pollutant of oceans, bays, and other United States water sources. Polystyrene products cause choking and starvation in wildlife.

Our denomination affirms concern with caring for God’s creation. It is appropriate to take personal and institutional responsibility by ending our use of polystyrene and polystyrene products.

Endnotes


Concurrence to Item 08-11 from the Presbytery of de Cristo and Muskingum.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-11.

With recognition that CO2 emissions are a major contributor to harmful climate changes, these two overtures (Item 08-09 and Item 08-11) both advocate for carbon taxes, in different forms, to discourage the emissions of CO2. Even though passing such a law has little chance in the current political environment, ACSWP supports this kind of policy as an ideal toward which our country should work as a part of our nation’s response to the environmental crisis. Both overtures show recognition that the problem with carbon is mainly on the demand side, which the rise in the after-tax price of carbon fuels would discourage.

Item 08-09 is the simpler and thus better carbon-tax proposal, because it taxes the carbon when it first enters the economy from out of the mine, the well, or the ship (imports). Compared to proposals that would tax the carbon at a point closer to consumption (like at the gasoline pump), would discourage CO2 production upstream, as at the refining and transport phases.
If this proposal came to the point of serious legislative discussion, it should be broadened in two ways. First, it should recognize that the carbon tax, while addressing efficiently the problem of global-average increased CO₂, won’t solve the problem of environmental justice, which requires additional remedies to protect the places where poor and non-white persons live. A per capita distribution of the dividend would not adequately address this.

Second, it should include a tax on the carbon footprint of imported goods. Otherwise, U.S. firms making carbon intensive products, say tires, would be at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis foreign firms making those products, and their production and the accompanying emission of CO₂ would simply move to foreign countries, with no net benefit to the global environment.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-11. ACREC agrees that consumer behavior is a significant factor of climate change, which disproportionately affects people of color. As our prophetic witness we need to adjust our own consumer practices.

Item 08-12

[The assembly approved Item 08-12 with amendment. See pp. 53, 55.]

On Supporting Carbon Pricing—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to do the following:

1. Express its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God’s creation, including a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries, the elderly and children, and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases.

2. Recognize the Gospel’s call and the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy regime in ways that are both just and compassionate. This mandate compels us to action as a denomination to implement strategies and actions that directly engage climate change and that offer a realistic prospect of changing the behaviors that are at the root of the issue.

3. Work with citizens/voters, legislators, other decision-makers, and other organizations that have parallel goals to bring into effect national and international policies that create a consistent, rational, and escalating price for emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, which will reduce consumption and support investment in sustainable alternative energy sources.

4. Protect the poor by advocating policies that implement emissions pricing and offset the regressive nature of the pricing mechanism, such as per capita rebates of all taxes or fees collected through the pricing mechanism.

5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in collaboration with the Presbyterian Mission Agency programs (such as Presbyterian Environmental Ministries and its Earth Care Congregations) to advocate at local, state, and federal levels for policies to rationally price the production of carbon and, therefore, reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This advocacy would include the following:

   • Work with other faith-based organizations (such as Interfaith Power and Light, Creation Justice Ministries, GreenFaith) to maximize our effectiveness in taking individual and collective action to slow climate change.

   • Develop educational materials to assist congregations and councils of the church in understanding the impact of climate change and how to take action to slow climate change.

6. Commend the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement (and the multi-agency board Mission Responsibility through Investment (MRTI)) for its long history of engagement with companies on issues related to climate change, and instruct MRTI to continue that engagement, especially in support of carbon pricing.

7. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

[8. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to support congregations’ advocacy with elected officials on climate action including just carbon pricing such as carbon fee and dividend.]

In 2006, the General Assembly passed a resolution calling all Presbyterians to go carbon neutral as our Christian witness to combat the effects of climate change (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 895ff, Commissioners’ Resolution. On Calling All Presbyterians to Take Positive and Immediate Steps to Live Carbon Neutral Lives.).

In 2008, our church made clear through the document, “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming,” that the catastrophic effects of climate change make the transition to renewable and away from dependence on fossil fuels essential to the preservation of human life and God’s good creation (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 934ff).

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. This is such an issue.

It is not enough simply to speak truth to power. We must enact in our individual, congregational, and denominational lives meaningful approaches that directly address concerns about climate change and that may require sacrifice. This overture seeks to unite all Presbyterians in directly engaging climate change with responsible, meaningful, and lasting actions that will make a difference in the future of God’s creation. We recognize that emission of greenhouse gases leading to climate change encompasses every sector of our modern economy, at home and around the globe. The following lists major areas that are linked in complex ways: (1) Transportation—American dependence on the gasoline-powered private automobile rather than support of mass transportation and alternative automobile fuels; (2) Agricultural production, particularly the industrial-scale production of meat, but also heavy dependence on fossil fuel based fertilizers and pesticides; (3) Energy consumption for heating and cooling of virtually all human-inhabited structures; (4) Communications and information technology that uses vast amounts of energy and precious metals; (5) Health care goods and services and medical advances that rely on plastics (hydrocarbon-based products). We cannot extricate ourselves from these systems without withdrawing from modern life. Every member of the PC(USA) uses fossil fuels daily in hundreds of applications that significantly improve quality of life, and yet we also succumb to mindless consumption of products that damage the earth and our fellow human beings. Acknowledging our complicity in damage to the earth, we resolve to move forward together toward a post-fossil fuel economy.

Some Positive Steps

In the ten years since “The Power to Change,” progress has been made on many fronts to advance renewable energy sources and technologies, and there have been setbacks as well, most recently the declaration by the Trump administration to withdraw from the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. We begin with some good news: The United States has been gradually reducing its greenhouse gas emissions in recent years. Between 2004 and 2013, emissions in total declined nearly 9 percent, while per capita emissions are down more than 15 percent. China has made significant investments in green energy. It plans to increase its solar-energy capacity this year alone by 18 gigawatts—as much solar-energy capacity as exists in the U.S. right now. Its wind-energy production has increased tenfold in half-a-dozen years, and the country is in the midst of what one analyst called "the largest build-out of hydroelectricity the world has ever seen." The cost of solar power is rapidly declining. In the sunniest locations in the world, building a new solar-power plant now costs less than coal or natural gas, even without subsidies, and within six years, this will be true of places with average sunlight, too. Coal (the dirtiest of fossil fuels) production has declined in favor of natural gas and is unlikely to resume its former prominence.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

Ecology and justice are implicit in the story of creation itself: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15, emphasis added). As the 1990 study, Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, (“RCEJ”) observes, “tilling” requires a community effort that establishes an economy; “keeping” is an act of environmental stewardship that regards the creation as a gift to be cared for. RCEJ identifies four norms that characterize “a new faithfulness” reflecting God’s love for the world: sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity. These highlight the inherent tensions. We cannot address only the good of the creation without also considering the good of the community. We cannot address only the good of the community without considering the good of creation. Global climate change, regardless of its cause, threatens both the community and the earth over which we are stewards. Our call is to address these threats responsibly, with meaningful effect, while promoting economic justice.

Denominational and Faith-Based Rationale
Our denomination has long recognized a moral obligation to be faithful stewards of God’s creation. We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its effect on the “least of these,” and the need to take action. Previous General Assemblies (1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, and 2008) have passed overtures, resolutions, and reports warning us of the dangers of climate change and calling on us to reduce our energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. Now is the time to move beyond pronouncements and symbolic actions into education and behavioral changes.

People of every faith tradition are recommitting to the theological call to stewardship in increasing numbers. GreenFaith: Interfaith Partners for the Environment includes Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian traditions. Our traditional partners from the mainline Protestant tradition are joined by Roman Catholics energized by Pope Francis’ highly regarded encyclical *Laudato Si* as well as Young Evangelicals for Climate Action and the Evangelical Environmental Network. It is particularly encouraging that young members are deeply committed to creation care.4

*An Effective Approach*

The actions proposed in this overture include advocacy to bring into effect consistent, rational pricing of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions, together with mechanisms to protect the poor by addressing the inherently regressive nature of any such system.

From our perspective, the root cause of the climate change issue is behaviors—both consumption and investment. We all engage in destructive behaviors. We do this in part because we do not bear the full social costs of our behaviors, a problem that economists label “negative externalities.” Consistent rational pricing of emissions will enlist market forces to drive those changes in individual and institutional consumption necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and will provide the economic incentive necessary to promote investment to develop and implement low-carbon or zero-carbon infrastructure and technologies. Affordable energy would continue to be available to drive responsible economic development, while emissions driven by our consumption would decline. We thus address our dual responsibility to promote the well-being of the disadvantaged and to protect the earth.

The actions proposed in this overture will address the problem, they will have a practical effect, we are prepared to be subject to the proposed system ourselves, and—assuming the regressive effects are properly dealt with—the proposed actions will advance economic justice.

Even if the more disastrous scenarios of climate change do not materialize, pricing carbon (reducing our consumption and investing more in renewable energy sources) has little downside. Pricing carbon can therefore be seen as insurance against the more dire consequences of climate change. It will also conserve our hydrocarbon resources for that many more generations.

We recognize that the consistent pricing of greenhouse gas emissions will affect the business prospects of the fossil fuel industry and industries that rely on fossil fuels, and we are not insensitive to the challenge this may create for those employed in or dependent upon those industries. We note that it is the intent of our proposal that greenhouse gas emissions be priced so as to reflect the full social and environmental cost of their production. We note also that it is the responsibility of every industry to adapt to changes in prices in the markets in which it operates. As the global economy adapts to rational pricing of emissions, we expect our investment managers to adjust our portfolios. We expect investments to be shifted away from firms and industries that adapt poorly to the new alternative energy economy and toward firms and industries that should benefit.

An effective method of pricing is a Carbon Fee and Dividend as developed and advocated by Citizens’ Climate Lobby.

*Citizens’ Climate Lobby’s Carbon Fee and Dividend Proposal*

The Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) has developed and is advocating for a comprehensive approach to implement such a plan. Full details may be found at the CCL website https://citizensclimatelobby.org/. The fee is collected on the major greenhouse gases (which include CO₂ and methane) when they are produced (at the well or mine) or imported, and the amount is based on the amount of CO₂-equivalent produced when burned or emitted. The dividend is the return of 100 percent of the fees to the public on a per capita basis. The carbon fee and dividend should be implemented as soon as practical at a moderate level of $15/MT to $40/MT. (The current official CCL proposal starts at $15/MT, while others advocate starting somewhat higher.) That level is increased every year (at a rate of $10 per MT per year) to provide clear price signals to consumers and industry.

The CCL plan phases in the emissions price over time, rather than jumping from the current explicit price of zero to the full social cost all in one step, and then raises the fee annually to continually increase the incentive to shift to cleaner energy sources.

This predictable increase will allow industry to make the large investments necessary to expand alternative energy sources and become more efficient while providing the energy we and the world need. The fee assures that market prices favor lower carbon energy sources, while the dividend redresses the inherently regressive nature of the fee. For example, electricity produced by natural gas generates about 50 percent of the CO₂ produced by generating from coal. A $15/MT carbon fee will add about 1.6¢/kwhr to the price of electricity from coal, but only 0.6¢/kwhr for electricity from natural gas-based electricity (assuming a U.S. average price of 10¢/kwhr). After a decade the fee will have increased to $115/MT, adding 12.1¢/kwhr for coal
but only 5.0¢/kwhr for natural gas. Looking at the example of gasoline, a $15/MT fee will add about 15¢/gallon at the pump, increasing to $1.15/gallon over a decade.

In the CCL plan, the dividend would be allocated based on “shares,” with one share per person up to 4 shares per family and a half share for children under 18. At the current levels of consumption and energy mix, the dividend would start at several hundred dollars per year (distributed monthly) and would rise to more than a thousand dollars in a decade. A carbon fee and dividend transfers money from capital intensive to more labor-intensive segments of the economy, and is projected to provide an economic stimulus.

A third implementation detail that a carbon fee and dividend must address is a system of border adjustments to assure that production of energy-intensive products is not forced off shore. These import fees on products imported from countries without a carbon price (along with rebates for exports to countries without a price of carbon) will create a fair competitive environment for exporters. A carbon fee and dividend is the most transparent, predictable, and transportable method of pricing greenhouse gases around the world. When the United States enacts such a proposal, our huge economy will be a powerful driver for the countries without a price on carbon to adopt similar carbon pricing policies.

There is tremendous energy inequality around the world. The developed nations (which have contributed the most to the carbon emissions that are driving climate change) need to lead the development of low-carbon and no-carbon alternatives. A carbon fee and dividend will drive the growth of alternative energy sources and efficiency improvements that will benefit developing countries, allowing them to have greater access to lower-carbon energy sources and thus partially leap frog the “carbon stage.” A key requirement of any energy and climate action is that it must support developing countries to provide greater access to energy and allow all people to reach their full potential.

Summary

We Presbyterians approach creation with the twin perspectives of responsible use (“tilling”) and sustainable care (“keeping”). An ethic of stewardship, therefore, considers God’s creation as a good in itself beyond utilitarian value, though creation is God’s way of providing resources for human growth and community. The responsibility of holding wealth is directed toward an ethic of engagement that seeks to use the wealth to transform injustice and immorality. The necessary changes in consumption and investment behavior would be greatly accelerated and facilitated by consistent, rational pricing of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions. Action to bring about that outcome would be consistent with long-standing denominational policy statements and would be a faithful response to the urgent climate change issues that are before us.

Endnotes

1. Citizens’ Climate Lobby is one such organization and their proposed Carbon Fee and Dividend is one effective method of Carbon Pricing.
3. Sustainability means “the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus. Participation refers to the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator’s gifts for sustenance. Sufficiency provides for all to have enough through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end. Solidarity means “steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies … to the realization of the church’s potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.”

Concurrences to Item 08-12 from the Presbytery of de Cristo and from the Synod of the Sun.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-12

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 08-12. ACREC laments the harm caused by climate change and the disproportionately damaging effects on people of color and seeks to actively work toward a solution. ACREC agrees with the educational component of this overture as consumer behavior is a significant factor of climate change.
Item 09-01

Item 09-01 has been moved. It can be found in 12 Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues as Item 12-09. See pp. 1148–49.

Item 09-02

[The assembly approved Item 09-02 as amended. See pp. 35, 36.]

On Support and Prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan—From the Presbytery of Shenango.

The Presbytery of Shenango overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take the following actions:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to:

   a. Issue a formal statement condemning the actions of those who initiated and perpetuate the conflict in South Sudan and of support and prayer for the church and people of South Sudan, and communicate this statement to the government of South Sudan and international bodies through appropriate diplomatic channels.

   b. Call upon the president of the United States, the U.S. State Department, and appropriate congressional leaders to promote a just and lasting peace in South Sudan by:

      (1) Putting pressure on all sides, including the current government in Juba under President Salva Kiir, the militia groups supported by former Vice-President Riek Machar, and all other armed groups, to adhere to a ceasefire;

      (2) Freezing the financial assets of the leaders of all armed groups who fail to agree to and implement a ceasefire, including the president and current and former first vice president;

      (3) Introducing new and effective measures to put pressure on the government of South Sudan to end the war and to address public corruption and misappropriation of state assets;

      (4) Promoting an inclusive peace process that provides all political parties and armed actors a place at the table and gives representatives of women, youth, faith communities, the Diaspora, and other civil society organizations an equal voice with the political and armed groups in all negotiations dealing with future governance;

      (5) Intensifying U.S. efforts to secure peace in South Sudan through such measures as the appointment of a special envoy;

      (6) Ensuring safe, unhindered passage for humanitarian aid into camps for Internally Displaced People (IDP) and protection for displaced peoples in those camps, especially women and children who have been disproportionately affected by the violence. Call for urgent implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution no. 2304/2016;

      (7) Working for an end to sexual violence, and looting of properties and killing of the innocent inhabitants, which is being used by all sides as an instrument of war, and for justice for survivors of sexual violence and punishment of the perpetrators;

      (8) Supporting free and fair elections;

      (9) After a warning, withholding military assistance to nations that continue to provide weapons to the government of South Sudan;

      (10) Declaring the current Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) a failure, recognizing the need for its revitalization and calling for the establishment of an interim government consistent with a revitalized ARCSS prior to elections.

   c. Urge the president of the United States, the U.S. State Department, and appropriate congressional leaders to enhance regional and global security by promoting stable and effective governance and strong and responsive democratic institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to advocate for public policy that:
a. Protects the human rights of the people of South Sudan;
b. Promotes transparent, accountable, and effective democracy in South Sudan;
c. Advances the objectives delineated in Recommendation 1.

3. Encourage presbyteries, congregations, and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:
   a. Continue to pray with the churches and people of South Sudan for an end to conflict, safe and effective delivery of humanitarian aid, a government led by servant leaders, forgiveness, reconciliation, accountability, and justice, leading to true peace and fullness of life for God’s people.
   b. Support the ministry and witness of our partners in the South Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and the ecumenical bodies in which they participate.
   c. Learn about the mission work of the PC(USA) in South Sudan and continue to support PC(USA) mission co-workers [and encourage donations to PDA’s South Sudan Direct Account].

Rationale

Presbyterians have been working in what is now South Sudan for more than 100 years. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Trinity Presbytery, the Presbytery of Shenango, and the Presbytery of Redstone have long-standing partnerships with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church. The Presbytery of Pittsburgh and others have more recently established similar relationships. Over the years we have developed strong bonds of communion in worship, work, and prayer with our South Sudanese brothers and sisters in Christ.

In December 2013, South Sudan, the youngest country in the world, became fractured from political differences; it has since been suffering from horrible, internal warfare. Government troops and opposing armed groups have killed tens of thousands and sent four million men, women, and children fleeing to Internal Displacement Camps and Refugee Camps in Ethiopia, Congo, Uganda, Sudan, and Kenya. The result of the continuing conflict is almost unspeakably horrible humanitarian abuse, manmade famine, and continuing crises. Church leaders and members, along with their neighbors, are struggling to survive amidst the devastation around them. They live in a war zone of endless conflict and heartbreak. Still, the grievous conflict involving armed groups, who are slaughtering men, women, and children indiscriminately, continues to block efforts for peace and humanitarian relief. Obviously, the sharing and spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ has been severely impacted.

The initial international efforts to end the conflict focused on the need for an African solution to an African problem. Out of that encouragement, in 2015 an agreement was reached between the government of South Sudan and the primary opposition group, the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement—In Opposition (SPLM-I/O). This Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) was never supported by all the signatories and has been declared a failure by designated monitoring bodies, yet the government of South Sudan is planning elections in 2018 based on the ARCSS document requirements. Such elections cannot be fair or inclusive under the current circumstances. Thus the U.S. government clearly must add to those voices that have declared ARCSS a failure and require a renegotiation of the peace agreement. Otherwise ongoing peace efforts will almost certainly fail.

This conflict has been imposed on the people by the leaders. Peace will be impossible for South Sudan and conflict is likely to spread to the region unless the leaders’ hearts are changed or there is adequate external influence. We, our partners in Christ, and all the people of South Sudan long for a time when “justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream” (Amos 5:24) so that accountability and ministries of forgiveness, trauma healing, and reconciliation lead to a just and lasting future peace.

The breadth and depth of manmade suffering, destruction, and death cannot be ignored by the men, women, and children of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This demands a formal statement of condemnation of those who caused and continue the conflict and of support and prayer for the church and people of South Sudan.

While the current conflict and humanitarian disaster demands our urgent action, we also must be alert to the potential for broader destabilization and conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. With ISIS having failed in Syria and Iraq, many analysts expect those forces to try to reestablish themselves in Africa. South Sudan, because of its current instability, is highly vulnerable and a likely target of ISIS. A strong U.S. policy for Sub-Saharan Africa must be developed, clearly articulated, broadly disseminated, and enforced to prevent the spread of terrorism and the potential future slaughter of Christians and moderate Muslims as has been witnessed in Syria and Iraq.

Concurrences to Item 09-02 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Pittsburgh, Redstone, Santa Fe, Trinity, and Upper Ohio Valley.
Advice & Counsel on Item 09-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-02.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns highlights the importance of the role of women in peacemaking efforts. The ACWC would encourage future peacemaking reports and resolutions to include an affirmation of the essential role that women play in peacemaking, in much the same way that the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 cites the importance of “Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.” [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).]

News source News Deeply reported in August 2017 that, while “The United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan has few women in its ranks, they, nonetheless, play an important role in gathering information from the population and helping the local police investigate sexual and gender-based violence. Further, women bring a different perspective to peacekeeping operations.” [News Deeply: “Women of Peace;” https://www.newsdeeply.com/peacebuilding/articles/2017/08/31/south-sudans-women-peacekeepers-tackle-the-problems-that-men-cant]

The ACWC lifts this up for the consideration of those writing future resolutions. By including women, a new perspective is gained as the concerns for women may be vastly different than those of concern to men.

Therefore, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-02.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-02

Comment on Item 09-02—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

In 2011, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joined with our partners in South Sudan, including the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS), the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SSPEC), and the South Sudan Council of Churches in welcoming the establishment of the new nation of South Sudan. The current conflict, which broke out in December 2013, has betrayed efforts to bring peace, justice, and security to the region, killing more than 50,000 people and displacing 3.5 million more.

Our partners in South Sudan have worked diligently for an end to the conflict, even as they minister faithfully to those affected by it. They have asked repeatedly for prayers and advocacy to urge the belligerents to negotiate a just peace. Item 09-02 was drafted by the Sudan/South Sudan Mission Network. Their work was informed by insights gleaned from Presbyterian Mission Agency consultations, through World Mission, with South Sudanese partners.

The overture in Recommendation 6, urges support of safe and free passage of humanitarian aid into camps, but misses an important opportunity to urge Presbyterians to participate in providing aid through donations to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance’s South Sudan Direct Response account. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has been partnering with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and the South Sudan Council of Churches since 2011 to provide humanitarian relief to citizens, refugees, and internally displaced persons, and support the peacebuilding and development objectives of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan.

Item 09-03

[The assembly approved Item 09-03 as amended. See pp. 12, 36.]

On Support of Peace Churches in the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of San Jose.

The Presbytery of San Jose overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Celebrate with gratitude the completion of the “Peace Discernment” effort of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to “seek clarity as to God’s call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war” and to “identify, explore, and nurture new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence” (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 68, 967).

2. Acknowledge the wonderful materials and curriculum that the Peace Discernment Steering Team made available to the churches for their discernment work and the inspiration it gave to many.
3. Acknowledge that the Five Affirmations were one of the fruits of this church-wide discernment and commend them to all church sessions for reading and study: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/five-peacemaking-affirmations/. [Each of the five affirmations is supported in the full report: https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000047. This is also presented in the short study book from Westminster/JohnKnoxPress, Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace: https://www.wjkbooks.com/Content/Site117/FilesSamples/307161FiveRisks_0000026401.pdf.]

4. Acknowledge that many churches have continued their own process of discernment and some have declared themselves “Peace Churches,” while others continue to study, pray, reflect, and explore this subject in their own church community.

5. Recognize and commend those churches who have declared themselves “Peace Churches” and encourage all churches interested in peace to continue their own discernment and further encourage the Peacemaking Program to maintain a list of churches who declare themselves “Peace Churches” on the Peacemaking Program website when they are notified by said churches.

6. Encourage the Peacemaking Program to republish the discernment materials developed in the “Peace Discernment” process for use by churches and others who wish to continue their own educational and discernment process.

7. Encourage the Peacemaking Program to identify or develop curriculum [that explores the full spectrum of biblical and Reformed theological thinking concerning war] to help young adults discern their position on war and violence before registering with the Selective Service System for possible military conscription as required by federal law.

8. [Reaffirm] [Affirm] the PC(USA) policy on conscientious objection, including our long support for selective conscientious objection, and encourage those who are conscientious objectors to register their decision with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly as established by previous General Assemblies and described in “Presbyterians and Military Service,” http://oga.pcusa.org/section/stated-clerk/stated-clerk/conscientious-objection/.

Rationale

During the Peace Discernment process from 2010 to 2016, the church committed many resources and many talented people contributed their expertise to create a significant body of biblical, theological, and historical information. The quality of these contributions is exceptional and because of these materials, many churches have declared or are in the process exploring whether to declare themselves “Peace Churches.” A few examples include First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto (Presbytery of San Jose), the Church of Reconciliation in Chapel Hill, N.C. (Presbytery of New Hope) and Montclair Presbyterian Church in Oakland, Calif. (Presbytery of San Francisco).

The ongoing violence (of which the Las Vegas massacre is only the latest event) that has become a daily occurrence within our communities, our country, and the world demands that we continue to understand how to engage as peacemakers with the growing violence and terror. As Rabbi Abraham Heschel said, “we are not all guilty, but we are all responsible.” The completion of the “Peace Discernment” process should not be the end but should be the beginning of an ongoing pursuit of justice and peace for all God’s people.

For those churches who are continuing this difficult work by declaring themselves a “Peace Church,” the PC(USA) should be able to acknowledge their commitment as consistent with the spirit of the “Peace Discernment” process.

During the “Peace Discernment” process, there was a wonderful curriculum that was created to help congregations engage in conversation as well as share a spectrum of experiences and opinions in the spirit of inquiry. This curriculum should not be lost but should be republished for the benefit of the entire church.

Our congregational baptismal vows commit us to the ongoing guidance and nurture of all the young people in our churches by word and deed with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ. Therefore, we should be assisting our young people to complete an “inventory of conscience” to help them to discern their beliefs about war and violence. The materials from the “Peace Discernment” process should be part of such a curriculum. Other helpful resources are available from the Center on Conscience & War and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.

Recognizing the importance of registering conscientious objectors with the Office of the Stated Clerk as prescribed in OGA document, http://oga.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/pdf/conscientiousobj.pdf, let us reaffirm this policy and confirm that the processes for registering conscientious objectors are straightforward and manageable for all concerned.

Concurrence to Item 09-03 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Mission, New Hope, and San Francisco.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-03 overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to support congregations that identify as “peace churches,” as one of several ways to build on the Peace Discernment process of 2010–2016.
The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 09-08 be approved as amended in Recommendations 3, 7, and 8 below: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“3. Acknowledge that the Five Affirmations were one of the fruits of this church-wide discernment and commend them to all church sessions for reading and study: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/five-peacemaking-affirmations/

[Each of the five affirmations is supported in the full report: https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000047. Which is also presented in the short study book from Westminster/JohnKnox Press, Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace: https://www.wikibooks.com/Content/Site117/FilesSamples/307161FiveRisks_00000026401.pdf]

“7. Encourage the Peacemaking Program to identify or develop curriculum [that explores the full spectrum of biblical and Reformed theological thinking concerning war] to help young adults discern their position on war and violence before registering with the Selective Service System for possible military conscription as required by federal law.”

“8. [Reaffirm] [Affirm] the PC(USA) policy on conscientious objection[, including our long support for selective conscientious objection,] and encourage those who are conscientious objectors to register their decision with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly as established by previous General Assemblies and described in “Presbyterians and Military Service,” https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/conscientiousobj1.pdf.”

The proponents of this overture lift up the Peace Discernment process initiated at the 219th General Assembly (2010) to look at:

- the effects of what was then nine years of war in Afghanistan and seven years in Iraq,
- the role of nonviolent resistance in the opening of Eastern Europe, the generally peaceful changes in South Africa, Northern Ireland, the Philippines, and elsewhere, and the partial success (then) of the “Arab Spring.”

The recommended additions to Recommendation 3. provide the full report of the 22nd General Assembly (2016) and the curriculum already published to interpret it. The full report looks at the current grinding tragedies of war and terrorism in light of our Reformed tradition and Presbyterian witness in the United States. It provides a definition and analysis of “peace churches” (as well as of the Just War tradition and Just Peacemaking) that are missing from the overture.

The proponent presbyteries lift up three congregations that have taken steps to identify themselves as “peace churches,” which is the historic designation for pacifist churches such as the Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). They suggest using the following study materials from the Peace Discernment process: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/3-peace-discernment-interim-report-2012.pdf and https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-ga_221_item_11-11_risking_peacemaking_in_a_violent_world-2014.pdf.

In addition to the responses to those materials received from congregations and presbyteries, the peace discernment process included a survey by Research Services that indicated fewer than 1 percent of Presbyterians would term themselves pacifist. At the same time, by approving the basic Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling (1980) and a congregational Commitment to Peacemaking, or by affirming the “Just Peacemaking” principles designed to prevent war (approved by the General Assembly in 1998), many Presbyterian congregations could be called, “Just Peace” churches.

The proponents are to be commended for urging study and action on these vital matters, and for suggesting that particular congregations as well as individuals consider going beyond the general consensus that the use of force by the military (or in policing) be the absolute last resort. God alone is Lord of the conscience and may well lead congregations to add their own affirmations or “risks” to those approved by the General Assembly. But we do recommend that the full picture be understood.

Thus, the addition to Recommendation 7. is to clarify the need for a curriculum that is rooted in the whole counsel of the Bible’s witness and our theological tradition.

The addition to Recommendation 8. is to remind us that the PC(USA) supports selective conscientious objection that allows persons of conscience to object to particular wars and commands on the battlefield. Like the peace churches, the PC(USA) also supports the conscientious decision to practice thorough-going nonviolence or pacifism.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-03.

The commitment to peace is one of the most urgently needed priorities of the global church, the community, and the world. It is an integral part of our biblical mandate and reformed theology. We live in an age of violence, war, and extremism. Churches
committed to being witnesses of peace in such time should be encouraged and supported. Their models of faithful witness to peace and reconciliation will bring glory to God and a fulfillment of Christ’s commandment to be peacemakers and healers in a deeply hurt, divided culture.

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**Item 09-04**

[The assembly approved Item 09-04 as amended. See pp. 36, 37.]

*On Endorsing Affirmations Regarding the Welfare of Our Neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—from the Presbytery of the Pacific.*

The Presbytery of the Pacific overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to endorse the following affirmations and actions regarding the welfare of our neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (the Northern Triangle of Central America) and the welfare of [all] migrants and refugees in the United States.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directs the Stated Clerk and other representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the PC(USA) Washington Office, the Office of Immigration, Presbyterian World Mission, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to advocate for region-wide and country-specific changes in policy, as requested by the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES), including the following:

1. **Develop a United Witness in the Americas: Act in greater solidarity, advocacy, partnership, and hospitality with the church in the Northern Triangle of Central America**
   
   a. Create the position of a mission co-worker position to facilitate a Meso-American faith-rooted advocacy witness in Central America, in partnership with the Reformed Calvinist Church in El Salvador and other church partners in the Northern Triangle of Central America and Mexico. A strong focus of this position would be to develop a Meso-American refugee and immigration advocacy network and coordinate Presbyterian World Mission partnerships in the region with the advocacy and policy work of the Office of Public Witness, the Office of Immigration, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Peacemaking Program, and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations.

   b. Direct the Office of Public Witness, the Office of Immigration, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Peacemaking Program, and the Presbyterian Office at the United Nations to incorporate the voices of Meso-American leaders in PC(USA)’s immigration and refugee advocacy efforts; create mechanisms for the U.S. government to hear the voices of church leaders from Meso-America when policy decisions are made that affect their context.

2. **Train local leaders in El Salvador. Invest in peacemaking in the Northern Triangle to reduce migration and reintegrate people who are returned to El Salvador from the United States.**

   Direct Presbyterian World Mission to expand funding for regional leadership training in nonviolence in the Northern Triangle of Central America, in partnership with AIPRAL (Asociación de Iglesias Presbiterianas y Reformadas de América Latina—Association of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of Latin America), CEDEPCA (Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pastorales en Centroamérica—The Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America) and other partners.

3. **Train leaders in the United States. Organize a strategic and coordinated faith-rooted advocacy movement for comprehensive immigration reform in the United States.**

   *Direct the Office of Public Witness and the Office of Immigration Issues to hire and share a national grassroots network organizer in the United States. This position will train and organize congregations and governing bodies. Networks of Presbyterians will receive training from this organizer in advocacy, community organizing, solidarity and accompaniment, and establish rapid response networks to support faith-rooted, migrant-led organizing.*


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*Rationale*

The PC(USA) is 1 of 233 member churches of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) that meets once every seven years. At its 26th General Council meeting held in Leipzig, Germany, June 29–July 7, 2017, the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) ratified Action 61 from the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES). This resolution awakens and challenges Reformed churches around the world to the crisis and suffering of migrants, victims of human trafficking, and particularly of youth in the Northern Triangle of Central America, and encourages closer cooperation and a common response from churches in all parts of the world.
We confess that the immigration policies of our country, the United States of America, have had a major impact on this crisis and the suffering identified by our brothers and sisters of the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES). Therefore, we acknowledge that we carry a greater burden of responsibility to hear the urgent appeal of our brothers and sisters in the Northern Triangle and to respond with concrete actions of solidarity, love, and justice in the name of Jesus. The recommendations in this overture come directly from the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES), and are specifically addressed to the PC(USA). We are moved by their call to us.

We affirm our denomination’s historic witness in the United States for just immigration laws, mindful of their impact on other countries. While respectful of the law and the powers of government to enact laws, we have considered it our moral duty to express our convictions to government to change laws when they were contrary to our values. We affirm the policy statements and resolutions of past General Assemblies supporting comprehensive immigration reform, condemnation of human trafficking, reforms of drug war policies, and trade and aid policies that provide sustainable, peaceful development in Central America. However, we acknowledge that, despite our resolutions and policy statements, our country is moving further away from implementing these just and humane policies.

At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), our denomination chose to become a church committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25, to recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to locate ourselves with the poor, to advocate for the poor, and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor. We are in a critical moment in history to take the next step as a denomination to organize a collective, faith-rooted voice for change on behalf of those who suffer. Therefore, we urge the PC(USA) to organize nationally and internationally, in partnership with the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador and churches throughout the Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador), and with immigrant communities and churches in the United States, for just and humane policies in the United States and in Central America.

The Presbytery of the Pacific has been involved in nonpartisan, faith-rooted immigration advocacy and sanctuary in the city of Los Angeles, in partnership with immigrant evangelical churches and leaders in the Matthew 25/Mateo 25 Southern California movement. Together we advocate for vulnerable immigrant communities and have saved people from detention and deportation. Through prayer, education, relationship, and joy, Matthew 25/Mateo 25 Movement of Southern California has catalyzed churches in our region to take action on immigration as a biblical imperative, a fundamental Christian issue, and an evangelical witness to the Gospel and the love of Christ. It is this kind of faith-rooted, migrant-led movement that we believe has the power to change the heart of our nation on immigration.

In 2014, in the face of the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied minor children fleeing violence in the Northern Triangle of Central America and arriving in Los Angeles, the Presbytery of the Pacific worked in partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and interfaith justice coalition CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) called UCARE (Unaccompanied Minors and Refugee Empowerment), to build a city-wide support network for unaccompanied minor/refugee youth. We have witnessed firsthand the trauma caused to these refugee youth by the violence they have experienced in their home countries, the perilous journey they take to our borders, and the treatment they receive when they come to the U.S.

It is essential that we are connected to the stories and lives of those who suffer. Here are the words from the original proposal from the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES) to the World Council of Reformed Churches (WCRC), where they describe their context and a call to action:

Violence in the Northern Triangle:

The three countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (the Northern Triangle of Central America) have experienced 15 years of violence generated from gang conflict, organized crime, and narco-trafficking. Peace accords did not address the different problems of these countries. The endemic gang culture, coupled with the socio-economic realities of poverty, unemployment, low wages, domestic violence and the resultant dysfunction and psychological problems, produce enormous problems for families, society and the churches. The populations of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras are young, with around 50% of the people under 24 years. Youth are most affected by crime and violence; many young people are dying, and the region is being robbed of its future.

Churches are carrying out their work under very difficult conditions. In El Salvador, the churches have been supporting different efforts to dialogue with youth gangs, but have had no support from the government, which is now calling gangs, and those who seek to dialogue, terrorists. The churches seek support to promote a culture of peace and prevent violence. They have requested funding to support non-violent leadership training.

Migration, Human Trafficking, and Refugees:

Human trafficking has been identified as a form of modern day slavery. Human traffickers take advantage of people in vulnerable situations, including many thousands of children every year. It is an injustice that affects millions of people every year on every continent and at all socio-economic levels. It also has a direct effect on the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the victims. During the initial trafficking, victims are often forced and deceived. People may be trafficked for labor and sexual exploitation, within an individual country or across international borders. Their movement is often restricted; their personal documentation withheld, and they may experience significant physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological abuse, including being killed for organs. Victims are often held in situations of indentured slavery.

The movement of hundreds of thousands of refugees has highlighted a situation that confronts the Churches. Women, men, young and old are fleeing war, poverty and persecution. Every day, people put their lives at risk as they seek life, peace and justice. As Reformed Churches proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a vision of life in fullness for all (John 10:10), we cannot and will not accept this as inevitable. The people seeking refuge are not merely an ethical or political challenge confronting the Church, they challenge our Churches in their innermost theological identity and mission. In
faithful accordance with the biblical witness, its calling and mission, the Reformed Church has a long-standing tradition of being committed to the life, dignity and wellbeing of the refugee and migrant.

As people of faith, we are called to “love the sojourner” (Deuteronomy 10:19) and to treat “the foreigner residing among you…as your native born” (Leviticus 19:34). Issues of human migration do not exist in a vacuum, and they can only be fully comprehended when we understand how they connect to the other issues of justice around the world that are of critical importance to WCRC’s member churches. These stories and motifs have had profound effects on the history of the church, especially the Reformed tradition as many early reformers were themselves refugees. Reformed communities around the world were created not only by missionaries, but by migrants as well.18

May we heed the call of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Endnotes


2. World Communion of Reformed Churches.

3. ACTION 61: The General Council: 1. Urges member churches and AIPRAL to share their experience and expertise in support of the churches’ advocacy efforts, dialogue, peacebuilding and reconciliation in the Northern Triangle of Central America; 2. Instructs the Executive Committee and the Secretariat, through and with the support of member churches and AIPRAL, to seek ways to accompany the churches in Central America in their efforts to counter violence and promote a culture of peace; and 3. Urges the Executive Committee to work with AIPRAL and member churches to make representations to the governments of these countries expressing deep concern about the rampant violence and impunity for those who commit it.

4. In January 2018, TPS (Temporary Protected Status) for 200,000 El Salvadorans was rescinded. In 2017, programs to admit Central America in their efforts to counter violence and promote a culture of peace; and 3. Urges the Executive Committee to work with AIPRAL and member churches to make representations to the governments of these countries expressing deep concern about the rampant violence and impunity for those who commit it.

5. As early as 1893, the General Assembly made bold and historic statements on immigration after Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1892, the first significant law in the U.S. restricting immigration of an ethnic group. On May 27, 1893, the General Assembly adopted a resolution sent to the president, Congress, advocating for the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, stating that the act was “in disregard of the just rights of man ... unworthy of this great nation ... a reproach to our current Christian civilization, and ... will prove injurious” (Minutes, 1893, pp. 115, 116). More on our historical legacy as Presbyterians on immigration.


7. 218th General Assembly (2008) Resolutions To Expand The Church’s Ministry With and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking of Women; See also 217th G.A. Resolution Condemning International Trafficking In and Exploitation of Children.

8. PC(USA) Drug Policy Reform Resources, also a study from the Meso-American Work Group “Rethinking the Drug War in Mexico and Central America.”


11. Historic sanctuary movement.

12. Much of reason people remain undocumented/illegal is because of difficulties navigating an extremely complex process, lack of resources and information, and lack of access to quality legal representation.

13. Our most publicized advocacy effort was the detention and liberation of Pastor Noe Carias.

14. Extensive background information on unaccompanied minors in the United States.

15. PDA’s response to the unaccompanied minor refugee crisis.

16. CLUE’s UCARE Program.

17. When unaccompanied minors began to surge into immigration courts in Los Angeles County in 2014, judges were fast-tracking their cases in court, making it impossible for the youth to have their asylum cases heard in court. The Presbytery of the Pacific and the ELCA formed a court witness advocacy ministry called Guardian Angels, to hold courts accountable to children’s rights. After a few months of coordinating volunteers to observe in our courts, rocket docket disappeared.


Concurrences to Item 09-04 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Santa Fe.
Advice & Counsel on Item 09-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-04 addresses the violence and displacement in the Northern three countries of Central America, envisioning a mission co-worker to help develop a Meso-American refugee and immigration advocacy network in the region, along with peacemaking, accompaniment, and nonviolence training, and a grassroots organizer in the United States, to help advocate for policy change.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-04.

The crisis in the Northern Triangle of Central America is very serious, with waves of children and broken families struggling to migrate across Mexico to join relatives in the United States, driven by the violence of drug wars and corruption, facing traffickers on one side and strict border enforcement on the other. Children of those seeking asylum are sometimes separated from their parents through intentional administrative cruelty. Not since the Sanctuary Movement of the mid 1980s has there been a similarly bleak human rights situation for Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The General Assembly directed considerable attention to the region through studies by the Advisory Council on Church & Society (ACSWP’s predecessor) and advocacy efforts to counter military support for death squads and the Contra War in nearby Nicaragua.

This overture proposes a mission co-worker in the region and an organizer/trainer in the United States. The work of the mission co-worker is targeted at parts of the Central America population missed by those who lump all together. Having such a person trained in peacemaking and able to do intercultural work would (it seems to us) be very helpful in the Salvadoran situation, where some of the violence has its origins in gangs transplanted from Southern California. The Presbyterian of the Pacific shows its deep concern for these people in their rationale statement. They also cite the report of our partner, the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador, to the World Communion of Reformed Churches, showing a level of international awareness of the crisis. With regard to Honduras, the General Assembly spoke to the deterioration in rule of law that followed the 2010 coup in that country: https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3605.

The latter position may connect with current staff capacities in the Immigration Office of the Office of the General Assembly. Given the scale of the immigration crisis, ACSWP is sympathetic to the intensified responsibilities carried by that office—which is the result of a recommendation in an ACSWP report to the 216th General Assembly (2004) (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-immigration-resolution-2004.pdf). We recognize that funding for these positions would come from different sources. In their comment, Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency also note the wide-ranging work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in the area. Our concern, as a body constituted to address challenges to the Christian conscience and ways we respond through corporate social mission, is that our economic and drug policies are part of what is driving desperation South of our border, which in turn feeds a militarization and punishment of asylum seekers and refugees on the U.S. side. This overture offers an overall strategy for our church to respond to this terrible cycle.

Commissioners may want to consider this item in relation to Item 09-10, which calls for a study by ACSWP of “socioeconomic and political realities in Central America.” Such a short-term study would necessarily involve mission co-workers deployed in the region—all six countries—and both World Mission and a small team of ACSWP members and staff, chosen for their expertise. Such a study would itself dovetail into the response outlined in this overture, and would prepare updated resources for the advocacy envisioned.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-04.

ACREC feels that the collaboration outlined in this overture across PC(USA) program areas and ecumenical partners is unique and timely given the current situation in some of the countries in Central America. The effectiveness and success of this initiative would have a positive impact both in the region and in the U.S. by addressing pressing issues affecting both migrants from Central America in the U.S. and curtailing violence and injustice in the area.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-04

Comment on Item 09-04—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency—through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, part of its Compassion Peace and Justice Ministry—works with congregations and mid councils in the U.S. to support their ministries with Central American refugees
and asylum seekers. We would be happy to work with other PC(USA) offices to identify new ways that we might work in greater solidarity, advocacy, partnership, and hospitality with the church in the Northern Triangle of Central America. We believe that developments in the region offer a unique opportunity to partner with our brothers and sisters in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Item 09-05

[The assembly approved Item 09-05 as amended. See pp. 12, 37.]

A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Affirm the support of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as expressed by the 210th General Assembly (1998).

2. Acknowledge the U.S. role in the war in Yemen, and by extension, our own complicity through our taxes that fund the U.S. military’s role in the conflict.

3. Acknowledge the devastating effects of the war in Yemen such as:
   a. Death of innocent civilians, including children, due to direct effects of bombing, disease, and famine;
   b. The destruction of infrastructure, including sanitation facilities, which has lead to an unprecedented cholera epidemic killing many including children; and
   c. Famine directly due to the Saudi blockade.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk to write to the United States President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense, urging them to actively participate in seeking a political settlement to the war and to suspend United States government military support to Saudi Arabia in its bombing and blockading of Yemen. United States military support to Saudi Arabia includes:
   a. The sale of weapons;
   b. Logistic support including intelligence for selecting targets;
   c. Air-to-air refueling of Saudi jets; and
   d. Multiple ground operations and more than 120 strikes in 2017.

5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN, to advocate for:
   a. An immediate end to hostilities;
   b. Cessation of United States military and financial support of Saudi Arabia’s Yemeni war; and
   c. A just political, not military solution.

6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to
   a. Study and then to inform all Presbyterians (through digital study materials) regarding the war in Yemen, and of the United States’ participation in that war and what our involvement entails, and to advocate for an immediate cessation of military support to Saudi Arabia; and
   b. Advocate for an immediate cessation of hostilities and work for a just political settlement of the war.

[Encourage churches to support relief efforts in Yemen through PDA.]

Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $2,000. Total—$2,000]
Rationale

**What We Must Do**

To remain silent is to be complicit. We as Presbyterians must speak out. “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40).

**The War and Its Origins**

The origins of the war in Yemen date back as far the 1960s. Two valuable and credible articles about the origins of the war and the atmosphere in Yemen today can be found in Professor Sheila Carapico’s article which appeared in *The Nation* magazine, and Kathy Kelly’s article that appeared on the web page of *Voices for Creative Nonviolence*. Kathy Kelly is the coordinator for *Voices for Creative Nonviolence*.

Sheila Carapico, a professor of political science and international studies at the University of Richmond in Virginia, describes the war in Yemen as “an invasion that pits billionaire royal elites of the Gulf—and their U.S. and Arab League supporters—against the downtrodden people of Yemen.” In Yemen, “a Saudi-led coalition backed by the United States is at war with an indigenous tribal group, the Houthis.”

According to Kathy Kelly, people living now in Yemen’s third largest city, Ta’iz, have endured unimaginable circumstances for the past three years. Civilians fear to go outside lest they be shot by a sniper or step on a land mine. Both sides of a worsening civil war use Howitzers, Kaytushas, mortars and other missiles to shell the city. Residents say no neighborhood is safer than another, and human rights groups report appalling violations, including torture of captives. Two days ago, a Saudi-led coalition bomber killed 54 people in a crowded market place. Before the civil war developed, the city was regarded as the official cultural capital of Yemen, a place where authors and academics, artists and poets chose to live. Ta’iz was home to a vibrant, creative youth movement.

This resolution is not intended to discuss the merits or demerits of either side of the war in Yemen, rather this resolution is intended to advocate for the innocent civilians caught in the middle of this war. The impact on children is particularly troubling and heartbreaking.

**United States Participation in the War**

The U.S. support for Saudi Arabia includes arms sales, refueling of aircraft, and supplying intelligence, and has long been controversial. Human Rights groups have repeatedly accused the kingdom of targeting civilians, notably through airstrikes on schools and hospitals. “U.S. forces have conducted multiple ground operations and more than 120 strikes in 2017,” U.S. Central Command, Centcom, in Tampa, Florida, said in a statement.

An editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* has this to say:

Since March 2015, when the Saudi coalition began bombing Houthi rebels in support of the internationally recognized Yemeni government, the U.S. Air Force has assisted—enabled—Riyadh and its allies in the air campaign. … Air Force intelligence identifies Houthi targets to hit. … At the U.N., in the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, Washington has protected Riyadh from censure, watering down resolutions and preventing war crimes inquiries. Most important, throughout the war, Saudi and Emirati jets have used U.S. midair refueling capabilities to keep up the pace of operations without having to return to a base. According to Pentagon statistics, the Air Force has refueled Saudi aircraft more than 9,000 times.

Through its support of the war in Yemen, the United States is culpable in the horrific effects the war has had on Yemen’s civilians and has a responsibility to stop its involvement and to speak out against this war.

**Civilian Casualties**

Between March 2015, when the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) began reporting on civilian casualties, and 30 August, at least 5,144 civilians have been documented as killed and more than 8,749 injured.

Children accounted for 1,184 of those who were killed and 1,592 of those injured. Coalition airstrikes continued to be the leading cause of child casualties as well as overall civilian casualties. Some 3,233 of the civilians killed were reportedly killed by Coalition forces.

The report states that the past year witnessed airstrikes against funeral gatherings and small civilian boats, in addition to markets, hospitals, schools, residential areas, and other public and private infrastructure.

**Famine**

On November 9, 2017, the United Nations News Center released the following news announcement:

Yemen will be gripped by famine—one the likes of which the world has not seen in years—if the blockade on basic supplies into the country imposed by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition is not lifted immediately, the top United Nations humanitarian official has warned.

“It will be the largest famine the world has seen for many decades,” Mark Lowcock, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, told the media late Wednesday, after briefing the Security Council.
Three years into a brutal conflict, Yemen depends on imports—amounting to up to 90 per cent of its daily needs—and millions in the country are being kept alive by humanitarian aid.

The fighting has also all but collapsed the country’s health, and water and sanitation systems. Combined with the lack of food, millions of lives—including those of children—will be lost as their bodies will simply not have the strength to fight off disease.

“What kills people in famine is infections […] because their bodies have consumed themselves, reducing totally the ability to fight off things which a healthy person can,” added Mr. Lowcock.12

According to the World Food Programme,13 20.7 million (76 percent of population) are in need of humanitarian assistance; 17 million are food insecure, including 6.8 million severely food insecure; 2.2 million are acutely malnourished children; 1.1 million are acutely malnourished pregnant and lactating women; and 2 million are internally displaced; and 1 million are returnees.14

Cholera Outbreak

Bombing of civilian centers in Yemen has been central to the destruction of sanitary infrastructure, thus leading to the spread of disease—notable cholera. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA):

Yemen is facing one of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, including the fastest growing cholera epidemic ever recorded. As of 1 November [2017], there were some 895,000 suspected cholera cases with nearly 2,200 associated deaths since 27 April. More than half of the suspected cases are children. The outbreak is affecting over 90 per cent of districts across 21 of the 22 governorates.15

Endnotes

5. Kelly, “Remaining Peaceful Was Their Choice.”
Advice & Counsel on Item 09-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-05.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the rationale given by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and further lifts up specific concerns for women and girls, as well as the importance of the role of women in peacemaking efforts.

Regarding specific concerns for women and girls in the midst of the crisis in Yemen: The United National Women Watch through The United Nations Population Fund cited in March 2017 that

At the two-year mark of Yemen’s conflict, it has become one of the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, [and] the toll is heaviest on women and girls. The country is on the brink of famine, with food insecurity affecting 60% of the population. Women go to sleep thinking about they can feed their children. Yemen already had one of the highest maternal death rates in the Arab region, but food scarcity is putting the lives of 352,000 pregnant women at risk, and it could harm the health of 2.2 million women of childbearing age who are in urgent need of assistance and protection, according to UNFPA calculations from January 2017. [Furthermore], women and girls in Yemen have long endured low status and high rates of abuse, but displacement and the breakdown of protection mechanisms have increased their vulnerability. [As of March 2017], an estimated 2.6 million women and girls were at risk of gender-based violence. Violence against women and girls has reportedly increased by over 63% since the conflict escalated, with over 10,000 cases reported in 2016 alone. The crisis has also left many women and girls to care for their families alone. The UNFPA is working to meet the urgent reproductive health and protection needs of women and girls in Yemen, by providing sexual and reproductive health care and services and preventing gender-based violence. [https://womenwatch.unwomen.org/country/yemen; https://www.unfpa.org/news/two-year-mark-yemens-conflict-takes-heavy-toll-women-and-girls]

With regard to including women in the role of peacemaking efforts, the ACWC encourages all future peacemaking reports and resolutions to include an affirmation of the essential role that women play in peacemaking, in much the same way that the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 cites the importance of “Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution” [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf]. By including women, a new perspective is gained as the concerns for women and girls may be vastly different than the concerns of men.

Additionally, the ACWC lifts up the portion of the PC(USA)’s “Social Creed for the 21st Century” (approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the PC[USA] and the National Council of Churches of Christ USA at the 2007 General Assembly), which references peacemaking: “In hope, sustained by the Holy Spirit, we pledge to be peacemakers in the world and stewards of God’s good creation, by working for ... peacemaking through multilateral diplomacy rather than unilateral force, the abolition of torture, and a strengthening of the United Nations and the rule of international law” [https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/socialcreedposter.pdf].

Therefore, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-05.

Item 09-06

[The assembly referred Item 09-06 to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy with comment. See pp. 36, 37–38.]

Comment: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline; actions taken in plenary are shaded in gray.]

The Assembly Committee on Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues [09] thanks the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy for their affirmations and recommendations related to global order and our nation’s purpose. We commend their creative and comprehensive exploration of global themes in an effort to reinvigorate the collective conscience of Presbyterians and other ecumenical partners to speak ethically and morally to a changing and challenged world.

We recognize the need to speak with a measured urgency to the many existential threats facing our nation and the world, and we appreciate the vision for ecumenical partnerships in addressing them. We offer the following suggestions to clarify and focus your recommendation to the General Assembly. [We encourage ACSWP to collaborate and/or partner with a variety of other funding sources in order to move this study forward and better reflect and incorporate the voices of diverse persons and marginalized communities.]
Recommendations:

1. Clearly name the audience for the study, as well as the final objectives of the study.

2. Focus and limit the affirmations thematically. Furthermore, decide on a scope for the project that honors the complexity of the issues we face while systematically addressing individual issues.

3. The formation of the steering committee should include the participation and comments from diverse persons and those from marginalized communities (e.g. ethnicity, gender, orientation, cultural origin, age, economic status, ability, education level, geographical region).

4. State how you will invite diverse persons including those from marginalized communities, beyond theological differences, into the public forums.

5. Create a curriculum from the findings of the study that would be teachable, useable, and approachable to the whole church.

6. Integrate the sacred texts of traditions that represent the voices of the participants in the study. Bring them to the forefront of the conversation/study.


A Resolution on Global Order and National Purpose—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following affirmations and actions on global order and our nation’s purpose, through which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Affirmations

1. Affirms a Reformed commitment to a just and durable peace based in a vision of a community of nations, cooperating for mutual benefit and to reduce risks for all.

   The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recommits itself to work with other Christian churches for a lasting peace among nations and peoples based on the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the highest principles of international law. This Christian vision applies to the national purposes of our country, which has sought to temper its power with high ideals, to provide “liberty and justice for all.” Aware of the effects of climate change, the danger of nuclear catastrophe, the pull of nativism and tribalism, and the costly habits of militarism, the church nevertheless believes it is both realistic and necessary to work for a just, durable peace. Prior generations have shared this understanding of the claims of Jesus Christ for this world—and all the nations—that God continues to love.

   Where our 20th century forbears experienced two great conflicts and worked to establish international standards and institutions to prevent a third world war, the struggles before current and future generations are different. New forms of colonization, inequality, and power rivalry test global institutions as populations continue to grow and climate change accelerates. The rise of sea levels and climate refugee numbers may lead to grim competition and abandonment of vulnerable areas, beyond any technological or biological “fixes.” In this context, our faith anchors us in hope, despite reasons for despair.

   Our faith also impels us to join with ecumenical partners and the world church in combatting the true enemies of human flourishing, which are not “flesh and blood.” This is a time to put God first, above every nation, and to be willing to re-conceive the vastly unequal structure of nations for the sake of biological survival and Christian faithfulness. Indeed, this will be a significant challenge for American Christians currently living in a time of rising nationalism and putting “America first.”

2. Affirms an ecumenical commitment to dignity, human rights, and well-being for all peoples.

   Though the number of desperately impoverished remains daunting, Christian prophets and church bodies have envisioned and acted for just, participatory, and sustainable global arrangements that have provided greater sufficiency for larger numbers of people. Churches have joined in nonviolent social changes in Eastern Europe, the Philippines, Northern Ireland, and South Africa, and have sought to support peaceful revolutions elsewhere, with deep admiration for those organizers, labor leaders, journalists, students and others—of all faith backgrounds and none—who have stood up to power and sometimes been crushed.

   Along with other religious traditions and bodies, our church bears a responsibility to understand interreligious dynamics and to restrain ethnic and religious bigotry. These can feed the mixture of fundamentalism and rage that engenders terrorism at home and abroad. The politics of resentment anywhere raises spiritual and moral questions that cannot simply be left to
politicians and economists. The church affirms that truth and reconciliation, apology and forgiveness, humility and avoiding idolatry: all have application in public as well as private life, for communities as well as individuals.

3. Reexamines our national purpose and global institutions strategically and theologically, in the light of increased risks of nuclear war, growing tensions with allies as well as enemies, and a budget focused on $900 billion a year for military-related spending (including nuclear weapons readiness, spy agencies, “homeland” security, veterans costs, and ongoing wars).

Unilateral military action on a global scale is neither sustainable nor just. The United States’ history of taking unilateral action has already led to significant miscalculation and distancing from our historic allies. The standing of the U.S. in the world, the positive balance built up over years of generally dependable and truthful action, has declined and cannot be restored through power alone. It must be restored through genuine efforts to work multilaterally and develop mutual trust. In Paul’s language in 2 Corinthians 8:21, “for we intend to do what is right not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of others.” To that end, structures of statecraft, dedicated diplomats, strategic and generous foreign assistance, and truthful witnesses are needed for a national security that is also collective security and basic human security, anchored in a decent quality of life for all.

4. Invites Christian ecumenical partners to join our congregations and councils in addressing the following crises as they affect the international order:

a. A Crisis of National Purpose in the United States of America, which has been in a fear-driven state of war since 9/11/01, with a form of shared moral injury for the needless suffering of millions overseas and thousands at home. These open and covert military actions continue without any gain in democratic practice or growth in effective human freedom, given increased inequality and continued poverty at home as well as abroad. This lack of positive national purpose contributes to the spiritual rootlessness, vocational insecurity, and isolation of individuals and the decline of communities, institutions, and marriage and childrearing rates, as the weakening of the common good and erosion of personal character reinforce each other.

b. Climate change and the need for binding, science-based national targets, shared technologies and resources, and public health-related cooperation to reduce and reverse extreme weather, crop devastation, mass extinction of species, and increased human conflict over resources.

c. Ethnic and racial nationalism that values human beings on the arbitrary bases of skin color and background rather than the “image of God,” weakens commitments to human rights, equal voting rights, and humanitarian treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers, and increases hostility among peoples and nations.

d. Downgrading international and regional institutions and agreements that assist human development, health, and common security, leads to increased tax competition, avoidance, and evasion by powerful corporations and individuals; undercutting and underfunding of United Nations programs and international legal standards; and systematic distortions in access to education and free exchange of information.

5. In addition, there are specific concerns:

a. reversal of progress toward nuclear disarmament;

b. massive arms sales regardless of democracy, human rights, or even ongoing hostilities;

c. religious discrimination and persecution;

d. weakening of international peacemaking or policing forces;

e. continued disadvantaging of women, girls, and sexual minorities;

f. forced labor and human trafficking, and transnational efforts to weaken labor rights and organizations.

6. Reclaims specific resources of the U.S. ecumenical tradition, in partnership with other communions that recognize problems beyond any individual church to address, resources that include:

a. The principles developed in the American church study conferences, that helped build Christian and broad public support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations;

b. The theological resources for addressing international conflict and crisis, particularly the resources of Christian Realism and Liberation Theologies, and ethics of repentance, truth-telling, and reconciliation;

c. Confessions of faith used in some families of churches and traditions to help interpret scripture and address contemporary challenges to Christian practice;

d. International relationships with broad confessional families that remind us that no church is only a national entity or creature of a state;
e. The Six Pillars of Peace, both the originals of 1940 and the updated Seven of 1998 (with the inclusion of ecological action);

f. Policies of the Federal and National Councils of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., such as the non-doctrinal Social Creeds of 1908 and 2008, that have given our Christian public witness shared themes and goals;

g. Policies of the World Council of Churches that help us hear the voices of other Christians and see ourselves as others see us.

7. Seeks answers to such questions as these currently asked of the United States and its Christian community:

a. Are any of the crises outlined above reversible?

b. Do enough people in the millennial generation and younger care what Christians and churches think—especially if the churches appear to be profoundly divided?

c. How quickly does a nation like ours, a one-time “indispensable” power, lose respect and the “soft power” of ideals and integrity? Is there a moral vacuum more dangerous than a “power vacuum”?

d. Can a self-weakened super-power learn to play a more cooperative role in the world? Faced with failed or reckless states such as Syria or North Korea, is a more coordinated and deliberative approach needed?

e. Can we listen to voices unheard and suppressed, both at home and abroad? Especially in a polarized media time, is everything for sale?

f. Is political reform in the U.S. possible, given politicized Supreme Court decisions allowing unlimited money in campaigns and only slightly limited gerrymandering?

g. Above all, can climate change be slowed before world disorder simply overwhelms transnational institutions and cooperation?

Actions

In light of the need to re-envision the place of the United States within the world and the nature of our nation’s leadership, and to lift up the shared witness by the communions for a more just global order, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) directs the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy to do the following:

1. Engage in a series of public forums with our ecumenical partners on the key matters of international priorities, relations to international institutions, the relations of trade, aid, development, and taxation, the balance of statecraft and military power, the role of religion and morality in foreign policy, the relation of U.S. government policies to Christian and other religious minorities, and other matters noted above.

2. Select, in consultation with the Stated Clerk and Moderator or Co-Moderators, six persons, including four Presbyterians and two ecumenical leaders, to serve on a study committee of twelve volunteers with appropriate diplomatic, military, academic, and theological-ethical experience and/or expertise.

3. Invite, in consultation with the President and General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and with representatives of our Full Communion Christian denominational partners, other denominations and communions to designate and support the participation of similarly equipped volunteers on the study committee, in light of how such participation could contribute to their social mission, ethical reflection, and public statements. (Such consultation is necessary to ensure diversity within even a small body.)

4. Work with existing Presbyterian and ecumenical staff in Washington, D.C., and at the United Nations, to draw upon their expertise and engagement with current concerns and their relationships with many interfaith and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners in the development of the public forums in Action 1 above.

5. Direct this study committee to prepare an initial study guide or interim report for the 224th General Assembly (2020) and for other church assemblies in a manner that is as ecumenically useful as possible in its print, podcast, and video presentation of theological, ethical, political, and historical elements.

6. Request the Office of Mission Engagement and Support of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and similar bodies in the other participating denominations, in consultation with their heads of communion, to explore appropriate external funding sources such as foundations and international organizations sharing goals and principles with our churches.
7. Request responses to the interim report or study guide by appropriate bodies within the participating communions and at forums linked to meetings of ecumenical bodies, such as the Christian Unity Gathering of the National Council of Churches of Christ, and to meetings of member communions.

8. Direct the study committee to produce its final report in a marketable or commercial book form, for submission to the 224th General Assembly (2022) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and such other bodies as wish to consider it.

Rationale

Crises That Call for Christian Response; Theological and Ethical Resources for That Response; More Questions; and an Appendix for Historical Perspective

This proposal calls for an ecumenical and interdisciplinary study into fundamental questions concerning the global order and the role of the United States in the world. In seeking to partner with the ecumenical churches, we do not intend to ignore or diminish our connections with people of other faiths and none. Rather, we seek to renew the broad, public witness of long-time Christian partners who have considerable theological and ethical traditions and extended histories of public engagement. We believe this critical voice has lately been weakened in public conversation and that recovering this voice will supply wisdom for seeking justice and equitable order in a changing world.

This rationale outlines major questions to be addressed in this study. It also surveys the ecumenical church’s long history of serious reflection on human nature, political power, and international relations. This history and tradition is reviewed in the Appendix and provides additional reason for this study, reminding us of religion’s capacity to notice and name important realities and to inspire people to work for the reconciliation of the world.

In this connection, we hope that this project encourages those in positions of responsibility in the state, military, and policy think tanks not to reduce all religion to deified and competitive tribalism, but to appreciate the positive contributions that particular faiths and religions may play. We do not call for academic study for its own sake, but envision forums, dialogues and video-clips to cast a public vision of life together on this planet and to strengthen the good work the churches are already doing in Washington, D.C., and at the United Nations.

The study would build on the work of the Federal Council of Churches’ Commission (begun in 1930) that conducted a study of “The Bases for a Just and Durable Peace.” This study helped create the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This framework supersedes and is broader than the influential church witnesses against the Vietnam War and other military interventions, the challenge to nuclear weapons (as in the “freeze” movement), the support for human rights struggles (as in the antiapartheid and sanctuary movements), and continuing concerns for upholding religious freedom. In 1991–92, a church project responded to the “new world order” proposed by the first President Bush and a larger study, led by ecumenical church staff related to the United Nations and international relations scholars, updated the Six Pillars of Peace in the late 1990s. There are lessons to be applied from these efforts and others cited in the Appendix. It is our hope that the prophetic voice of our ecumenical partners today will join us in helping shape a vision for the changing role of the United States in service of a stable, just and peaceful international order.1

The invitation to address global order and national purpose responds to three related crises: a crisis in international order, a crisis in national purpose, and a crisis in the religious life of the nation.

A Crisis of Evolving Global Order

The first crisis is global. According to many experts, the post-World War II order has reached an inflection point. Technology has created a politically, economically, and ecologically interdependent world that holds possibilities for global community and creaturely flourishing. Yet today many powerful nations are withdrawing support from the law-based institutions that shepherded the global order through the cold war. Regional hegemons are challenging the sovereignty of their neighbors as well as the post-World War II order’s emphasis on human rights. First world nationalists have joined voices from the Two-Thirds world in challenging trade agreements and the justice of an unregulated or neo-liberal market system. Militant fundamentalisms challenge the values of the global cosmopolitan culture, while traditional alliances block the development of participatory government, leaving authoritarian governments in place. The global civilization is not on a track that is ecologically sustainable.

A Crisis of National Purpose

The second crisis has to do with national purpose. What should America’s role in the world be? Americans of both political parties wonder whether the U.S. should continue to serve as a “global policeman.”2 They question the expense of America’s defense budget and the wisdom of its military adventures.3 They are uncertain where a stable international order ranks among other pressing national priorities, and what approaches (other than military interventions) are most effective for achieving it. If upholding the global order is in the U.S. interest, can it be divorced from democratic values, diplomacy, and ecologically sustainable economic development? Faith in democratic institutions has plummeted among young adults in America and in other Western democracies.4 The election of an avowed “America First” nationalist who scorns traditional democratic values
like a free press and independent judiciary, and who rejected a bipartisan internationalism in favor of an America-First foreign policy, has made these questions more pressing.

Because the United States wields inordinate economic, political, and military power, the crisis in global order dovetails with the crisis in national purpose. The national confusion comes at a time when the world economy has become more integrated than at any previous point in history, and when climate change, nuclear proliferation, disease, and terrorism require a more effective response from all nations. Our national confusion has not gone unnoticed by our allies or our rivals.

A Crisis of Domestic Religious Nationalism

A third crisis involves the dominant faith traditions of the United States. Religious nationalism has come to exert tremendous power over the public imagination. Religious nationalism is a syncretistic religion that promotes uncritical, even tribal support, for nationalistic foreign policies. It pretends to offer a hardnosed, practical realism. Because it has lost touch with the larger Christian tradition’s expansive loyalties and wisdom (while employing central faith symbols in combination with national symbols), it has contributed to morally outrageous and strategically disastrous misadventures.

Self-defined progressive religious groups have responded to ascendant religious nationalism, to the dominance of American economic and military might, and to our foreign policy calamities, with mixtures of Christian idealism and broad denunciation. Though this study proposal also challenges the seventeen-year overemphasis on “the war on terror,” there are genuine security threats and credible arguments for state and international agencies capable of repelling them. This study can provide a theologically grounded alternative to fearful and even defeatist religious nationalism by lifting up moral initiatives that call on Lincoln’s “better angels” of our nature and nation. The study process will succeed if it helps reframe the U.S. debate over the uses of power without proposing overly idealized or even utopian counsel that does not connect with historical realities. Imaginative and courageous does not mean naïve. With this study, then, we would seek to combine Christian ideals of peace and justice with practical wisdom for the United States government and major nongovernmental organizations (NGO’s).

Theological Resources

There is no one doctrinal touchstone in the ecumenical communions, at least in the Protestant houses. This study process envisions input from persons of all the traditions in the NCCC and good cooperation with our Roman Catholic friends. In listening to other voices from outside the U.S., we will certainly be hearing liberation theologies of many kinds, and not neglecting the liberation theologies of North America as well. Women’s theological treatments of the uses of power, militarism, moral injury, classic, and other virtues, such as empathy, need to be part of the church’s analysis. Cross-cultural perspectives and expertise in world religions will be needed. Persons with experience in disaster relief and peacemaking efforts will provide vantage points “from below” and ways of hearing the vulnerable. Theologians and ethicists with theocentric orientations may expand our perspective to include ecological threats, countering tendencies to focus too narrowly on risks to the human.

In practical terms, we also hope to stimulate conversations with those in political science and the military, who interpret the world through vocabularies of power, incentives, forced choices, and security threats. While the church, as an ambassador of God’s reign, must embody a “contrast model” to state and international structures, it also recognizes that God works through broken political institutions with tragic histories to promote the common good and restrain evil. In light of this, the church needs to offer practical counsel to those who serve these institutions, particularly to believers whose vocations place them in positions of responsibility.

Thus, this proposal summons mainline Protestant churches, and the larger faith community, to reclaim a version of Christian Realism that can help analyze national interests with an eye to power as well as morality. A well-considered, public Christian witness is desperately needed precisely because political leaders and citizens must make moral decisions within practically relevant choices. Churches should offer both prophetic judgment and constructive counsel. Christian Realism reflects some of the tested wisdom the churches have to contribute to our national and global debates and to the public ethos. We are not calling for a simple reassertion of Christian Realism. Many ethicists, including Gary Dorrien, the current holder of the Reinhold Niebuhr chair at Union Seminary, have criticized the Christian Realist tradition for being androcentric, privileged, and complicit in the exercise of American empire. Christian Realism, therefore, must be reconceived in “prophetic” ways, along with the more recent theological resources we have named. Yet, both its realism about human sin and evil and its pragmatic appreciation of the limitations of history continue to recommend it.

Expanding the Questions Regarding the Global Order and America’s Purpose

Behind the questions listed in the resolution for focus of the study, the study originators have listened to many experts who believe the international community has reached a crossroads and that the next decade will decisively shape the global order for an indefinite future.

Their questions concerning the global order are legion: How ought the international order be structured? What principles should guide it? Who can legitimately act on behalf of the international community to enforce human rights, trade agreements, and national security norms? Who should police the global commons, protect the high seas from piracy, and maintain freedom of navigation? How can we better handle common concerns that transcend national boundaries (climate change, disease,
fisheries, tax havens, terrorism)? How do we ensure that the rights and needs of the global poor are addressed? How will disputes between nations be resolved? Given heightened nationalism, how much can we expect from the United Nations or any other international bodies? How will humanity and the rest of God’s creatures survive the epoch we call the “anthropocene”?

These questions are intertwined with questions concerning the role of the United States in the international order. Can the United States afford to spend so much on its military? Can the United States’ vaunted democracy be trusted with so much power? How do we balance self-interest and our higher democratic and human values? How shall we exercise soft power and maintain moral legitimacy so that other nations do not view our disproportionate hard power as a threat? How will people in the United States adapt to relative economic decline (compared with a rising global economy)? While the ecumenical churches have been right to challenge U.S. impulses toward “empire,” now is the time when we also need to step up to offer constructive words about the positive roles the U.S. must play in the international community.

As Christians struggle with these questions, we may sense tension between our loyalty to God and the current vision of “patriotism.” This may be precisely what we need to articulate, as disciples of the One who transcends all nations and tribes.

APPENDIX

Ecumenical Thinking About Global Order:
Some History, a Map of Current Conflicts, and Ecumenical Resources

The United States has not always tried to be a global leader. Through most of the 19th century the U.S. did not project power outside of the Americas, though it frequently acted imperially within the Americas. It had a relatively small standing army and deployed a tiny Navy oriented to coastal defense. When Westward expansion concluded in the 19th century, the McKinley, Roosevelt, and Taft Administrations directed America’s expansionist impulse to other parts of the world. Economic interests and a vigorous sense of divine national purpose stimulated this internationalist move, setting the stage for President Wilson’s venture into Europe and his failed attempt to have America play a greater international role through the League of Nations. The isolationist turn that followed in the 1930s was soon reversed by the attack on Pearl Harbor.

To avoid repeating the disaster of WWI, even as the tragedy of WWII loomed, theologians from diverse Protestant communions broke with the pacifistic and isolationist tendencies advanced in The Christian Century to found a competing magazine, Christianity and Crisis. Seeking to realize their ideals, they convinced the Federal Council of Churches to establish the Commission to Study the Bases for a Just and Durable Peace in 1940. In the first phase, the commission articulated Six Pillars of Peace, principles they thought should guide an approach to international relations. During the second phase, the commission proposed that the United States embrace these principles; commit itself to “a future of organized international collaboration”; and, in concert with other nations, establish international institutions capable of maintaining a liberal, rule-based global order. Their work informed the Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods Agreements that gave us the United Nations and international financial institutions. They were even invited to critique early draft agreements. The group worked on multiple levels during this time to shape church and public opinion and pressure lawmakers to accept the United States’ international responsibility. The commission’s work was marked by its concern for human rights, which shaped and supported the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Meanwhile, a series of church study conferences was held through the 1950s that advocated a law-based international order and the necessity of American engagement.

The new international institutions were soon tested by and, in some ways, overtaken by the Cold War, which pitted the Soviet Union and global communism against “the Free World” led by the United States of America. In this connection, we note that the term “Free World” was appropriate mainly for the North Atlantic nations. At the start of the Cold War, the major countries included in the moniker “Free World” were actually ruling large colonial empires in Africa, and South and East Asia, where people were hardly free. As these colonies gained nominal independence in the late 50s to mid-70s, they sought economic and military aid that often made them clients of either the Soviet Bloc or the NATO bloc. Sometimes this led to territorial splits and open military conflict, as in China, Korea, Vietnam, and Pakistan. At other times, notably in Africa and the Middle East, the Soviets and NATO powers restrained conflict between their client states. Particularly in these places, and Latin America, the Cold War mentality led the U.S. government to support undemocratic and often brutal governments, as long as they opposed communism, voted with us at the UN, and in some cases let us have military bases.

In the later1980s and early 1990s, after the collapse of USSR, some countries in Latin America, Africa, and especially the former Soviet Union adopted more democratic electoral systems. But the Cold War pattern of the NATO and the USSR competing for and sometimes restraining clients also withered. Without that framework, more open military conflicts arose, and are still ongoing. There are many complex stories in these countries of the greater Middle East and Central Asia in particular, often with important effects on the internal politics and society in the major powers. Part of the challenge of supporting a more just world order is determining how much regional collective security agreements can or should be modeled on NATO, and how much leadership can be expected of other blocs (such as an EU without Britain) in a world increasingly affected by China. China’s perceived pragmatism in expanding its relationships poses clear questions about human rights.

The Cold War concluded with an astonishing display of peacemaking among former rivals, as the West forged a partnership with Russia to reduce nuclear stockpiles and prevent nuclear proliferation. The West even sent advisors to help revitalize the tattered Soviet economy, an effort that was perhaps bound to fail, even if a more constructive transformation of state enterprises and fairer distribution of state assets had been envisioned. Much of the hope that characterized the immediate post-Cold War era has dissipated.

When the bipolar, Cold War world collapsed, a unipolar world remained, leaving America and her allies militarily, economically, and culturally preeminent. There was no Peace of Westphalia, Congress of Vienna, or Dumbarton Oaks to establish the contours of the post-war peace as there had been following other conflicts. Instead, there was continuity, sometimes described as “status quo plus.”
President George H. W. Bush asserted that the “New World Order” presented an opportunity to build an international community of nations based on “the rule of law, not the law of the jungle.” In saying this, he hoped the institutions founded after World War II would finally be able to live out their promise. The National Council of Churches responded quickly to that sense of possibility with a one-year project supporting a human rights and development-oriented foreign policy. The first Iraq war tempered the Bush Administration’s ambitions. During the relatively peaceful Clinton years, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright envisioned a constructive U.S. dominance when she called America the “indispensable nation.” She urged America to work in concert with allies to provide leadership and military backbone for a relatively just, peaceful, and law-based international order still structured by the post WWII institutions. Again, with a hope of encouraging a genuine re-direction of U.S. hegemony, the National Council of Churches in 1998 updated the six pillars of peace, adding a seventh concerning ecology.

Neoconservatives in the George W. Bush administration challenged aspects of this consensus prioritizing peace over intervention. Like the liberal internationalists of the first Bush and the Clinton administrations, they believed in encouraging the spread of a democratic capitalism as a way to advance freedom, human rights, and national security, even if it was through forcible regime change. However, they diverged from the Clinton’s caution by articulating a preemptive strategy to counter perceived threats and rivals. They also tended to view international institutions and law as constraining the national interest of the United States, rather than facilitating them.

The invasion of Iraq reflected both inclinations. Saddam Hussein was alleged to be flagrantly violating international law while U.N. sanctions and the International Atomic Energy Commission were failing to halt his programs to develop weapons of mass destruction. Although most allies urged a more restrained approach, the second Bush administration (along with Great Britain, some smaller nations, and with logistical support from allies who publicly opposed to the war) invaded to halt the alleged programs. Even before the exaggerations and lies justifying the Iraq invasion were fully understood, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and others opposed the war as “unwise, illegal, and immoral.” Many, including United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, questioned the invasion’s legality.

Most now view the war in Iraq as a strategic blunder. Some blame its failure on the administration’s inability to quickly win the peace. Others claim that Bush waged the wrong sort of war; namely, an old-style war against a nation state, when the enemy was a decentralized, non-state actor. Still others claimed that invading Iraq to create a democracy was always quixotic. Regardless, the war in Iraq had far-reaching consequences. It awakened long simmering rivalries between Sunnis and Shiites, empowering the later. It strengthened the regional position of Iran, destabilizing the Middle East; pinned U.S. forces, distracting us from the occupation of Afghanistan; and made the United States unpopular in much of the world, even among the citizenry of our strongest Iraqi War allies. One could argue that it also demoralized peace movements in the U.S. and around the world that had been unable to stop the war.

The Obama administration sought to return the nation to a more modest version of liberal internationalism that the first Bush and Clinton administrations had articulated. It had mixed success. Despite opposition from our closest regional allies, Israel and Saudi Arabia, it led a broad coalition of nations that compelled Iran to relinquish its nuclear ambitions for a decade. The administration also attempted a foreign policy pivot to Asia, in order to counter expansionist moves by China and restore a regional balance of power. Yet it failed to extract the United States from Iraq or Afghanistan. More than any previous administration, it engaged in small-foot-print warfare through drones and special ops strikes, extending a state of seemingly permanent war. It encouraged rebellion in Libya and Syria without committing to support the subsequent revolution and was slow to respond to the rise of ISIL in Iraq.

It is difficult to determine what foreign policy direction President Trump will ultimately take. The President’s reversals and conflicting statements, the vagueness of Secretary of State Tillerson’s vision, and Trump’s contradictions with his Secretary of State make discerning a coherent policy difficult. During the campaign and in an aggressive speech to the United Nations he articulated an “America-First” posture that takes a transactional approach in pursuit of America’s interests (as he understands them) even at the expense of allies and international institutions. Since the election he has seemed to pursue this policy, pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Trade Partnership, continuing to criticize multilateral treaties, and signaling impatience with the United Nations. In December of 2017, despite contacts earlier in the year with Palestinian representatives, the President unilaterally recognized Jerusalem as the capital only of Israel, a position repudiated by most nations in a United Nations General Assembly vote soon after. That action, probably marking the end of any U.S. claim of helping broker a “two-state” solution, appeared to cater directly to Christian as well as Jewish Zionist constituencies without much consideration of larger consequences.

If advisors from the populist wing of the administration influence him, President Trump may thus approach the world in terms of “a clash of civilizations.” Or it may be that more traditional internationalists in the administration, such as Mattis and McMaster, will moderate this inclination. The inertia of a diminished State Department, international events, and global opinion may frustrate attempts at a course change. While it is unclear what values or strategy will drive Trump’s foreign policy, many around the world have voiced concerns and uncertainty about America’s global leadership. Some nations and non-state actors see this as an opportunity to be exploited.

The Emerging Global Order

As much as the United States and her allies were perceived to be “preeminent” after the collapse of the USSR, today we see growing instability as regional actors and long-term trends challenge the post-Cold War global order.

The proxy wars in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq reflect the age-old struggle between Shiite and Sunni, as well as the present-day ambitions of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. Although tensions between Shiite and Sunni had been a part of the Middle East for centuries, the current conflict was set in motion when the U.S. invaded Iraq and destabilized several inherently volatile states. Their instability stemmed from the colonial powers’ disregard for ethnic and religious identities when they drew the national boundaries and left members of religious minorities in charge. Some suggest that the existing colonial powers did this intentionally so that the empowered minorities would remain dependent clients of their former rulers. The bloodiness of these wars and the specter of terrorism inspired by fundamentalist Islam tempt many to exaggerate threats from the Middle East, when greater challenges to the international order emanate from elsewhere.
Russia prefers a “polycentric world” (a world divided among regional powers) to the current U.S.-led international system, which they deem as reflecting and serving America’s interests. Russia’s view of the world is shaped by its precarious geographical position, with few naturally defensive borders and a history of multiple invasions (Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hitler). Because of this, NATO’s expansion into former Soviet republics was bound to leave Russia fearful of encroachment and aggrieved at having lost regional hegemony. Putin has sought to restore a sense of Russian greatness by recovering regional dominance, invading Georgia, and annexing Crimea. He has also sown seeds of disunity and confusion among the NATO democracies and challenged American interests in Syria. Some worry that at an opportune moment, Russia will test the West’s commitment to newly formed NATO alliances with their former Eastern European client states.

China has stated the foreign policy goal of dominance over the “near seas,” particularly the South China Sea. The Obama administration’s “pivot to Asia” was designed to counter this goal by balancing power in the region, ensuring freedom of navigation, and protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China’s neighbors. The bipartisan rejection of the Transpacific Trade Partnership in our recent election has provided an opening for China to secure economic alliances that may strengthen its regional ascendency.

China and India are rising economic powers, even as Europe and Japan grow older and decline. The World Bank has forecast that in ten years China’s GDP (aggregate, not per capita) will surpass the U.S. Other experts predict that by 2050 India’s economy will also surpass U.S. GDP. Some foresee a time when the dollar will lose the global dominance it has enjoyed since 1944 and will be joined by the euro and renminbi in a multicurrency monetary system. Recently, “China’s development banks have pumped billions of dollars into Africa, central Asia, and Latin America, displacing the World and the Asian Development Banks. In contrast to its Bretton Woods competitors, China’s lenders offer loans without attaching pro-democracy strings.”

Others doubt that the dollar can be displaced soon as a reserve currency, citing the structural weakness of the European Union revealed in the recent recession and the fact that the value of the renminbi cannot be trusted given that China is a closed society.

The capacity to project military power rests on economic power. This fact portends a shift in global military might. History teaches that these sorts of shifts in power can be extremely dangerous and difficult to peacefully negotiate. Today China is happy for the U.S. to patrol the global commons and spend its blood and treasure to stabilize, say, Afghanistan, allowing China to extract minerals without bearing the cost for maintaining order. China’s continuing development of cheap anti-ship missiles will complicate the ability of the U.S. fleet to project power inside the first island chain of the South China Sea. This may compromise freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and encourage China to continue encroaching on the sovereignty of nations like Vietnam and the Philippines. The U.S. response to this Chinese assertion of regional hegemony must be carefully managed.

Complicating this is the fact that the United States wants China’s help in containing a paranoid and dangerous North Korea. While China is alarmed by North Korea’s bellicose rhetoric and growing nuclear and missile capabilities, the prospect of a destabilized North Korea and tens of thousands of North Korean refugees streaming across the China border is their bigger nightmare. Beyond misunderstanding China’s interests, there are many ways the situation in North Korea could go terribly wrong. Unlike the balance of power that existed during the Cold War, when the possibility of mutual assured destruction restrained actors, dynamics in this simmering conflict could provoke a preemptive strike and then retaliation. The difficulties North Korea presents to the global order reinforces the importance of global cooperation to restrain nuclear proliferation.

Other Transnational Trends

Non-state actors, such as terrorist networks and transnational corporations, complicate traditional Westphalian conceptions of political order based on the sovereignty of the nation state. Terrorist networks undercut the legitimacy of governments that cannot protect civilians against attack and provoke strong nations to regularly violate national sovereignty of weaker nations to defend themselves. Transnational corporations whose balance sheets dwarf the GDP of poorer nations often seek economic advantage by weakening some governments and propping up others. Climate change and other environmental concerns transcend national boundaries and create refugees. Innovations in communications, finance, and travel have made the world smaller.

The world’s shrinking size invites powerful, distant nations to involve themselves in what, in an earlier age, would have been local disturbances or civil wars. It also makes migration easier. Advances in robotics have made manufacturing much less dependent on human labor. As trade expands and capital, talent and manufacturing move freely around the world, the globe has become, in Thomas Friedman’s terms, “flat.” Weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, render state borders permeable.

Philip Bobbitt claims that these transnational trends are bringing the global order to a momentous inflection point. He predicts that they will challenge the nature of the state and the social contract that gives it legitimacy. A sign of the churning caused by these questions is the significant global retreat of liberal democracy, which began under the Obama administration. Sometimes the retreat is to an “illiberal democracy” as in Poland and the Philippines; other times it is a near-complete overthrow of democratic institutions as in Hungary and Turkey. The global expansion of democracy that happened following the end of the Cold War is over and the previously widespread conviction that capitalism necessarily fosters a democratic mindset increasingly looks quaint.

Furthermore, globalization has provoked a backlash among the economically developed countries of the world, particularly among their rural and working-class populations. People worry whether their governments can protect them from terrorist attack or absorb the vast numbers of refugees. The erosion of the economic position of the working and middle classes in the U.S. and Europe has intensified since the “Atlantic” recession of 2008. Today, in the United States and in Europe, we see the rise of populisms and nationalisms that reject globalization and question core democratic and capitalist values.

Ideally, international tensions would be adjudicated in the U.N. and in other international institutions that the U.S. and its allies fashioned after WWII. While these organizations have endured, few would say that the U.N. has lived into the dream of being a “Parliament of Man” [sic]. It never had the military teeth outlined in its charter, for the obvious reason that no nation wanted the relinquish sovereignty. The U.N. Security Council’s anachronistic membership no longer reflects economic and military realities. It is rarely able to act decisively or enforce norms. The one-nation veto spreads perverse incentives throughout the U.N.’s humanitarian and diplomatic work. As with the
Responsibility to Protect doctrine, the moral reach of the United Nations often exceeds its grasp. At best it projects soft power (or legitimating authority) and helps coordinate action against terrorism and other common threats. While the U.N. is not all one might hope, it is not “nothing” either.

Historical, Theological and Ecumenical Resources

The diverse traditions of Christian faith have resources of history, theology, and global relationships that give us wisdom to address questions concerning global order and America’s role in the world. In this section we examine strands of U.S. Protestant political ethics before turning to their theological underpinnings.

The Christians who migrated to North America brought diverse traditions with them. Some looked primarily to the early Church for inspiration (the peace churches). Others drew inspiration from the natural law thinkers of the 11th Century (Roman Catholics). Still others interpreted the world through theological lenses ground during the Reformation (Lutherans, Reformed, and Episcopal Communions). On the American continent, Black Christians read the biblical story and developed theological insight in light of their experience of slavery and oppression. Other movements attempted to transcend European sectarianism and attain a purer biblical pattern of life (Disciples of Christ, some neo-Pentecostal movements). The Orthodox churches, most recent in terms of immigration, appeal to the longest traditions of negotiating with empires and representing peoples. This rich, diverse history gives the modern, ecumenical church multiple lenses through which to read scripture and interpret God’s world.

The Federal Council of Church’s Commission to Study the Bases for a Just and Durable Peace represented the theological and institutional strength of mid-20th century Protestantism. Rooted largely in Christian realism, the theologians who participated in its numerous studies and conferences outlined an ethic that supported principles that would establish a lawful international order. They encouraged the United States to accept moral responsibility in the international realm, while eschewing nationalistic notions of special providence. Their work, as previously noted, supported the Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods agreements that helped structure the global order these past seventy years.

One of them, Reinhold Niebuhr, went on to address threats posed by the Cold War. He urged a policy of containment in response to “messianic communism,” which he predicted would eventually collapse from its internal contradictions. He also warned that the struggle posed a menace for a soul of a nation that was inclined to excessive confidence in its innocence and goodness. George Kennan, among other public officials, credits Niebuhr for inspiring his political philosophy. The threat of nuclear annihilation motivated mainline Protestants to articulate policies of just peacemaking to diminish the possibility of nuclear war.

During the early post-cold war years, some Christian theologians articulated theologies of “globalization.” They insisted that globalization was more than simply a political, technological, or economic phenomenon, contending that it included religious and moral dimensions. Max Stackhouse encouraged spreading the secularized Christian values outlined in the U.N.’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, democracy, and a type of covenantal capitalism, as well as the metaphysical-moral vision that undergirds them. William Schweiker characterizes globalization as “a time of many worlds” threatened by “over-humanization” that threatens the integrity of life. Believing that the modern banishment of religious sources from moral thinking has resulted in a profound symbolic and conceptual poverty in current thought, he maintains that theological humanism can overcome this threat as well as the threats of anti-humanism and religious fanaticism. Walter Eucken and other Ordoliberals at the University of Freiburg developed the concept of Ordnungspolitik as an intellectual guidepost for Germany’s post-war reconstruction.

It is notable that theologians who participated in the Just and Durable Peace conversations called for an end to colonialism. Following World War II, former colonies demanded freedom and equal inclusion in the community of nations. Concurrent with this, Christians in many parts of the world and in the West articulated theologies of liberation that reflected their experience and protested the first world’s exploitation of the third world, pointed to the contradictions in Western Civilization, and proclaimed the biblical God’s concern for the oppressed. Third world Christians have sometimes characterized globalization as re-colonization and condemned patterns of “empire” that favor the wealthiest countries. At the same time, we may note that globalization has had a more complex impact on poorer countries than can be captured in simple evaluations of “good” or “bad.” This history gives the church an example of engagement and suggests theological resources that can guide a faithful response to transformations in the global order.

Theological Themes

The ecumenical church shares theological themes that transcend our doctrinal differences, even though we may emphasize some doctrines more than others and express the same doctrines in distinctive denominational dialects. The hymn “In Christ There Is No East or West” summarizes the cosmopolitan spirit of Christian faith. We view (or should view) the world in relationship with God who is both Creator and Redeemer. A loyalty to God’s reign and the prohibition of idolatry curbs nationalistic impulses, while an ethic of universal love alerts Christian ethics to the false charms of tribalism and fosters inclusivity.

A theological view of human nature has inspired and shaped the contributions that Christians have made to international relations. A Christian anthropology begins with the conviction that everyone is created in God’s image. This belief supports the dignity of every person, undercuts aristocratic and elitist ideologies, and underwrites a special concern for the poor, weak, and vulnerable.

A Christian anthropology holds the conviction that God has endowed every human being with a moral sense. This belief is rooted in the Apostle Paul’s declaration that Gentiles, who lack the Hebraic law, nevertheless possess the capacity for ethical reasoning because God has written the law on their hearts and given them a conscience (Rom. 2:14–15). Every human is able to determine right and wrong. It follows from this that morality cannot be limited to religious texts, the interpreters of these texts, or the communities formed around these texts.

In the 11th century, the belief that all people are capable of discerning right and wrong became the foundation on which natural law thinking developed and European law was reconstructed. It informed Martin Luther’s observation that “people are better ruled by a smart Turk than a stupid Christian.” Since Hugo Grotius in the 17th century, natural law and the (often Protestant) elevation of the individual
conscience provided a basis for interreligious dialogue and the foundation for international law in a world of diverse cultures and religions. A Christian anthropology suggests that peoples of differing faiths and interests can reason together.

A Christian view of human nature is indelibly shaped by the claim that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3.23). The conviction that human sin curves individual and national interests in on themselves fosters realism about the limits of humans and their institutions. It compels us to recognize the countless ways that human law and moral reasoning can be corrupted. A belief in sin’s inevitable corruption amplifies sensitivity to corporate and structural evil and makes us worry about concentrations of power. It tempers utopian dreams, grounding a pragmatic view of what can be accomplished in history. It restrains the crusading spirit with the recognition that our best plans can have unintended consequences that may go tragically wrong. It makes the church doubt that moral appeals, by themselves, are able to correct injustice. Instead, guided by a sober realism, the church tends to pursue justice by placing limits, checks, and balances on power. In this connection the cross of Christ arouses suspicion of unchecked political and religious power, even as a belief in Christ’s resurrection gives grounds for hope in the face of evil and inspires resistance and reform.

Though they hold different theories as to how it works, Christians believe God’s grace is the remedy for sin. The “covenant of grace,” that runs through both “testaments” encourages a generous posture towards all people, Christian and otherwise, as having a worthy place before God. God’s covenant with Adam and Eve (who represent all humanity), with Noah (who again represents all humanity and all creatures), with Abram and Sari (with its aim to bless the families of the earth), and with the other covenants, express a single intention that is clarified and fulfilled in the new covenant in Jesus Christ. God has bound God’s self to all peoples and nations; indeed: God loves the cosmos. God’s universal covenant binds us together with other companions or partners. These ties give rise to moral obligations. The covenant of grace calls attention to the social dimension of human nature and the requirements for human flourishing. It also provides a positive basis for respectful, constructive engagement with people of different cultures and religions, as well as a model for federated international political structures.

Proclamation of the gospel of grace cannot be separated from an announcement that God’s reign overthrows systems of oppression. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of the one who proclaimed, “The kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news” (Mk. 1:15). The dominion that Jesus announces involves influence and allegiance (hence the call to “repent”). God governs the world through secondary causes, including institutions of political power, which are instituted to promote creation’s flourishing and restrain evil. Sin corrupts these powers so that they are in rebellion. Jesus’ proclamation included a confrontation with sinful systems and structures that diminished people’s lives. Paul says God was in Christ reconciling the world (cosmos) to God’s self (2 Cor. 5:19), which is a way of saying that God’s commonwealth is not tribal, but includes all people and creatures. Indeed, it embraces the whole society of being, or, as Jonathan Edwards might put it, is benevolent to “being in general.” Jesus not only taught, but modeled this inclusion in his ministry, crossing boundaries of clean/unclean, righteous/sinner, Jew/Samaritan, male/female, and finally overcoming all sinful “walls that divide” the human family.

A more complete rehearsal of Christian social impacts throughout the 20th century would look at the high points of the Civil Rights movement and its aspiration—as in Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous Riverside Church sermon—to ending militarism and materialism as well as racism. The ecumenical churches have had influence in other areas; the human rights emphasis, opposition to capital punishment, the sanctuary movement and Central America solidarity work in the 1980s, influence on conservation and environmentalism, the nuclear freeze movement noted earlier in this text, opposition to the Vietnam war and other U.S. military interventions. Earlier support for improving labor conditions and organizing broadened in some ways to the corporate responsibility movement and consumer boycotts, often targeted on behalf of exploited workers. The purpose of mentioning these various campaigns is to indicate the scope and tenacity of the ecumenical churches, and to situate the international peace witness of this study effort in that history.

Even now, for people around the world living without hope, who have despaired that evil earthly powers control their destiny, the announcement of God’s rule is always good news. Rebellious earthly powers responded to the challenge of God’s in-breaking rule by crucifying Jesus. When God raised Jesus from the dead, God confirmed his teaching and example and defeated these rebellious powers, named as sin, evil and death. God’s redemptive and reconciling work is of course not done; it calls us to think and act creatively in each period and to call upon the power of the Holy Spirit who makes all things new.

Finally, U.S. churches have ties and communication with partner organizations and congregations around the world. Although we have focused on the responsibility of U.S. churches, a more just world order needs the support of all persons of good will. For that specific voice of the church that this proposal is to strengthen, we will want to deepen our transnational relationships, as stated in the initial recommendations, and we name them again. The mainline denominations are connected to confessional groupings of Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist and other. The Peace Churches maintain international networks. The historic African American churches have forged relationships with African churches, new and old. The Orthodox churches retain the strongest links to their countries of origin. Members of the National Council of Churches of Christ and other ecumenical groups share some common ecumenical social teaching, as well as engage with ongoing conversations and debate. These relationships enrich our understanding and are vital to the ecumenical church as it strives to offer a prophetic word and a timely witness.

Endnotes

1. In invoking the Federal Council of Churches’ Commission in the 1930s to Study the Bases for a Just and Durable Peace, this proposal underlines the role of theologians and seminarians played in the creation of the U.N. and other international organization. One can also not invoke the creation of United Nations without recognizing its need for updating to better serve the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other subsequent advances in international law. One can read this proposal as a return to questions that study chair, Henry Van Dusen thought had not been fully answered in the “Just and Durable Peace” conferences. “Who is to be responsible for the determination and maintenance of the peace? What principles should be intrinsic to the peace we seek? … How can they be translated from the realm of ideals into the decisions of statesmen (sic) and the politics of nations?” See Heather A. Warren, Theologians of a New World Order: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realists, 1920–1948 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
2. A Pew study found that 57 percent of Americans thought that the U.S. should deal with our own problems and leave others to manage theirs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/case-offshore-balancing?cid=nlc-fatoday-20161228&sp_mid=5308694&sp_rid=cmm5fbW9uZHIvb2JcnRzQGdtyWIsLnNvbQ82&spMailingID=5308694&spUserID=MjIxNTgwNjA1MzYzS0&spJobID=1065071969&spReportId=MTA2NzA3MTk2QjQ2.

3. A recent poll of registered voters found that only 14 percent believe recent American foreign policy has made us safer, https://www.charleskochinstitute.org/news/majority-believe-foreign-policy-made-americans-less-safe/. Note the source of this study; the values of world order can be presented in many ways, as concerns for safety can be directed toward “national security” or “human security.”

4. According to one study, young Americans who say it is “essential to live in a country with a democracy” (where “essential” is 10 on a 10-point scale) has plummeted from 91 percent in the 1930s to 57 percent today, http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Foa%26Mounk-27-3.pdf. The decline in democracy is global. https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-democracy’s- decline-would-undermine-international-order. See also, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/15/opinion/across-the-globe-a-growing-disillusionment-with-democracy.html. Edward Luce says that while “democracy is something of a sacred value to the generation who fought against fascism—or suffered under it—and lived through the Cold War” American and European millennials no longer hold this to be true. “Today, one in six people of all ages in America and Europe now believe it would be a good or a very good things for the ‘army to rule.’” Luce is most troubled with how the rich have lost faith in democracy. See, The Retreat of Western Liberalism (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017), pg. 121. Some doubt that support for democracy is in decline, though they admit that the quality of democracy is in decline. See https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/26/is-democracy-on-the-decline-not-as-much-as-some-pundits-want-you-to-believe/?utm_term=.e78f8d7ad6c.

5. John Ikenberry hints at the stakes of our current political moment, Compared with past orders—imperial and anarchic systems of various sorts, from the Greek and Chinese worlds of the classical era to the nineteenth-century European imperial system—the liberal order stands alone. Choose your metric. But in terms of wealth creation, the provision of physical security and economic stability, and the promotion of human rights and political protections, no other international order in history comes close. The liberal order may have its shortcomings—costly and ill-advised wars have been fought in its name, and vast economic and social injustices remain—but it has empowered people across the world who seek a better life within a relatively open and rules-based global system. See, John Ikenberry, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-04-17/plot-against-american-foreign-policy.


7. Foreign Affairs recently dedicated a whole issue to the question of the future of the global order: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-12-12/will-liberal-order-survive?cid=nlc-fatoday-20170105&sp_mid=53136093&sp_rid=cmf5fbW9uZHIvb2JcnRzQGdtyWIsLnNvbQ82&spMailingID=53136093&spUserID=MjIxNTgwNjA1MzYzS0&spJobID=1080887791&spReportId=MTA4MDg4NzcsMSQ2.


9. Robert Gilpin claims the most stable political orders are hegemonic, such as the current unipolar, American-led global order. He observes that while hegemonic powers benefit from the orders they uphold, free riders, which don’t have to shoulder the costs, often benefit more. Throughout history there usually comes a point when the cost of upholding the order exceeds the benefit extracted by the hegemon. Sometimes they continue playing this role to maintain the prestige. It gives one food for thought considering how military expenditures may be related to the U.S. to neglect of infrastructure and other public goods. See Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For more about hegemonic theory see, https://policytensor.com/2013/02/25/theory-of-hegemonic-war/.


11. John Foster Dulles, Six Pillars of Peace: Cement Unity Now with Organized World Collaboration. ” Dulles described the six pillars of peace this way, 1st—There must be organized political collaboration, in the first instance as between the United Nations, with others to be subsequently included… 2nd—Wherever, in the economic and financial field, interdependence is such that the acts of one nation may have acute international consequences, then—we say—such acts must be brought within the scope of international agreement and not left to purely unilateral decision… 3rd—There must be a standing international body to study the need for change… 4th—There should be some form of international organization to promote the ultimate autonomy of subject peoples… 5th—We propose international control of armament… 6th—…..we assert that the right of spiritual and intellectual liberty must be both recognized and made a matter of international concern. … http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1943/1943-03-18a.html.


15. Chris Miller argues that glasnost (openness) undermined perestroika (economic reform), making it impossible for Gorbachev to outmaneuver the interest groups who found perestroika threatening. Miller doubts Gorbachev could have taken the authoritarian path China took in ending Mao’s socialism. See, Chris Miller, The Struggle to Save the Soviet Economy, Mikhail Gorbachev and the Collapse of the USSR (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

16. Daniel Philpot argues that glasnost and perestroika represented an ideological collapse that preceded the political falling away of former Soviet Satellites. See, The Shield of Achilles.
17. Some may ask whether the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (November 1990) is comparable with previous peace treaties. Though the agreement followed perestroika, which both undermined the ideological basis for Soviet participation in the Cold War and outlined democratic principles and human rights, it quickly passed into obscurity in the confusion that followed the collapse of a signatory, the Soviet Union. Much discussion of this period in history and what has followed is written from Charles A. Kupchan, No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).


21. The NCC advocated these six pillars:
   1) International political framework (provided by the United Nations); 2) International economic accountability; 3) International legal framework; 4) Protection for the most vulnerable; 5) Resolution and transformation of conflict; 6) Honoring human rights.

   They also suggested a seventh pillar, “concerned with ecology and the environment,” http://www.nccusa.org/news/news58.html. The NCCC international relations team that reopened this approach to world order was supported in part by the Stanley Foundation.

22. See https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf. Some, such as Philip Bobbitt, prefer the concept of “preclusion” to “preemption.” He views the former as more circumscribed.


24. For example, see Condoleezza Rice, Democracy: Stories from the Long Road to Freedom, (New York: Twelve, 2017).

25. This is Philip Bobbitt’s argument, despite the fact he initially supported the invasion of Iraq. See, Terror and Consent, (New York: Anchor Books, 2009).


27. This was an argument for a peace discernment process in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); See Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2017).

28. Some, like John Mearsheimer, claim that despite the rhetoric, an honest comparison of the Obama and Bush administrations shows continuity. He believes both have pursued a foolish policy of regime change in the Middle East. See http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics/grand-strategy-george-w-bush-vs-barack-obama-19109.

29. See Secretary of State Rex Tillerson’s remarks to the U.S. Department of State Employees, https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/05/270620.htm.


31. See Steve Bannon’s Vatican comments. He claims that globalism, relativism, pluralism, secularism, and political correctness have dispirited and subverted the West’s previously humane, biblical capitalism that distributed wealth to a broad middle class. (Bannon’s sanitized history conveniently ignores the 19th century robber barons and the brutality that accompanied early industrialization, which provoked some workers to turn to communism.) In its place we have the crony capitalism and the vicious, Ayn Randian capitalism of Wall Street. Bannon also claims that Lilliputian globalists have tied down Europe and America, sapping our cultural strength and incapacitating us in the long war with Islamism, http://the-american-catholic.com/2016/11/18/remarks-of-stephen-bannon-at-a-conference-at-the-vatican/. For a consideration of how Steve Bannon’s cyclical view of history may shape American foreign policy see, http://time.com/4659390/howe-strauss-steve-bannon/ See also Andrew Sullivan’s consideration of other Trump administration players, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/04/andrew-sullivan-why-the-reactionary-right-must-be-taken-seriously.html.


33. Political scientists of the Realist school claimed that a unipolar world, with a single superpower, was inherently unstable and that it would provoke lesser states to band together against the hegemon. For an alternate view that claims that unipolar worlds are more stable. See William Wohlforth, http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/wohlforthv024no1.pdf.

34. Some readers of this paper note that very little is said about Central and Latin America; this is because experts writing about threats to global order do not point to threats emanating from there.


39. See Kupchan p. 76.

40. Edward Luce, The Retreat of Western Liberalism, p. 84.


45. Philip Bobbit predicts that this transformation will be as disruptive and, likely, as violent as that which transformed the feudal order into the nation states. One may ask whether the current discontent in the West is a rejection of Bobbitt’s emerging “Market State,” which he claimed would own the future. See The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History, (New York: Anchor Books, 2003).

46. Andrew Sullivan summarizes the nationalist backlash against globalization this way,

Donald Trump is now president of the United States, having won on a campaign that trashed liberal democracy itself, and is now presiding over an administration staffed, in part, with adherents of a political philosophy largely alien to mainstream American politics. In Russia, Vladimir Putin has driven his country from post-communist capitalism to a new and popular czarism, empowered by nationalism and blessed by a resurgent Orthodox Church. Britain, where the idea of free trade was born, is withdrawing from the largest free market on the planet because of fears that national identity and sovereignty are under threat. In France, a reconstructed neo-fascist, Marine Le Pen, has just won a place in the final round of the presidential election. In the Netherlands, the anti-immigrant right became the second-most-popular vote-getter — a new high-water mark for illiberalism in that once famously liberal country. Austria narrowly avoided installing a neo-reactive president in last year’s two elections. Japan is led by a government attempting to rehabilitate its imperial, nationalist past. Poland is now run by an illiberal Catholic government that is dismembering key liberal institutions. Turkey has morphed from a relatively secular state to one run by an Islamic strongman, whose powers were just ominously increased by a referendum. Israel has shifted from secular socialism to a raw ethno-nationalism,” http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/04/andrew-sullivan-why-the-reactionary-right-must-be-taken-seriously.html.


52. Donald Meyer notes the influence of theological realism. He suggests that in the minds of many, theological realism blurred into pragmatic realism. When Vietnam tarnished the reputation of the pragmatic realism, theological realism was also damaged, despite Reinhold Niebuhr’s sharp criticism of the misadventure from the beginning. This led some revisionist critics to dismiss Niebuhr as a pre-Vietnam Cold Warrior. See Meyer, The Protestant Search for Political Realism, 1919–1941 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), p. xxiv.


Edward Luce believes it is more complex, noting that “Since 1970, Asia’s per-capita incomes have increased five-fold. Even in Africa, the world’s worst-performing continent, incomes have almost doubled. The West’s median income, meanwhile has barely shifted in the last half-century” The Retreat of Western Liberalism, p. 21.

Jean Porter distinguishes natural law viewed as the “created order of things” from natural law viewed as a “universal capacity of moral discernment.” She claims the later was the foundation for the development of the natural law tradition. See Jean Porter, Natural and Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 1999). See also, Jean Porter, Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2005).


Speaking as a member of a denomination that emphasizes the doctrine of election, I recognize that doctrines of election have sometimes fostered an arrogance about the believer’s place in God’s economy that is at odds with Christ’s kenosis and undercuts Jesus’ call to servanthood. This presents a sharp contrast with an emphasis on the covenant of grace.


ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-06. This is an ambitious proposal to examine global order and the role of the United States and the church within that order. Issues of climate change and its effect on the movement of peoples, nuclear catastrophes, militarism, colonization, power rivalry, degradation of the environment, extinction of species, and migration are just some of the topics for study and examination proposed by this overture. These are valid and valuable goals, however the timeline suggested for the completion of a final report by 2022 is not realistic. This overture would benefit from a focus on a fewer set of topics.

Item 09-07

[The assembly approved Item 09-07. See pp. 12, 38.]

On Promoting Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Madagascar—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Moderator(s) of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to call upon the President of the United States and relevant Executive and Congressional leaders to promote democracy, good governance, human rights, and sustainable development in Madagascar by

   a. providing technical and financial support to public agencies and civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations; working in an impartial manner to promote voter education; inclusive and participatory democracy; free, fair, transparent, and credible elections; and strong and responsive public institutions;

   b. promoting consistent respect for fundamental civil and political rights, including the rights of free expression and free association;

   c. encouraging state and civil society actors in Madagascar working to deal with corrupt practices so that the Malagasy people are not robbed of the benefits of natural resource development and foreign assistance;

   d. offering increased financial and technical support to international agencies that are working to halt illegal trafficking of natural resources, animals, and animal products;

   e. reviewing and strengthening U.S. laws and international covenants designed to promote transparency in extractive industries and to prevent the payment of bribes or other corrupt transfers to political and business officials;

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f. urging the Malagasy government to take prompt and effective steps to prevent human trafficking and to prohibit the recruitment of personnel for labor contracts likely to expose workers to coercion or other violations of their human rights;

g. expanding U.S. federal development assistance programs designed to increase the capacity of the Malagasy government and other providers to deliver quality fundamental services including health, education, and impartial justice and security for all Madagascar’s people;

h. financing research and analysis aimed at deepening understanding of the root causes of climate change and assisting governments to minimize the impact of climate change on their citizens and the environment;

i. supporting consistent application of international law and fulfilling U.S. financial commitments to the peacemaking and sustainable development efforts of the United Nations; and

j. encouraging the Malagasy government and people to avert cyclical political crises and uphold the dignity of all of Madagascar’s people by implementing national reconciliation processes consistent with the principles of repentance (fibehahana), confession (fiaiken-keloka), justice (fahamarinana), and forgiveness/reconciliation/harmony (fihavanana) articulated by the Malagasy Christian Council of Churches (FFKM).

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness and Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to

a. monitor social and political developments in Madagascar and assist the Stated Clerk and other denominational leaders to identify opportune moments at which to express effectively the concerns of the General Assembly set out in Recommendation 1.;

b. advise Presbyterians on ways to advocate on behalf of democracy and on behalf of our sisters and brothers in Madagascar.

3. Urge PC(USA) congregations and individual Presbyterians to

a. pray for and with the people of Madagascar;

b. learn about the history of Madagascar and the FJKM, the current realities faced by the people of Madagascar, and the mission work of the PC(USA) in Madagascar;

c. support the ministry and witness of the FJKM and of PC(USA) mission co-workers in Madagascar; and

d. engage in advocacy with their respective legislators to support democracy, protection of human rights, adherence to the rule of law, good governance, ethical business practices, and good stewardship of natural resources.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk to

a. share this action with our partners in the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM);

b. express our thanks to God for the FJKM’s holistic ministry and prophetic witness and for the opportunity to walk beside them as partners, and

c. inform them of our unceasing prayers for them and for their country.

Rationale

In March 2009, a military coup d’etat deposed Madagascar’s democratically elected president, Marc Ravalomanana, and installed a self-styled, “high authority of transition” (HAT), headed by Andry Rajoelina, the former mayor of the capital city, Antananarivo. The coup government shuttered the parliament, “packed” the High Constitutional Court, and stifled free expression, closing a number of radio stations, including Radio Fahazavana, operated by the PC(USA)’s partner, the five-million-member Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM). The HAT presided over rapid social and economic decline, exacerbated by the withdrawal of foreign assistance by many nations. In a country where more than 90 percent of the population was already subsisting on less than $2 per day, many households struggled to make ends meet.

African organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), quickly condemned the coup and called on Madagascar’s political leaders to restore democracy. The SADC brokered multilateral talks involving supporters of Rajoelina and Ravalomanana, as well as two previous presidents, Didier Ratsiraka and Albert Zafy. After two initial accords collapsed almost as soon as they were signed, nearly all of the parties signed a “Roadmap for Ending the Crisis in Madagascar” in September 2011. The roadmap identified a series of steps to be taken in preparation for new national elections and the restoration of democracy.
Meanwhile, the Malagasy Christian Council of Churches (FFKM)—composed of the FJKM, the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Anglican Church—initiated its own national reconciliation process. The process was based on “the four Fs,” four Malagasy words beginning with the letter “F,” that summed up essential stages of genuine and durable reconciliation: fibebahana (repentance), fiaiken-keloka (confession), fahamarinana (justice), and fihavanana (forgiveness/reconciliation/harmony). The FFKM held that all of these elements were necessary to begin to repair Madagascar’s social fabric at a grassroots level and reduce the risk of future outbreaks of the cyclical political conflict that has prompted several political crises since the island regained independence from France in 1960. In particular, our partners in the FJKM stress that strengthening fihavanana, which might also be translated as “kinship,” is vital to achieving reconciliation and building a shared future.

Although the roadmap was never fully implemented, the FFKM reconciliation process was ultimately overtaken by the pressure to hold presidential and parliamentary elections, which eventually occurred in late 2013. International observers accepted the outcome of the elections, despite numerous flaws, and Hery Rajaonarimampianina became Madagascar’s new president in January 2014.

However, while the new government enjoys more legitimacy than the HAT government did, it is unfortunately beset by many of the same problems. In particular, corruption is rife and public officials have made little progress in curtailing illegal trade in Madagascar’s unique precious woods, gemstones, and exotic animals. There are frequent reports of summary executions and other violations of human rights by state security forces, particularly in the south of the country where they often occur in the context of ostensible efforts to curb cattle rustling by bandits known as “dahalo.” In fact, insecurity and corruption are often closely linked as insecurity creates opportunities for corruption and corrupt officials have little interest in promoting social stability and security. Additionally, labor trafficking remains a persistent problem as people—especially women—desperate for income to support their families are recruited for domestic work in the Middle East and other places that turns out to be little more than slavery.

Madagascar is due to hold fresh national elections before the end of 2018. The elections will be critical to the future and well-being of the country’s 24 million people. Elections that are seen to be free, fair, transparent, and credible can help to entrench and consolidate democratic institutions and build public confidence in and ownership of democratic government. Conversely, a process that is muddied by the exclusion of certain candidates, an electoral commission perceived to be partial, widespread corruption and vote-buying, or other irregularities during the campaigning or polling will undermine the legitimacy of the outcome and invite poor governance.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) approved a commissioners’ resolution calling for the restoration of democracy in Madagascar and Honduras, both of which had experienced unconstitutional changes of regime in the previous months. The rationale for that resolution included the following passage, which is equally relevant to this overture:

In 2008, the General Assembly approved a resolution focused on the U.S. political process, “Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform” (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 977ff). Among the biblical, theological, and ethical foundations affirmed are the convictions that “power is held in trust for the common good” (Ibid, p. 984) and that power can also magnify sin. Hence, “we affirm that fundamental basis for checks and balances of power, and the awareness of our ultimate accountability to God and not to other human beings and groups (Peter: ‘we must obey God rather than men’). Alongside the awareness of human fallibility is the strength that God gives us: “God alone is lord of the conscience and has set it free from the doctrines or rules of men (human doctrines or rules), or anything contrary to scripture” (Ibid). (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 978–79)

Concurrences to Item 09-07 from the Presbyteries of Central Florida, de Cristo, Eastern Oregon, Elizabeth, Greater Atlanta, Heartland, Redwoods, and Sheppards & Lapsley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-07.

Madagascar has suffered under many economic and governance setbacks in the last decade and needs substantial support to handle them. The unique animal and plant ecology of Madagascar has suffered along with the human population.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve with comment Item 09-07.
The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to speak out about the suffering of the people of Madagascar due to the lack of a democratic government. ACREC believes it is important that the language focus on a theological basis for intervention versus a democratic system of government.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-07

Comment on Item 09-07—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), our global partner in Madagascar, has actively encouraged the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to engage in advocacy with U.S. officials to support credible elections, the strengthening of democratic institutions, consistent recognition of human rights, and the promotion of reconciliation in a nation that has endured a series of political crises, including a military coup d’etat in March 2009. The actions of previous General Assemblies provide a compelling policy basis for advocacy in all of these areas.

Item 09-07 was drafted by the Advocacy Committee of the Madagascar Mission Network in consultation with the leadership of the FJKM.

Item 09-08

[The assembly approved Item 09-08. See pp. 12, 38.]

On Seeking God’s Peace Through Nuclear Disarmament in the 21st Century—From the Presbytery of New Hope.

The Presbytery of New Hope overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Call upon all members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—in faithfulness to the God of justice, mercy, and compassion—to take actions in defense of God’s creation and our own security, which is inextricably bound to the security of the rest of the world, to take all actions such as might be effective in requiring full U.S. compliance with the obligation to achieve nuclear disarmament under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

2. Renounce the false god of nuclear security with its promise of catastrophic consequences.

3. Renounce any policy that threatens the death of millions of God’s children in any land with a single command and a single warhead.

4. Join in ecumenical discussion at the highest level to develop a collaborative strategy with Christian and other faith communities to effect the total elimination of nuclear weapons from the earth.

5. Make use of resources within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to educate members about the existential threat of nuclear weapons and effective actions that can be taken to address and eliminate that threat.

6. Call upon Presbyterians to take the five risks Presbyterians must take for peace: Commit to the Gospel of Peace, confess our complicity in not being peacemakers, reclaim Christ the peacemaker, find new peace strategies, and convert the empire and work for peace [Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace: Renewing the Commitment to Peacemaking in the PC(USA), Christian Iosso, 2017].

7. Call upon the government of the United States of America to

   a. immediately begin the process of complete, irreversible, and verifiable nuclear disarmament in compliance with our obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (1969), the findings of International Court of Justice (July 1996), and the requirements of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017);

   b. recognize that any use of nuclear weapons is a de facto declaration of war, a power reserved by the Constitution to Congress alone, constrain the power of any president to initiate a nuclear “first strike” by adopting “No First Use” legislation;

   c. eliminate funding for programs designed to prolong the nuclear danger, including the Life Extension Program for existing nuclear weapons and the construction of nuclear weapon production facilities in Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Los Alamos, New Mexico; and any other locations that may be proposed;

   d. direct the U.S. Department of Energy to redirect resources to cleaning up nuclear and other contamination that has accumulated over decades and threatens human health and the environment at multiple nuclear weapons installations, former and present, and at waste sites used to dispose of nuclear waste;
e. provide sufficient resources for the protection of human health and the environment and the remediation of former nuclear weapons facilities;

f. provide support, where possible, to nongovernmental groups and organizations working for the abolition of nuclear weapons;

g. join in the international efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, collaborating with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to seek full implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, beginning with a campaign to compel the United States to demonstrate global leadership to sign and ratify the treaty.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita: $2,500/year. Total—$5,000]

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) lives as a servant of the living God, and acts to transform the world. We are guided in our efforts, however imperfect, by the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in Matthew 26:52 commanded Peter to put away his sword and eschewed violence. The vision of the Kingdom of God captured in the book of Isaiah is of a world where swords were beaten into plowshares, spears into pruninghooks, and God’s children were instructed to “study war no more” (Isa. 2:4).

Since the dawn of the nuclear age, the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons has compelled the church to recognize that these weapons are distinctive among all weapons, having the power to render life on the planet unsustainable. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has engaged the question of nuclear weapons on numerous occasions, saying in Peacemaking: the Believer’s Calling (1980): “At this critical moment in history, peacemaking is the central activity of all believers individually and corporately,” and, in Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age (1988): “Since the policy of nuclear deterrence is in danger of becoming an end in itself, we must exercise our individual and corporate influence to effect a change in national policy as rapidly as possible.”

While many in the church and in the world believed the nuclear threat abated with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, and the thawing of the Cold War, the reality of the threat has never lessened. The United States alone has more than 1,500 thermonuclear warheads deployed on hair-trigger alert around the globe. Our would-be adversaries have as many or more. Cumulatively, these weapons represent an existential threat to humanity.

Since the 1980s, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has remained largely silent on the issue of nuclear weapons and has never in its history taken an unequivocal position rejecting the idolatry of nuclear weapons and demanding that the United States take clear and irreversible steps toward nuclear disarmament.

And yet we know we serve the living Christ who by his example and through his teachings requires compassion of us that extends beyond our loved ones and even unto those who are considered our enemies: “‘You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.’” (Mt. 5:43–44). This radical reversal of the usual dynamic of human relationships is at the very heart of the gospel; its claim on us is inescapable; its imperative applies directly to nuclear weapons.

Since 2014, international efforts to address the nuclear threat from a humanitarian perspective have led to a reemergence of the issue of nuclear weapons on the world stage. After issuing a strong statement condemning nuclear weapons in 2016, Pope Francis, leader of the Roman Catholic Church across the globe, renounced that church’s long-standing provisional acceptance of nuclear deterrence and categorically condemned, on November 10, 2017, not only the threat of use of nuclear weapons, but also “their very possession.” Nuclear weapons, Francis said, “cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family, which must rather be inspired by an ethics of solidarity.”

It is in this context that the persistent exchange of messages and provocative military displays by the United States and North Korea has escalated the danger of a nuclear exchange to an alarming degree.

We would be clear, however, that our responsibility to call for and work for and achieve nuclear disarmament is not simply a response to fears arising from the current political situation, but rather a positive obligation of followers of Christ.

God’s Creation, Humankind, Other Creatures, and the Earth

The existence and threatened use of nuclear weapons presents an existential threat to humankind. It has been said that nuclear weapons represent humankind’s challenge to God, worded quite clearly: “We have the power to destroy everything you have created” (Arundhati Roy, The End of Imagination, 1998).

In the past twenty-five years, accidents, miscommunications, human error and computer glitches have, on numerous occasions, activated U.S. and Russian nuclear launch protocols, bringing the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation because
of a mistake. Should a nuclear exchange take place, the use of nuclear weapons would constitute a catastrophe for the environment that is “not an abstraction, but represents the living space, the quality of life and the very health of human beings, including generations unborn” (International Court of Justice Opinion, July 8, 1996).

In 2018, nuclear weapons, now possessed by at least nine states, are the embodiment of a humanitarian catastrophe on an unimaginable scale. If used, they would release not only immense quantities of heat and energy, but also powerful and prolonged radiation causing damage vastly more powerful than the damage caused by other weapons. The destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet (International Court of Justice Opinion, July 8, 1996).

It is this characteristic of nuclear weapons—that their effect cannot be contained in time or space, cannot distinguish between combatants and noncombatants, cannot be confined to the field of battle, cannot be constrained to the time of declared hostilities—that places them outside any reading of the Just War theory.

Additionally, the radiation released by even a small series of nuclear explosions would affect health, agriculture, natural resources, and demography over a very wide area in a phenomenon known as nuclear winter. The International Court of Justice, in its 1996 opinion, noted that the use of nuclear weapons would be a serious danger to future generations. Ionizing radiation will inevitably damage the future environment, food and marine ecosystems, and cause genetic defects and illness in future generations.

Thus, we see that nuclear weapons pose a threat not only to human life, but to all life on the planet, and even to the natural processes that make life possible—the health of soil and water that, if contaminated by long-lasting radionuclides, will be unavailable to sustain life for millennia.

The fact that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons is so great that it is almost impossible to contemplate (the radiological half-life of highly enriched uranium, a central component in all of today’s thermonuclear weapons, is 710 million years.) does not relieve us of our obligation to face the reality of what human beings have done in inventing, manufacturing, testing, using, and deploying for use, thousands upon thousands of these weapons.

Statistics

Today, the United States of America has more than 4,500 thermonuclear warheads in its active nuclear stockpile. More than 1,500 thermonuclear warheads are deployed on “hair-trigger” alert on 700 delivery vehicles positioned around the globe—in underground silos, on airbases, and submerged in a fleet of nuclear armed submarines.

The United States Congress has expressed its intention to commit the United States to an ambitious plan to modernize its entire nuclear weapons enterprise at a cost of $1.2 trillion over the next thirty years. When costs of environmental cleanup are included, the number rises to $1.7 trillion.

These numbers represent not only a commitment to an enduring reliance on nuclear weapons as the foundation of our military posture around the world, they also represent, as President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “the theft of a slice of bread from a child who is not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.”

The U.S. plan to modernize its nuclear weapons enterprise is not a projection into the future. The United States plans in 2018 to begin construction of a new manufacturing facility—the Uranium Processing Facility—to produce new thermonuclear cores to extend the lifetime of current nuclear warheads and to permit the design and production of new nuclear warheads at the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, at a cost of more than $6 billion.

At the same time, abandoned facilities from nuclear weapons production activities in past years deteriorate at sites around the country. Some of these “excess” facilities pose, in the words of the Department of Energy’s Inspector General, “an ever-increasing risk to workers and the public.” The key reason for the failure to remediate these facilities and eliminate risks is fiscal—money is being spent to build bombs and contamination is left behind in soil and water to threaten generations to come.

Causes and Calls to Peace

The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is in violation of common humanitarian law. This finding, by the International Court of Justice in 1996, was followed by the court’s unanimous finding that nuclear weapons states have an obligation to achieve complete disarmament. The U.S. and many of these states assumed this obligation voluntarily in 1969 under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and promised to disarm “at an early date.”

In July 2017, 122 nations approved a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations. In September, when the Treaty opened for signature, more than fifty nations signed it (the minimum number for the Treaty to enter into effect). At some point in 2018, it is expected that fifty nations will also complete their internal processes of ratifying the treaty at which
point it will enter into effect. The United States, along with its NATO allies and other nuclear weapons states, refused to participate in the negotiation of this treaty and has refused to sign it.

In the years since the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) said, in 1988, “Since the policy of nuclear deterrence is in danger of becoming an end in itself, we must exercise our individual and corporate influence to effect a change in national policy as rapidly as possible.” The policy of nuclear deterrence has assumed the power of a sacred text in national policy discussions. But in the last decade, prominent voices in the United States, including Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Sam Nunn, and William Perry, joined by high-ranking military, diplomatic, and political leaders from around the globe have declared “We are at a tipping point,” (Yale Divinity School Journal, Reflections, 2009) and have called on the United States to take concrete steps toward nuclear disarmament.

It is widely recognized that in the current geopolitical climate, injudicious statements by some nuclear armed leaders have had the effect of exacerbating the risk of a nuclear exchange. On January 26, 2017, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists set the hands on the Doomsday Clock, a universally recognized gauge of the world’s vulnerability to nuclear attack, at 2½ minutes to midnight, the closest it has ever been set since the clock was established.

In an effort to underscore this moment of peril and hope, the Nobel committee awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). In December 2017, ICAN’s Beatrice Fihn said, in accepting the prize: “There are only two endings to the story of nuclear weapons. Either we end nuclear weapons, or they will end us.”

The last great national movement to address the threat of nuclear weapons took place in the United States in the 1980s. Faith communities led that movement. It is time for people of faith to step forward once again to provide leadership in the new global movement to achieve nuclear disarmament. The leadership of Pope Francis should inspire all people of faith to insist that governments pursue policies that provide universal security, guaranteed by relationships of mutuality and brother/sisterhood, rather than the threat of annihilation by nuclear arms.

Conclusion

The promise of the kingdom of God fulfills our hope beyond the secular expectations of history. God redeems history; we do not. We must act as consistently with that redemption as our light and our power permit (Peacemaking: The Believer’s Calling, 1980).

History, by the grace of God, has drawn us to this moment, when the threat of nuclear annihilation is once again in the forefront of the public imagination and is brought before the church. Nations of the world, compelled by their understanding of the humanitarian cost of nuclear weapons—not only their use, but the threat of their use—have risen to adopt a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The effectiveness of that treaty depends in large measure upon us—if we permit our government to ignore the treaty, it will.

In addition, we understand now in ways that were not understood in 1980, the environmental, health, and financial costs that nuclear weapons extract even from those they purport to protect. And we understand that the policy of “deterrence” is actually a suicide pact that might be invoked not only by intentional acts of leaders, but by accidents of miscommunication, computer error, or terrorism.

This is a moment in history when the church must speak with its clearest prophetic voice. Our message is the message of the Old Testament prophets: “Neither shall we study war . . .”, leavened by the gospel of Jesus Christ: unbridled and unlimited compassion for all people, including and especially our enemies.

The mechanisms and instruments required to achieve universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament exist. What is lacking is the political will and the moral leadership. The church can contribute to the former and provide the latter.

It is imperative that we side with the angels and insist, as Jesus did to Peter, that governments around the world put away the sword.

Concurrences to Item 09-08 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Muskingum.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-08

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-08 with the proposed amendment in Recommendation 7.g. to read:

“g. join in the international efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament [in all countries whether considered to be United States allies or not], collaborating with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to seek full
implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, beginning with a campaign to compel the United States to demonstrate global leadership to sign and ratify the treaty.”

All too often, the tendency for United States policy regarding disarmament is to focus on a few countries that it does not view as its allies, while ignoring other countries that have a belligerent record towards their neighboring countries and have nuclear weapons at their disposal. For any disarmament plan to be universally accepted, it should be universally applied.

In summary, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns supports this overture, but cautions against a tendency to only hold accountable for disarmament those countries we do not perceive as allies.

Item 09-09

[The assembly answered Item 09-09 by the action taken on Item 09-12. See pp. 36, 38.]

On Concerning Prayer and Preparation for Peace on the Korean Peninsula—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.

The Presbytery of the Cascades overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to:

1. Encourage every congregation in the PC(USA) to pray at least one week each year for North Korean victims of human rights.

2. Prepare for possible unification by reviewing the list of all properties owned by the predecessor denominations of the PC(USA) in North Korea before the Korean War.

3. Encourage PC(USA) presbyteries that are interested in this issue to work together with the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches.

Rationale

It is time that the whole church should pray together for defectors and others victimized by North Korea’s violations of human rights. At the same time, we should remain hopeful that peace and reunification will come to the Korean peninsula. It is time to review the list of all properties owned by predecessor denominations of the PC(USA) so that centers for caring and faith will be available for Christians in what is now North Korea.

Concurrence to Item 09-09 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 09-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-09 calls for preparing for peace between North and South Korea by praying for “victims of human rights” in the North and taking inventory of properties lost at the time of the Korean War.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the assembly approve an alternate resolution for both Items 9-09 and 9-11). This alternate resolution was developed by our primary Presbyterian and ecumenical Christian partners in South Korea, with Recommendation 3. added to respond to a possible breakthrough in relations with North Korea.

“On behalf of our church partners and in consultation with World Mission, ACSWP respectfully requests the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to do the following:

1. Designate September 2018 as a Korean mission month:
   a. to pray for peace in the Korean peninsula and for victims of division and conflict on both sides of the Korean peninsula, and
   b. to reflect on the past 130 years of Presbyterian mission to Korea including both the positive legacies and also the ways in which mission workers might have contributed to the Korean conflict.

2. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to communicate with domestic and international governments and agencies to encourage peaceful resolution of the divisions on the Korean peninsula, which will foster an environment where no party to the historic conflict feels the need to sacrifice civil liberties in the name of security and where refugees and asylum-seekers are treated humanely.

3. Authorize World Mission Ministries and other appropriate PC(USA) bodies and staff to support and monitor progress toward reconciliation and de-nuclearization in consultation with Korean and other Asian partners, such as the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches, including the following actions:
“a. Explore, in conjunction with current refugee ministries, caring and support ministries for those displaced from both South and North Korea;

“b. Share more broadly within the PC(USA) an understanding of current relationships with the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK);

“c. Deepen the participation of the PC(USA) in the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reconciliation, and Development Cooperation in order to prepare U.S. Christians for reconciliation in Korea by expanding people-to-people exchanges and other forms of trust building;

“d. Assist the Presbyterian Mission Agency in planning events and programs for the Korean mission month and providing informational resources to local councils and congregations;

“e. Encourage the U.S. and other governments to lift sanctions on North Korea as appropriate to genuine steps toward peace and justice and in respectful consultation with regional allies; and

“f. Expand ministries of healing and reconciliation, building on the example of the PC(USA) peace delegation visit to No Gun Ri in 2017, and including as feasible additional areas in Korea significant to the history of the conflict.”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and doubtless many Presbyterians have followed the current U.S. administration’s opening to North Korea with a mixture of doubt and hope; doubt, because prior efforts at peacemaking have failed, and hope, because South Korean leaders, in particular, have taken brave initiatives to expand significant conversations with the North. The dangers of nuclear war cannot be overstated, dangers for which Hiroshima and Nagasaki stand as continuing reminders, and dangers against which U.S. and international sanctions have been imposed on the North. Despite a mixture of sanctions and isolation, the government of North Korea has managed to develop a nuclear weapons capacity and delivery systems for the bombs they have tested. Thus, as we write in late April 2018, with tacit and apprehensive support from Japanese allies and Chinese neighbors, the government of the United States is currently considering direct talks with the leadership of North Korea.

This substitute motion reflects consultation with partners, but is not their statement. It builds upon Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson II’s trip to South Korean in 2017, which was dedicated to making formal apology for war crimes in a particular location and building up relations with the South Korean churches, as directed by 2016 General Assembly action. As we pray for peace across borders and across generations, the key to past and current PC(USA) approaches is recognizing that Korean Christians have been engaged in the work of reconciliation and should take the lead whenever possible. They are quite familiar with the situations in both North and South Korea and in neighboring countries where Koreans have sought refuge. At the same time, the nuclear dimension to Korean relations makes this a matter of worldwide relevance.

Further, the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement makes the potential for any progress with North Korea worthy of exploration, while cautioning us against putting too much hope in any single meeting or tentative agreement. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in fact, would take the assembly’s action here into consideration in the study of moral purpose in international affairs proposed in Item 9-06.

This substitute affirms the concerns of the overtures but honors our ecumenical relations with full church partners and councils, which must come before caucuses and coalitions in any country or region. Neither overture acknowledges the action of the 2016 General Assembly on Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula. Our partners are already developing plans and programs for healing the grievous divisions, political, economic, and cultural, across the two Koreas, without presuming a collapse of either the North Korean government or its economy. We would encourage commissioners to hear from Korean church representatives and PC(USA) mission personnel on whether additional measures are necessary.

Overall, as long as there are deep patterns of mutual suspicion and equally deep desires for independence from outside powers in both Koreas, careful and steady actions seem wise. With respect to the ownership of church properties, for example, we understand that these matters are already subject to several theologically-grounded agreements. As U.S. Presbyterians, we take pride in the contributions we made to some of those buildings and institutions, but our larger joy is in the continuing faith and presence of the Holy Spirit in the Korean Christians on both sides of the border.

Item 09-10

[The assembly approved Item 09-10 as amended. See pp. 36, 39.]

On a Study of the Current Socioeconomic and Political Realities in Central America—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to develop a comprehensive study of the current socioeconomic and political realities in Central America and report its findings and recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [The study would be done in consultation with the Latin America Office of World Mission]
and a team of five persons working with the mission personnel in the region, and included the theological and ethical reflection required.]

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $12,000 (2020) $18,500 (Total—$30,500]

**Rationale**

The PC(USA) has had mission and partnership relationships in Central America since 1882.

The PC(USA) engaged in study and action regarding Central America during the crisis years of the 1980s but has not updated its policies since 1988.

The 1987 Esquipulas Peace accords brought an end to the regional civil wars and initiated a turn towards democracy. However,

1. corruption remains widespread throughout the region;
2. poverty remains a major reality;
3. organized crime and gangs have created a deadly reality throughout Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras;
4. resulting waves of migrants have impacted both the U.S. and other Central American countries;
5. the government of Nicaragua has become increasingly authoritarian and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports a steady “democratic deterioration”; concerns have been expressed over a potentially devastating interoceanic canal and treatment of indigenous people; and
6. the United States House has before it a Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act that would “oppose loans at international financial institutions for the Government of Nicaragua unless the Government of Nicaragua is taking effective steps to hold free, fair, and transparent elections.”

There are numerous ongoing church mission projects in Nicaragua. The Presbyterian Hunger program, for example, has hosted annual mission trips focused on building “Just Relationships.”

There is need for theological reflection on the contemporary reality in Central America as well as recommendations for the church, the U.S. government, and the international community regarding the impact of U.S. social and economic policy on the region and specific recommendations for each country.

**Endnotes**

1. [http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a8aedf6fd.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a8aedf6fd.html).

**Concurrence to Item 09-10 from the Presbytery of Hudson River.**

**ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-10**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 09-10—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).*

Item 09-10 calls for our church’s 1988 policy on Central America to be updated based on a study of the socioeconomic and political changes.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-10 as amended below: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with underline and with brackets.]

“The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to develop a comprehensive study of the current socioeconomic and political realities in Central America and report its findings and recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [This study would be done in consultation with the Latin America Office of World Mission and a team of five persons working with mission personnel in the region, include the theological and ethical reflection required, and be coordinated with the ecumenical study of Global Order and National Purpose, Item 09-06].”
The proponents of this overture do not waste words, but we urge commissioners to read this overture in light of Item 09-04, which focuses on the three Northern countries of Central America. This study would involve all six Spanish-speaking countries, wisely so in terms of the turmoil in Nicaragua at this time. (Belize, just South of Mexico and English-speaking, is normally not counted due to its small population, but is a seventh country). The crisis in Venezuela and transitions in Colombia and Cuba (subject of a recent General Assembly study), also would support doing the study and including Presbyterian mission links to the neighboring countries. (More than 1 million Venezuelans have migrated to Colombia, and thousands more continue to leave for countries all over Latin America, adding to social tensions and refugee numbers).

The temptation of U.S. citizens is to see much of Latin America in terms of immigration, and often simply as an extension of Mexico. The peoples are lumped together as “Hispanic” or “Latino/a/x,” and then evaluated in terms of our alleged fears or economic needs, such as harvesting crops. Most Presbyterians, to judge from our policies over the years, are not afraid of Latin Americans and are motivated by fairness. Yet to make our case we need updated facts and understanding. Studies, such as the one recommended here, include solidarity visits to our mission personnel and ecumenical partners, as well as to public officials, academics, and business people who hold a wide range of views, including some opposed to Christian faith and values. Social witness in those cases most clearly includes evangelism, as we make known our motivation for study.

In the recent case of Cuba, ACSWP devised a study with the Cuba Partners Network that involved meetings with officials in the State Department and National Security Council as well direct exposure to Cuba, leading to a report that differs with current administration policy: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/New-Hopes-and-Realities-in-Cuban-American-Relations-2016-ACSWP.pdf.

In assessing both Items 09-04 and 09-10, and the larger ecumenical project of Item 09-06, commissioners are being asked to consider our understanding of mission in the region, as well as our own financial and other capacities. We no longer seek to convert Roman Catholics, for example, and we seek to embody a Reformed Protestantism that is not thinly disguised Americanism. In fact, our partnerships and shared communion with Reformed Christians in Central America may help us keep our faith clearer about the Christ who meets us across all human borders.

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**Item 09-11**

Item 09-11 was not referred due to lack of concurrence.

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**Item 09-12**

[The assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 36, 39–40.]

Alternative Resolution:

1. **Designate September 2018 as a Korean mission month**
   a. to pray for peace in the Korean peninsula and for victims of division and conflict on both sides of the Korean peninsula, and
   b. to reflect on the past 130 years of Presbyterian mission to Korea including both the positive legacies and also the ways in which mission workers might have contributed to the Korean conflict.

2. **Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to communicate with domestic and international governments and agencies to encourage peaceful resolution of the divisions on the Korean peninsula, which will foster an environment where no party to the historic conflict feels the need to sacrifice civil liberties in the name of security and where refugees and asylum-seekers are treated humanely.**

3. **Authorize the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through World Mission Ministries and other appropriate Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bodies and staff, to support and monitor progress toward reconciliation and denuclearization in consultation with Korean and other Asian partners, including the following actions:**
   a. Explore, in conjunction with current refugee ministries, caring and support ministries for those displaced from both South and North Korea;
   b. Share more broadly within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) an understanding of current relationships with the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK);
c. Deepen the participation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reconciliation, and Development Cooperation in order to prepare U.S. Christians for reconciliation in Korea by expanding people-to-people exchanges and other forms of trust building.

d. Plan events and programs for the Korean mission month and providing informational resources to local councils and congregations.

e. Encourage the United States and other governments to lift sanctions on North Korea, as appropriate, to begin genuine steps toward peace and justice and in respectful consultation with regional allies.

f. Expand ministries of healing and reconciliation, building on the example of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) peace delegation visit to No Gun Ri in 2017, and including as feasible additional areas in Korea significant to the history of the conflict.


Commissioners’ Resolution. On North Korean Refugees

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Designate June 2019 as the Korean mission month, pray for peace in Korea and for safekeeping of North Korean refugees, and reflect on the past 130 years of Presbyterian mission to Korea.

2. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate with domestic and international governments and agencies to encourage peaceful resolution of the tensions on the Korean peninsula and bring an end to the mistreatment and the exploitation of North Korean refugees.

3. Create a task force consisting of no less than seven members (two designated by the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches, one designated by the Coordinating Committee for Korean American Presbyteries, two members of racial ethnic origin other than Korean designated by the newly elected General Assembly Moderator(s), one from the PMA’s Office of Korean Intercultural Congregational Support, and one from the OGA’s Office of Manager for Korean-Speaking Councils Support) with the responsibilities to

   a. make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) to suggest positive improvements to the sensitive issues embedded in the Korean peace process and to create a sustainable strategy for the church to respond to the North Korean refugee crisis in consultation with Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s ecumenical partners in Korea;

   b. collaborate with other refugee ministries to formulate plans to rescue and bring relief to the North Korean refugees who are displaced in neighboring communities;

   c. assist the Presbyterian Mission Agency in planning events and programs for the Korean mission month and inform local congregations and councils of them.


Rationale

The South Korean government reports that it annually admits 1,500 refugees or defectors from North Korea. There are approximately 30,000 to 50,000 refugees currently hiding in China and more in neighboring countries. These refugees are subjected to physical and mental abuse, sexual exploitation and threats of repatriation. Once arrested and forcefully repatriated to North Korea, they are incarcerated and often sentenced to death. Currently, our church does not have any policies nor programs for this situation.

There are dozens of congregations already involved in nondenominational efforts to help the North Korean refugee crisis, but they are unorganized and lack direction.

The Korean peninsula has been under the threat of war for the past sixty years. With presidential meetings for peace in progress, it is high time for our church to be an advocate for these peaceful resolutions.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) has always supported Christianity in Korea. From the very beginning we have sent missionaries such as Horace Allen (1884), Horace Underwood, Samuel Moffett, and many others to Korea. Our efforts have brought great progress for South Korea, but the blood of the martyrs was the seed for the church. The situation today calls for further efforts to sustain the gospel of peace and reconciliation for this country.
The spiritual affluence in Korea is a great resource for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to draw from in this most important movement towards world peace.

We live in rapidly changing times. Conflicts and tensions have grown resulting in war and the escalating refugee crisis. In times such as these, we must join hands in prayer. Let us ask God to use our efforts for peace as a lightning rod for the rest of the world. God bless.

Samuel Adams Park, Presbytery of New York City
Sung Yeom Joo, Presbytery of Los Ranchos

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-12

Advice and Council on Item 09-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval of an alternate resolution for Item 09-12.

Item 09-09 calls for preparing for peace between North and South Korea by praying for “victims of human rights” in the North and taking inventory of properties lost at the time of the Korean War, and Item 09-12 also overemphasizes one aspect of the needed balance in ecumenical and international relations on the peninsula.

On behalf of our church partners and in consultation with World Mission, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) respectfully requests the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to approve the following alternate resolution:

“In response to Item 09-12, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approves the following:

1. Designate September 2018 as a Korean mission month
   a. to pray for peace in the Korean peninsula and for victims of division and conflict on both sides of the Korean peninsula,
   b. and to reflect on the past 130 years of Presbyterian mission to Korea including both the positive legacies and also the ways in which mission workers might have contributed to the Korean conflict.

2. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to communicate with domestic and international governments and agencies to encourage peaceful resolution of the divisions on the Korean peninsula, which will foster an environment where no party to the historic conflict feels the need to sacrifice civil liberties in the name of security and where refugees and asylum-seekers are treated humanely.

3. Authorize the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through World Mission Ministries and other appropriate Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bodies and staff, to support and monitor progress toward reconciliation and de-nuclearization in consultation with Korean and other Asian partners, such as the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches, including the following actions:
   a. Explore, in conjunction with current refugee ministries, caring and support ministries for those displaced from both South and North Korea;
   b. Share more broadly within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) an understanding of current relationships with the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK);
   c. Deepen the participation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reconciliation, and Development Cooperation in order to prepare U.S. Christians for reconciliation in Korea by expanding people-to-people exchanges and other forms of trust building.
   d. Assist the Presbyterian Mission Agency in planning events and programs for the Korean mission month and providing informational resources to local councils and congregations.
   e. Encourage the United States and other governments to lift sanctions on North Korea, as appropriate, to begin genuine steps toward peace and justice and in respectful consultation with regional allies.
   f. Expand ministries of healing and reconciliation, building on the example of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) peace delegation visit to No Gun Ri in 2017, and including as feasible additional areas in Korea significant to the history of the conflict.”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and doubtless many Presbyterians have followed the current U.S. administration’s opening to North Korea with a mixture of doubt and hope; doubt, because prior efforts at peacemaking have failed, and hope, because South Korean leaders in particular have taken brave initiatives to expand significant conversations...
with the North. The dangers of nuclear war cannot be overstated, dangers for which Hiroshima and Nagasaki stand as continuing reminders, and dangers against which U.S. and international sanctions have been imposed on the North. Despite a mixture of sanctions and isolation, the government of North Korea has managed to develop a nuclear weapons capacity and delivery systems for the bombs they have tested. Thus, as we write initially in late April 2018, with tacit and apprehensive support from Japanese allies and Chinese neighbors, the government of the United States is currently considering direct talks with the leadership of North Korea.

This substitute motion reflects consultation with partners but is not their statement. It builds upon Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II’s, trip to South Korea in 2017, which was dedicated to making formal apology for war crimes in a particular location and building up relations with the South Korean churches, as directed by 222nd General Assembly (2016) action. As we pray for peace across borders and across generations, the key to past and current PC(USA) approaches is recognizing that Korean Christians have been engaged in the work of reconciliation and should take the lead whenever possible. They are quite familiar with the situations in both North and South and in neighboring countries where Koreans have sought refuge. At the same time, the nuclear dimension to Korean relations makes this a matter of worldwide relevance.

Further, the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement makes the potential for any progress with North Korea worthy of exploration, while cautioning us against putting too much hope in any single meeting or tentative agreement. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in fact, would take the assembly’s action here into consideration in the study of moral purpose in international affairs proposed in Item 09-06.

This substitute affirms the concerns of the overtures but honors our ecumenical relations with full church partners and councils, which must come before caucuses and coalitions in any country or region. Neither overture acknowledges the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula. Our partners are already developing plans and programs for healing the grievous divisions, political, economic, and cultural, across the two Koreas, without presuming a collapse of either the North Korean government or its economy. We would encourage commissioners to hear from Korean church representatives and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission personnel on whether additional measures are necessary.

Overall, as long as there are deep patterns of mutual suspicion and equally deep desires for independence from outside powers in both Koreas, careful and steady actions seem called for. With respect to the ownership of church properties, for example, we understand that these matters are already subject to several theologically grounded agreements. As U.S. Presbyterians, we take pride in the contributions we made to some of those buildings and institutions, but our larger joy is in the continuing faith and presence of the Holy Spirit in the Korean Christians on both sides of the border.

**ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-12**

*Advice and Council on Item 09-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-12.

ACREC/REAC laments the inhumane treatment of the people of North Korea and calls the church to act. We affirm the need to support our sisters and brothers on the Korean peninsula who seek to provide much needed care.

**ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-12**

*Advice and Council on Item 09-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-12.

Recommendation 2. “encourages peaceful resolution of the tensions on the Korean peninsula and fosters an end to the utterly oppressive treatment of North Korean refugees.” The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns highlights the importance of the role of women in peacemaking efforts. The ACWC would encourage future peacemaking reports and resolutions to include an affirmation of the essential role that women play in peacemaking, in much the same way that the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 cites the importance of “Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.”

Recommendation 1. “prays for peace in the Korean peninsula and for North Korean refugees displaced from their homeland,” and Recommendation 3. “seeks relief and rescue plans for the North Korean refugees … who are under constant threat of abuse, persecution, and forceful repatriation. This commissioners’ resolution does not specifically identify the vast numbers of women who are among these refugees, but as many news organizations have reported, not only are the percentages of women refugees high, these same women have either been, or are in threat of being, trafficked as sex slaves. For example, NBC reported in February 2018 the following:
In 1998, at the height of a famine that ravaged North Korea, just 12 percent of the nearly 950 North Korean defectors were women, according to the South Korean government's Ministry of Unification. In 2017, an estimated 83 percent of the more than 1,120 North Koreans who defected were female. That switch has taken place over the past several years, observers say, as women generally have an easier time going unnoticed when they cross into China. In addition, North Korean women are wanted as sex slaves or to be married off in China, which has 30 million more men than women, government data shows.ii

The ACWC lifts up the inclusion of women in all peacemaking endeavors around the world for obvious reasons of gender equity, but also for the oft unseen need for the voice of women who are the most affected and vulnerable by displacement from their homelands. Furthermore, the inclusion of women offers a perspective that is gained as the concerns for women may be vastly different than those of concern to men.

Therefore, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-12.

Endnotes

Item 09-13

[The assembly approved Item 09-13. See pp. 12, 40.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Prayer for the People of Nicaragua.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Invites its congregations to pray for the peace of Nicaragua. Pray for an end to the violence, and that our loving and merciful God guide and enlighten Nicaraguans in the construction of the path of peace, nonviolence, justice, and hope.

2. Asks congregations and presbyteries to inform themselves about the tragic situation in Nicaragua through reports from international organizations such as the Organization of American States and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

3. Instructs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Washington Office, to oppose any proposed intervention of the United States—whether military, economic, or diplomatic—into the current affairs of the country of Nicaragua. This includes:
   a. strongly opposing the passage of the Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act (NICA Act), already passed by the House and soon to be considered in the Senate;
   b. opposing any further funding of Nicaraguan organizations by the National Endowment for Democracy and/or the National Democracy Institute until the current crisis is resolved.

4. Instructs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate this action to congressional representatives.

Rationale

Since mid-April of this year, the peaceful country of Nicaragua has been torn apart by civil unrest, disturbances, and violence. As of this writing, more than 150 people have been killed in this wave of violence and the toll is getting higher every night. The majority of the dead are students who are standing up for a new vision of Nicaragua that seeks greater justice and democratization. Transportation has been disrupted, making it difficult for farmers to bring their products into the cities, and the scarcity of food has impacted prices, increasing the food insecurity of this already poor country. Extreme levels of uncertainty and insecurity are overwhelming all of Nicaraguan society. Our PC(USA) Mission Partners in Nicaragua are asking for our prayerful and informed support as they continue to witness to God’s love in these tense and difficult days.

The complex issues at play in Nicaragua defy simplistic analyses. Some may view the situation primarily as an oppressive government reacting with repressive violence to peaceful protests. Others, in light of prior financial support from the United States government to some opposition groups, focus on antigovernment groups who have attacked and burned stations and government buildings. There is some truth in both of these positions, and nothing justifies the horrors that the people of Nicaragua are living today. But these are issues that the Nicaraguan people should be allowed to solve for themselves without interference from the United States. The NICA Act legislation could be especially damaging because it seeks to stop international loans that will be needed to rebuild the country after the destruction caused by the current unrest.

Douglas Orbaker, Presbytery of Northumberland
Susan Washburn, Presbytery of Redstone
Ron Butler, Presbytery of Northumberland
Advice and Council on Item 09-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-13.

We grieve the violence and deaths currently taking place in Nicaragua. We note the division of opinion among Nicaraguans, in their current desperate situation, over whether United States economic intervention would be helpful.

However, we agree with the resolution in opposing the Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act (NICA) and other named United States interventions. We note that the Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act (NICA) is designed to remain in force only until the Government of Nicaragua takes steps to address concerns, such as promoting human rights and free press, holding fair elections, and combating corruption. And we note that the language of the Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act (NICA), instructing “the United States Executive Director at each international financial institution to use the voice and vote of the United States to oppose any loan for budget support for the Government of Nicaragua” does add “other than to address basic human needs or to promote democracy.” However, the United States Government has an unfortunate track record of interventions in Central America, including in the guise of “promotion of democracy.” Thus, we also note that United States intervention has the potential to escalate, not diffuse, the current violence. And we note the potential for the Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act (NICA) to enable a U.S.-led embargo unless and until Nicaragua elects a government specifically favored by the United States.

Commissioners may wish to consider adding a recommendation that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Compassion, Peace, and Justice, explore appropriate disaster and development support for our Nicaraguan partners in the aftermath of the current emergency.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-13

Advice and Council on Item 09-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).


The United States has a dubious history of intervention in the internal affairs of Nicaragua that eventually have led to the current situation of governmental and social instability.

The United States should let the Nicaraguan people decide their own destiny.

Item 09-14

[The assembly approved Item 09-14 as amended and with comment. See pp. 36, 40–41.]

Comment: The commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) support and pray for effective humane and swift action to end this atrocity.

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Stopping the Separation of Immigrant Families at the Border and Upholding the Integrity of the U.S. Asylum System.

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA):

1. Call upon the [Department of Justice (DOJ)] [federal government] to immediately end the newly implemented zero-tolerance policy that is tearing apart families.

2. Call upon the [DOJ] [federal government] to reunite parents and children that have been separated as soon as possible, under the care of the community, not in family detention [ensuring access of attorneys to those in detention].

3. Call upon the [DOJ] [federal government] to make certain that every parent in custody knows the location of their children and facilitate regular communication between parents and their children until they are reunited.

4. Call upon the [DOJ] [federal government] to not use possible reunification with children to force immigrant parents into a concession to plead guilty to a crime in exchange for reuniting with their children.

5. Call upon churches and individuals to advocate for the passage of the Keep Families Together Act in Congress, which would take away the power of the DOJ to continue separating families. [Condemns the President’s June 20th
6. Call upon synods, presbyteries, and individual churches to understand, condemn, and work against the ideology of white supremacy undergirding these racist immigration policies.

7. Remind our denomination of the Gospel call to work for just and humane policies for all immigrant communities, grounded in the principles of family unity, human dignity, and rights.

8. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate the contents of this overture to the President of the United States, our representatives in Congress, as well as to Jeff Sessions, U.S. Attorney General, and Kirstjen Nielson, U.S. Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

[9. Direct the PMA, through the Office of Public Witness, to advocate for a policy that ensures family unity and safety for those in the asylum process.]

[9.] [10.] Strongly encourage congregations to learn about the impact of these immigration policies on the lives of church members as well as members of our local communities, making use of resources listed below:

- The Genesis of Exodus film and Story Map resources: www.genesisofexodusfilm.com;
- Family Detention: www.pcusa.org/familydetention;
- Resources on Refugees and Asylees http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/refugees/.

[11. Urge churches and congregations to connect with, accompany, support, and advocate alongside immigrant-focused organizations that can lead us to be part of the voices working for change and transformation of unjust immigration laws and policies.]

Rationale

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) condemns the Department of Justice’s inhumane and cruel “zero-tolerance” policy that seeks to prosecute all immigrants crossing the U.S.-México border, regardless of any individual’s claim to asylum. In April of 2018, news spread across the country that Customs and Border Protection (a branch of the Department of Homeland Security) was separating migrant families at the border due to the increase in prosecutions of parents of these children. The DOJ, led by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, admitted that these policies would result in the further separation of families, considering this a deterrent to what they consider unlawful entry of migrants. Due to these policies, children as young as twelve months are being torn from their parents and detained even hundreds of miles away from their parents. This includes families who have arrived through an official port of entry and those apprehended outside of one.

From October 2017 to April 2018, approximately 1,358 families have been torn apart at the border, resulting in trauma to parents and children. Reported in the New York Times, a Honduran father, Marco Muñoz, committed suicide in jail, after being torn away from his son a day earlier. Another report surfaced that a child was torn away from her mother during breastfeeding. When the mother resisted, she was handcuffed. An employee inside one of the Arizona facilities detaining the separated children reported that officials had told children that their parents were “lost,” which the children interpreted to mean dead.

Dr. Collen Kraft, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, warned that “fear and stress, particularly prolonged exposure to serious stress without the buffering protection afforded by stable, responsive relationships—known as toxic stress—can harm the developing brain and harm short- and long-term health.” She went on to say that she is dismayed by the “sweeping cruelty” of these policies. Indeed, it would appear that child abuse has become an official policy of the United States.

The United Nations human rights office, too, has condemned this practice of family separation, saying it “violates the rights of the child and international law.” The United States is the only country that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which stipulates that “a child who is considered a refugee … shall receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance.”

Our Scriptures are very clear about our call to welcome the stranger among us: “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (Lev 19:33–34). In Matthew, Jesus
tells a parable to his followers emphasizing specific classes of people we should serve as if serving Christ himself. Immigrants are one of those groups. “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35c). In fact, the call to care for immigrants is reiterated thirty-seven times throughout the Bible.

The United States has a history of separating brown and black children from their parents. During the era of slavery, enslaved families were frequently torn apart, bought and sold by different slave owners. Most of these families were never able to reunite. In the late 19th century, the U.S. government began to tear native children from their families to forcibly assimilate them into white American culture in Indian Boarding Schools. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) issued a call for the denomination to apologize to the descendants of native people who were taken to these boarding schools. The 221st General Assembly (2014) directed agencies of the PC(USA) to bolster the church’s commitment to anti-racism training and “an understanding of systemic racism, including white privilege, power, and prejudice in relation to race.” In recent history, millions of immigrant families have been torn apart through deportation of a family member or members. The 220th General Assembly (2012) called the church to prioritize family unity as part of its advocacy around immigration reform. So, now, the practice of separating families is only the latest in a pattern of treating brown and black people as inferior and unworthy of human dignity, a pattern the church must condemn.

The Trump Administration claims to have no choice but to separate children from their “criminal” parents, even though there is nothing in the criminal code that requires either incarceration for a misdemeanor offense or separation of children and their parents. This cruel policy is being implemented even against immigrants who present themselves at official border crossings and legally request asylum. The government has made it clear that it seeks to collectively punish children and parents in order to deter them from seeking asylum and refuge in the U.S. This must not be allowed to stand without a full-throated protest from every corner of the church.

Endnotes

10. A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.
11. On Advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

Bart Smith, Presbytery of de Cristo
Mardee Rightmyer, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-14

Advice and Council on Item 09-14—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 09-14 with the following amendments:

“[9. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for a policy that ensures family unity and safety for those in the asylum process.]

“[9. [10.] Strongly encourage congregations to learn about the impact of these immigration policies on the lives of church members as well as members of our local communities, making use of resources listed below: [The rest of Recommendation 10 remains unchanged.]
As the resolution points out, Jesus called the children to him. Within the Presbyterian tradition, we have continued the call to bring all of God’s children to the church. The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved the statement “Transforming Families,” which points out that family loyalty reflects the covenant that God establishes with God’s people. This covenant is reflected in the vows parents make at baptism, as well as the recognition of the church community that they are called to support both the parents as they raise the child and to support the child as they grow and mature. “We envision a church and society that welcomes and nurtures all persons, regardless of their family circumstances” (Transforming Families, p.11). The United States government’s decision to rip children from their parents at the U.S./Mexico border is a direct violation of our call to welcome all persons into our country and our communities.

Further, “We envision a society in which the well-being of every child is nurtured and supported” (Transforming Families, p. 11). As the resolution points out, the American Pediatric Association has stated the harm to both child and parent, both immediately and continuing throughout their precious lives. Ripping children from their parents is not supporting and nurturing these children, it is the opposite of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s vision for all children.

The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved a policy on comprehensive immigration reform. The theological grounding reminds us in both the Old and New Testaments that God calls us to welcome the stranger (see Lev. 19:33–34; Deut. 10:18–19; Mt. 25:44–45; and Heb. 13:2). As people present themselves to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the U.S./Mexico border, our faith tradition calls on us to create communities of welcome; not to rip their children from them and then lose track of these children in the system.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-14

Advice and Council on Item 09-14—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-14.

This resolution is aligned with the core values of our Christian beliefs and faith in the health and unity of the family in general, and ministry of compassion and hospitality in specific and aligned with ACREC values including

1. advocating for of the most vulnerable among us, the children,
2. condemning and seriously addressing any mistreatment of children.

The question for ACREC is not whether a state has the right to protect its border or not, but the question for us is, biblically speaking, “how we treat the alien and the stranger in our midst.”

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-14

Advice and Council on Item 09-14—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 09-14.

This commissioners’ resolution clearly articulates the need for the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to act in this moment of crisis occurring daily at our southern border, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns affirms the resolution and advises for its approval. The ACWC believes to not do so would, in essence, be turning our backs on the most vulnerable among us—the women and children being torn asunder as we watch in silence. Let this not be us, we pray.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-14

Comment on Item 09-14—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Office of Public Witness (OPW) is actively engaging with social movements led by undocumented leaders and affected people to win just immigration policy. The OPW is able to provide training and equipping for mobilization and accompaniment, including resources for direct action.

Part of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance’s (PDA) mandate is to provide relief to refugees and asylum seekers. Over the past week, PDA has begun working with mid councils along the U.S. southern border to financially support organizations providing legal aid and helping parents find their children who have been separated by the Department of Homeland Security. PDA is also working with the Office of Immigration Issues, other denominations and ecumenical partners, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to create a more coordinated advocacy and humanitarian response.
In addition to the resources already mentioned, to understand more about the reality of immigration detention for these separated parents, we refer the committee members to the PDA produced short documentary film *Locked in a Box: Immigration Detention*, [http://pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/video-immigration-detention/](http://pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/video-immigration-detention/).

**Item 09-15**

[The assembly approved Item 09-15 as amended. See pp. 13, 41.]

*Commissioners’ Resolution. On Denouncing Violence and Injustice in Nicaragua.*

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, Presbyterian Office of Public Witness, and Presbyterian World Mission) to speak out on behalf of the people of Nicaragua in response to violent repression taking place at the hands of their own government [, and other violent actors]. The assembly directs these entities to work together to:

1. Develop a moral, theological, and prophetic framework in consultation with our mission partners in Nicaragua, in response to escalating violence and the growing outcry for international support, thus adding our faith-rooted witness to the growing chorus of voices denouncing the actions of the Nicaraguan government [, and other violent actors]. The assembly asks that such a condemnation would take the form of a written statement and press release. Such a statement should make reference, but not be limited to, the following points:
   a. Rejection of the use of firearms and other weapons used on civilians resulting in loss of life and injury.
   b. Affirmation of the preciousness of each and every life bearing the image of God our creator.
   c. Rejection of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and torture and humiliation in detention.
   d. Rejection of any form of repression to the people’s right to assembly and expression.
   e. Affirmation of God’s intention for humanity’s freedom to flourish and to live in peace with one another.
   f. Rejection of attempts to suppress journalists, media coverage, and freedom of the press.

2. Develop an interagency and interfaith coalition to prioritize these issues, to continue to monitor the situation, and to respond appropriately to further developments.

3. Address the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the U.S. Department of State to pressure the Nicaraguan government to cease the killing of protesters and political dissidents, demand “the release of students arrested ... respecting their physical integrity” (Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teologicos y Sociales [CIEETS]), “restoration of security and the free movement of citizens and the nonmilitarization of civil institutions” (CIEETS), and immediately “allow an international, independent, and transparent investigation in order to prosecute those responsible for the repression” (Resolution of European Parliament).

[4. Continue to consult with and listen to the perspective of our partners in Nicaragua and count on their guidance on how to support and respond to this crisis.]

[5. Encourage the National Dialogue and the mechanisms that they agree upon, which to date include invitation of the OAS’ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights back to Nicaragua; to accelerate the formation of an international and independent expert Truth Commission; to invite the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights to Nicaragua; to invite the Secretary General of the OAS to Nicaragua; and to call for an end to all forms of violence from all sides.]

*Rationale*

On April 16th, 2018, student-led demonstrations began in Managua in response to a failure of the Nicaraguan government to protect the Indo Maiz Biological Reserve from a devastating 56-acre fire. Two days later, President Daniel Ortega announced a policy to reduce social security benefits to elderly individuals by 5 percent, at which time protests escalated. The government then launched a violent counteroffensive leaving several dead including students and journalists.

Protests and executions of innocents have continued throughout the months of April and May and into June. Within the first five days of protests alone, the Nicaraguan Red Cross reported treating more than 400 persons for injuries related to the attacks (Amnesty). Thus far, more than 200 have been killed more than 1,000 have been injured, more than 450 arrested, and more than 100 have gone missing (last updated Saturday, June 16th).
“One of the first attacks of this type reported took place on 18 April 2018, around the Central American University (Universidad Centroamericana, UCA), where a crowd had gathered to protest. Amnesty International has photographs and a copy of the security camera footage from the entrance to the university. The images confirm that from the start of the protests pro-government armed groups were used by the police to attack dozens of demonstrators gathered there” (Amnesty).

Major escalations have occurred only within the last three weeks. “On May 26, the local headquarters of the Frente Sandinista (Sandinista Front) in the town of Altarracia, on Ometepe island, were burned by unidentified third parties. In the early hours of May 27, masked attackers allegedly shot mortars at two guards who were watching the gate at the Central American University” (Organization of American States [OAS]).

On May 28, “students were reported to have occupied the Simón Bolivar Campus at the National University of Engineering (UNI, by its Spanish acronym). According to the information received by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, parapolice groups and riot squads attacked the students at the site using bullets, tear gas, and mortars. Also on May 28, the IACHR received reports of clashes between demonstrators and the National Police at the Metrocentro traffic circle, which allegedly left twenty people injured and led to several arrests. ... There was also a fire at the Public Prosecutor’s Office in Masaya, whose cause needs to be investigated” (OAS).

Attacks on journalists and media outlets were also reported on May 28. “The EFE news agency complained that its team had been assaulted by National Police officers near the UNI, as it covered police repression against students who were occupying the higher education center” (OAS). Since then, “media outlets covering the protests were arbitrarily shut down by the government and journalists who expressed any form of opposition were intimidated and detained … and the journalist Angel Gahona was shot dead while presenting a live broadcast” (Resolution of European Parliament).

On May 30th, protesters gathered for a Mother’s Day demonstration in which an estimated 600,000 people marched to support the mothers of those who had been killed in previous demonstrations. Sources report that “several so-called parapolice ‘shock forces’ and armed third [pro-government] parties repressed the march and shot demonstrators” (OAS) resulting in 15 deaths and 199 injured in Managua, Esteli, and Masaya. Possible use of snipers has also been reported (Amnesty).

As a result of these attacks, chaos has ensued in many cities and towns. Reports have surfaced via Twitter (@SOSNicaragua) that state-run hospitals are refusing to treat individuals injured in the attacks. Sources report possible use of crop-dusters to spray crowds with poison. Local, primarily agricultural communities, have built makeshift roadblock barricades to protect civilians, many of which have been attacked. A local news outlet reported on a young girl who was released from prison due to pressure from local Catholic Bishops who could not walk because she had been gang-raped by guards. These are only a tiny fraction of the atrocities that are occurring.

All the while, the Ortega-Murillo regime maintains a propaganda campaign to smear protesters themselves as the source of any unrest, looting, vandalism, fires, and violence.

On April 27th, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights called for “independent and transparent investigations without delay and to prosecution of those responsible for the deaths of these individuals.” Amnesty International has issued reports saying, “the alarming number of deaths and people injured indicates that the government used disproportionate, excessive, and sometimes unnecessary force in responding to the protests, allowing demonstrators to be deliberately attacked.

On May 28th, the European Parliament passed a resolution saying, the “high number of casualties demonstrates the brutal repression used by the state authorities, violating the principles of necessity and proportionality as required under international law and standards setting out limitations to the use of force.” Most recently, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights made a statement on June 1st urging the Nicaraguan Government to dismantle pro-government militias and restore the people’s right to peaceful protest.

Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua’s president, and his wife and Vice President Rosario Murillo were elected to their positions on a platform of a hybrid of socialism and Christianity and have faced pressure from religious entities such as the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference of Bishops who met with the regime on June 7th to present a document expressing the lament of the Nicaraguan people and calls for peace. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in Nicaragua also released a statement on June 9th urging leaders to cease the bloodshed.

We affirm the Presbyterian Church’s previous policies with regard to Nicaragua (1990).

We affirm the witness of our partners in Nicaragua, the CEPAD (Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua) and CI-EETS (Interchurch Center for Social and Theological Studies) who have issued statements and asked for solidarity and prayer.

We affirm the words of our PC(USA) Director of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Reverend Valdir França, to “stand with the people in their pain and sadness as we watch what is still a developing situation that has broken into disorder and chaos ...” and to “pray for the families of the most affected … continu[ing] to hear the perspective of our partners and count on their guidance on how to support and respond to this crisis.”
This escalating deadly clash demands a strong, prophetic condemnation from people of all faiths. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must use its voice and influence to further denounce these atrocities, in a way that does not compromise the safety of our mission partners in Nicaragua. The obligation rests with the Nicaraguan State “to dismantle the repressive structures that are operating in the country” (OAS) and the state must be pressured by the international community to comply. The tactics of the Ortega-Murillo Regime are intentionally meant to instill fear in the people to keep them in their place. As Christ exemplified in his life and ministry, we must stand on the side of the persecuted and join them in their cry for justice.

References

Julie Emery, Presbytery of Southern New England
Deborah A. Packard, Presbytery of Northern New York

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-15

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-15—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 09-15 with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, Presbyterian Office of Public Witness, and Presbyterian World Mission) to speak out on behalf of the people of Nicaragua in response to violent repression taking place at the hands of their own government [and other violent actors]. The assembly directs these entities to work together to:

“1. Develop a moral, theological, and prophetic framework in consultation with our mission partners in Nicaragua, in response to escalating violence and the growing outcry for international support, thus adding our faith-rooted witness to the growing chorus of voices denouncing the actions of the Nicaraguan government [and other violent actors]. The assembly asks that such a condemnation would take the form of a written statement and press release. Such a statement should make reference, but not be limited to, the following points:

“a. Rejection of the use of firearms and other weapons used on civilians resulting in loss of life and injury.

“b. Affirmation of the preciousness of each and every life bearing the image of God our creator.

“c. Rejection of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and torture and humiliation in detention.

“d. Rejection of any form of repression to the people’s right to assembly and expression.
“e. Affirmation of God’s intention for humanity’s freedom to flourish and to live in peace with one another.

“f. Rejection of attempts to suppress journalists, media coverage, and freedom of the press.

“2. Develop an interagency and interfaith coalition to prioritize these issues, to continue to monitor the situation, and to respond appropriately to further developments.

“[3. Address the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the U.S. Department of State to pressure the Nicaraguan government to cease the killing of protesters and political dissidents; demand “the release of students arrested . . . respecting their physical integrity” (Centro Interreligioso de Estudios Teologicos y Sociales [CIEETS]); “restoration of security and the free movement of citizens and the nonmilitarization of civil institutions” (CIEETS), and immediately “allow an international, independent, and transparent investigation in order to prosecute those responsible for the repression” (Resolution of European Parliament).]

“[3. Continue to consult with and listen to the perspective of our partners in Nicaragua and count on their guidance on how to support and respond to this crisis.

“[4. Encourage the National Dialogue and the mechanisms that they agree upon, which to date include invitation of the OAS’ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights back to Nicaragua; to accelerate the formation of an international and independent expert Truth Commission; to invite the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights to Nicaragua; to invite the Secretary General of the OAS to Nicaragua; and to call for an end to all forms of violence from all sides.]”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) supports much of the intent of this resolution, but advises some substantial changes in the language. These changes are advised in the interests of ensuring (as the original commissioners’ resolution rationale comments) that we do “not compromise the safety of our mission partners in Nicaragua.”

Further, we wish to emphasize even more strongly that we should be guided by our local partners in Nicaragua in this rapidly changing situation. We also recognize and support the work of the “Diálogo Nacional”—the national dialogue between civic groups and the government, as mediated by the Roman Catholic Church. The self-determination of the Nicaraguan people in this crisis is of utmost importance, and this national dialogue is the most important mechanism for a peaceful resolution at this time. They are inviting outside help from particular international institutions in the area of human rights and investigation into the violence that has taken place since April 18th. However, it is important to steer away from any U.S. State Department-led forms of intervention, given our unfortunate track record in the region.

The changes to the resolution also recognize (as does the resolution’s rationale) that there is, increasingly, more than one perpetrator of violence.
Item 10-01

[The assembly approved Item 10-01 as amended and with comment. See pp. 28, 29.]

Comment: While the overture contains significant funds for assessing all Native American churches, if a church community or mid council feels they can accurately assess and tabulate the cost through volunteers in the community in an effort to be good stewards of our denomination and diminish costs, this action could be permitted

On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the Churches and Properties in the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field of the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to direct the [General Assembly] [Presbyterian] Mission Agency to [provide] [work with mid councils to facilitate] an assembly-wide inventory documenting the physical needs of Native American churches and chapels and creating an ongoing fund for urgent and immediate repairs and improvements. The property assessments shall be done during that time between the meetings of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and the 224th General Assembly (2020). The comprehensive report shall be comprised from the on-site inventories and shall indicate what repairs need to be completed for congregation use.

The PC(USA) has identified ninety-eight Native American churches in the denomination. Inventorying the ninety-eight campuses is manageable over the two-year assessment period. A formal assessment of churches/chapels in the Synod of the Southwest was launched in 2016. An assessment of ten churches and chapels in Presbytery of Grand Canyon’s northern bounds was completed in nine months. The assessment process, as completed and critiqued, provides a guide for future and expanded inventories in PC(USA) with the following components:

1. Inventory—Intentionally working together, evaluation teams would use survey forms that allow for both check-offs and narratives of the situation of each church. Teams [should] [shall be led by individuals with the appropriate professional certification, licensures, or degrees appropriate to the work and may also] include synod and presbytery staffs, Native American ministries committees, [Native American Consulting Committee,] Native American congregations, and special task forces. Focus would be on immediate safety and health repairs needed to stop leaking roofs, build-up of mold, buckling walls, collapsing retaining walls, dangerous furnaces, stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, deteriorating fences, parking lot potholes, graffiti, and abandoned buildings.

2. Report—Findings of the inventories will be reported to all responsible parties during the two years between meetings of General Assembly and a report would be made to the 224th General Assembly (2020) in Baltimore, Maryland. To be of value, this report must contain estimates of the identified repairs and improvements. Of equal value is the necessity to provide a mechanism to prioritize the repairs and improvements and the associated estimated costs.

3. Research—Results of the surveys will be used for further research and given to the Presbyterian Foundation to designate and earmark funds for the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field. The creation of such funds must be used to educate members across the PC(USA) in quest of generous gifts and support. Research should make note of any funds given for Native American and Alaskan Native missions that may have been redirected by the judicatories of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Foundation, synods, and presbyteries to mission works in other fields. That would reaffirm the integrity of our church and our gift-giving.

4. Repair—A means must be established to match identified projects with teams of volunteers capable of making the repairs, including Presbyterian and non-Presbyterian groups looking for such mission work. This is an invitation to the PC(USA) itself to marshal its churches and volunteers to furnish their labor, materials, and funds for mission work projects, especially to start with the most pressing and immediate needs.

5. Establish and Fund—This overture calls for using current, previous, and future funds to further the ministry of Jesus Christ to Native American and Alaskan Native peoples in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii, to establish an ongoing fund to meet the needs for urgent and immediate repairs. Health and safety repairs/improvements are in desperate need to enable continued use of the facilities by congregations and public who visit the churches. It calls for planning long-term physical maintenance of the historic Native American mission fields, as well as qualified staff needs.


Rationale

This is a call for preparation of a comprehensive, on-site inventory by all responsible parties, agencies, groups, and persons working with Native American churches to document the facilities and the conditions of those facilities on our Native American
church and chapel properties, and in the process clearly identify what is required and mandatory by current codes and regulations to bring the properties up to those current codes and health and safety standards for their continued use. Because these conditions have largely been ignored, conditions of facilities are deteriorating rapidly.

This is a call to remember the Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans with recommendations coming from the 212th General Assembly (2000) (Minutes, 2000, Part I, pp. 206ff). The assembly referred the following recommendation to the “General Assembly Council, Special Task Force on Native American Ministries, for further discussion and the development of specific, measurable recommendations to the 214th General Assembly (2002)”:  

Instruct the General Assembly to make available adequate funding for implementation of the “Comprehensive Strategy for Ministry with Native Americans,” including but not limited to the following: (a) extend support for developing congregations beyond the traditional model of five years; (b) develop and produce a recommended outline and overview for commissioned lay pastor training, to be used in preparation for ministry with Native American communities, and commend these materials to presbyteries; (c) increase recruitment of and maintain adequate funding for Native American Scholarship Aid for seminary students; (d) assist in the development of opportunities for volunteer service in Native American communities; (e) conduct an inventory of Native American church properties; (f) provide funding to implement the strategies recommended for youth and young adult ministries. (Minutes, 2000, Part I, p. 206)

This is a call to support efforts identified as critical to the Native American churches in a Native American Ministry Supplemental Report authored by the Office of Native American Support, in consultation with the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC), and received by the 219th General Assembly (2010) (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 135ff). The following is the conditions defined for property in 2009 and little has happened to correct the situation:

i. Property Concerns

Many of the reservation churches were built during the time of Euro-American westward expansion, well over 100 years ago, and in many cases the last major maintenance on the buildings was done under the Board of National Missions (pre-1973). Reservation churches have few financial resources, and the cost of repairs can be prohibitive. While not the case in all situations, most Native American churches are built on tribal land, and if the congregation ceases to exist, the building, by law, reverts to the tribe. Some tribes have been responsive to the needs of reservation congregations, and some congregations have been able to do fundraising, both locally and through “children” of the congregation now living in urban areas. (Minutes, 2010, Part I, p. 141)

Presbyteries, too, have a significant role regarding the properties of Native American churches. They often hold the insurance on the properties, an invaluable service. They can also be a means to generate mission connections that can help provide assistance and/or direct contributions of labor and materials, whether to help with ongoing maintenance or to respond to a crisis situation when a building becomes unusable as a result of age or severe damage through flooding or a fire. An ongoing need of NACC is to complete an inventory of Native American church properties and the issues they present.

This is a call to remember the requests made at the 212th and 219th General Assemblies (2000) and (2010) that have gone largely unanswered and unfunded. The conditions of the Native Americans, both spiritual and physical, continue to deteriorate and the denominational calls for action have fallen on deaf ears. It is time to act!

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), most notably during the 19th and early 20th centuries in its predecessor denominational form through the Board of National Missions, was a model at dispatching missionaries and leaders to remote areas to share the story of Jesus Christ. The missionaries established many mission churches in the Southwest, with one-third of those located on Native American reservations with these churches still in existence today.

Collapsing structures, leaking roofs, unstable walls, deteriorating plumbing and electrical, dangerous furnaces, stoves, and refrigerators, potholed parking lots, and graffiti-covered walls are some of what our Native American sisters and brothers confront on their churches campuses today. Air-conditioning systems are problematic, fences around property are falling down, and outbuildings are too decrepit to use. Church members’ safety and health are jeopardized by continued use of crumbling structures. Often needed major repairs cannot be made—and are not made—because the congregations lack the resources. For example, there are no funds for new roofs or furnaces. Such repairs would serve to revitalize and sustain the Native American churches, which often are remote locations, lacking trained clergy, and under-attended by tribal members. It is a fundamental responsibility to maintain what we built if we plan to go forward and continue to advance the work and message of Jesus Christ.

Native American churches are not alone in occupying facilities sorely in need of repairs, upgrades, and even total replacement. A look across the landscape of Presbyterian facilities would uncover some woeful examples of immediate structural and maintenance needs. For thirty-three years (1879 to 1912), there were twenty-four Presbyterian churches started. Some of these Presbyterian church structures are still in use today and are in need of repairs and improvements. Of these twenty-four churches, eight are Native American Presbyterian churches with structural ages ranging between 105 and 128 years. This overture recognizes that reality.

The gifts and heritage of Native American churches have been celebrated in ceremonies in recent years. The PC(USA) has determined there are ninety-eight Native American congregations and chapels, most on reservations. The largest number of churches and chapels, twenty-six, are in the Synod of the Southwest. A total of twenty-one presbyteries and seven synods boast Native American constituents.
Concurrence to Item 10-01 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Santa Fe, Upper Ohio Valley, and Wabash Valley, and from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-01.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to invest in the infrastructure of the churches and properties in the historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission field. See the Doctrine of Discovery report and its recommendations, Item 10-12.

ACREC points out that often needed major repairs cannot be made—and are not made—because the congregations lack the resources. For example, there are no funds for new roofs or furnaces. Such repairs would serve to revitalize and sustain the Native American churches, which often are in remote locations, lacking trained clergy, and under-attended by tribal members. It is a fundamental responsibility to maintain what we built if we plan to go forward and continue to advance the work and message of Jesus Christ.

ACREC acknowledges that this item brings to light the need to address the need for adequate financial resources to address the racial financial equity among people of color members of the PC(USA).

FOUNDATION COMMENT ON ITEM 10-01

Comment on Item 10-01—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation).

The Presbyterian Foundation welcomes the opportunity to be part of the funding discussion for this worthy initiative and offers its tools and services to those who will lead the effort, should the assembly choose to approve this overture. Gifts to the Foundation may be designated by the donors for specific purposes. The Foundation will gladly conduct research regarding funds given for the purpose of Native American and Alaskan Native missions.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 10-01

Comment on Item 10-01—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports this initiative. The GACOR works to ensure that “the church gives full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation” (G-3.0103).

Native Americans and Alaskan Native Americans have suffered from the ongoing effects of colonization, both within and outside of the larger church. Research and study of infrastructure and physical structure will help local members to assess what they need while lifting up the support needed from the denomination. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourages member to help member; this initiative will uncover the necessary financial support for communities by encouraging congregation to congregation and member to member assistance so that all persons thrive in their local setting. The GACOR suggests that educational materials be prepared locally with denominational support, providing incoming volunteers with The Doctrine of Discovery Document and the local history of the worshipping congregation. Education will help persons be equipped to partner and illuminate the inequities experienced by Native Americans and Alaskan Native persons in our denomination.

Helpful resources can be found here: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-ethnic-and-womens-ministries/gender-and-racial-justice-ministries/doctrine-of-discovery/.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 10-02

[The assembly approved Item 10-02. See pp. 28, 29.]

On a Collaborative Study of the Place and Purpose of the Humanities in the Teachings of PC(USA) Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:
1. Approve a collaborative study of the place and purpose of the humanities—including religion and ethics—in the teachings of Presbyterian Church U.S.A.-affiliated liberal arts colleges and universities.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to appoint a cross-disciplinary team drawn from (1) existing staff within the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism unit and (2) the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to consult with the Moderators of the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016) and (2018) on the appointment of a seven-to-ten-person task force to be drawn from faculty, administrators, and chaplains at related Presbyterian-affiliated colleges and universities.

3. Direct said task force to work with the cross-disciplinary team on the design and execution of a study in conjunction with
   a. the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU),
   b. the Social Ethics Network of Presbyterian ethics and religion professors,
   c. specialized scholars and scholarly organizations dealing with undergraduate education in the humanities, religion, and ethics, and
   d. ecumenical, public/research university, and foundation partners as appropriate.

4. Encourage all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affiliated colleges and universities to sponsor and/or commission consideration of their distinct teaching missions in the fields of humanities—including religion and ethics—and liberal arts more broadly, and to share their thinking with the study task force.

5. Direct the study task force to make an interim report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) and a final report to the 225th General Assembly (2022), with recommendations to the church as well as academic institutions.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual—$23,240. Total—$46,480]

Rationale

Church-related liberal arts colleges in America represent a living endorsement and modification of classical humanistic approaches to higher education. Confident that God the Creator and Redeemer is the source of all good and truth, they seek to join faith and reason. Convinced that the calling or vocation of human beings is to love God and neighbor, they also seek to educate the whole person (mind, spirit, and body) for responsible living in the expansive context of God’s world.

Indeed, in a Reformed perspective, true wisdom consists of knowledge of God, the world, and ourselves, and the arts and sciences are gifts to be cultivated and appreciated. The sciences help to put us in touch with the excellence of God’s good creation, even as they promise to advance human flourishing. The humanities study human self-understandings as they come to expression in cultural artifacts and practices, e.g., literature, drama, philosophy, religion, politics, art, and various social structures. These studies contribute to diverse professional pursuits, but have worth primarily because they get at the richness and depth of human life in the world, and so enhance the sensibilities of those who participate in them.

Today, this sort of education faces serious challenges. There are efforts from both the religious right and the secular left to dissociate faith and reason. Pictures of the good life as almost entirely a matter of commercial success and the accumulation of wealth undermine non-pre-professional liberal arts education, especially in the humanities. There are also important challenges of diversity. How can this comparatively costly style of education be made more widely available to diverse and underserved persons and groups? There is also the issue of “canon and curriculum.” How can we reflect in depth on the many cultural particularities, without limiting inappropriately the particularities we engage?

Mark well what is at stake: a particular strand of faithful intellectual and moral formation that tries to educate persons in humane sensibilities and to discipline responsible living by the pursuit of truth. The perennial relevance of this style of education is one reason it has endured. It nevertheless appears to have special relevance in a time of “alternative facts,” fake news, and resurgent nationalisms—an age in which we wonder how cultural particularities fit into a wider world of interdependent interrelations.

For these reasons, the time is right for a study of Presbyterian church-related liberal arts colleges and the distinctive sorts of education they offer, as well as how their vibrant enterprise may be celebrated and understood both today and in the future.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 10-02 requests the Moderator(s) to appoint a team to study the teaching of the humanities, including religion and ethics, in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-related colleges and universities, and the relation of this teaching to the vitality of Christian faith on those campuses.
The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises support for this study.

This overture makes a strong case for teaching humanities from a Christian faith perspective, and clearly relates that teaching to the vitality of faith on college and university campuses. Commissioners may grant a relationship between such teaching and faith formation but still wonder if it is worth asking General Assembly funding for even part of the study outlined. Is this reaction itself a reflection of what Bradley J. Longfield calls, the identity crisis of Presbyterian colleges? (See Presbyterian and American Culture (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2013, pp. 186-89). Is there, or should there be, any particular link between Presbyterian identity and the standards and goals of scholarship at the set of schools historically associated with our church?

Not since the 1995 report, On Being Faithful: The Continuing Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Higher Education, has the General Assembly given sustained attention to the PC(USA)'s relation to colleges and universities. That report included the role of chaplaincies and campus ministries, and led to some further dialogue on the place of specifically Christian teaching and scholarship in the sixty-six or so PC(USA)-related institutions. A set of papers from a conference at Centre College in 2000, edited by Duncan S. Ferguson and William J. Weston, was entitled, Called to Teach: The Vocation of the Presbyterian Educator (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 2003). It recognized the historic role of teachers and professors in the church’s reputation for valuing education and an educated ministry. The major study of the 1980s on the Presbyterian Presence, six books edited by Milton Coalter, John Mulder, and Louis Weeks, saw a decline in the appeal of church colleges and universities and wondered if that decline could be reversed.

The starting point of the study proposed here would be different and may suggest ways to bridge between the interests and values of the church and the academy. Today’s trends are not good for either religion or the humanities, but there may be an advantage to be claimed for PC(USA) institutions that have linked the two in their past educational goals. The offices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency named in the overture, the Office of Theology and Worship and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, both work with groups of faculty members who draw meaning from the church connection. Some put particular weight on the rooting of ethics in religious inspiration rather than philosophical speculation, though the preservation of truth and social righteousness clearly go together in our tradition.

Peter Steinfels, in his book on the Roman Catholic Church, A People Adrift, looks at the once-powerful social mission of Catholic colleges and universities and wonders if “hiring to a specific mission” can help improve both Christian scholarship and teaching, even if the professors are not Roman Catholic. This study, necessarily open to current challenges, may be a small way of helping our church and its one-time colleges and universities not simply drift further apart.

Item 10-03

[The assembly approved Item 10-03 as amended. See pp. 28, 29.]

A Resolution on Determining the Need for an [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] Advocacy Committee in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) to create a five-member task force (with a commitment to gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, and race inclusiveness and balance) to investigate the need for creating an Advocacy Committee for [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] Concerns. The task force will report back with recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) after:

   a. Meeting with the boards of the following organizations or representatives of these organizations (either face-to-face or via video conference): More Light Presbyterians; That All May Freely Serve; Covenant Network; PARITY;

   b. Meeting with a diverse (age, gender, race, etc.) collection of Presbyterian individuals (either face-to-face or via video conference) from various segments of the country who identify as [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+];

   c. Reviewing the history of PC(USA) policies and actions impacting [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] people directly, and ultimately the entire denomination; and

   d. Reviewing the scope of the history of ACWC’s advocacy work on behalf of [LGBTQ+] [LGBTQIA+] people.

2. Direct the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) to ensure that diversity of sexual identity and gender identity are considered in the General Assembly nominating process for all committees and task forces.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $11,060. Total—$22,120]
Rationale

Rooted in the rich, Reformed theology of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the General Assembly has seen fit to provide within the structure of the denomination advocacy committees to provide accountability and prophetic witness on behalf of groups historically marginalized and silenced via oppressive power structures perpetuated by human sinfulness. The General Assembly has seen the need for those who have been silenced by the power structure to be given direct access to decision-making tables to amplify those voices that have so often been silenced.

Since its formation in 1993, the ACWC has served as one of those prophetic voices, speaking not only for women, but others whose voices have been silenced. The ACWC has embraced gender justice concerns of those who identify as female, working to be intersectional in its approach to justice, including advocating on behalf of members of the LGBTQ+ community. The ACWC has done this without hesitation as it sees that all persons are created in the image of God.

With the approval of what became known as “10-A” at the 219th General Assembly (2010) and subsequently by the presbyteries, with the movement of the Holy Spirit, the PC(USA) clearly said all who are called to the ministry either as minister of Word & Sacrament, ruling elder, or deacon, should be ordained.¹ Next, at the 221st General Assembly (2014), the authoritative interpretation was approved allowing ministers to perform same-sex marriages in states where it was already legal,² and ultimately the passing of Item 10-02, which became “Amendment 14-F” adopted by the presbyteries,³ no longer excluded same-gender couples. The PC(USA) firmly and positively embraced the LGBTQ+ community.

The ACWC has been a partner to the LGBTQ+ community, yet the injustices most directly affecting the LGBTQ+ community, while intersecting those of gender justice, are not identical to those directly affecting women within the PC(USA) and the nation. Over the years, ACWC has found itself spending large amounts of time and energy on LGBTQ+ advocacy efforts.

The PC(USA) has been and continues to be served well by organizations such as More Light Presbyterians, Covenant Network, All May Freely Serve, and PARITY, yet these organizations have had to work hard via grassroots campaigns to help bring about the changes within the PC(USA). These organizations continue to work for the good of the community, but there are those within the community who are not connected to these bodies. Further, these organizations work from an external position without the direct access to the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency granted the advocacy committees.

Even with the official denominational acceptance of LGBTQ+ persons into the ministries of the PC(USA), members still face discrimination, be it obvious or covert, in a similar manner to the experiences women and people of color in the denomination, for whom the church has seen fit to provide structural accountability and prophetic witness. With the current wave of backwards change in government policies towards not only LGBTQ+ persons, but women, people of color, and immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community again faces many unique struggles. Because of lack of government policy, an entire generation of gay men died from the results of HIV. Healthcare continues to be an issue not only in the continued battle against HIV, but for the transgender person seeking care for the transition process. Legal discrimination continues in the workplace, and it unfortunately remains a factor in the call process within the PC(USA). As LGBTQ+ couples marry and make plans to start families, they face issues that many can’t even begin to understand, including those related to housing, legal adoption and guardianship, and general safety.

The task force proposed will study whether the formation of an advocacy committee devoted solely to these and related issues could better address the injustices affecting the LGBTQ+ community. An advocacy committee would serve as an internal accountability partner with access to decision-making tables as well as a prophetic witness to and for the denomination on LGBTQ+ justice issues. The task force will need to have conversations with not only the organizations named and their leadership, past and present, but also with those in the community who are not connected with any of the organizations. It will be the responsibility of the task force to address the future funding of such a committee.

Endnotes


ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-03.
Item 10-03 is a request from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns that the assembly approve its undertaking of whether a new advocacy committee on gender and identity matters should be created.

The struggle for full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been long and hard. Since 1974 when David Sindt held up a sign on the floor of the General Assembly that asked, “Is anybody else out there gay?,” the PC(USA) has studied and debated the humanity and worthiness of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and other markers of identity. Gratefully, God’s Spirit has moved in deliberations over the last five decades so that both ordination and marriage are now open to people of all sexual and gender identities.

However, LGBTQ+ persons still face exclusion and discrimination within the PC(USA) and the broader society. Just as the church has become more attentive to issues of gender and racial justice because of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, so ACSWP concurs with ACWC that it is timely to assess the need for an advocacy committee that would give voice to LGBTQ+ issues.

National and global cultural identities are changing. Millennials and subsequent generations are likely to reflect increasingly diverse ways in which humans are seen as gendered and sexual. The PC(USA) needs to consider how to welcome this diversity into its life as the body of Christ. Studying the need for an LGBTQ+ advocacy committee now may give the church new eyes for recognizing current injustices and strategizing ways to embody full inclusion. Conducting this study will also give LGBTQ+ persons an opportunity to speak to their hopes and dreams for realizing equal status and dignity in church and society.

ACSWP agrees with ACWC that the study task force will need to have conversations not only with the external organizations named but also with those in the community who are not connected with any of the organizations. We suggest that the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) as well as others in the PC(USA) be included in this study’s consultations. Engaging in this study will give the PC(USA) an opportunity to reform its theological witness in light of the recent inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons. Since there continues to be a backlash to LGBTQ+ gains in church and society, we concur with ACWC that this study will be a timely means of identifying advocacy strategies that are needed to fully welcome LGBTQ+ persons into the life of the PC(USA).

Recommendation 2. calls for the General Assembly Nominating Committee to ensure diversity of sexual and gender identities among those nominated to serve on General Assembly committees and boards. In principle ACSWP supports this proposal to enhance the deliberation of these bodies. Insofar as there are a wide range of self-designations possible, ACSWP is hesitant to ask for additional categories of nominee to be developed, beyond the space on nomination forms for additional comment under gender that already exists. This approach would trust the judgment of the GANC that the diversity of sexual and gender identities can be considered based on nominees’ self-designation.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-03.

ACREC concurs with the overture as LGBTQ+ people of color have unique cultural challenges in addition to the oppressive power structures of the dominate culture. We would urge that the unique intersectional issues related to race and gender identity/sexual orientation be taken into account in this work.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 10-03

Comment on Item 10-03—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports a process through which the denomination can seek ways to represent the denomination’s full diversity within its decision-making bodies and processes. A task force “to investigate the need for creating an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQ+ Concerns” will allow for the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns to spearhead a period of discernment as the PC(USA) seeks to ensure LGBTQ+ representation and equity within the larger church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).
Item 10-04

[The assembly approved Item 10-04 with comment. See pp. 28, 30.]

Comment: [This comment addresses the Justice and Reconciliation portion of the Mission Work Plan.] While the item overtly names white supremacy and racist systemic structures, it does not name violence against women in a time when the United States of America society is grappling with the violence perpetrated against women. If not now, when? When violence intersects with poverty and racism, women have experienced hurt and harm. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to put into practice the PC(USA)’s confession and beliefs (from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns comment).

[The Mission Work Plan, written in the form of worship, allows for repentance (confession) and a way forward. The focus on an intentional mission plan with specific areas of intention (Evangelism & Discipleship, Leader Formation, and Justice and Reconciliation) allows for a radical turn in the mission of the denomination. Addressing structured racism and white supremacy is emphasized, and yet the lens of gender justice is omitted.

[The Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) Report, written by Research Services of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, states:

[Although male and female members are equally likely to be asked to serve in a leadership role, the nature of that role varies by gender. Men are more likely to hold an official leadership role, in which they have an official title and/or receive a paycheck, and women are more likely to be heavily involved in a voluntary capacity. Women still comprise only about 38% of all active PC(USA) teaching elders, and only 29% of teaching elders overall. These percentages are slowly increasing. If the rate remains the same, we won’t achieve gender parity among active teaching elders until 2027. [Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA), https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/4]

[With this present reality as evidenced in the above-mentioned report, the delayed justice for women must be included in the overall fiber and ethos of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. To fail to intentionally include addressing known gender injustices in our denomination does a grave disservice to the recent findings included in the research of 2016.

[For these reasons, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) would like to see an emphasis on support/leadership efforts (including mentoring) for women leaders in ordered ministries, as well as an overall acknowledgement of the need to address gender injustices via the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns comments).]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following 2019–2020 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

Presbyterian Mission Agency
2019–20 Mission Work Plan

Call

Sing to God a new song; Sing to God, all the earth.
Sing and give praise to God’s name;
Tell the glad news of salvation from day to day. (Psalm 96:1–2)

Bound together by the Grace of God, the Love of Christ, and the movement of the Holy Spirit, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is called to “sing to God a new song,” a song that bears witness to God’s abiding love made manifest in the life of Jesus Christ and gathers us together for the Holy Spirit’s equipping. Let us worship the Triune God in our daily lives through the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Hymn of Praise

All that we have, all that we are, comes from you, dear God, our Creator. We thank you for your steadfast love.
All that we are called to be, comes from you, Jesus, our brother and our guide, an abiding presence in our lives.
All that summons and sanctifies us, comes from you, Holy Spirit, our comforter and cleanser.
We praise you O God, Holy One, Holy Three.

Confession

Gracious and merciful God, we come before you to confess the ways that we have not been faithful to you or to one another.
In humility and with a contrite spirit, we admit that:

- We ignore your call to us to be stewards of your creation and all that is in it. We are guided by scarcity, forgetting or refusing to see the many precious gifts you set before us each and every day.

- We put our own self-interest ahead of the needs of your church and work to advance our own agendas rather than seeking to work in partnership with colleagues in ministry across the church.

- We ignore the systemic brokenness of the world and the church, poverty, white supremacy, and structural racism; systems that oppress and destroy members of our human family, created in your image.

- We allow fear to overcome us and we are unable to follow Christ, who said, “Fear not, for I am with you always.”

Compassionate and loving God, in Jesus Christ you make all things new. Forgive us. Transform our weak spirits and fearful hearts. Give us ears to hear and hearts to listen to the new songs that are welling up within and beyond the church. Give us courage to follow you so that we may become witnesses to your saving love and your call to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you.

**Assurance of Pardon**

The God who challenges us is also the God who encourages us.
The God who confronts us is also the God who accepts us.
We can be assured that God is with us even now, accepting, guiding, and forgiving.
Thanks be to God!

**The Word**

Matthew 25:31–46

At the appointed time the Promised One will come in glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, and will sit upon the royal throne with all the nations assembled below. Then the Promised One will separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep will be placed on the right hand, the goats on the left, “The ruler will say to those on the right, ‘Come, you blessed of my Abba God! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world! for I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then these just will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?’ The ruler will answer them, ‘The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me. Then the ruler will say to those on the left, ‘Out of my sight you accursed ones! Into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the fallen angels! I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you gave me no welcome; naked and you gave me no clothing. I was ill and in prison and you did not come to visit me.’ Then they in turn will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry or thirsty, or homeless or naked, or ill or in prison, and not take care of you? The answer will come, ‘The truth is, as often as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me. They will go off to eternal punishment, and the just will go off to eternal life.’” (The Inclusive Bible: First Egalitarian Version. The Priests for Equality, Sheed and Ward, 2007.)

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) called us to a... moment of great opportunity for our church. Momentum is building within our denomination and throughout our society to courageously confront the challenges of our time. A new civil rights movement, a new peace movement, a new economic justice movement is on the rise and we are in a position to stand in solidarity with the poor in a uniquely powerful way. It is a time for us to define who we will be for decades to come. May we choose to be a church committed to the gospel of Matthew 25.

... We see the Spirit blowing through our society, bringing to fruition seeds of peace and justice long dormant. The harvest will be plentiful. Let us heed the call to service, and recommit ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in deeds as well as in words. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 700–701)

**Invitation to Discipleship**

I appeal to you, therefore, members of one family in Christ,
and by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.
Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,
so that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom. 12:1–2)
Affirmation of Faith

Discerning the signs of the times and responding to the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) as it approved the Confession of Belhar, we boldly proclaim that:

We believe in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.

We believe in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

We believe that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another.

We believe that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ.

We believe that through the working of God’s Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought.

We believe that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity, and hatred between people and groups is sin.

We believe that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted.

We believe that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine that absolutizes natural diversity in such a way that this hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church.

We reject any doctrine that professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace while believers are alienated from one another and in despair of reconciliation.

We reject any doctrine that denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin.

We reject any doctrine that maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church.

We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence.

We believe that Jesus is Lord. To the one and only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be the honor and the glory for ever and ever. (© 2006 Reformed Church Press. Originally published in Unity, “Reconciliation, and Justice: A Study Guide for the Belhar Confession.” David Alexander. Used with permission.)

The Offering

All that we are and all that we have comes from God. God calls us to be stewards of the gifts entrusted to us to work in partnership with our colleagues from other agencies, mid councils, and congregations to become a “Matthew 25 Church,” committing ourselves to ongoing directional goals with specific emphases for 2019–2020:

• Evangelism & Discipleship

Grow, proclaim, and live out our faith in Jesus Christ by working with our partners, here and around the world, to build communities that witness to the gospel of Christ’s love for the rich diversity reflected in all humankind.

2019–2020 Emphases:

• Congregational Vitality, where churches prioritize faithfulness over self-sufficiency.

• Poverty, where the denomination fights unjust economic systems perpetuating destitution and need.

• Leader Formation

Seek, develop, and energize diverse leaders who are answering God’s call to equip the church to be a welcoming place of worship, mission, and spiritual nurture for all of God’s children, especially those who have been marginalized.

2019–2020 Emphasis:

Structural Racism/White Supremacy, where Presbyterians dismantle structures and ideologies oppressing people of color.

• Justice & Reconciliation

Galvanize the church to act on issues of racism, violence, and poverty as a prophetic witness to Christ’s transforming justice by speaking and living out God’s truth and compassion as we call ourselves and the world to account for injustice and oppression.

2019–2020 Emphasis:

• Poverty, where the denomination fights unjust economic systems perpetuating destitution and need.
The Benediction

Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to this One be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20–21)

Rationale

The General Assembly has directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Organization for Mission, to “develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.”

The Presbyterian Mission Agency fulfills this directive through presentation of the accompanying Mission Work Plan and a budget for approval. In recent years, the Mission Work Plan covered a four-year period, while budgets were recommended to the General Assembly biennially. In 2016, acknowledging transitions in leadership for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the beginning of national discussions regarding denominational focus and possible agency reorganization, the General Assembly approved a two-year “interim” Mission Work Plan for 2017–2018.

Through interim leadership in the Office of the Executive Director and initiatives undertaken by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the last two years have provided renewed focus under three directional goals: Evangelism and Discipleship; Servant Leader Formation; and Justice & Reconciliation. The mission work plan for 2017–2018 introduced a theological framework centered around the great ends of the church, and invited all of those engaging the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to joyfully center the work of God in Jesus Christ as our shared calling. The accompanying budget addressed ongoing revenue trends and proposed expenditures under these shared criteria.

In the spring of 2017, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board established a Mission Work Plan Advisory Task Force of elected board members to work alongside agency staff in developing the next Mission Work Plan. Work initially included an evaluation of the existing 2017–2018 mission work plan, a survey of board members, and conversation with senior staff and leadership cabinet members during the Board Executive Committee Retreat. The survey revealed substantial support for the theological frame for the Mission Work Plan as well as the formulation of the directional goals, with some suggestions for improvement.

The resignation of the Interim Executive Director in the fall of 2017 temporarily interrupted progress toward revising the mission work plan, which was then resumed by the Acting Executive Director several weeks later.

The announcement that the search for an installed Executive Director would be temporarily suspended led to our decision to propose another two-year “interim” mission work plan for 2019–2020. We believe that installed leadership should be allowed to oversee the establishment of a four-year work plan, ideally during a time of renewed denominational vitality and stability following the work of the General Assembly through the reports of the Way Forward Commission and 2020 Vision Committee.

Staff proposed a more expansive theological vision for the mission work plan, placing the directional goals as an offering to the church within the context of a reformed worship service. It is believed that this format can find multiple practical uses, promoting mission alignment within worship and devotional experiences inside the agency. This is meant to be a Mission Work Plan that will be used extensively. Call and Confection, Word and Affirmation provide familiar rhythms for experiencing the presence of God within our common mission, an expression of contrition for shortcomings, and the assurance that God’s presence moves within and throughout even so. Interpreting Matthew 25 through the newly adopted Confession of Belhar provides depth and texture to the directional goals, highlighting particular emphases that these goals suggest for this time in the life of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. As with the previous Mission Work Plan, for 2019–2020 program areas will be asked to be guided by all three directional goals. The directional goals themselves remain substantially the same under this version of the Mission Work Plan, but this new framework is intended to provide a richer understanding of those goals and a reaffirmation of the centrality of God’s mission in our work together.

This Mission Work Plan remains more limited in scope and will serve as an interim work plan over the next two- to three-year period, in light of transitions in leadership for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and conversations regarding agency consolidation. It is flexible enough to enable staff to respond nimbly to General Assembly directives but specific enough to help give intention and focus to mission decisions.

The worship frame for this Mission Work Plan required the removal of overt Vision, Mission, and Core Value statements. It is not the intention of either staff or the Mission Work Plan Advisory Task Force that these be abandoned, but they are not seen as essential for the purpose of this document. If it is the will of the board or the General Assembly, these may be reaffirmed through appending them or adopting them in another place.
Conclusion

The General Assembly will consider several action items that will have impact on the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is impossible to know in advance where these proposals, and the assembly’s discernment, will lead. Whatever the outcome, the Presbyterian Mission Agency will need strategic direction and a budget for the next two-year period. The 2019–2020 Mission Work Plan is intended to provide direction for that interim period, ensuring continuity with what has gone before, while being open to the movement of God’s Spirit in the years ahead.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve with comment Item 10-04.

While the item overtly names white supremacy and racist systemic structures, it does not name violence against women in a time when the United States of America society is grappling with the violence perpetrated against women. If not now, when? When violence intersects with poverty and racism, women have experienced hurt and harm. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to put into practice the PC(USA)’s confession and beliefs.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-04 with comment.

This overture, written in the form of worship, allows for repentance (confession) and a way forward. The focus on an intentional mission plan with specific areas of intention (Evangelism & Discipleship, Leader Formation and Justice and Reconciliation) allows for a radical turn in the mission of the denomination. Addressing structured racism and white supremacy is emphasized, and yet the lens of gender justice is omitted.

The Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) Report, written by Research Services of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, states:

Although male and female members are equally likely to be asked to serve in a leadership role, the nature of that role varies by gender. Men are more likely to hold an official leadership role, in which they have an official title and/or receive a paycheck, and women are more likely to be heavily involved in a voluntary capacity. Women still comprise only about 38% of all active PC(USA) teaching elders, and only 29% of teaching elders overall. These percentages are slowly increasing. If the rate remains the same, we won’t achieve gender parity among active teaching elders until 2027. [Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA), https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/]

With this present reality as evidenced in the above-mentioned report, the delayed justice for women must be included in the overall fiber and ethos of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. To fail to intentionally include addressing known gender injustices in our denomination does a grave disservice to the recent findings included in the research of 2016.

For these reasons, would like to see an emphasis on support/leadership efforts (including mentoring) for women leaders in ordered ministries, as well as an overall acknowledgement of the need to address gender injustices via the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

WFC COMMENT ON ITEM 10-04

Comment on Item 10-04—From the Way Forward Commission (WFC) with the Concurrence of the All-Agency Review Committee.

The Way Forward Commission (“WFC”), with the concurrence of the All Agency Review Committee (“AARC”), advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to review with care Item 10-04, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Work Plan for 2019–20. This item of business contains three important “emphases” for 2019–20:

- Congregational Vitality, where churches prioritize faithfulness over self-sufficiency.
- Poverty, where the denomination fights unjust economic systems perpetuating destitution and need.
- Structural Racism/White Supremacy, where Presbyterians dismantle structures and ideologies oppressing people of color.

We concur that these emphases are important and appropriate. However, the document contains no plan for addressing these issues. Without specifics, it is unclear how the PMAB will develop a detailed budget to address these issues in a manner...
accountable to the General Assembly or how future General Assemblies will have useful measures for determining whether the PMAB has accomplished this plan. The WFC, with the concurrence of the AARC, advises that the General Assembly (a) direct the PMAB to develop a detailed work plan within ninety days of the close of the General Assembly; (b) confirm that its budget contains all expenditures expected to be made by the PMA for that work plan and the operations of the PMA; and (c) report these items for review and approval to the Moving Forward Implementation Commission (see Item 04-02, Recommendation 5). In addition, the WFC, with the concurrence of the AARC, advises that the General Assembly direct the PMAB to report a detailed work plan to the 224th General Assembly (2020), containing not just mission emphases, but specific and measurable steps as part of an action plan to be taken to accomplish those emphases (and again confirming that the proposed PMA budget contains all expenditures expected by be made by the PMA for that work plan and the operations of the PMA).

Item 10-05

[The assembly approved Item 10-05. See pp. 13, 30.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the attached Institutional Relationship Agreement between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions.

Institutional Relationship Agreement between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Historically Racial Ethnic Institutions

Prologue

The strong investment of the Presbyterian church in education reflects John Calvin’s conviction that education should be an integral part of the church’s mission. Since colonial times the American Presbyterian church, reflecting Calvin’s conviction, has sought: (1) to develop an educated clergy and provide educational service to the community of faith, and (2) to educate for responsible citizenship and to serve the public good through education. Many schools, colleges, and universities in the United States owe their beginnings to this heritage and were founded for these two purposes.

Westward expansion, the American Civil War, and Reconstruction gave rise to new obligations and opportunities. The church expanded its mission by providing access to education for those persons previously excluded. The establishment of African American, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino-a educational institutions became a central mission thrust of the Presbyterian church.

Through the schools and colleges it established, the Presbyterian church provided educational opportunities that racial ethnic people had been denied. The institutions developed racial ethnic leaders who served society at large, the church, as well as their own racial ethnic constituency. These leaders espoused the Christian faith and the Presbyterian tradition. This mission has become a sacred trust for the church and an investment in young adults who are challenged to serve the church, the community, and society as a whole.

The Presbyterian church’s commitment to this historic mission produced more than 150 educational institutions, of which three racial ethnic educational institutions continue to relate directly to the General Assembly through an institutional relationship agreement. These Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools and Colleges</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menaual School</td>
<td>Albuquerque, N.M.</td>
<td>1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Pan American School</td>
<td>Kingsville, Tex.</td>
<td>1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stillman College</td>
<td>Tuscaloosa, Ala.</td>
<td>1876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Purpose

The parties of this institutional relationship agreement are the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions (HPREIs). The HPREIs educate and equip women and men for lives of committed leadership within society and the church. The HPREIs seek to guide and challenge individuals and to affirm them in their quest for values, knowledge, and truth. And, they endeavor to provide students with the knowledge and understanding to make ethical decisions and to be responsible to family, community, church, and nation. Each HPREI integrates faith and learning in a Christian environment, and each is committed to meeting special needs in order to develop the unique potential of its students.

The purpose of this institutional relationship agreement is to define, strengthen, and inform the missional relationship between the General Assembly (GA), through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the HPREIs. This institutional relationship
agreement expresses the partnership in mission between the GA and the HPREIs, a long-standing partnership based upon common history, shared beliefs, complementary visions, and a relationship of mutual respect and collaboration.

The GA and the HPREIs uphold education as a continuing priority of the church. The GA names the Presbyterian Mission Agency as its representative for program administration and ongoing relations, and recognizes the Presidents Roundtable as the association through which the relationship of the HPREIs is affected.

The parties to this institutional relationship agreement therefore mutually affirm that:

- Our involvement in education is rooted in the Bible and the Reformed tradition and grows out of our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord.
- Our common mission is guided by the Constitution of the PC(USA), “The Great Ends of the Church,” and by this institutional relationship agreement.
- Our continuing commitment is to be involved together in service to God and society through education.
- Our continuing partnership in mission is declared in this institutional relationship agreement, setting the framework for the relationship between the GA, through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the HPREIs through their association, the Presidents Roundtable.

B. Principles of the Institutional Relationship

The HPREIs seek to maintain a warm and active relationship with the church and its mid councils. Legally, the HPREIs are independent and autonomous institutions. This institutional relationship agreement describes a missional partnership, not a contract. It is based on relationships and trust with specific responsibilities for the GA, through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the HPREIs, through the Presidents Roundtable. It is agreed that each entity assumes sole responsibility for its own actions and this document does not hold either party legally liable for the actions of the other.

An important purpose of the HPREIs are to provide educational experiences for people of color within institutions that are open to all. The HPREIs also nurture the relationships between Presbyterian churches and students, faculty, alumni/ae, and board members, sharing the educational mission of the institutions and providing mission interpretation of educational ministry in the church.

The missional relationship of the GA and the HPREIs is expressed in several documents of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Specifically, Article 8.4 of the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the document that guided the church in the Reunion of the two streams in 1983, reads:

8.4 Racial ethnic educational institutions have been the primary source from which racial ethnic church leadership has developed. Consistent with the dire need for racial ethnic church leadership, the General Assembly Council [now known as PMA] shall propose to the General Assembly ways whereby the General Assembly shall be able to fulfill its responsibility for education through colleges and secondary schools and for meeting the operational and developmental needs of those Presbyterian schools that historically have served Black Americans and those serving other racial ethnic groups. (Book of Order, p. A-8)

The HPREIs align with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.’s mission of developing and energizing diverse leaders, especially those who have been marginalized. Annually, the HPREIs report to the Office of Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges in the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries ministry area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The HPREIs reports include activities supporting the leader formation and justice and reconciliation directional goals of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

In order for the HPREIs to use the PC(USA) name, seal, or symbol, a written license must be secured from the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. This institutional relationship agreement does not confer the use of these.

C. Core Functions and Mutual Responsibilities

The GA, through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the HPREIs agree to relate in the following manner.

The HPREIs will:

- Continue the church’s commitment to education and maintain the heritage of the racial ethnic mission of each school by emphasizing quality educational experiences for people of color within institutions that are open to all. We will continue the commitment through programs that teach and model Christian values, that adhere to standards of academic freedom, that maintain high standards of education, and that emphasize individual and corporate service to humankind.
- Interpret our collective and individual missions on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Throughout the church, we will lift up this institutional relationship agreement in publications and other communications of each HPREI and will collaborate with efforts that provide interpretation of and advocacy for the HPREIs within the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

- Provide opportunities for the guidance and interpretation of the mission and program of each HPREI by having members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on each school’s board of trustees as appropriate to each HPREI.

- Demonstrate commitment to the HPREIs mission and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Mission Work Plan 2017–2018, especially the leader formation and justice and reconciliation directional goals to inspire, equip, and connect the church to seek, develop, and energize diverse leaders and to act on issues of racism, violence, and poverty as a prophetic witness to Christ’s transforming justice.

- Share the accomplishments and concerns of each HPREI in fulfillment of its mission and this agreement through an annual report to the Office of Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges in the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries ministry area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

- Develop relationships with other entities within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for mutual support and affirmation. These relationships include, but are not limited to, the synods and presbyteries within which the HPREIs are located, the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries ministry area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and the Board of Pensions, as well as Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We will encourage them to explore avenues of mutual partnership.

Exercise responsible stewardship of the resources provided through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), via the Christmas Joy Offering and other designated funds, and continue the pursuit of financial strength for ongoing fiscal operations. We will document our efforts through annual independent audits and annual program reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

- Encourage use of the facilities, faculty, and staff of each HPREI by various entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**The GA, through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, will:**

- Report biennially to the GA and other appropriate bodies on the mission of the HPREIs and the progress made toward fulfilling its responsibility for education through the racial ethnic schools and colleges.

- Support and advocate the mission of the HPREIs within the national church. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will also encourage mid councils to establish and maintain supportive relationships with the HPREIs for continued mutual support.

- Provide information regarding opportunities for mission engagement and funds development and opportunities to engage in the emerging priorities of the church.

- Support and articulate the unique challenges and blessings of educating racial ethnic and economically poor people and be a partner in enhancing the success of the Christmas Joy Offering.

- Provide transparent stewardship of funds intended for this mission and audit-based reports of the Christmas Joy Offering to the Presidents Roundtable on an annual basis.

- Provide avenues of interpretation of the mission of the HPREIs, both as a group and as individual institutions, throughout the church. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will also seek to utilize the expertise and facilities of the HPREIs to resource the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**D. Implementation, Consultation, and Reporting**

This institutional relationship agreement will be implemented by the HPREIs through the Presidents Roundtable and by biennial reports to the GA. The HPREIs shall also report annually to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Reports shall include activities, programs, mission interpretation efforts, and financial reports of these HPREIs. The agreement will be implemented by the GA through the Presbyterian Mission Agency and, in particular, the Office of Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges in the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries ministry area. It is the Office of Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges that has the primary responsibility for day-to-day activity in reference to this agreement. These responsibilities include the administration and disbursement of Christmas Joy Offering and endowments for the HPREIs, administrative support to the Presidents Roundtable, and periodic visits to the HPREIs. The associate for Mission Program Grants/Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges also serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees of the HPREIs.

**E. Approval, Review, and Evaluation**

This agreement shall be effective when it is approved by the Presidents Roundtable, the boards of trustees of the HPREIs and the GA. The agreement shall be formally reviewed by the Presidents Roundtable and Presbyterian Mission Agency staff and elected representatives at least every four years to coincide with biennial general assemblies and with the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s mission planning cycle. The GA, through the Office of Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges in the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries ministry area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the HPREIs, through the President’s Roundtable, shall review and, when necessary, suggest revisions of this agreement. A written agreement shall ensue with copies
to the GA through the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the boards of trustees of the HPREIs through the Presidents Roundtable. The next renewal is expected in 2022. Either missional partner may request a review at any time.

A part of the review and renewal process shall include the reaffirmation and celebration of the benefits of this missional relationship along with the reiteration of mutual support.

Written notice of a request to alter or dissolve the agreement shall be submitted to each missional partner, providing a three month period for both partners to discuss the request. Following that period, a formal meeting of representatives of the missional partners will create a proposal to be submitted to each partner for action.

HISTORICALLY PRESBYTERIAN RACIAL ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS

MENAUL SCHOOL
Mr. Lindsey Gilbert, Head of School

PRESBYTERIAN PAN AMERICAN SCHOOL
Dr. Doug Dalglish, President

STILLMAN COLLEGE
Dr. Cynthia Warrick, Interim President

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
223rd General Assembly (2018) Moderator
The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD
The Reverend Ken Godshall, Chairperson
The Reverend Dr. Rhashell Hunter, Director of RE&WM

Rationale

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, has institutional relationship agreements with institutions that have shared common purpose and sought strength in partnership with the national church offices. An institutional relationship agreement is one between the General Assembly and other institutions. In this case, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for cultivating the relationship and requesting General Assembly approval; however, the relationship is not limited in scope to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Institutional Relationship Agreement between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions places the relationship in the context of the church’s missional directives and describes expectations and responsibilities as part of the relationship. Institutional relationship agreements are approved by the General Assembly, upon recommendation by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, for a four-year term.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-05

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-05.

As the church of Jesus Christ, we are called to promote justice and advocate for the marginalized. The support and advocating for the mission of HPREIs easily falls within the parameters.

Item 10-06

[The assembly approved Item 10-06. See pp. 13, 30.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the revised Institutional Relationship Agreement between Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Institutional Relationship Agreement between
Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.
and the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
I. Preface

This agreement expresses the partnership in mission among Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). PW and PMA have had a longstanding partnership based upon shared beliefs and complementary visions and commitments, common history and a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation. While this covenant is specifically for the relationship between PW and PMA, it is commended as a model for Presbyterian Women in relation to other corresponding governing bodies and councils.

II. The Covenant-Based Relationship

A. Background

PW is a tax-exempt national women’s organization related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), hereinafter PC(USA). Its members are, first and foremost, members of the PC(USA).

Presbyterian Women came into being in 1988, five years after the reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. PW incorporated in 2009 as a mission entity related to the PC(USA) as an integrated auxiliary. PW’s bylaws link PW closely to the Constitution of the PC(USA). PW’s members participate in leadership coordinating teams at all governing body levels from the congregation to the General Assembly.

From reunion in 1983 until the organizing Business Meeting of Presbyterian Women in 1988, a working team of Women of the Church (WOC) and United Presbyterian Women (UPW) proposed designs to their constituencies that culminated in the approval of the present structure. The 198th General Assembly (1986) received the Presbyterian Women Purpose and Principles of Organization as information only, pending approval by the uniting constituencies. The General Assembly action affirmed the independence and responsibility of Presbyterian Women to make its own decisions concerning leadership, program and budget. Membership in Presbyterian Women is open to all women who choose to participate in or be supportive of the PW organization in any way. The PW Purpose states: “Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom” (Purpose of Presbyterian Women). In 1986, UPW and WOC, as they looked ahead to becoming Presbyterian Women (PW), willingly became a part of the Women’s Ministry Unit where they were in partnership with Justice for Women, Women Employed by the Church, and the Committee of Women of Color. In 1993, the Women’s Ministry Unit was reorganized into the Women’s Ministries program area of the National Ministries Division.

In 2007, the Women’s Ministries program area was reorganized into Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries (RE&WM). PW continues to be in programmatic partnership with RE&WM. PW supports the PC(USA) ministries that advance the role of women in the church and society. With each restructure or reorganization of the denominational staff, the PW organization has made the decision to be lodged with women’s constituency groups and emphases. The employees moved from Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, to PW on August 1, 2014. PW continues to be in partnership with the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries ministry area.

B. The Covenant Responsibilities of Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women will

1. conduct all mission and ministry according to the PW Purpose:
   a. nurture [their] faith through prayer and Bible study,
   b. support the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [which includes the Presbyterian Mission Agency],
   c. work for justice and peace,
   d. build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

2. work cooperatively with Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries as a whole and with other offices and areas within the PMA and other related entities;
3. be an active presence on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board through the PW Moderator’s membership, voice and vote;

4. be faithful stewards of the money given by Presbyterian women from throughout the church, whether that money is given for the general mission of the church, for ongoing work of PW, or for projects of Creative Ministries offerings;

5. ensure editorial autonomy for *Horizons* magazine, the annual Bible study, and all other publications of PW;

6. be guided by the general policies of the PMA (for example: contract procedures, minority vendor policies, and travel and meeting policies).

C. Covenant Responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency

The PMA will

1. Support the Purpose of Presbyterian Women.

2. Recognize and respect PW’s autonomy and status as a separate corporation, self-determining in its leadership, budget, and program.

3. Provide support to PW:
   a. Honor the relationships as stated in the PMA Manual of Operations, recognizing the full membership, with voice and vote, on the PMAB, of the moderator of PW Churchwide.
   b. Appoint a member of the PMAB to serve with full voice and vote on the Corporate Board (CCT) of PW.
   c. Recognize the role of PW as a corporation related to the General Assembly, as stated in the Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and as a corresponding member to the General Assembly, as stated in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly as amended by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).
   d. Acknowledge and ensure editorial autonomy for all PW publications, including *Horizons* magazine and the annual Bible study.

4. Seek ways to build tangible partnerships and share resources with PW for joint programming with various mission areas of the PMA in which the mission priorities of the church are served.

5. Through the RE&WM ministry area director, maintain close connections with PW and the PW staff and be responsive to changes, new developments, and program options.

6. Ensure that collaborative women’s ministries work remains a focus of PMA and ongoing work is supported.

III. Accountability

In the following ways, PW and PMA will stay in communication, as each party attempts to be faithful to the covenant promise:

1. PW will provide a report to the PMAB through RE & WM of its programs, services, and policies, and PW’s mission giving will appear in the General Mission Budget.

2. A member of the PMAB will sit with full voice and vote on the CCT of PW and report on the policies and activities of PMA at the triennial Churchwide Gathering Business Meeting of PW.

3. The term of this agreement will be four years, commencing June 30, 2018, and expiring July 5, 2022.

4. Any party may propose changes in the Institutional Relationship at any time upon prior written notice to the other party.

*Rationale*

Over the years it became apparent that a clear understanding about the relationship between Presbyterian Women and the national church structure needed to be articulated. The Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women (CCT) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Council, now known as the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, approved the original covenant in August 2001.
Advice & Counsel on Item 10-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-06.

- Presbyterian Women (PW) is the oldest and largest mission partner of the PC(USA).
- PW is on the leading edge of justice and peace work for women and children, and often leads the PC(USA) into advocacy efforts and programs.
- PW provides women’s leadership throughout the PC(USA).
- PW has provided more than $60 million dollars in grants for PC(USA) partners since 1988, and works integrally with ministry areas and ecumenical partners on relationship building and programs. For instance, PW creates the largest circulating Bible study curriculum in the PC(USA).

Item 10-07

Moved to 04 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, as Item 04-08.

Item 10-08

Moved to 04 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, as Item 04-09.

Item 10-09

[In response to Item 10-09, the assembly approved alternate resolution with comment. See pp. 28, 30–31.]

Alternate Resolution:

Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on its efforts to strengthen the mission and ministry of small congregations, including the progress of implementing the Vital Congregations and Christian Formation initiatives.

The Presbytery Mission Agency (PMA) currently supports the ministries and missions of small churches through a wide range of ministries that have been designed to partner with small congregations as they live into the challenges and opportunities of the present moment.

The Theology, Formation, and Evangelism (TFE) ministry area of the PMA is a strong advocate for small churches and their ministry.

- The Vital Congregations initiative is a ministry designed to help all our churches become more vital, including small congregations. This initiative brings church leaders together in prayer, Bible study, and discernment. It provides them with tools and support for the work of revitalization. Because presbyteries are essential partners in ministry with congregations, TFE staff members have begun a two-year pilot project in five presbyteries to obtain some experience with this initiative. The pilot project includes small congregations. The current plan is to launch this initiative at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

- 1001 New Worshiping Communities is deeply engaged in ministry with new small congregations and has seen 445 new worshiping communities take shape in a variety of contexts and with a diverse group of people. Many of these new worshiping communities continue to be small churches even as they reach new people and experience vitality and vibrancy. TFE staff are beginning to work with existing churches so that they can learn from the new worshiping communities and the new worshiping communities can learn from them.

- The Christian Formation and Theology and Worship ministries of TFE continue to work with all our churches, including our small congregations, on the practices of our faith that lead to evangelism and sharing our hope with the world.

The Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministry (RE&WM) area of the PMA is also a strong advocate for small churches and their ministry.

- Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Intercultural Ministries offers support for African, African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino-a, Korean, Middle Eastern, and Native American small and large congregations. The small congregations are racial ethnic and new immigrant worshiping communities that regularly gather together, constructing a racial ethnic identity that stems from a common history, heritage, and language. The support includes working closely with
racial ethnic and new immigrant worshiping communities through mid councils, caucus groups, and networks, engaging
in the mission to grow, transform, empower, lead, and develop communities.

- Women’s Leadership Development and Justice Ministries provide opportunities and training for women leaders
to serve in small congregations. The office annually gathers Presbyterian racial ethnic and new immigrant seminarians from different theological institutions across the United States for the Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Seminarians conferences and helps prepare them for ministry.

Comment: We recognize the need for assistance for small churches to support their vitality. We ask that the Presbyterian Mission Agency and corresponding committees and agencies not only work to grow new churches but to also support small churches struggling with vitality using innovative resources to support their missions. We also recognize membership numbers alone do not indicate the health of a church but a more comprehensive approach should be taken when determining vitality and the need of assistance. We have reservations regarding creating a new director position for small churches but ask the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with existing programs specifically targeting outreach to smaller churches.


Overture Concerning Small Churches—From the Presbytery of Grace.

The Presbytery of Grace overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) to develop a department of the Presbyterian Mission Agency
dedicated solely to the ministry and mission of the small congregation (defined as having less than fifty adults in attendance at
weekly worship); and

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to provide adequate and sufficient funding to achieve the following:
   a. A full-time director with salary and benefits consistent with the directors of other PMA/OGA departments;
   b. A second full-time staff person who has done exemplary ministry in a small congregation, whose job description
      will be to coordinate with the director to produce research and programs designed to increase the ministry and mission of small
      congregations;
   c. Support staff; and
   d. Funding for conferences, workshops, and materials needed to fulfill the goal of strengthening the mission and
      ministry of small congregations.

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop goals and objectives necessary to measure the effectiveness of the
new department of small church ministry.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to report to the 225th General Assembly (2022) on the progress of developing
this new department; and to provide for a comprehensive review of this department to report to the 228th General Assembly
(2028).

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has undergone a significant shift in demographics over the past five years. Denomina-
tional reports on Comparative Summaries show a steady loss of membership since 2005 resulting in a loss of nearly 831,000
(35 percent) members; nearly 367,000 (44 percent) are accounted for since 2012.

The demographic change is primarily due to the movement of very large-, large-, and mid-size congregations from the
PC(USA) to other Reformed bodies. Since 2012, statistics report a loss of 811 congregations; 562 (69 percent) of those con-
gregations were dismissed to other denominations. During the same time, the PC(USA) did not receive any congregations from
other denominations.

Thirty-five percent of PC(USA) congregations have fifty or fewer members with an average of nineteen in worship; and
59 percent of PC(USA) congregations have 100 or fewer members. Regardless of membership size, 37 percent of congregations
report an average attendance for weekly worship of two to fifty persons.

A large and growing number of congregations in the PC(USA) can no longer afford full-time pastoral leadership.

The pastoral role in congregations is increasingly filled by part-time ordained clergy, commissioned pastors, and non-
Presbyterian clergy.
Programs, mission, and ministry opportunities produced by the General Assembly agencies are oriented to mid-size and larger congregations.

Resources Cited:


http://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/denominational-statistics/ (Statistics on OGA website back to 2008)

Concurrence to Item 10-09 from the Presbytery of de Cristo and Palo Duro.

Concurrence to Item 10-09 from the Presbytery of West Virginia (with Additional Rationale)

At its February meeting, after lively discussion, the Presbytery of West Virginia overwhelmingly affirmed our concurrence to Item 10-09 from the Presbytery of Grace. The current circumstances of small churches and the foreseeable growth in the number of small congregations throughout the denomination calls us to a discussion of these matters at the national level.

The median membership of the congregations within the Presbytery of West Virginia is twenty-nine. Should the decline in membership continue, the challenges confronting this presbytery will grow, as more and more congregations are unable to afford full-time, pastoral leaders. The presbytery of West Virginia is also experiencing difficulties recruiting and retaining leaders for the committees that serve our members. This serves to further aggravate the situation: we are finding it more and more difficult to meet the needs of the smaller churches within our boundaries.

Item 10-09 confirms that the Presbytery of West Virginia is not alone in this struggle. Statistics and trends across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also indicate the growing need to address the struggles of shrinking congregations—struggles that begin, perhaps, with finding pastoral leadership, but also include maintaining Spirit-filled ministry, Spirit-discerned mission, and Spirit-affirmed identity, recognizing their continued value and role in the work and life of the kingdom of God.

As Presbytery of West Virginia considered this concurrence, there was debate concerning the need for a new department in the Presbyterian Mission Agency and staff positions, but there was general agreement that the time is ripe for the General Assembly to more intentionally and purposefully consider the ways the denomination can support and provide resources that recognize the unique calling of small membership congregations.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-09. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns fully supports this overture. The majority of women clergy serve small congregations and lack the necessary support for shaping congregational mission and ministry. The Small Church Residency Program that allowed small congregations to receive resources and pastors to receive calls ended in December 2017. Many of the small congregations were not able to sustain the pastoral salary, yet vital work was done. The Presbyterian Mission Agency dedicating an office solely to the ministry and mission of the small congregation (defined as having less than fifty adults in attendance at weekly worship) speaks to the Work Plan of the PMA Board in Evangelism and includes an often forgotten population of women clergy who serve these congregations.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 10-09

Comment on Item 10-09—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

This overture calls for denomination-level support for the life and health of small churches. It seeks to accomplish that end by asking for specific staffing changes at the denominational level, to establish staffing whose ministry will be aimed at and determined by congregational size.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency affirms the importance of small congregations in the life of the denomination, and is grateful to the Presbyteries of Grace (which made the overture) and de Cristo (which has concurred) for lifting up the importance of effectively supporting small congregations across this denomination.

Because of the importance of this work, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is currently staffed for and engaged in a wide range of ministries designed to partner with small congregations as they live amidst the challenges and opportunities of the present moment.
The Theology, Formation, and Evangelism (TFE) ministry area of the PMA is a strong advocate for small churches and their ministry. TFE staff have initiated the Vital Congregations initiative, a ministry designed to help all our churches become more vital, including congregations with smaller membership. This initiative brings church leaders together in prayer, Bible study, and discernment. It provides them with tools and support for the work of revitalization. Tools for the discernment portion of the initiative are being developed now. One of the tools is an assessment of a congregation’s life and ministry through the grid of seven key marks of congregational vitality. The marks include the following: lifelong discipleship formation, intentional authentic evangelism, outward incarnational focus, empowered servant leadership, spirit-inspired worship, caring relationships, and ecclesial health. Because presbyteries are essential partners in ministry with congregations, TFE staff members have started a two-year pilot project in five presbyteries to experience and learn about what will work in this initiative and what does not work. Small churches are included in these pilot groups. The plan is that work with the pilot presbyteries and congregations will result in a full launch of this initiative at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

1001 New Worshipping Communities is deeply engaged in ministry with new small churches and has experienced 435 new worshipping communities take shape in a variety of contexts and drawing a diverse group of people. These new worshipping communities begin, and many continue to be small churches. Many of them are reaching new people and experiencing vibrancy. Staff working with the 1001 New Worshipping Communities (NWC) movement are beginning to work on partnering with existing churches so that existing churches can learn from the NWCs and NWCs can learn from the existing churches.

The Christian Formation and Theology and Worship ministries of TFE continue to work with all our churches, including our smaller membership churches, on the necessity of foundational grounding in the practices of our faith that lead to sharing the hope we have and evangelism.

If approved by the General Assembly, this overture would require the elimination of multiple programs within the PMA mission budget. The staffing it calls for creating would be organized on the basis of the size of congregations and would be at odds with present staffing structures that seek to bring needed support and expertise to a variety of sizes of congregation as they face similar challenges and opportunities both internally and in the wider society in which we all follow Jesus Christ. For example, the Vital Churches initiative works with congregations who share in seeking revitalization, tailoring the initiative’s work to differing sizes of congregations as needed.

We encourage Presbyterians with a passion for small church ministry to form ministry networks for collaboration and coordination. The PC(USA) web site provides tools for these networks to form and for synergies to emerge. Ministry networks are vital for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the PMA will continue to seek ways to foster connections and collaboration to join in expanding partnership in God’s mission and to grow Christ’s church.

Item 10-10

[The assembly approved Item 10-10 as amended and with comment. See pp. 13, 31.]

[Comment: The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination recommends the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board clarify the criteria for being included on this list and confirm through positive affirmation from the school to be included on the list. We believe the schools’ lack of response should not indicate a positive response to remain on the list of schools related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following list of colleges, universities, and secondary schools as those related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Ga.; Alma College, Alma, Mich.; Arcadia University, Glenside, Pa.; Austin College, Sherman, Tex.; Belhaven University, Jackson, Miss.; Blackburn College, Carlinville, Ill.; Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, N.J.; Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa; Carroll University, Waukesha, Wis.; Centre College, Danville, Ky.; Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; The College of Idaho, Caldwell, Idaho; College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Mo.; The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio; Davidson College, Davidson, N.C.; Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, W.V.; Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Hampden-Sydney College, Hampden-Sydney, Va.; Hanover College, Hanover, Ind.; Hastings College, Hastings, Nebr.; Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill.; Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, N.C.; King University, Bristol, Tenn.; Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.; Lake Forest College, Lake Forest College, Ill.; Lees-McRae College, Banner Elk, N.C.; Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo.; Lyon College, Batesville, Ark.; Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.; Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Va.; Maryville College, Maryville, Tenn.; Millikin University, Decatur, Ill.; Missouri Valley College, Marshall, Mo.; Monmouth College, Monmouth, Ill.; Montreat College, Montreat, N.C.; Muskingum University, New Concord, Ohio; Presbyterian College, Clinton, S.C.; Queens University of Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.; Rhodes College, Memphis, Tenn.; Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Mont.; St. Andrews University, Laurinburg, N.C.; Schreiner University, Kerrville, Tex.; Sterling College, Sterling, Kans.; Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Trinity University, San Antonio, Tex.; Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tenn.; Universidad InterAmericana de Puerto Rico, San Juan, P.R.; University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa; University of Jamestown, Jamestown, N.Dak.; University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, Ark.; University of Pikeville, Pikeville, Ky.; University of
The Presbyterian Mission Agency will use the existing criteria and develop additional criteria as needed for placing and removing colleges, universities, and secondary schools on this list.

Rationale

The criteria for being included on this list is that the institutions can identify a historic connection to the PC(USA) and demonstrate a commitment to Reformed values through the education they provide. Among these values are a commitment to faith, truth, learning, service, community, character, and the dignity and worth of each person.

Item 10-11

[The assembly approved Item 10-11 as amended. See pp. 28, 32.]

On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues—From the Presbytery of Mission.

The Presbytery of Mission overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Recognize the 10th anniversary of the ‘Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness’ approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to acknowledge the relevancy it still holds for our church and society in 2018. [Commend the initial work of the Presbyterian Serious Mental Illness Network (PSMIN) of the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) in distributing Comfort My People.]

2. Establish a $250,000 grant to be used to implement the provisions of this overture. The funds will be used to develop plans of action and resources that will be used by presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries of the PC(USA) to further educate these entities within PC(USA) regarding serious mental illness issues with the intent to provide a foundation for action within the denomination, and that the materials developed include help for congregations interfacing with mental illness found in the homeless population surrounding the church.

[Direct Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to launch a churchwide network following Recommendation 10 in the Comfort My People policy (p. 10).]

[Consult with Presbyterian seminary professors of pastoral psychology, counseling, and psychiatry on models, incentives, existing resources, and counseling centers that provide holistic mental health ministries.]

[Draw upon those academic and practical experts, Presbyterian Research Services, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in the survey design, analysis, and preparation of recommendations for action and policy update outlined in Recommendations 4 and 5.]

3. While it is acknowledged that all of the recommendations within the “Comfort My People” statement are worthy of implementation, this overture focuses on those action items that are foundational to any development of long-term policies and plans for action within the PC(USA). Grants to be awarded will therefore focus on the following recommendations:

   a. Presbyteries: Recommendations 6.a.–d., g. 10. (pp. 8, 10).

   b. Congregations: Recommendations 9.a., d.–k., o., q., t. (pp. 9, 10).

   c. Seminaries: Recommendations 14.a.–e. (p. 11).

4. Conduct a review and evaluation of the actions that have been taken since the policy statement was approved, with a report to be presented at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

   a. Survey of presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries to evaluate how these organizations have responded to the policy statement’s recommendations.

   b. Based on survey results, recommend specific activities designed to focus and implement measures to enhance mental health initiatives in presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries.
5. Review, update, and present a second edition of “Comfort My People” for approval at the 224th General Assembly (2020). This review and update would examine terminology, facts, findings, hyperlinks, and add any additional resources (i.e. websites, books, movies) published since 2008 that would add value to the statement.


Rationale

The “Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness,” approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), was a profound statement of faith for persons, families, and communities living with mental illness. This statement has aided in the message of hope through educating Christians and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness.

In recognition of its tenth anniversary, it is our desire to see this statement reimagined and instituted as a priority within our denomination and put into practice in our presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries. Our hope is to see this document serve as an instrument for God’s love in the lives of those who still feel as if they are living in the “The Land of Exile” within their own communities.

Accepting that our denomination has allocated limited resources to ensure these recommendations are effectively implemented, we believe that by allocating funds that will be available to these entities as grants, there would be a grassroots effort that would ensure “God’s Call to Comfort” is honored.

Finally, we strongly believe God is still calling the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to be a prophetic voice within our contexts to comfort God’s people. This overture will demonstrate our denomination’s commitment to serve those who live with mental illness and their families/communities in the process of healing and wholeness.

Endnotes


Concurrence to Item 10-11 from the Presbytery of Newton (with Additional Rationale):

Recommendation to the committee addressing this overture—To create a plan to assist congregations in ministering and providing pastoral care to those battling and facing mental health issues and those providing for their care and to increase the grant to respond to mental health issues through congregations and communities to $1,000,000.

Regularly, congregations and pastors are witnessing the struggles of persons in communities of faith who are personally living with or caring for someone battling mental illness. The PC(USA) is called to be in creative ministry, reaching people and touching their lives with a message of hope.

The PC(USA) must respond to the youth who proclaims: “I am unhappy with life” and is considering suicide. The church must pastor the person who feels that they are unnoticed in life and not appreciated. We are called to bring hope to the older gentleman who has lost his dear wife to death and when she is gone with tears in his eyes says: “Life seems to just pass me by now. I’m just lonely now.”

Life can lay all sorts of burdens upon a person, physical or psychological weights that can bend one over. We must respond to the weight of distress upon a parent with a special needs child. We must provide healing to someone in an oppressive marriage. What happens to a person’s self-respect when a job fails to compensate him or her adequately? What is the psychological damage to people suffering discrimination? Think how tired, worn, and weighted down our presidents begin to look after about two years in office. Teachers and school administrators, and nurses and public-sector figures sometimes break from the strain of public demands. Look at the day laborers when they return after heavy labor. View the migrant farmer after picking in the fields for twelve hours. See the face of the mother and father who lost a child due to just their wandering in the wrong direction. Witness the veteran who is haunted by the atrocities of war, friends injured and killed, and the barrage of violence.

The church is called to assist people in dealing with and facing the struggles and pressure of everyday life that wrecks havoc on the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of people of faith.
Simply rewriting and circulating the *Finding Comfort* curriculum, that few have read or may read, is not an adequate response to the mental health crisis facing worshiping communities and people of faith. The church of Jesus Christ must develop hands-on resources to prepare and assist pastors and church leaders in ministering to persons combating mental health issues and must set aside funds to assist congregations in the development of their own ministries and programs in their local communities.

The National Alliance on Mental Health reports:

**Prevalence of Mental Illness**

- Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.8 million, or 18.5 percent—experiences mental illness in a given year.\(^1\)
- Approximately 1 in 25 adults in the U.S.—9.8 million, or 4.0 percent—experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.\(^2\)
- Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13–18 (21.4 percent) experiences a severe mental disorder at some point during their life. For children aged 8–15, the estimate is 13 percent.\(^3\)
  - 1.1 percent of adults in the U.S. live with schizophrenia.\(^4\)
  - 2.6 percent of adults in the U.S. live with bipolar disorder.\(^5\)
  - 6.9 percent of adults in the U.S.—16 million—had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.\(^6\)
  - 18.1 percent of adults in the U.S. experienced an anxiety disorder such as posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and specific phobias.\(^7\)
  - Among the 20.2 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance use disorder, 50.5 percent—10.2 million adults—had a co-occurring mental illness.\(^8\)

**Social Stats**

- An estimated 26 percent of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness and an estimated 46 percent live with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders.\(^9\)
- Approximately 20 percent of state prisoners and 21 percent of local jail prisoners have “a recent history” of a mental health condition.\(^10\)
- 70 percent of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition and at least 20 percent live with a serious mental illness.\(^11\)
- Only 41 percent of adults in the U.S. with a mental health condition received mental health services in the past year. Among adults with a serious mental illness, 62.9 percent received mental health services in the past year.\(^12\)
- Just over half (50.6 percent) of children aged 8–15 received mental health services in the previous year.\(^13\)
- African Americans and Hispanic Americans each use mental health services at about one-half the rate of Caucasian Americans and Asian Americans at about one-third the rate.\(^14\)
- Half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14; three-quarters by age 24. Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.\(^15\)

**Consequences of Lack of Treatment**

- Serious mental illness costs America $193.2 billion in lost earnings per year.\(^16\)
- Mood disorders, including major depression, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults aged 18–44.\(^17\)
- Individuals living with serious mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions. Adults in the U.S. living with serious mental illness die on average twenty-five years earlier than others, largely due to treatable medical conditions.\(^18\)
- More than one-third (37 percent) of students with a mental health condition, age 14–21 and older who are served by special education, drop out—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.\(^20\)
Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S.,\(^1\) the third leading cause of death for people aged 10–14,\(^2\) and the second leading cause of death for people aged 15–24.\(^3\)

More than 90 percent of children who die by suicide have a mental health condition.\(^4\)

Each day an estimated 18–22 veterans die by suicide.\(^5\)

Endnotes for Additional Rationale


**ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-11**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 10-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).*

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the General Assembly approve Item 10-11 with amendments.

Item 10-11 would establish a fund to provide grants to congregations and mid councils to provide education concerning severe mental illness, so that affected persons may be more fully included within the life of our church. It calls for surveys of congregations and mid councils to assess the distribution and implementation of “Comfort My People” (2018) (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/3-serious-mental-illness-2008.pdf) and for a review and update of the report itself.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

1. Recognize the 10th anniversary of the “Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness” approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to acknowledge the relevancy it still holds for our church and society in 2018.

2. [Establish a $250,000 grant to be used to implement the provisions of this overture. The funds will be used to:] [Direct Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to engage suitable staff on a one-year basis to:

a. review with the Presbyterian Foundation any endowments or investments that might be drawn upon to implement the provisions of this resolution, and otherwise explore ways (including foundation grants) by which a mental and spiritual health fund of up to $1,000,000 might be established with minimum impact on other current mission expenditures;]

b. develop plans [of action] [for awarding grants] and resources [that will be used by] [for] presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries of the PC(USA) to further [educate those entities within PC(USA)] [education and engagement as noted in Recommendation 3 below] regarding [chronic and/or] serious mental illness issues with the intent to provide [a foundation] [an ongoing impetus] for action within the denomination;

c. consult with Presbyterian seminary professors of pastoral psychology, counseling, and psychiatry on models, incentives, existing resources, and counseling centers that provide the kind of holistic mental and spiritual health ministries proposed in the concurrence from the Presbytery of Newton.

d. draw upon those academic and practical experts (see Recommendation 2.c. above), Presbyterian Research Services, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in the survey design, analysis, and preparation of recommendations for action and policy update outlined in Recommendations 4 and 5 below.]

3. While it is acknowledged that all of the recommendations within the “Comfort My People” statement are worthy of implementation, this overture focuses on those action items that are foundational to any development of long-term policies and plans for action within the PC(USA). Grants to be awarded will therefore focus on the following recommendations:
“a. Presbyteries: Recommendations 6.a.–d., g. (pp. 8, [9] [10]).
“b. Congregations: Recommendations 9.a., d.–k., o., q., t. (pp. 9, 10).
“c. Seminaries: Recommendations 14.a.–e. (p. 11).
"[d. Churchwide web-based network: Recommendation 10 (p. 10) See new Recommendation 4.c. below]

4. Conduct a review and evaluation of the actions that have been taken since the policy statement was approved, with a report to be presented at the 224th General Assembly (2020).
   “a. Survey [of] presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries to evaluate how these organizations have responded to the policy statement’s recommendations.
   “b. Based on survey results, recommend specific activities designed to focus and implement measures to enhance mental health initiatives in presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries.
   “[c. Commend the initial work of the Presbyterian Serious Mental Illness Network (PSMIN) of the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) in distributing Comfort My People, and include a recommendation on if or how any network(s) of concerned congregations, individuals, and social service providers may be feasibly maintained in the long term.]

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the broader church remain indebted to the volunteers and consultants who developed Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness with Study Guide, with per capita funds designated by the 216th General Assembly (2004). The document is both justice-oriented in its data and recommendations, and pastoral in the use of personal narratives within the text, a dimension that has been valued by many readers. Some of those narratives were from study task force members. The title and biblical framework came most from a wise pastor who chaired ACSWP and served on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, as well as on that study task force. Overall, most Presbyterians recognize God’s Spirit at work in mental healthcare and seek to relate that healing to the prayer and worship life of our congregations.

The actions requested in this overture have to do with mission engagement, and hence would draw upon mission funds, either from undesignated giving (praise God for those generous givers!) or from endowment income (from previous generous givers). Sometimes as times change, past investment designations can be adapted to meet new mission needs. The amendments proposed seek to fulfill the intent of the overture in a cost-effective way. They propose drawing upon the wealth of knowledge held by healing professionals in our church and upon the knowledge of wealth held by foundations dedicated to public health, for which creative partnership with one or more churches or faith communities would offer new opportunities for impact.

The nineteen presbyteries and synods concurring with the Presbytery of Mission provide clear evidence of the need for additional welcome and support of those suffering from chronic and severe mental illness. The holistic vision and careful documentation of the range of mental health issues by the Presbytery of Newton concurrence have been integrated into the amendments proposed.

Since the 2008 report was published, we have seen significant advances in the public perception of mental health. However, even though mental health now has parity with physical health in healthcare legislation, there remains a stigma that often keeps people from full participation in the life of the church. Rates and kinds of drug use have expanded, alongside addictions of all kinds, not all related to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. Veterans bring home trauma and moral injury, and frequent mass shootings add personal tragedy, rage, and social tension. Health insurance quality and availability are being scaled back and further efforts to cutback government spending may target Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, adding to mental healthcare needs. Thus, in this new context ten to twelve years later, an update of the 2008 study seems merited.

It is also appropriate to review the church’s effectiveness in both national and local contexts, as denominational programs ideally complement and help inspire congregational action, often by lifting up particular local initiatives. Denominational and ecumenical programs can also carry visions and energy for change, even in the complex and politicized areas of preventive healthcare, for which the capacity of public institutions (like the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control) to research and publish freely is essential. New models for diagnosis and treatment are clearly needed in the society as well as church, as the overture wisely recognizes.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

Citing directly from Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness, a policy statement approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), ACREC notes the clear racial justice implications involved in addressing mental health:

Concerted and continued efforts to promote greater access and culturally responsive mental health services are critical for racial and ethnic groups. Race and ethnicity in addition to other cultural diversity considerations like language, gender, geographic location, and physical ability affect mental health and care. Addressing mental health challenges is influenced by how individuals from various groups understand and make sense of their social world. In addition, individuals classified in the lowest socioeconomic income level, education, and occupation categories are about two to three times more likely than those in the highest stratum to have a mental disorder. Many of these individuals identify as racial and ethnic people. Culturally proficient delivery of mental health services takes into account social risk and cultural factors, incorporating these considerations in assessment, diagnosis, and analyses of the mental health of racial and ethnic group members. More research is necessary in order to clarify the role that social and cultural factors have had and continue to have in the mental health of racial and ethnic populations in the United States (Comfort My People, 40).

Endnotes


97. These racial and ethnic group are listed by these titles in order to be consistent with the titles used by the congregational enhancement offices of the General Assembly Council (GAC) in describing the populations they minister with and to. A separate subcategory on Middle Eastern Americans was not included in this report because data on this ethnic group was not included in the U.S. Census Bureau statistics.

The experience of underfunding continues to negatively impact people of color over time. It is time for intervention in an effort to comfort my people.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-11.

The ACWC supports the recognition of the tenth anniversary of the PC(USA) policy statement, “Comfort My People,” as well as advocates for it being reimagined and instituted as a priority within the PC(USA), and as such, put into practice in presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries.

For the ACWC, mental illness is a gender justice issue that must be recognized, highlighted, and addressed within the PC(USA). Regarding the intersection of mental illness and gender justice, Psychology Today reports that

One in three Americans struggle with a mental illness, but the rate is much higher in women. Research suggests that women are about 40% more likely than men to develop depression, twice as likely to develop PTSD, and about 10% of women develop the condition after a traumatic event, as compared to only 4% of men. Psychiatrists point to a number of factors that contribute to these statistics: trauma—about 50% of women experience some form of trauma during their lives. One in four women has faced an attempted or completed sexual assault, and one in three report being abused by a domestic partner. Trauma is a risk factor for a host of mental illnesses, most notably post-traumatic stress disorder. Thus, the challenges of gender discrimination, gendered violence, and mistreatment of women directly work to undermine women’s health. Discrimination can increase women’s exposure to stress, and stress is a significant predictor of mental illness. The common challenges of women are highly stressful and can conspire to tear down their coping skills and self-esteem. Postpartum depression is another significant contributor to women suffering from mental illness. There are a number of factors that interact in complex ways to make women more vulnerable to mental illness. [Joel Young, M.D., Psychology Today: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/when-your-adult-child-breaks-your-heart/201504/women-and-mental-illness]

In a Nutshell: Women’s Mental Health: The Facts:

- Depressive disorders account for close to 41.9 percent of the disability from neuropsychiatric disorders among women compared to 29.3 percent among men.
- Leading mental health problems of the older adults are depression, organic brain syndromes, and dementias. A majority are women.
- An estimated 80 percent of 50 million people affected by violent conflicts, civil wars, disasters, and displacement are women and children.
- Lifetime prevalence rate of violence against women ranges from 16 percent to 50 percent.
- At least one in five women suffer rape or attempted rape in their lifetime. [World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/]

References:

Ball, J. (2013, May 22). Women 40% more likely than men to develop mental illness, study finds. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/may/22/women-men-mental-illness-study


For further insight, the ACWC recommends that The World Health Organization’s “Women’s Mental Health: An Evidenced Based Review” (2000) be consulted. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/66539/WHO_MSD_MDP_00.1.pdf?sequence=1

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**Item 10-12**

[The assembly approved Item 10-12 as amended. See pp. 28, 32–33.]

*Overture on Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery—From the Presbytery of Yukon.*

The Presbytery of Yukon overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take action aimed at expanding the response of the PC(USA) in its renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to include not only responses by congregations, but also responses that lie in the province of mid councils and the national church. Specifically, the Presbytery of Yukon asks the General Assembly to take the following actions:

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to develop resources that aid members, congregations, mid councils, and the national church on the following areas of theological understanding:
   a. Describe the Christian ethic presented by Scripture and the PC(USA) confessions for properly respecting people and communities from different cultures and worldviews,
   b. Present framework for understanding how the PC(USA) strayed from those understandings such that it became complicit in a prevailing worldview of oppression and collusion through policies based on the Doctrine of Discovery, and
   c. Describe the potential challenges and promises this theological exploration presents as we consider a multicultural church in a multicultural world that includes indigenous peoples.

2. Invite the PMA to continue working in partnership with other denominations and organizations allied in the cause of redressing the wrongs caused by the Doctrine of Discovery, both
   a. by learning from the efforts of others, and cooperating in efforts that respect Native American peoples and their sovereignty, and
   b. by heeding the United Nations Permanent Forum’s call for “a clear shift of paradigm … from colonial doctrines to a principled human rights framework,” by requiring PC(USA) policies and practices to become consistent with the United Nations’ *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

3. Direct the PMA to undertake a study on relationships within our own denominations, such as the following:

   Description of acts of repentance, reconciliation, and justice needed to improve relationships between the PC(USA) councils above the congregation level and the Native American congregations and tribal nations within the PC(USA), including at least the following:

   a. An investigation of the allocations and distributions of funds for supporting Native American ministry at the national level since the merger that founded the PC(USA) in 1983, with the following goals:
      (1) An assessment of the practice and effectiveness of funding in recent decades, and
      (2) A Determination of whether funds were misdirected and, if so, what acts of restoration are needed.
b. An investigation of the recent history of the national church with its Native American congregations and ministries to explore if there are any immediate actions that should be taken as a part of reconciliation.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate with congregations and mid councils, encouraging them to explore the following:

[a. The local history of how the land was acquired from the indigenous residents,

[b. The local history of how the community and the church formed, and how that community or church pursued relationships with the indigenous people of the region.

5. Make recommendations for how mid councils, as well as the national council and ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.]

4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to issue a call for the engagement of mid councils and their congregational members to start a flow of ideas and information back and forth between mid councils and congregational members, directed at understanding how the Doctrine of Discovery has been present in our history and our theological positions, and continues to be present today.

We recommend a two-step process: confession, repentance. These are concepts that have always been central to Presbyterian theology. These interactions should include:

[a. Confession:

(1) An exploration of the local history of how the land was acquired from indigenous residents, and

(2) The local history of how the community and the church formed, and how that community or church pursued relationships with the indigenous people of the region.

[b. Repentance:

(1) Development and implementation of a beginning strategy for entering into dialogue and action with relevant local communities, and

(2) Planned reflection over time on how on those efforts, to discern what God is revealing through these relationships, and what next steps are needed in this work.]

5. Direct the PMA to form a coordinating council for the purpose of encouraging, monitoring, and sharing the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk, as listed in Recommendation 4, above. The council will also have the purpose of making recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on how the national church, mid councils, and congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.

[a. The coordinating council should be comprised of at least two members from the Native American Consulting Committee, plus at least two members from national church, two from mid councils, and at least two members from congregations.

[b. The General Assembly should commit funds to enable this group to meet quarterly throughout the next two years. This means a total of seven or eight meetings. These meetings can be virtual if the group desires this, however, it is important that the group meet together at least twice: at the start and toward the end.

[c. The coordinating group must be organized and have its first meeting within three months of the passage of this overture.

[d. The coordinating group will be responsible for generating a report back to the next General Assembly, in 2020, and for making recommendations for actions that the next General Assembly may consider.]

6. Direct the PMA to develop resources for congregations and members in the following areas of practical understanding and response to the needs beyond the doors of the church:

a. Resources for raising awareness on how both church and society in the United States benefited and grew at the expense of Native American peoples due to the Doctrine of Discovery, including insight into how that privilege continues to this day.

b. Resources on curriculum lessons, study guides, and audio video resources for congregations, mid councils, and the national church on the following topics:

(1) Unmasking the idolatries and violence that emerged from colonial conquest in western culture as it was shaped by the Doctrine of Discovery, and

(2) Reforming the structures that grew out of that worldview.
c. Resources for informing members and congregations on the current research on

(1) Intergenerational Trauma and Toxic Stress, and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs), as they apply to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples, and

(2) Examples of strategies for pastoral ministry and social advocacy aimed at increasing resilience, bringing healing, and changing systems that prolong oppression.


**Rationale**

The committee tasked to author the report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) was limited in the recommendations it was authorized to produce. The committee was limited primarily by the wording of its mandate, but also to a significant degree by the fact that the import and depth of this study only emerged slowly as the committee pursued its work. Some of the depth of the work needed is only now becoming clear. A brief description of reasons for continued effort at defining this work include the following:

1. **The Need for Recommendations to More Than Just Congregations**

   The committee was tasked by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to make most of its meaningful recommendations to congregations. That committee’s mandate was to consider work that congregations can do to “support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights,” ([Minutes](#), 2016, Part I, pp. 58, 791) and “[suggest] specific ways in which congregations may recognize, support, and cooperate with Native American individuals, tribes, and nations who reside within their communities” ([Ibid.](#)). As essential as those recommendations are, some areas of response belong more properly to the province of the mid councils and the national church.

   The thinking that formed the institutional structures and the policies of the church were designed by councils largely from the Western cultural perspective. That thinking, and those structures, often failed Native Americans and ministries with Native Americans. To a significant degree that failure was because Western culture has been so saturated by a worldview that formed, and was formed by, the Doctrine of Discovery. Efforts are needed to address those issues in order that those mistakes will not be repeated. This requires more effort at defining recommendations for the mid council and the national levels, and not just at the congregational level.

2. **There Is a Need for Acts of Justice That Only Come Through a Journey of Repentance**

   Repentance is the proper response to recognizing that one has sinned against another. Since the New Testament Greek word for repentance is metanoia, and metanoia is defined as “turning around and walking in a new direction,” repentance must be understood as a journey. The renunciation of any wrong act is a very good first step of repentance, but cannot be considered adequate by itself. The national and mid councils levels of the PC(USA) need to explore what next steps might be taken in the provinces of their work as a part of the repentance of the whole church. This will require recognizing some injustices within the church that need to be rectified, such as exploring how to restore the opportunities lost when some funding was misdirected.

   However, repentance also calls on hearing how these issues have been addressed at international levels, such as the United Nations. Indigenous people across the world have been instrumental in wrestling with these same questions and crafting thoughtful responses. With this in mind, consideration is needed regarding whether the recommendations coming from the international indigenous community need to become policy of the PC(USA). For instance, we need to consider whether guidance for PC(USA) policy should come from statements like the following:

   For both Indigenous peoples and States, there are compelling reasons to go beyond repudiation. It is essential to replace the colonial Doctrine of Discovery with contemporary international human rights standards and engage in just and collaborative processes of redress.

3. **Acts of Justice and Wholeness Are Needed within the PC(USA) and in the Wider Community**

   It’s time to recognize that our baptismal vows call us to move beyond studying oppression, to taking action to dismantle oppression (see Mt. 25:37–40 and Jas. 2:14–18). Indeed, since the PC(USA) has admitted its complicity with the larger Western society in perpetrating the Doctrine of Discovery, it should be clear to us that acts of justice and wholeness are needed both within the church, and across the wider society. This will include joining with indigenous peoples in their movements for justice, as describe in Recommendation 2., above, as well as clarifying our role as allies in this ongoing work.

   However, it is also clear that the collision of western culture with indigenous cultures has led to grievous intergenerational trauma. Since Jesus made clear that healing is always integral to God’s salvation, and since healing ministries have been such an important part of the ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it is time to explore new approaches for healing ministry as a part of redressing the wrongs of the past.
The PMA should explore opportunities and approaches for these new ministries and report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020). There is a great deal of literature available on Intergenerational Trauma and Toxic Stress, and on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) as they relate to Native American populations. This sociological awareness could help inspire new ministries of healing, in obedience to the biblical mandate to spread the gospel in deed, as well as in word.

Endnotes

2. Ibid, para. 4.

Concurrence to Item 10-12 from the Presbytery of Hudson River.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-12

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-12.

ACREC believes acts of justice that provide for wholeness are needed within the PC(USA) and in the wider community. ACREC core values to combat racism and its commitment to inclusion and peace among God’s creation is paramount to realizing the eschatological vision of the beloved community. The Doctrine of Discovery recognizes the humanness of indigenous peoples as they continue to be oppressed and marginalized.

It’s time to recognize that our baptismal vows call us to move beyond studying oppression, to taking action to dismantle oppression (see Mt. 25:37–40 and Jas. 2:14–18). Indeed, since the PC(USA) has admitted its complicity with the larger Western society in perpetrating the Doctrine of Discovery, it should be clear to us that acts of justice and wholeness are needed both within the church, and across the wider society.

ACREC supports this overture as it demonstrates faith in action recognizing that the PC(USA), a predominately white Christian denomination, acknowledges its complicity and need to now work to realize an inclusive community.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES COMMENT ON ITEM 10-12

Comment on Item 10-12—From the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

In accordance to Standing Rule K.1.b. in the Manual of the General Assembly 2018 and due to the financial implications involved, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures has consulted with staff from the Presbyterian Mission Agency and finds that the work assigned to this coordinating council could not be done within the existing structures.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 10-12

Comment on Item 10-12—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The Presbytery of Yukon overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take action aimed at expanding the response of the PC(USA) in its renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to include not only responses by congregations, but also responses from mid councils and the national church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) seeks to help the church understand the inequitable impact of its actions on marginalized communities and its responsibilities for repair. Maturity in community is coming to a clear-eyed understanding of the good, bad, and ugly of life together.

GACOR regularly is asked to provide assistance in the forming of inclusive groups drawing from the fullness of the church. See the Book of Order, G-3.0103.

When inequities are faced, the church is freed to unmask idolatries and listen to voices long silenced. The impact of the ongoing sin of operating in the doctrine of discovery is present among us still. Committees on representation (and/or their functions) are present in all councils above session. Including these conscientizing bodies in mid council efforts to address these long-ignored harms and peoples would be helpful.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).
Item 10-13

[The assembly approved Item 10-13 as amended. See pp. 28, 33.]

The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on behalf of the Doctrine of Discovery team, recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the Doctrine of Discovery report and recommendations as follows:

1. Urge the session of each congregation, as well as each mid council, [seminary] [COTE-member seminaries], Presbyterian Women’s groups, and other organizations to confess their complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create resources for education on racism that address the themes in this report involving Native American Presbyterians and congregations.

3. Encourage [PC(USA) schools and seminaries] [COTE-member seminaries] to prepare students to articulate Native American theologies to give voice to these theologies and disrupt historic oppression and racism in Native American communities.

4. Encourage the commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to review the 212th General Assembly (2000) report, “Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans” (Minutes, 2000, Part I, pp. 206ff), including its supplemental recommendations regarding all aspects of Native American ministry, and to lift up Native American ministries in the PC(USA).

5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create a speaker’s bureau on Indigenous issues and publicize the list to the church.

6. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to amend the Standing Rules of the General Assembly so that each meeting of the assembly begins with an acknowledgement of whose land the assembly is meeting on and that greetings to the assembly include a welcome from those Indigenous peoples currently living on the land.

7. Direct the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to begin each meeting with an acknowledgement of whose land they are meeting on and that greetings to the assembly include a welcome from those Indigenous peoples currently living on the land.

8. Encourage mid councils to begin their meetings with an acknowledgment of whose land they are meeting on and that greetings to the assembly include a welcome from those Indigenous peoples currently living on the land.

9. Encourage the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to create resources that address the realities faced by Indigenous peoples in the United States and worldwide.

10. Encourage the Presbyterian Mission Agency to provide education on the human rights of Indigenous peoples as part of preparation for all mission co-workers.

11. Direct the Presbyterian Historical Society to identify and highlight resources related to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its relationships with Indigenous peoples.

12. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to initiate a survey in order to create a listing of courses taught in [Presbyterian-related seminaries and schools] [COTE-member seminaries] that focus on the histories of Indigenous peoples and current issues facing Indigenous peoples, identifying specific instructors, courses, texts, and syllabi when possible.

13. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to identify in the Book of Confessions how our confessions may support the Doctrine of Discovery, how our confessions may challenge the Doctrine of Discovery, how our confessions provide evidence for ways the church can change, and to report its findings to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

14. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to include the Doctrine of Discovery and the histories of Indigenous peoples and current issues facing Indigenous peoples in its antiracism and training efforts.

15. Encourage mid councils to request that when they contract outside antiracism trainers that the trainers address Indigenous issues and include Indigenous trainers, adjusting the content to be appropriate to the context in which the training takes place.
16. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in consultation with the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC), to devote an issue of Unbound to the Doctrine of Discovery, including histories of Indigenous peoples and issues facing Indigenous peoples.

17. Urge the session of each congregation—as well as each mid council, [seminary] [COTE-member seminaries], Presbyterian Women’s groups, and national church agency—to review the existing study resources on the Doctrine of Discovery (posted on the Facing Racism website: https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/item/41901/), and to lift up histories of Indigenous peoples and current issues facing Indigenous peoples.

Rationale


The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty

At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved recommendations for action on the Doctrine of Discovery. Recommendation 7 of Item 11-24 called upon the PC(USA) “to confess its complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with ACREC [Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns], to ... initiate a process of review of the Doctrine of Discovery. ...”1 This process includes the preparation of a report that: (1) describes the Doctrine of Discovery and explains its history; (2) makes recommendations of how congregations in the PC(USA) can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights; (3) describes how relationships with specific Native American individuals and tribes can be developed; and (4) suggests specific ways in which congregations may recognize, support, and cooperate with Native American individuals, tribes, and nations who reside within their communities. With this action the PC(USA) joins other denominations who have taken actions to repudiate the doctrine of discovery.2

This report was prepared in consultation with a committee of PC(USA) staff and Native American consultants who represented or had served on the following PC(USA) bodies: ACREC, Native American Consulting Committee; Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod of the Southwest, Synod of the Northwest, Dakota Presbytery, Yukon Presbytery, Office of Racial and Intercultural Justice, Presbyterian Mission Agency; Assistant Stated Clerk, and manager for equity and representation, PC(USA).

The Presbyterian church, in all its various formations in the United States, has been in relationship with Native American peoples for more than 300 years. In 2000, the General Assembly Task Force on Native American Ministries presented an historical report to the 212th General Assembly (2000) entitled “Mission and Ministry with Native American Peoples: A Historical Survey of the Last Three Centuries.” This longer report was summarized in the “Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans” (Minutes, 2000, Part I, p. 206, paragraphs 22.229–230) as historical background for the task force recommendations for Native American ministries in the PC(USA).3 Major themes emerged in the preparation of the 2000 historical report, one of which has specific relevance for this report:

First, at least 200 years of the Presbyterian relationship with Native American peoples have been years in which the Presbyterian church was active in the formation and implementation of government policies affecting Native American peoples. Because major Indian policy in the United States has focused on the land rights of native peoples in these 200 years, Presbyterian work among Native Americans is largely linked to Native American land (p. 1).

A conversation on the Doctrine of Discovery will always entail a discussion of Native American or Indigenous lands. Moreover, because the doctrine has been a central part of U.S. law regarding tribal lands, the Presbyterian church has played a major role historically in the implementation of the doctrine. As the overture from the Presbytery of National Capital stated, “[d]uring all … periods of American history, Christian churches … have accepted and supported the various forms of the Doctrine of Discovery, … We have participated both actively and passively throughout our history in discriminatory behavior directed against Native Americans. We have stood by while Native Americans were killed and their lands taken, while the story of their participation in the history of our country was distorted and suppressed.”4

Additionally, through its mission work outside of the United States, the Presbyterian church has had relationships with Indigenous peoples on all continents of the world. Thus, an understanding of the origins and modern-day manifestations of the
Doctrine of Discovery, including its impacts on Indigenous peoples in the United States and around the globe, is essential to meaningful “recommendations of how congregations in the PC(USA) can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.”

After a discussion of the doctrine as currently understood, and its origins, this report will identify contemporary manifestations of the Doctrine of Discovery among native peoples and set forth recommendations called for in Recommendation 7. of Item 11-24 (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 791).

**Doctrine of Discovery in the United States**

In its current United States domestic iteration, the doctrine is a principal of law by which “fee title to the lands occupied by Indians when the colonists arrived became vested in the sovereign--first the discovering European nation and later the original States and the United States.” This principle as U.S. law was first articulated in Johnson v. McIntosh, 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823). The U.S. Supreme Court interpreted “discovery” to mean that when European, Christian nations “discovered” lands unknown to Europeans, they automatically gained sovereign and property rights in the lands. This was so, even though Indigenous people had occupied and used the lands for millennia. This real-property right was subject only to the continuing use and occupancy rights of the Indigenous peoples.

Johnson v. McIntosh involved the attempted purchase of land in Indiana and Illinois from Piankashaw and Illinois Indians by private land speculators in Philadelphia and Baltimore. After nearly fifty years of attempts to have the titles acquired by these purchases legislatively recognized, the companies sought judicial recognition in the federal district court for the District of Illinois. They received an adverse decision and appealed. The U.S. Supreme Court decided against the land speculators. Writing for the Court, Justice Marshall concluded that the companies had no recognizable title because (1) the Illinois and Piankashaws had no fee title to convey; upon discovery, fee title passed to the discovering European sovereign, Britain, and (2) the tribes only possessed an occupancy right that they could sell only to the same sovereign or its successor in interest (the U.S.). Justice Marshall set forth what has been quoted as the Doctrine of Discovery in U.S. law:

> They were admitted to be the rightful occupants of the soil, with a legal as well as just claim to retain possession of it, and to use it according to their own discretion; but their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations, were necessarily diminished, and their power to dispose of the soil at their own will, to whomsoever they pleased, was denied by the original fundamental principle, that discovery gave exclusive title to those who made it.  

The principles established in Johnson have remained “cornerstones of the concept of original Indian title.”

The same passage provides that the discoverer gained sovereign governmental powers over the native peoples and their governments, which restricted tribes’ international political, commercial, and diplomatic powers. This transfer of rights was accomplished without the knowledge or consent of native peoples. Johnson has been cited and relied on by Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian courts, and thus had a major impact on all Indigenous peoples who have experienced the colonial impacts of the British crown.

**From Christian Roots of Doctrine to Secularization**

Although commonly referenced as a secular legal doctrine in the United States, the Doctrine of Discovery has roots in European medieval Christianity. This section provides a summary of the Christian roots of the doctrine, its secularization, and eventual journey from Europe to the United States, leading to its American articulation in Johnson v. McIntosh.

- **Medieval Crusades and Christian Warfare**

Scholars have traced the development of the doctrine to the Crusades to the Holy lands in 1026–1271. In justifying the Crusades, the Church established the idea of a worldwide papal jurisdiction that “vested a legal responsibility in the pope to realize the vision of the universal Christian commonwealth.” This papal responsibility and power led to the idea of justified holy wars by Christians against Infidels.

In 1245, the canon lawyer Pope Innocent IV wrote a legal commentary on the rights of non-Christians that proved very influential in the development of the Discovery Doctrine. He focused on the central legal problem raised by the medieval crusades and Christian warfare against non-Christian societies: “Under what circumstances might Christians legitimately dispossess pagan peoples of their dominium—that is, their lordship and property?” He first interpreted Christ’s instructions to Peter to “feed my sheep” to be a justification for the papal jurisdiction over both Christians and infidels: “Both infidels and the faithful belong to Christ’s flock by virtue of their creation, although the infidels do not belong to the sheepfold of the Church, and so it seems from the aforementioned that the pope has jurisdiction over all men and power over them in law but not in fact.” Then through a series of theological and legal arguments, Innocent IV concluded that it was legal for Christians to occupy territory invaded “because in such cases the legal title reverted to the Church and to the pope who represented all men.” Thus, the Crusades were “just wars” fought for the “defense of Christianity” and to reconquer lands that had once belonged to Christians. With this commentary, Innocent IV provided a broad legitimizing mandate for wars of conquest and colonization in the lands of other peoples for medieval Europe.
In the early 1400s, Innocent IV’s commentary on the rights and status of infidels was revived in the context of a dispute between Poland and the Teutonic Knights. The Council of Constance heard the arguments and issued its decision in 1417: The Church and Christian princes had to respect the natural law rights of pagans to property and self-government, but not if they strayed too far from European normative views. This gave Spain and Portugal great license as they formulated their “colonizing discourse” for Africa and the New World and the legality of seizing the lands and rights of non-Christians.18

- **Issuance of Papal Bulls**

  Competition between Portugal and Spain to control the Canary Islands beginning in the 1300s led to a ban of both nations from the islands in 1434 by Pope Eugenius IV. Portugal appealed to the Pope, arguing that Portugal’s discovery and conquest was motivated by its guardianship duty to the infidels. This led to a new doctrine based on Portugal’s rights of discovery and conquest that stemmed from the alleged need to protect Indigenous peoples from the oppression of others and the need to convert them. Eugenius IV consulted canon lawyers, who opined that “[a]lthough possessing dominium, if infidels demonstrated an incapacity to comport their conduct according to natural law, the pope could interfere with their rights under his indirect Petrine guardianship responsibility to shepherd and care for all the sheep of God’s flock.”19 He issued the papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* in 1436 and authorized Portugal to convert the Canary Islanders and to control the islands on behalf of the papacy. In 1455, Pope Nicholas V additionally granted Portugal title to the lands of Indigenous peoples in Africa that Portugal had “acquired and that shall hereafter come to be acquired,”20 and authorized Portugal “to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans” and place them into perpetual slavery and to seize all their property.

  Spain thus had to look elsewhere for lands to exploit. This laid the groundwork for King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to sponsor Christopher Columbus’s westward passage to the Indies. After Columbus “claimed” the lands that he encountered in the New World, Isabella and Ferdinand sought papal ratification of their ownership of these lands. In May 1493, Pope Alexander VI obliged the Spanish Crown’s request by issuing the bull *Inter caetera divinai in May 1493*, ordering that the lands, which “hitherto had not been discovered by others,” and were now found by Columbus, belonged to Ferdinand and Isabella, along with “free power, authority, and jurisdiction of every kind.”21 The Pope also granted Spain any lands it might discover in the future, provided they were not “in the temporal possession of any Christian owner.”

  Portugal protested the geographical reach of *Inter caetera I*, after which Spain requested another bull. Pope Alexander obliged and issued *Inter caetera II*, drawing a line of demarcation 100 leagues west of the Azores. Spain was to have title to all territory west of this line, securing nearly all of North and South America. This line was later adjusted by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas between Spain and Portugal to a point 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. With this bull, Spain was given “the wherewithal by which [Spain] may be able to pursue [its] holy and laudable work [conversion], pleasant to immortal God … and the expansion of the Christian Rule.”22

  Miller observed that, by 1494, the Doctrine of Discovery stood for four points, as defined by the Church, Portugal, and Spain: (1) the Church possessed the authority to grant Christian kings title and sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and their lands; (2) European exploration, conquest, and colonization was designed to assist the papacy in exercising its guardianship over the entire earthly flock; (3) Portugal and Spain held exclusive rights over other European countries to colonize the world; and (4) the mere discovery of lands by Portugal or Spain in their respective spheres of influence, and engagement in symbolic acts of possession on these lands, was sufficient to establish their ownership rights.23

- **Secularization of the Doctrine**

  Clearly the Doctrine of Discovery had Christian roots, leading some to label it the “Christian doctrine of discovery.” However, such a focus may discount the manner in which sixteenth century legal discourse merged theology and law. In Renaissance Spain, canon lawyers and theologians spent considerable time addressing the justice of Spanish rule in the Americas, focusing on related themes of papal claims to universal secular jurisdiction and the application of natural law principles to all human relationships, especially between nations. In 1532, Franciscus de Victoria (1480–1546), a Dominican scholar, delivered a three-part lecture entitled “On the Indians Lately Discovered,”24 in which he provided a secular rationalization for discovery and conquest. He believed that the Indians possessed certain autonomous powers and entitlements to land, which Europeans were to respect. However, he methodically set forth rationale by which European Christian nations could “validly” acquire Indian lands or assert authority over them.25 With Victoria systematically “desacralizing” the discourse on discovery, it became ripe for Protestant England after the English Reformation of Henry VIII to employ the doctrine for Britain’s purposes.

- **The Doctrine as Applied by the Protestant British Empire**

  In the 1823 *Johnson v. McIntosh* case discussed earlier, Justice Marshall referenced a 1497 patent issued by King Henry VII to John Cabot to illustrate the origin of the “principle” of “discovery.”26 Although the first discovery voyage did not take place until sixty-five years later, under the reign of his granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth I, this patent demonstrated English interest in America as a possible colonial empire. Henry VII’s charter of conquest notably limited Cabot’s patent to avoid lands that had been granted to Portugal by the pope; he was to sail only to lands “unknown to all Christians” in the north, south, west, and east—avoiding Africa to the south.27 Henry VII issued other patents that also prohibited colonizing lands recognized to be under the papally granted sovereignty of the Portuguese Crown.
Britain, with the Reformation of Henry VIII and consequent shifts in the Empire’s international and colonial priorities with changes in the Crown, took a more circuitous route to join Spain, Portugal, and others in colonization of the New World. However, after practicing Spanish-influenced colonizing techniques in Ireland, Britain would easily transplant its Protestant crusade to the New World. In the words of legal scholar Williams, “[t]he genealogy of the legal discourse of the Protestant crusade against the infidels of America traces a process by which the mediaeval discourses of the Catholic church were domesticated and combined with other discursive practices appropriated from a variety of English and non-English sources.” Thus, for Indigenous Peoples worldwide, the impacts of discovery have been equally destructive whether they are based on Christian—be they Catholic or Protestant—or secular discourses of conquest.

In 1883, the Board of Foreign Missions described its work among the Native peoples as they transferred their work to Home Mission, in language reminiscent of 16th century colonial rationalizations for conquest.

The [missions] were established in view of the spiritual state of the Indians. Their condition as lost sinners and their need of Christ as their savior, led our churches to seek their salvation. It was soon perceived that as a heathen people, and as speaking languages of their own, the same kind of missionary efforts were required for them as for the people of Africa and China. These efforts took the form of preaching, teaching in schools, training native missionary laborers, translating portions of the scriptures, etc., very much as if they lived in Syria or Persia. Many hundreds of the Indians were brought to their Savior by his grace, lived exemplary Christian lives and triumphed at death in the hope of the Gospel.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has recognized that “[i]n all its manifestations, ‘discovery’ has been used as a framework for justification to dehumanize, exploit, enslave and subjugate Indigenous peoples and dispossess them of their most basic rights, laws, spirituality, worldviews and governance and their lands and resources.” While the doctrine has been rejected by some international and domestic bodies, it continues to have life. As the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has stated, its ‘resilience remains because it is embedded in colonizing cultures and maintained in State laws, policies, negotiations and litigation positions.’

Contemporary Manifestations of the Doctrine

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court demonstrated the resilience of the doctrine, in City of Sherrill v. Oneida Nation of N.Y. In this chapter of the Oneida Nation’s ongoing efforts to regain its aboriginal lands, the Oneida Nation challenged taxes owed on parcels of land that were within their aboriginal lands. They argued that when they purchased land parcels and gained fee title, these parcels were “unified” in title with other lands recognized as their ancient reservation land by the Supreme Court, so that the Oneida nation could assert sovereignty over these parcels and not be subject to state taxation. The Supreme Court, in rejecting their claim, made explicit reference to the Doctrine of Discovery as part of federal Indian law: “It very early became accepted doctrine in this Court that although fee title to the lands occupied by Indians when the colonists arrived became vested in the sovereign—first the discovering European nation and later the original States and the United States—a right of occupancy in the Indian tribes was nevertheless recognized.” City of Sherrill presented a stark reminder to Native Nations, Native scholars, and activists that the doctrine is alive and well in U.S. law, and that Indigenous peoples in this country and elsewhere will continue to suffer the impacts of this racist and discriminatory doctrine.

- Impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on Native American Congregations in the PC(USA)

As discussed earlier, Protestant denominations have played a large role in the materialization of the doctrine in the United States, beginning with the purported “discovery” by the English Crown. Legal and historical scholars agree that the expansion of the United States from its first European settlements was largely based on the doctrine. Miller, for example, traces the metamorphosis from the Doctrine of Discovery into Manifest Destiny, as the elements of discovery were readily adopted into Manifest destiny. President Jefferson, for example “utilized Discovery in the Louisiana and Oregon Territories when he launched the Lewis and Clark expedition; when he made the Louisiana Purchase, even though he thought his actions were unconstitutional; and when he took steps to acquire the Pacific Northwest for the United States.”

As the 212th General Assembly (2000) task force report documents, the Presbyterian church joined other religious denominations in assisting the U.S. government with its mandate of manifest destiny. Through the nineteenth century, “the geographic expansion of the Presbyterian mission work among Native Americans often foreshadowed the movement of Euro-Americans to Native American lands,” whether by presence as U.S. government agents to supervise the newly created Indian reservations as part of Grant’s “peace policy,” or as missionaries. Presbyterians joined other denominations in supporting the 1887 Dawes Act, under which the largest loss of Indian land occurred. In 1884–1847, Christian denominations who gathered yearly at Lake Mohonk Conference grounds in New York gave their strong support for the Dawes Act “solution,” by which each Indian was to be given an allotment of land, thereby undermining the concept of communally held tribal land. The Dawes Act opened the way for the federal government to declare all unallotted land as surplus and open for sale. Lands were allotted from 1887 to 1934. By the time the policy ended in 1934, with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act, American Indians had lost 90 million acres of land.

Taking this theme into the 20th century, historian Fixico provided case studies to illustrate “Indian-white competition for natural resources in Indian Country,” arguing that American capitalism, deriving from a tradition of Eurocentrism, continued through the 20th century to exploit tribal nations for their natural resources. Case studies include the allotment of Muskogee Creek lands, the Osage murders and oil, Pueblo water rights in the Southwest, termination of the Klamath and timberslands in
the Pacific Northwest, Chippewa fishing and hunting rights in the Great Lakes, and the quest for gold in the Dakota Black Hills. In almost all the case histories documented by Fixico, Presbyterian Native Americans were impacted.

- Regional Stories of Presbyterian Support of Native Americans

As the committee assigned to write this report deliberated, stories of Presbyterian presence to support Native American efforts to regain lands and maintain sovereignty emerged. While the Presbyterian church may have been complicit in the Assimilationist policies and Manifest destiny in the United States, some stories of resistance serve as valuable precedents and models for support of Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty, to regain aboriginal lands, and for fundamental human rights. Often the support grew out of understanding of Native peoples based on shared experiences and the ability to set aside a Eurocentric world view in order to appreciate the perspectives of Native peoples. Here then are some of those stories.

Worcester, Advocate for Cherokee Nation

Samuel Austin Worcester (1778–1859), a Presbyterian minister who lived among the Cherokee people, played a crucial role in one of the most important cases regarding tribal jurisdiction in the United States, *Worcester v. Georgia,* decided in 1832. Worcester moved to Cherokee Territory in 1828, where he worked to translate the Bible into Cherokee, using Sequoyah’s alphabet, and assisted Elias Boudinot in publishing the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the first Indian newspaper in North America. He opposed removal of Cherokees west of the Mississippi River, as Georgia took Cherokee lands and dismantled Cherokee government in the face of inaction by the federal government. Worcester was arrested for disobeying Georgia’s law restricting white missionaries from living in Cherokee territory without a state license. He and eleven other ministers published a resolution in protest of the Georgia law. Worcester knew that obeying the law would be tantamount to surrendering the sovereignty of the Cherokee Nation. Worcester was arrested on July 7, 1831, and quickly brought to trial and convicted. He stuck to his beliefs and was sentenced to prison on September 16, 1832.

On appeal of his conviction, the U.S. Supreme Court held that Georgia’s law was unconstitutional. Chief Justice John Marshall wrote in his opinion that the federal government had an exclusive relationship with the Indian nations and recognized their sovereignty, above state laws. However, both President Andrew Jackson and Governor George Gilmer ignored the ruling, and Worcester served two years of hard labor in prison. Under a subsequent governor, he was pardoned and thereafter moved to Indian Territory, where he continued his work of preaching, translating, and publishing.

Dirk Lay, Advocate for Pima People

The Reverend Dirk Lay (1886–1944), a Presbyterian missionary who served the Pima people in Arizona, was largely responsible for legislation for the Coolidge Dam, which restored some of the water to the Pima or Akimel O’odham, “River People,” that had been taken by white settlers. He moved to Sacaton in 1910 to serve for a year, to support the mission work of Charles Cook, and ended up staying for twenty-four years. “At once I saw the terrible need of the Indians because of lack of water for the fields,” he said. “This was in a region where, in 1696, when Kino came from Mexico to this country, there was a surprising irrigation system built by the Indians, of miles of ditches, with all necessary laterals. But when I went there I found that the white people had gone to lands to the east, and had tapped the supplies of water. They took all; none was left for the Indians, who were barely existing.” He became a fierce advocate for Pima water rights.

He and his wife Elizabeth visited Congressmen and Senators in Washington as well as churches in the East, and urged their members to write and wire their senators and representatives in Congress. Testifying before a House subcommittee in 1923, Lay said: “The first Arizonan killed in action in France in the World War was a full-blood Pima Indian, a volunteer. When the telegram came on the reservation that he had been killed, six acres of wheat, the only means of support of his widowed mother, were drying up because this Government had permitted others of our race to take her water.” In 1924, the Pima Indians did not have status as U.S. citizens and so could not use the courts to assert their water rights. Construction of the Coolidge Dam started in 1924. It was finished in 1928 and dedicated in 1930.

Unfortunately, the water lasted only five years. Speculators had bought up desert land under the dam and sold it with water rights. Irrigation water decreased; in response, farmers began to drill so many wells and run so many hundreds of pumps day and night that the water table sank almost out of reach. The Gila River people would not have a dependable supply of water until after the Central Arizona Project canal was built and Congress passed the Arizona Water Settlements Act in 2004. Rev. Lay did not live to see this happen. He is remembered fondly by the O’odham people to this day.

Self-Development of People and North Slope Borough

In 1972, the Arctic Slope Native Association was awarded funding by Presbyterian Self-Development of People (SDOP) to support a land rights and governance project. The North Slope of Alaska, which lies between the Brooks Range and the Arctic Ocean, covers an area of 228,800 square kilometers, 15 percent of the land area of the state. About 70 percent of these people are Inupiat Eskimos. In 1990, Barrow, the largest village, had 3,400 residents, about 40 percent of whom were non-Inupiat. A Presbyterian church was established in Barrow in 1890. In 1972, after oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope, the people of the eight North Slope villages voted to establish a borough, a form of regional government, in order to tax the oil companies and build government infrastructure. Oil companies threatened any business who would help in this
effort, and a political and legal battle ensued. The Native Association approached the Presbyterian SDOP for assistance with their legal challenges and were awarded $85,000. They eventually won, established the North Slope Borough, and began collecting property taxes from oil field developments. Within a few years, the North Slope Borough became one of the richest local and regional governments in the United States as measured by taxable wealth and tax revenues per capita.50 After the Native Association won their case, they returned the funds to SDOP with interest.51 North Slope Borough government has provided the Alaska arctic Inupiat with means to greater political self-sufficiency.

Santa Fe Presbytery and Mount Taylor

In 2014, the Presbytery of Santa Fe sold a church camp property on Mt. Taylor to the Pueblo of Laguna. The Laguna United Presbyterian Church, established in the 1870s, is the only Native American congregation in the Presbytery of Santa Fe. This sale represented an important return to the Pueblo of its aboriginal lands. The creation of national forests and national parks around the country involved the taking of Indigenous lands, including those of Pueblo peoples in New Mexico.52 Through the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, the President of the United States set aside forest reserves from the land in the “public domain” without recognition of Indigenous ties to the land. In 1905, management of approximately 21 million acres of public lands in New Mexico and Arizona, almost one-eighth of the surface area of these states, was transferred from the Interior Department to the Bureau of Forestry. This included thousands of acres of aboriginal lands of peoples, including the Pueblo of Laguna. Later the establishment of Cibola National Forest, which included Mt. Taylor (“Tsibiina” to Laguna people) included aboriginal lands of Laguna Pueblo and other tribes. Efforts to regain these lands in the courts had failed.

In 2009, the Pueblo, along with four other tribes (Pueblo of Acoma, Zuni Tribe, Hopi Tribe, and Navajo Nation), sought the support of the PC(USA) as they sought to protect the sacred mountain landscape from harmful development and advocated for designation of Mt. Taylor as a Traditional Cultural Property under New Mexico law, after it was listed as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Citing a denominational social witness policy to support Indigenous peoples and land-based theologies, Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick submitted a letter of support for the designation. Although the 2009 designation was challenged in court, the tribes eventually prevailed in the New Mexico Supreme Court in 2014.53

PC(USA) and Standing Rock

Perhaps the most well-known instance of an Indigenous effort to claim aboriginal lands in contemporary times is that of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. From 2016 to 2017, the fight to resist placement of an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, a major source of water for Standing Rock, drew international attention for its human rights implications. The PC(USA) offered support to the “water protectors” in numerous ways, in person, and through financial and in-person support.54 In November 2016, representatives from the PC(USA) joined a 500-person-strong gathering of interfaith clergy and lay leaders at the Oceti Sakowin prayer camp.

All these stories demonstrate the wealth of possibilities for supporting Indigenous peoples in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and all the rights attached to it. They also demonstrate the power of one person’s willingness to set aside Eurocentric paradigms and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in new ways. Native peoples continue to live land-based theologies that center the lands they call home and seek out healthy lives despite being inheritors of generations of oppression. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has recognized that the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery continue to be devastating, far-reaching, and intergenerational.55 Indigenous Peoples also experience ongoing adverse effects relating to “health; psychological and social well-being; denial of rights and titles to land, resources, and medicines; conceptual and behavioral forms of violence against Indigenous women; youth suicide; and the hopelessness that many Indigenous peoples experience, in particular Indigenous youth.”56

Implications for Future Engagement with Native Peoples

Many have observed that an enduring aspect of the Standing Rock resistance was the opportunity it afforded for education on international human rights of Indigenous Peoples. In numerous instances during media coverage, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was cited, with particular focus on the rights to self-determination (Article 3), to lands (Articles 25–28), and the right to free prior and informed consent (Article 19). Indigenous peoples will no doubt continue to fight for their lands, water, and self-determination in numerous ways. The UN Declaration, and more recently the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, have added frameworks for action aiming at the full protection and implementation of the rights of Indigenous peoples. The UN Permanent Forum in its 2014 “Study on the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on Indigenous peoples, including mechanisms, processes and instruments of redress,” emphasized that “[f]or both Indigenous peoples and States, there are compelling reasons to go beyond repudiation. It is essential to replace the colonial Doctrine of Discovery with contemporary international human rights standards and engage in just and collaborative processes of redress.”57 Importantly, the Permanent Forum calls for a “clear shift of paradigm … from colonial doctrines to a principled human rights framework, consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” This should be the foundation for future PC(USA) engagement with Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and elsewhere. Repudiating the doctrine of discovery may, so far, be merely a recognition of bad things that happened in the past, while remaining blind to current thought-and-actions, and their consequences.
Currently, 90.93 percent of the PC(USA) membership is Caucasian and still (mostly unconsciously) guided by the same trajectory of thought that is reflected in the Doctrine of Discovery. Guidance into a new way of thinking must come from sources outside the dominant culture. Today there are ninety-five Native American congregations in the PC(USA), a decrease of fifteen since the General Assembly task force report was delivered in 2000. The task force anticipated that the number of Native congregations would decrease if systemic issues were not faithfully addressed by the denomination. Organizational patterns and methods reflect the cultural thinking behind them. We know that the current PC(USA) system does not serve Native American constituencies well and continues to reflect some of the same blind spots that are endemic to the doctrine of discovery. On the one hand, our official PC(USA) policy is for self-determination to guide Native American ministry. In reality, leadership systems still are not effective in providing for the self-determination of Native American ministries, especially in times when funding shortfalls force unhelpful decisions from the top—unhelpful for staffing for Native American Ministry, for the development and nurture of upcoming Native American leaders, for Native American discipleship programs, or for Native American control over funding.

Endnotes
2. See PC(USA) website on Doctrine of discovery for information on other denominational actions, found at: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-ethnic-and-womens-ministries/gender-and-racial-justice-ministries/doctrine-of-discovery/.
3. The historical report was not included in the General Assembly minutes in its entirety.
4. See n.1 supra.
6. The case was the result of an act of collusion between the two parties. Also problematic was that Justice John Marshall had large real estate holdings that would have been affected if the case had been decided contrary to those interests. See discussion in, Gonnella Frichner, “Preliminary study of the impact on Indigenous peoples of the international legal construct known as the Doctrine of Discovery,” UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, February 4, 2010 (E/C.19/2010), paras 25–26.
10. See discussion in Robert J. Miller, “The International Law of Colonialism: A Comparative Analysis,” 15 Lewis & Clark L. Rev. 847 (2011) (“In discussing Discovery, one is forced to use a comparative analysis to examine how the legal regimes of England, Spain, and Portugal developed the international law of European expansion and colonization, and then how they applied the Doctrine in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, and the United States.”)
13. Miller, supra, note 9 at 855; Williams, supra at 29–30.
14. See discussion in Muldoon, supra, note 8, pp. 6–14, which contains numerous citations from Pope Innocent IV’s Commentaria doctissima in Quinque Libros Decretalium; Williams, supra, at 13, note 4: Innocent framed the question as follows: “[I]s it licit to invade a land that infidels possess, or which belongs to them?”
15. Although there is no citation in Williams or Muldoon, this appears to be the gospel of John 21:17.
16. Williams, supra, p. 50, n. 5.
19. Williams, supra, p. 72. See discussion in Muldoon, pp. 120–131.
22. Williams, p. 81.
23. Miller, p. 860.
24. Williams, p. 97. The lectures were not published until 1557.
25. See discussion in Anaya, supra, n. 11, pp. 10–12.
28. See discussion on Britain’s brutal colonization of Ireland in Williams, pp. 136–146.
29. Williams, p. 122.
33. Ibid, para 2.
34. 554 U.S. 197 (2005), n.1.
38. Robert J. Miller, supra, note 3.
40. 212th General Assembly (2000) task force report.
42. 31 U.S. 515.
44. An online biography can be found at https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=38443470.
45. Ibid
46. 68th Congress, 1st Session, Senate, Report No. 129, San Carlos Federal Irrigation Project in Arizona, February 7, 1924, available online at: http://water.library.arizona.edu/body.1_div.44.html.
47. See a 1924 video on the water project at https://mail.aol.com/webmail-std/en-us/suite.
49. For a brief history of Presbyterian mission work in Alaska, see http://alaskaweb.org/religion/presby.html.
50. In 1990, Prudhoe Bay and neighboring fields produced more than 1.7 million barrels of oil per day, or nearly a quarter of total U.S. oil production.
51. Interview with the Reverend Curtiss Karns. See also, “Coordinator for Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People retires: Cynthia White reflects on 37 years of ministry around the world,” found at www.pcusa.org/news/2016/3/1/coordinator-presbyterian-committee-self-developmen/
56. Ibid, para 11.
57. Ibid., para 4.
Advice & Counsel on Item 10-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-13.

Item 10-13 fulfills the 222nd General Assembly (2016)’s request for a study of one of the legal building blocks of Native American dispossession, and includes recommendations for the study’s use.

The ACSWP advises approval, with notes for its posting and publication.

This is a very good study, summarizing a large amount of historical and legal material. It makes clear that the “Doctrine” was at its earliest stages the product of a time when church and state were not separate. It outlines the process of “secularization,” and indicates several other legal developments leading to the direct U.S. Federal jurisdiction over Native American tribes, considered as dependent or limited sovereignties.

In its references to PC(USA) actions in aid of Native American empowerment, the account of the assistance given to the North Slope Borough in Barrow, Alaska, prior to taxing authority, leaves out the role of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) in arranging for Presbyterian funds to be loaned to the borough and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

The recommendations are wise to note the 2000 Report of the Task Force on Native American Ministry. This was accompanied by the publication of an issue of Church & Society magazine, “Native American Ministry: Voices of a New Dawn,” March/April 2000 issue (90:4).

The legal mechanisms of dispossession had led to three Law and Theology Seminars organized by the Native American Counseling Committee, the Advisory Council on Church & Society, and other bodies of the church. Two of these seminars led to issues of Church & Society containing papers presented:


Law and Native American Religions with National Indian Youth Council, Santa Fe, June 1984 (few papers).


A fourth issue of Church & Society, “The Voyage After Columbus,” Jan/Feb 1992, addressed the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ “discovery,” but (among good articles) said little about the Doctrine of Discovery.

Referred to in Recommendation 16, the online journal, Unbound, at www.justiceUnbound.org, is the successor to Church & Society magazine, and is published by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.


ACREC is grateful for the excellent and important work of the Doctrine of Discovery Team and stands in full solidarity with the recommendations made by this report. We are encouraged to see that the recommendations involve all levels of church structure and presence in relations with Native People.

As those called to live our faith, holding one another accountable to the highest standards of justice and equity, we know that repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery is not merely about our polity, but requires an ongoing recognition of error and mutual establishment of corrective actions with those who have been harmed or oppressed. The recommendations named here take this reality into account as well as acknowledge the cause of the loss of geographic homelands, language, culture, and children of historical indigenous people in order that settler communities and churches might gain.

The hope of ACREC is that these recommendations will not merely be endorsed and approved by this General Assembly, but that this would be a call to the church to repent, to turn, to take action in a new direction together with our Native American siblings. ACREC has noted that over the years that the Native American Consulting Committee has a clearly decreasing level of authority, particularly after reunion, which shifted its purpose from consulting to caucusing. ACREC encourages the bolstering of Native ministries and relationships within PC(USA) church structures, including broadening and strengthening ecclesial partnerships in order to repair damage done over centuries of influence by the Doctrine of Discovery.
It is far too late that we’re arriving at this report, but we remain grateful and hopeful that this document will serve as a catalyst for a true culture shift within our denomination. May it be so.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 10-13. ACWC agrees that there is a need for the Presbyterian Church (1) to confess its complicity in sins—both active and passive—against our Native American brothers and sisters and (2) to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, central to U.S. law regarding tribal lands, which has led to the oppression of Native Americans and the denial of their fundamental civil rights.

Historically, the U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted “discovery” to mean that when European Christian native nations “discovered” lands not previously known to Europeans, they automatically assumed sovereignty and property rights over those lands even though the areas had been occupied and used by Indigenous people for millennia. According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “in all its manifestations Discovery has been used as a framework for justification to dehumanize, exploit, enslave and subjugate indigenous peoples and dispossess them of their most basic rights, laws, spirituality, worldviews and governance and their lands and resources.”

When Columbus’ encountered, what to him were new worlds, he brought a culturally-embedded Doctrine of Discovery with him to the shores of the Americas and a belief in the superiority of Western ways. Europeans of his time saw civilizations as placed along a continuum. At the lower end of the continuum stood those forms of civilization considered primitive. The continuum stretched forward until the apex of civilization was reached in Western society. Thus, the Indigenous people of the New World were not considered human beings, but more infantile lifeforms viewed as having no principles, values, or traditions worthy of respect. They were deemed to need being cared for—or, more accurately, taken over—by morally-superior Western nations.

Columbus could not imagine that another culture might have different ways of organizing society and of valuing life. That those ways might not be necessarily better or worse, but simply different, was beyond his comprehension. Those first Europeans explorers chose to see the faults in indigenous cultures rather than acknowledge the possibility of their own European cultural limitations. Failing to understand that communication occurs in a cultural context, for instance, Columbus was unaware that while dancing was a sign of peace for Spaniards, it was a declaration of war for Trinidadians. [See Jeanne Choy Tate, Something Greater: Culture, Family, and Community as Living Story, WipfandStock, 2013.]

With Westward Expansion, the Doctrine of Discovery would take on additional form in the Doctrine of Manifest Destiny. In the name of converting “heathens” to Christianity and protecting Indigenous people from oppression by others, the Presbyterian church in its many forms, along with other religious denominations, joined with the U.S. government in spreading this doctrine from coast-to-coast along with its concomitant rape of lands and murder of Native Americans.

Stunning in its arrogance, this Eurocentric way of confronting differences would influence all subsequent forms of encounter between Europeans and other cultures for centuries on into modern times. The claims made by the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny continue to undergird white supremacy and patriarchy today and Western culture still assumes itself to be the defining culture. Even concept of “inclusivity” reinforces privilege when applied universally with the intention of including everyone in the dominant (European American/White) worldview. Unlike Columbus, it is possible to choose another path, replace the colonial doctrine of Discovery with contemporary international standards of human rights and engage in a dialogue with difference rather than its subjugation.

The current PC(USA) system does not serve its diminishing numbers of Native American constituencies well. Indeed, it continues to reflect the same dangerous points of ignorance endemic to the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny. Within the PC(USA), these implicit assumptions impact denominational attitudes toward congregations of color and immigrant fellowships as well.

The PC(USA) has much to learn from our Native American brothers and sisters. When lifted up, Native American land-based and other theologies are able to disrupt the historic oppression grounded in Eurocentric mindsets. This overture represents one small step towards reforming our tradition and living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in new ways.

COTE COMMENT ON ITEM 10-13

Comment on Item 10-13—From the Committee on Theological Education (COTE).

The Committee on Theological Education notes that seminaries are mentioned in Recommendations 1, 3, 12, and 17. The Committee on Theological Education offers the following comment.
First, COTE notes that in these recommendations the seminaries are described in different ways: “PC(USA) schools and seminaries” in Recommendation 3, “Presbyterian-related seminaries” in Recommendation 12, simply “seminary” in Recommendations 1 and 17. Presumably the intention in each case is to refer to the seminaries that relate to the General Assembly through their membership in the Committee on Theological Education. COTE advises that the language of the report’s recommendations be revised to reflect this fact. Commissioners could do so by the phrase “COTE-member seminaries.”

Second, the Committee on Theological Education further notes that although it is the established body through which the denomination and the member seminaries communicate with one another, it is not mentioned in the recommendations in their present form. The Committee on Theological Education urges that all communication with the COTE member seminaries called for by these and any other recommendations made by this report be coordinated with and occur through the Committee on Theological Education.

**GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 10-13**

*Comment on Item 10-13—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)*

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) understands God as deeply interested in the concerns of humanity and the relations among peoples and power, especially upon the least and lost. Our theology speaks to the issues of representation, equity, and diversity revealed in this history of repression of Native American peoples in the United States, in the name of faith and fervor by our denomination specifically and the Christian church at large.

The Doctrine of Discovery used as a theological rationale, argued into legal documents and mortared into precedents, provide basis to remove the original inhabitants from their lands and violate their human rights, life, liberties, and deprive them of full participation. Legally it continues to be used to legitimize these actions. The church has also used this ideology to justify its injurious practices of cultural imperialism and assimilation.

The Brief Statement of Faith (11.4) teaches us that by trusting in God the Holy Spirit, he “gives us the courage to ... hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.” The Confession of Belhar (10.8) also invites us to denounce and resist this ideology as an injustice that is contrary to the Gospel, “that the credibility … is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity” (10.5, Belhar referencing James 2:8–9).

As the report itself enumerates, The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,

- recognizes that “[i]n all its manifestations, ‘discovery’ has been used as a framework for justification to dehumanize, exploit, enslave and subjugate Indigenous peoples and dispossess them of their most basic rights, laws, spirituality, worldviews and governance and their lands and resources” [UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “Study on the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on Indigenous peoples, including mechanisms, processes and instruments of redress,” February 20, 2014 (E/C.19/2014/3). Cited on page 6 of the report].

- states, its “resilience remains because it is embedded in colonizing cultures and maintained in State laws, policies, negotiations and litigation positions” [Ibid, paragraph 2, cited in report.]

If the church is to ever achieve unity and diversity completely, we must first recognize and repent of the harm that we have done towards many of the original peoples and cultures, repairing where we can to be fully the church worthy of Christ. True unity within the church can only rest upon a full acknowledgement and education of the historic oppression and continuing racism in which the church willingly participates.

GACOR supports efforts to educate and provide reparation to the damage caused by past activities and laws affecting Native Americans and other marginalized persons. As all councils above session are required by G-3.0103 to attend to inclusiveness and interrupt excluding practices, GACOR lifts up the constitutional support for this work in all councils of the church. We are committed to being a faithful partner in creating organizational and systematic transformations that give underserved communities full voice, participation and equity within the PC(USA).

Recommendations 5–7 are particularly easy and bring the realities of the erasure of native peoples’ home to wherever the church gathers. Other denominations have implemented these practices and found in them a new awareness of voices long silenced and unmasking idolatries in their common practices.

*The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).*
Item 10-14

[The assembly approved Item 10-14. See pp. 28, 33.]

Confirming the Election of the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett as President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency—from the Presbytery Mission Agency Board (PMAB).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) confirm the election of the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett to a four-year term as President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Search Committee has concluded a wide-ranging national search for a President/Executive Director. The search committee was chaired by Nancy Ramsay and included Bong Bringas, Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz, Chip Low, Alice Ridgill, Patsy R. Smith, Wendy Tajima, and ex-officio members Ken Godshall, Joe Morrow, and Ruth Gardner. The committee worked with BoardWalk Consulting, a national nonprofit search firm based in Atlanta.

The following provides the search committee’s recommended candidate to the Board of Directors, with a request for ratification of this choice.

About the Search

The PMA Search Committee resumed the search on March 15, after finalizing a revised Leadership Profile. BoardWalk reached out to some 200 individuals in advance of a Benchmark Meeting on April 5, and the search committee discussed the backgrounds of sixteen individuals. After narrowing the list to five candidates, the committee held candidate interviews on April 14, and the search committee selected finalists for interviewing on April 27 and 28 in Cincinnati based on criteria in the Leadership Profile. The candidates interviewed represented a broad range of diversity. The semifinalist candidate pool included three women and two people of color. Among the finalist candidate pool were two women and two people of color.

As described in the Leadership Profile, the goal of the search was to recruit a President/Executive Director with the following assets:

- Inspiring leader of transformation and mission
- Manager of change
- Able to build cohesive, mission-focused culture
- Relationships across the Church
- Able to lead PMA to a vibrant future

Personal characteristics include: credibility; organizational and change management experience; cultural fluency; awareness of the changing Church; confidence and humility; ability to thrive with ambiguity and change; courage and innovation; and passion for the Church and mission.

A Unanimous Recommendation: The Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett

The committee voted unanimously to recommend hiring the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett. Diane is a multidimensional leader and author whose decades of transformational leadership have been honed within various arenas of complexity. She has served as a congregational pastor, executive of an urban outreach ministry, and community leader in Oakland, Calif., East Orange, N.J., and Greensboro, N.C. In 2017, Diane ran in a competitive race for mayor of Greensboro.

Diane is currently the senior pastor of Saint James Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she has served since 2005. She is the current moderator of the Executive Council of the Presbytery of Salem and was previously moderator of the Presbytery of Salem. Other PC(USA) leadership roles have included chair of the 218th General Assembly (2016)’s Climate for Change-Cultural Proficiency Task Force, a group charged with assessing the six agencies of the General Assembly’s progress in cultural proficiency and presenting recommendations for improvement in this area. Diane also served as an advisory member on the African American Advisory Committee for the PC(USA) and as vice president of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus.

An active community leader, Diane currently serves on the boards of Presbyterian Homes, The Cone Health Network, and the Cone Foundation, where she sits on the executive committee. Diane helped to establish and serves as the co-moderator of the Greensboro Interfaith Clergy Council and as vice president of the Pulpit Forum, both faith-based advocacy organizations.
The search committee was especially drawn to Diane’s passion for mission. In each of her leadership roles, and even as a seminarian, Diane has led adaptively in promoting transformative change through significant congregational involvement with surrounding communities.

Diane’s commitment to connecting congregations with their communities has developed into an effective, engaged practice of ministry that speaks to the needs of the 21st century church.

As senior pastor of Saint James Presbyterian in Greensboro, North Carolina—a historically black congregation formed by formerly enslaved Africans who had worshipped at First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro—Diane helped develop a partnership between both congregations, and through a yearlong process of listening and learning, a joint service of reconciliation was held that had ramifications across the city and the denomination.

Previous calls include pastor of Elmwood Presbyterian in East Orange, New Jersey (1995–2005), where she successfully secured funding for the launch of a second worshipping site. While still a seminarian, Diane served as student pastor for Elmhurst Presbyterian in Oakland, California (1987–1992). When she arrived, Elmhurst was a congregation in decline. She successfully integrated the church into the life of the community, developed relationships with other faith-based and community leaders, expanded and nurtured new ecclesiastical leadership, and raised resources that led to the call of an associate pastor. That church is still ongoing.

From 1993–95, Diane served as executive director of Harbor House Ministries in Oakland, a complex outreach ministry within one of the most diverse communities in America. Harbor House supports children, youth, and families with education, before- and after-school care, food, clothing, workforce training and other needs. While at Harbor House, she expanded the budget and donor base of the ministry. She also helped residents establish two businesses to employ people in the community.

Diane displays a warmth for mission conveyed with enthusiasm. She is a sought-after preacher whose sermons are frequently included in collections. Her book Beyond Greens and Cornbread: Reflections of African American Christian Identity received excellent reviews from various publications.

Diane is a bridge-builder, culture-transformer, and effective listener able to “garner community consensus, all while remaining faith-based.”

Diane’s unique gifts of interpersonal leadership, intercultural community engagement, developing faithful leaders, church planting and cross-cultural competency elevated her candidacy among other potential PMA leaders and commends her to lead PMA at its current stage.

The following are quotes from some of her peers, representing all levels of PC(USA) leadership:

“Diane has the respect of people within different levels of the church as well as in the pews.”—PMAB member

“Diane is a good listener. I can’t emphasize enough from my experience serving on the PMAB and hearing from different constituencies how critical this skill will be. She will inherit a gifted staff of directors at the PMA as well as deployed staff in the field. Knowing her, she will value the gifts they bring based on their experience of leadership and passion. She will be good at assessing what is going well. She will assess areas that need to be put on hiatus or re-envisioned as well as create space for the movement of the spirit in new ways. Her thoughtful approach will serve her well in assessing, casting a vision and charting a course for PMA.”—PMAB member

“We have had challenges developing leadership in African-American congregations. Those congregations remain at 4 percent of our total membership; meanwhile our country’s population is changing. PC(USA) has to identify, recruit and support young adults who can go into leadership within these congregations. Diane has experience leading that and will bring this issue to the national level. Diane will keep that in front of everyone in a positive way.”—Transitional General Presbyter

“I cannot think of a better person to lead PMA than Diane. Quite extraordinary leadership.”—Transitional General Presbyter

“Diane has an ability to get people to sign up, to join in and help. She is able to garner community consensus, all while remaining faith-based. She is grounded in the Word.”—Elder and Organizing Member of Elmwood Presbyterian West

“I am Methodist and was a pastor for 20 years before coming to nonprofit leadership. Her work with First Presbyterian inspired my church to do the same thing with a black church across town. We have been encouraged to read books that might be hard to read and have conversations that are difficult to have. It has been quite powerful.”—Peer reference from the CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro
**Item 10-15**

*Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.*

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

A. Relating to Budgets for Presbyterian Mission Agency
   1. Presbyterian Mission Agency—Presbyterian Mission Agency Receipts and Expenditures Actual Compared to Budget for 2016 and 2017

B. Relating to Net Assets and Reserve Funds
   Unrestricted and Restricted Net Assets and Reserve Funds

C. Relating to Support for Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission
   1. John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds
   2. Special Offerings 2016 and 2017

A. Relating to Budgets for Presbyterian Mission Agency


   The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) incorporate into the Minutes the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Receipts and Expenditures Actual Compared to Budget for 2016 and 2017.

   [The display that is found in pma-budget-charts-A1.pdf is the report of actual revenue and expenditures for the years 2016 and 2017. See pp. 945–46.]

   **Rationale**

   The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted policy governing mission budgets at the General Assembly level. That policy provides that:

   B. The General Assembly Council shall:
      1. Report to each General Assembly:
         a. Actual total financial resources used to support the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program and the expenditures during the most recently completed year. *(Minutes, 1990, Part I, p. 375)*


   The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) receive the revised report of the 2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget in the total amount of $68,255,478.

   [The display that is found in pma-budget-charts-A2.pdf is the report of the Revised 2016 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget. See p. 947.]

   **Rationale**

   The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted policy governing mission budgets at the General Assembly level. That policy provides that:

   B. The General Assembly Council shall:
      1. Report to each General Assembly: ...
         b. Adjustments, if any approved by the General Assembly Council for the current budget year.


[The display that is found in pma-budget-charts-A3.pdf is the report of the 2017 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and Program and the 2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget. See pp. 948–50.]

**Rationale**

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted Policy Governing Mission Budgets at the General Assembly Level. That policy provides that:

B. The General Assembly Council shall: ...

3. Recommend to the General Assembly the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program for the next succeeding budget cycle. Displayed in the recommendation shall be:

   a. All projected financial sources; and
   

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is required by the Constitution to prepare and submit a comprehensive budget to the General Assembly (G-3.0113).

B. **Relating to Net Assets and Reserve Funds**


**Unrestricted and Restricted Net Assets and Reserve Funds**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) receive the report of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation regarding unrestricted and restricted net assets and reserve funds as of December 31, 2017.

[The display that is found in pma-budget-charts-B1.pdf is the report of the 2018 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Unrestricted and Restricted Net Assets. See pp. 951–54.]

**Rationale**

The report of the unrestricted and restricted net assets is divided between unrestricted and restricted funds. The following display indicates those funds as well as the activity of those funds and the status of the total reserves as of closing December 31, 2017. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) rescinded the 1990 General Assembly Mission Program Budget Policy and Procedures and replaced it with the “Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy” below:

A. Presbyterian Mission Program Fund

   Definition: The funds composed of current or prior year unrestricted gifts, legacies, and bequests that equal or exceed $500,000 (five hundred thousand), and will be expended over several operating periods or years. The use of these funds will be determined as part of the normal operating budget preparation cycle and processes.

B. Unrestricted Reserve Fund

   Definition: The funds composed of all unrestricted receipts and prior year net assets intended for the support of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

1. Sources to maintain this fund shall include all unrestricted revenue available for the Presbyterian Mission Agency, including but not limited to:

   a. income including receipts from congregations, presbyteries, or individuals;
   
   b. unrestricted gifts, legacies, bequests;
   
   c. unrestricted investment income;
   
   d. gift annuity excess reserves;
   
   e. such nonrecurring income as the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall direct by general or specific policy statement; and
   
   f. under expenditure portion of the Presbyterian Mission Agency annual operating budget.

2. The Unrestricted Reserve Funds

   a. The unrestricted reserve fund will not be used to manage projected operating budget shortfalls;
b. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall maintain an unrestricted reserve fund that may be accessed with the approval of the Presbyterian
Mission Agency Board;

c. Use of the unrestricted reserve fund shall be limited to revenue shortfalls and expense overruns in the current budget cycle, emergency
purposes, and new mission opportunities;

d. The unrestricted reserve fund shall be held in a separate unrestricted net asset account;

e. Reserves will be increased by allocating unrestricted gifts and budget accumulations;

f. Mission areas that rely on unrestricted reserve funds will rely on an agency-wide emergency fund; and

g. The unrestricted fund reserve balance will be approved by the Chief Financial Officer with concurrence of the Executive Director of the
Presbyterian Mission Agency.

3. Any use of the unrestricted reserve fund for the purposes outlined in the above section must be based on a plan that takes into account income
estimates and provisions for all the anticipated changes in the fund. Such plans will be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Finance
Committee and further approved annually by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

4. Ordinarily, the unrestricted reserve fund will not be used for capital expenditures, except in the event of an emergency and the capital replace-
ment funds are fully expended or allocated for use within a three (3) year period. The Chief Financial Officer will report this emergency
expenditure to the Finance Committee, and seek timely approval from the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,
or its Chair.

5. Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation of its Finance Committee, shall authorize all appropriations, expenditures, or
transfers from these fund balances through established policies.

6. Use of Restricted Funds: Availability of restricted funds shall be considered in conjunction with budgeting of unrestricted funds with restricted
funds being depleted first. Information concerning restricted funds use and balances shall be provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),
A Corporation on a regular basis.

C. Restricted Reserves Funds

Definition: The reserve funds are composed of restricted receipts with limited use and are subject to donor restrictions.

1. Sources to maintain this fund shall include all restricted revenue available for the Presbyterian Mission Agency, including but not limited to:

a. income including receipts from the Special Offerings;

b. restricted gifts, legacies, bequests;

c. restricted investment income; and

d. such nonrecurring restricted income as the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall direct by general or specific policy statement.

2. The Restricted Reserve Fund

a. The restricted reserve fund will not be used to manage projected operating budget shortfalls;

b. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall maintain the restricted reserve fund that may be accessed with the approval of the Presbyterian
Mission Agency Board;

c. Use of the restricted reserve fund shall be limited to revenue shortfalls and expense overruns in the current budget cycle, emergency
purposes, and new mission opportunities within the donor restrictions;

d. The restricted reserve funds shall be held in a separate restricted net asset account;

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purposes, and new mission opportunities within the donor restrictions;

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c. Use of the restricted reserve fund shall be limited to revenue shortfalls and expense overruns in the current budget cycle, emergency
purposes, and new mission opportunities within the donor restrictions;

d. The restricted reserve funds shall be held in a separate restricted net asset account;

e. Reserves will be increased through the allocation of restricted gifts and budget accumulations;

f. Mission areas that rely on restricted funds will rely on the restricted reserve fund for emergencies; and

g. The restricted fund reserve balance will be approved by the Chief Financial Officer with concurrence of the Executive Director of the
Presbyterian Mission Agency.

3. Any use of the restricted reserve fund for the purposes outlined in the above section are based on a plan that takes into account income and
expenditure estimates and provisions for all the anticipated changes in the fund. Such provisions will be approved by the Finance Committee
of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and further approved annually by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

4. Ordinarily, the restricted reserve fund will not be used for capital expenditures.

5. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, upon recommendation of its Finance Committee, shall authorize all appropriations, expenditures, or transfers
from these fund balances through established policies.

D. Use of Excess Income over Actual Expenditure

1. Any excess unrestricted income over actual unrestricted expenditures realized at the end of a budget year shall be retained in the Unrestricted
Reserve Fund.

2. Budgeted amounts unexpended at the end of a budget process may be encumbered by those participating in the Presbyterian Mission Agency
budget process in order to complete projects, upon approval of the Chief Financial Officer and provided as an information item to the Finance
Committee.

a. Unexpended project funds at the end of the budget year may be encumbered only when completion of a project (or the completion of an
essential part of a project)

1) is authorized as a part of a total approved program; and

2) is not otherwise provided for in the succeeding year’s budget.

b. Unexpended project funds at year-end may not be encumbered when
10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

1) it serves to expand a general or ongoing budget, or part of a budget; and

2) it serves to exempt the specific budget and program item from the usual review and the particular priority choices involved in building the succeeding year’s budget. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 579–84)

C. Relating to Support for Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission


1. John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) allocate the annual income realized in 2017 and projected for 2018 from the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds in support of the budget for the general mission work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Rationale

Current practice is to recommend to each General Assembly the allocation of annual income from these two funds in light of wording in the donors’ wills that requires this annual process.

Portion of the will of Edmund P. Dwight (May 23, 1903):

I will and bequeath to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, to be used for the establishment of the Christian Religion, that the light of the gospel may be made to join more perfectly...

Portion of the will of John C. Lord (January 2, 1873):

...to the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., for religious and charitable uses, to be called the John C. Lord Fund, the annual interest of which is to be disposed of and distributed by the said General Assembly at each annual meeting for the furtherance of the Gospel of our Blessed Saviour, at home or abroad, as the Assembly may deem best. ...

The applicable provisions of the two wills facilitate the annual income realized from these funds to be used in the Presbyterian Mission Agency General Mission Budget.

Income from these funds in 2017 were $13,437.26 and it is projected that the income from these funds in 2018 will be approximately $13,309.51.

2. Special Offerings 2017

[The assembly approved Item 10-15, Recommendation C.2. See pp. 80–81.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) incorporate into its Minutes the following summary of receipts from Special Offerings for the years 2016 and 2017.

[The charts that are found in pma-budget-charts-C2.pdf show the summary of receipts for Special Offerings for the years 2016 and 2017. See p. 955.]

Rationale

Special Offerings enable an important part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In 2016, income from these offerings totaled approximately 16 percent of total income for the mission program of the church and 31 percent of the mission gifts from congregations. In 2017 income from these offerings totaled approximately 13 percent of total income for the mission program of the church and 21 percent of the mission gifts from congregations.

Item 10-16

[The assembly approved Item 10-16. See pp. 13, 34.]

In fulfillment of Recommendations 2.a.(3) of Item 12-07 of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), and in affirmation of the strong and long relationship between Cuban and United States Presbyterians, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its World Mission ministries, requests that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Approve the new Mutual Mission agreement between the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), printed below.

2. Express the appreciation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the approval given to this agreement by the XI Synod of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church at its February 2018, meeting.
3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its World Mission ministries and Latin America regional office, to publicize and oversee implementation of the following Mutual Mission Agreement throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

MUTUAL MISSION AGREEMENT

The Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), reaffirm the Mutual Mission Agreement between our two denominations made in 1986. As sister churches within the body of Christ, we celebrate more than a century of work together in proclamation, mission, evangelism, and reconciliation.

We thank God for:

- our unity in Jesus Christ and our common Reformed tradition;
- the bridges of reconciliation and dialogue that we have maintained through the years when our countries had no official ties; and
- the contributions given by each denomination in the joint work of proclamation, mission and our common life despite language, cultural, social, economic and political differences.

We recognize, however, that the dramatic and ongoing change in national contexts, as well as change within our churches, leads us to the urgent need for a new agreement between us.

We declare that:

- we share together in “one Lord, one faith, and one baptism”;
- we share the mission of the Triune God (the Missio Dei) in Cuba, the U.S.A., and the world;
- mission is always life-affirming, is based in transformative spirituality and is rooted in justice and love.

In the spirit of transformation, we affirm that we are called by the Spirit to be peacemakers; together we discern issues of inequity and power that foster hostility and division, and seek to create paths of reconciliation, friendship and understanding between peoples.

In the spirit of community, we affirm that:

- We are called to deepen the bonds of unity, faith, and common witness between our two churches. We are committed to continuing prayer for each other; to be open in offering hospitality for each other and humble in accepting it; through our partner congregations to the sharing of liturgies, sermons, and community services; and to accompany and work pastorally with migrants, immigrants, and their families in both the U.S.A. and in Cuba.
- Our relationship lives within the context of commitment and mutual cooperation within the ecumenical bodies to which we both belong; that we will relate to one another in a spirit of humility and mutuality seeking to share each other’s perspectives through study and dialogue.
- We will relate middle governing bodies, congregations, institutions, and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada on mutually agreed-upon guidelines.
- To the end of strengthening Christ’s Church, we are committed to sharing our gifts and spiritual, human, and material resources. We will work to achieve economic sustainability of the structures and institutions of our respective churches.

In the spirit of liberation, we pledge to advocate for more just governmental and social policies in both our countries; in the U.S.A., more especially on U.S. policies that negatively impact the lives of Cubans as well as the relationship between our countries.

We are committed to work in common challenges and new opportunities for mission engagement and advocacy such as:

- the environment, including issues of eco-justice and climate change;
- racial concerns;
- aging populations;
- gender diversity and discrimination;
the status of women in church and society;
poverty and food security;
• economic self-sustainability;
• emigration, immigration, internal migration, and social dislocation.

In the spirit of Pentecost, we pledge to increase the capacity of our churches to spread the Good News through:

• focusing on the centrality of Christ;
• shared studies and devotional materials;
• intercultural, intercontextual, and interfaith dialogue;
• increased opportunities for exchange of seminary professors and students between the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and churches in other countries;
• continued sharing in the rebuilding and restoration of church buildings and the Conference Center of National Activities of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba;
• shared resources and persons to participate in mission in a third country, and/or the organizations and ecumenical organizations to which we belong.

We express joy in our unity as brothers and sisters in Christ and express through this new agreement our determination to continue to strengthen our common participation in the one mission of the Triune God, the Missio Dei, throughout the world. Acknowledging the need for review in a mutually agreed upon cycle, both delegations unanimously adopt this mutual mission agreement and recommend it to our churches for approval.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral:


The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved the report, New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento,” which contains a policy section with an affirmation and recommendations, and a supporting study. The report was authorized by a referral by the 221st General Assembly (2014), which called for a response to a relative opening in relations between Cuba and the United States. That study was developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), working with World Mission personnel, volunteer members, and support from the Cuba Partners Network, and leaders of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada. Forums were held in Havana, Matanzas, and Washington, D.C., involving pastors, scholars, and representatives of independent organizations and government agencies, including the Cuban Department of Religious Affairs, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Security Council. The report is available in downloadable booklet form in English and Spanish at: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/New-Hopes-and-Realities-in-Cuban-American-Relations-2016-ACSWP.pdf and https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/ga-2016-cuba-in-spanish.pdf. These booklets contain texts of the 1986 prior agreement and a 2000 theological exploration of partnership.

Claiming the work of the Holy Spirit in the steadfastness and solidarity of the Cuban Church and its U.S. partners, and in the anticipation of greater changes for Cuba in the broader context of the Americas, the report directed that World Mission:

(3) Update our partnership agreement between the PC(U.S.A.) and IPRC in light of new hopes and realities as we assess together new opportunities for mutual mission. ... (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 907)

The updating work began at a small conference in Matanzas, Cuba, in October of 2016. Small groups from each denomination began putting together hopes, desires, and items of importance, but the task of creating a document was overwhelming for the initial gathering. Subsequently, each denomination sent a team of six or eight people to Cardenas in May of 2017. That meeting distinguished the elements of policy and direction that would be needed in the Mutual Mission Agreement from lessons and learnings from the eighty or so current Cuban-U.S. church partnerships that could go into a “Best Practices” handbook.

The “Handbook” would be a living document that could and should be changed regularly as either Cuban or North American sides saw the need, but the Mutual Mission Agreement would represent a covenant between the two churches agreed to at
their highest level, the General Assembly. The Cuban Partners Network has worked with the World Mission and IPCRC members
and staff on versions of the Handbook for both churches, and also contributed to the thinking in the Mutual Mission Agreement.
(This summary indebted to the Cuba Partners Newsletter, https://mailchi.mp/df87e03534fa/cuba-partners-network-newsletter-
winter-2017-1130225?e=c87af82641).

The Reverend Ary Fernandez Alban, Moderator, and the Reverend Edelberto Valdes Fleites, Secretary General, of the
Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba, confirmed their church’s approval of the Mutual Mission Agreement at their Febru-
ary 2018 Synod meeting. In the words of their transmittal letter:

“This agreement gives continuity to the excellent relations between our Churches and paves the way for new moments of
 collaboration in the life and mission of both at a time when dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding are needed. We
 thank God for the times we have lived and we put ourselves in His hands so that the future is also a time where we can bear
 witness of unity and commitment.” (Communication with the Reverend Jose Luis Casals, Director, World Mission, PC(USA),

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Item 10-A

[The assembly approved Item 10-A. See p. 34.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board reports the recipients of the Sam and Helen R. Walton Awards for 2017
and 2018 and recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) recognize the recipients as outstanding new church
developments:

2017

1. The Bridge Presbyterian Church, Leland, North Carolina, Presbytery of Coastal Carolina, Synod of the Mid-
Atlantic.

2. Durham Presbyterian Church, Durham, North Carolina, Presbytery of New Hope, Synod of the Mid Atlantic.


4. Tidelands Church, Stanwood, Washington, Presbytery of the Northwest Coast, Synod of Alaska Northwest.

2018

1. Faith Presbyterian of the North Georgia Mountains, Cherokee Presbytery, Synod of South Atlantic

2. Serious Ju Ju Skate Works Ministry, Glacier Presbytery, Synod of Rocky Mountains

Rationale

In late December 1991, Sam and Helen Walton made a generous gift through the Presbyterian Foundation of $6 million
that included $3 million to be used for new church developments that have placed an emphasis on site acquisitions. All nomi-
nees must meet the qualifications as set forth in the application. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, acting on behalf of
the General Assembly between meetings, approved the above recipients.

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Item 10-B

[The assembly approved Item 10-B. See p. 34.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) recognize the fol-
lowing Women of Faith award recipients at the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

The Reverend Amantha Barbee,

The Reverend Karen Hernandez-Granzen,

The Reverend Liz Theoharis.

Rationale

The Women of Faith Awards were established in 1986 to honor women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) whose lives
exemplify their Christian commitment through witness, service, and leadership.
Each year a theme is chosen. Nominations are received from throughout the church and honorees are selected by a committee of representatives from various groups.

Awards are presented at the Women of Faith Breakfast during the General Assembly. This breakfast is a biennial celebration of God’s activity in the lives of women and their response to God’s presence.

The theme for this year’s awards is “Clergywomen Who Challenge Racism and Injustice” and it recognize clergywomen who are “woke” and who challenge systemic racism and oppression.

The 2018 selection committee included Mary Jorgenson, moderator; Marcella “Marci” Glass, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board; Kate Duffert, Presbyterian College Women & Young Women’s Ministries; Khayla Johnson, Racial Ethnic Young Women Ministries; Catherine Warren, Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team; and Joyce Karumangkay, Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The selection committee members were instructed to consider the following criteria in reviewing nomination forms and in making their selection of the four women who receive this award:

• Selection of the Women of Faith awardees are based on the theme.
• How is she engaged in ministries of reconciliation?
• How has she demonstrated in her church or community her gifts of reconciliation?
• Three nominees will be selected.
• Strive for racial ethnic diversity.
• Strive for geographic diversity.
• Awardees will be women.
• Awardees will be Presbyterian.
• Current staff serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are ineligible for nomination.
• Previous award recipients are ineligible to be nominated again for the Women of Faith Award (one-time recipients; no duplications).

The election of the three honorees was approved by the Leadership Committee and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Biographical sketches of these three women are as follows:

Amantha Barbee, Charlotte, North Carolina, Charlotte Presbytery, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. Barbee is the pastor of Statesville Avenue Presbyterian Church. She stood between protestors and policemen, with several other ecumenical colleagues all wearing clergy collars, the night Keith Scott was killed in Charlotte. Barbee received the 2017 Charlotte City Center Partners Special Achievement Award for the work of that night. She became the chairperson of the Charlotte Clergy Coalition for Justice shortly after the city erupted in the wake of the shooting. Barbee serves on the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR). She also served as moderator for Mission, Justice and Outreach and on the Racism Task Force of the Presbytery of Charlotte.

Karen Hernandez-Granzen, Trenton, New Jersey, New Brunswick Presbytery, Synod of the Northeast. Hernandez-Granzen was awarded the Master of Divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1994, and she has served as the pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church since 1995. Westminster is an urban, intercultural, multiracial, and More Light congregation. Hernandez-Granzen has served as a supervisor of field education students from Princeton Theological Seminary, intentionally reaching out to white seminarians to provide multiracial and intercultural field education placements at Westminster. She is a member of the Trenton Latino Advisory Council, the Princeton Civil Rights Commission, and she served on the board of the Presbyterian Intercultural Network (PIN).

Liz Theoharis, New York, New York City Presbytery, Synod of the Northeast. Theoharis is the co-director of the Kairos Center and co-chair of the Poor Peoples Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. She spent the last two decades with grassroots, community-led, anti-poverty organizations working to build the movement to end poverty. In her book, Always with Us?: What Jesus Really Said about the Poor (Eerdmans, 2017), she argues that being poor is not inevitable and that a theology that suggests otherwise has stifled the growth of a transformative movement to end poverty. Her book was recommended to the church this past summer by the Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).
Item 10-C

[The assembly approved Item 10-C. See p. 34.]

Minutes, PC(USA), A Corp.

Item 10-D

[The assembly approved Item 10-D. See p. 34.]

Minutes, PC(USA), A Corp. Audit [For text of Audit, see p. 956.]

Item 10-Info

A. Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Report of Progress

2017 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis

Overview

By action of the 197th General Assembly (1985), the Presbyterian Mission Agency is required to report annually the equal opportunity information of all PC(USA) agencies, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods.

At the request of the Office of Human Resources, Research Services handled the collection of data for the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis for 2017. Based on the success of web-based data collection for previous years, we followed similar procedures for 2017.

The web-based data collection instrument was developed, tested, and deployed by Research Services. A point of contact in each organization or entity was invited by email to provide data for the organization. (The original invitation is included here as Attachment A.) An initial email invitation was sent January 3, 2018. A reminder email was sent to all non-responding organizations on January 17, 2018. Responses were accepted until January 18, 2018.

Invited Organizations

The following agencies and organizations were requested to provide their workforce analysis data: Board of Pensions; Presbyterian Mission Agency; Hubbard Press; Jarvie Commonweal Service; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation; Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc.; Presbyterian Publishing Corporation; Office of the General Assembly; and all conference centers, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods associated with the PC(USA).

Response Rate

Of 225 invited organizations, data were received from 99 organizations, for a response rate of 44 percent. Attachment B shows organizations that provided their data. Of responding organizations, all (100 percent) used the web form.

Results

Attachment C shows the results for responding organizations and presents the percentages of employees by gender and racial-ethnic category.

Recommendations for the Future

Research Services recommends that the racial ethnic categories be updated to correspond to PC(USA)’s commitment to inclusivity, and by extension the commitment of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to diversity and racial justice.

Prepared by: Research Services
A Ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
January 23, 2018

Note: Figures include data received as of 1/23/2018.
First, provide data about your organization’s exempt employees, those not eligible for overtime pay.

Q-1a. Please report your total number of exempt male employees in each category below—regular full-time and regular part-time exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exempt Males:</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latino) males</td>
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<td>Asian (not Hispanic/Latino) males</td>
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<td>Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latino) males</td>
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<td>Hispanic and/or Latino males</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latino) males</td>
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<td>Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino) males</td>
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<td>White (not Hispanic/Latino) males</td>
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Q-1b. Please report your total number of exempt female employees in each category—regular full-time and regular part-time exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exempt Females:</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
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<tbody>
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Second, provide data about your organization’s non-exempt employees, those eligible for overtime pay.

Q-2a. Please report your total number of non-exempt male employees in each category below—regular full-time and regular part-time non-exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q-2b. Please report your total number of non-exempt female employees in each category below—regular full-time and regular part-time non-exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (not Hispanic/Latino) females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions for Use in Completing the Form

Racial Ethnic Categories: These are current categories defined by the federal government for EEO AA reporting. Note that each employee can be counted in only one category.

- **American Indian and/or Alaska Native (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.

- **Asian (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast
Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- **Black and/or African American (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

- **Hispanic and/or Latino:** All persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

- **Two or More Races (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons who identify with more than one of the other racial categories.

- **White (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

**Other Definitions:**

- **Exempt:** Employees who are not entitled to overtime pay (i.e., professional staff including clergy).

- **Non-exempt:** Employees who are entitled to overtime pay (e.g., secretarial, clerical, and custodial staff).

- **Full-time:** Employees who work at least 30 hours weekly.

- **Part-time:** Employees who work fewer than 30 hours weekly.

**Questions? Call Ruth Gardner at 800-728-7228, ext. 5237**

**Trouble with the survey? Call Research Services at 800-728-7228, ext. 2040**

Completed forms may be returned by fax. Please provide your contact information:

- **Organization:** 
- **Your name:** 
- **Telephone:** 

Fax completed form to: (502) 569-8736.

**Thank you for your help!**

**Attachment A**

Original Email Invitation and Sample Form

**From: Research Services**

**Subject Line: Important 2017 EEO/AA Workforce Analysis Information Needed**


We are compiling this information electronically again this year. Please click on the link below to begin.

You may have received multiple emails if you are responsible for reporting on several organizations.


**The deadline for your organization’s information is Wednesday, January 17, 2018.**

If you need additional information or have questions, please contact me (800-728-7228, ext. 5237, or Ruth.Gardner@pcusa.org).
If you have trouble with the survey Web site, please contact Research Services (800-728-7228, ext. 2040 or research@pcusa.org).

We appreciate your assistance and cooperation.

Ruth Gardner  
Human Resources Director  
Presbyterian Mission Agency

### Attachment B

#### 2017 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Presbyteries</th>
<th>Responding Synods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon</td>
<td>Synod of Lakes and Prairies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska-Northwest</td>
<td>Synod of Mid-America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>Synod of The Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Synod of Rocky Mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Korean</td>
<td>Synod of South Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise</td>
<td>Synod of The Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borinquen En Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Synod of The Trinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Florida</td>
<td>Synod of The Western Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Nebraska</td>
<td>Synod of Transylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee</td>
<td>Synod of Upper Ohio Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Synod of The West</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cimarron</td>
<td>Synod of Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dakota</td>
<td>Synod of West Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Cristo</td>
<td>Synod of Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>Synod of Yorkshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Moines</td>
<td>Synod of the Inland Northwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>Synod of Youngstown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Iowa</td>
<td>Synod of Zanesville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Tennessee</td>
<td>Synod of the Peaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Korean</td>
<td>Synod of York</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Responding Presbyteries</th>
<th>Non-Responding Synods</th>
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<td>Alaska-Northwest</td>
<td>Synod of The Covenant</td>
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<td>Albany</td>
<td>Synod of The Pacific</td>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlantic Korean</td>
<td>Synod of The Western Reserve</td>
</tr>
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<td>Boise</td>
<td>Synod of The Western Reserve/Mid-American Synod</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borinquen En Puerto Rico</td>
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<td>Central Florida</td>
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<td>Chicago</td>
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<td>Cimarron</td>
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<td>East Tennessee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Korean</td>
<td>Synod of The Western Reserve/Mid-American Synod</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Responding Presbyteries

- Baltimore
- Beaver-Butler
- Blackhawk
- Boston
- Carlisle
- Cayuga-Syracuse
- Charleston-Atlanta
- Charlotte
- Cincinnati
- Coastal Carolina
- Colonial
- Eastern Oklahoma
- Eastern Oregon
- Eastminster
- Florida
- Genesee Valley
- Giddings-Lovejoy
- Grand Canyon
- Heartland
- Holston

#### Non-Responding Presbyteries

- Abingdon
- Alaska-Northwest
- Albany
- Arkansas
- Atlantic Korean
- Boise
- Borinquen En Puerto Rico
- Central Florida
- Central Nebraska
- Cherokee
- Chicago
- Cimarron
- Dakota
- De Cristo
- Denver
- Des Moines
- Detroit
- East Iowa
- East Tennessee
- Eastern Korean

#### Responding Synods

- Synod of Lakes and Prairies
- Synod of Lincoln Trails
- Synod of Living Waters

#### Non-Responding Synods

-Synod of Alaska-Northwest
-Sinodo Boriquen En Puerto Rico
-Synod of The Covenant
### Responding Theological Institutions

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## 10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

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### Totals

#### Grand Total
- **Total Racial Ethnic**
- **Women**

---

**223rd General Assembly (2018)**

869
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## 10 Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination

### PILP

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**Totals:**
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- Male: 7, Female: 0, Total: 7, Grand %: 53.8%
- Male: 3, Female: 0, Total: 3, Grand %: 23.1%
- Male: 4, Female: 0, Total: 4, Grand %: 30.8%
- Male: 13, Female: 0, Total: 13, Grand %: 100.0%
- Male: 11, Female: 0, Total: 11, Grand %: 84.6%

### ROP

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**Totals:**
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- Male: 30, Female: 0, Total: 30, Grand %: 45.5%
- Male: 52, Female: 0, Total: 52, Grand %: 78.8%
- Male: 12, Female: 0, Total: 12, Grand %: 18.2%
- Male: 66, Female: 0, Total: 66, Grand %: 100.0%
- Male: 42, Female: 0, Total: 42, Grand %: 63.6%

### FONDATION

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**Totals:**
- Male: 22, Female: 0, Total: 22, Grand %: 33.3%
- Male: 30, Female: 0, Total: 30, Grand %: 45.5%
- Male: 52, Female: 0, Total: 52, Grand %: 78.8%
- Male: 12, Female: 0, Total: 12, Grand %: 18.2%
- Male: 66, Female: 0, Total: 66, Grand %: 100.0%
- Male: 42, Female: 0, Total: 42, Grand %: 63.6%

### JARVIE COMMONWEAL

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- Male: 30, Female: 0, Total: 30, Grand %: 45.5%
- Male: 42, Female: 0, Total: 42, Grand %: 63.6%
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BYLAWS
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“Corporation”), is the principal Corporation of and established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the “General Assembly”) to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as provided in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [and was]. The Corporation traces its origins to an entity named the “Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,” originally formed on March 28, 1799 by Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE I
Office and Fiscal Year

Section 1.01. Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such places within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the Corporation requires.

Section 1.02. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January in each year.

ARTICLE II
Board of Directors

Section 2.01. Selection of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be selected [and may be removed] as follows:

The voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, by virtue of their offices, be Directors of the Corporation. As set forth in the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation, the number of such Directors may be increased or decreased at any time by the General Assembly or by any officer or agency thereof thereunto duly authorized, and successor or additional Directors shall be selected in the manner determined by the General Assembly.

Section 2.02. Directors of the Corporation’s Constituent Corporations. The persons from time to time serving as Directors of the Corporation shall, by virtue of their offices, constitute the [directors]Directors or [trustees]Trustees of each corporation listed in Annex A hereto (which corporations so listed are referred to collectively in these bylaws as [“]“Constituent Corporations[”]).

Section 2.03. Resignations Other Vacancies.

(a) Resignation. Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation, to be effective upon receipt or at a later time stated thereon.

(b) Disability. If a Director is unable to perform substantially all of his or her duties and responsibilities by reason of illness, injury or incapacity for a period exceeding six months, such Director shall tender, or shall be deemed to have tendered, his or her resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation. As soon as practicable thereafter (but in any event not later than at its next regularly scheduled meeting), the Board of Directors shall determine whether to accept such resignation.
(c) Vacancies. In case of a vacancy on the Board of Directors by death, disability or resignation, a successor to fill the unexpired term shall be nominated by the entity who nominated the former Director in the same manner as provided in Section 2.01 of these Bylaws for the selection of Directors.

Section 2.04. Meetings of Directors. Every meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation may be, without further notice or action, a meeting of the Board of Directors or Trustees of each of the Constituent Corporations, as to matters concerning such Constituent Corporation.

Section 2.04-2.05. Powers; Liability.

(a) The Board of Directors shall have full power to conduct, manage, and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation; and all powers of the Corporation are hereby granted to and vested in the Board of Directors.

(b) A Director of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as may be defined under applicable law and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Director for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or Federal law.

Section 2.05-2.06. Organization. The Board of Directors shall elect from among the members of the Board a Chair of the Board and a Chair-elect (who shall serve as the Vice Chair), who may each serve one two-year, non-renewable term, and a vice chair of the Board, also for one two-year, non-renewable term. The Chair-elect shall become Chair at the end of the two-year term, and a new Chair-elect shall be elected from among the eligible members of the Board. Eligibility requirements are set forth in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair, or, in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair or a Chair chosen by a majority of the Directors present, shall preside, and the Secretary, or in the absence of the Secretary, an assistant secretary, or any person designated by majority vote of the Board or appointed by the Chair as Secretary Pro Tem or Secretary of the Board, shall act as Secretary of the meeting and shall record the minutes of the meeting.

Section 2.06-2.07. Place of Meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such place within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint, or as may be designated in the notice of the meeting.

Section 2.07-2.08. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time and place as shall be designated from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors, and one such meeting each year shall be designated as a meeting for organization and the election of members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee and officers may also be elected at any other meeting of the Directors. At every regular meeting, the Directors shall transact such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws.

Section 2.08-2.09. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held whenever called by the Chair of the Board of Directors or by three or more of the Directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be given to each Director by telephone or in writing at least twenty-four hours (in the case of notice in person or by telephone, facsimile transmission, email or other electronic communication) or forty-eight hours (in the case of notice by mail) to any corporation or in the case of notice by telephone of a meeting of trustees of an Ohio corporation, telegram, courier service or express delivery service) or five days (in the case of notice by mail), or (b) the minimum notice required by applicable law for any Constituent Corporation when the action to be taken by the Board of Directors is solely for the Constituent Corporation, before the time at which the meeting is to be held. Every such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting.

Section 2.09-2.10. Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote; Directors may not vote by proxy. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting by unanimous written consent, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the Secretary of the Corporation. Unanimous written consent may be executed through e-mail by the Directors returning the written consent together with their written signature on or before the announced deadline for returning the consent.
Section [2.10. Executive and Other] 2.11. Committees of the Board.

(a) The Committees of the Board [of Directors shall, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors in Office, establish an Executive Committee of not less than five members, one of whom shall be the chair.]

(b) [The Executive] No Committee of this Corporation shall have and exercise all of the powers and authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the business affairs of the Corporation, except that the Executive Committee and shall not have any power or authority as to the following:

1. The adoption, amendment or repeal of these bylaws, or the adoption of any amendment of articles or plan of merger, division or consolidation or the approving of the sale, lease or exchange of all or substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or of the dissolution of the Corporation.

2. The amendment or repeal of any resolutions of the Board.

3. The filling of vacancies in the Board of Directors thereof.

4. (c) No committee of the Board of Directors [other than the Executive Committee,] shall, pursuant to resolution of the Board of Directors or otherwise, exercise any of the powers or authority vested by these bylaws[.] or other applicable law in the Board of Directors as such, but any other committee of the Board of Directors may make recommendations to the Board or Executive Committee concerning the exercise of such powers and authority.

5. A majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee, or Directors designated to replace them as provided in this section, shall be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the acts of a majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee or their replacements shall be the acts of the committee.

6. Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report such proceedings periodically to the Board of Directors. Sections [2.07, 2.08, 2.09 and 2.10] shall be applicable to committees of the Board of Directors.

Section [2.11. ] 2.12. Compensation and Expenses. Except as permitted by Section [4.13] 4.15 of these bylaws, no compensation of any kind shall be paid directly or indirectly by the Corporation to, and no loan or other extension of credit shall be made for the benefit of, any Director, as such, or as an officer or employee of the Corporation. Directors may be reimbursed for expenses in a manner consistent with any applicable policies adopted by the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

ARTICLE III
Notice - Waivers - Meetings

Section 3.01. Notice. What Constitutes. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws. Whenever written notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, it may be given to such person, either personally or by sending a copy thereof by first class mail, postage prepaid, or by email, to his or her address appearing on the books of the Corporation, or in the case of Directors, supplied by the Director to the Corporation for the purpose of notice. If the notice is sent by mail or by email, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the United States mail or upon transmission to such person. A notice of meeting shall specify the place, day and hour of the meeting and any other information required by law or these bylaws. When a meeting is adjourned pursuant to Section 2.09 of these bylaws for lack of a quorum, it shall not be necessary
to give any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting, other than by announce-
ment at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.

Section 3.02. Waivers of Notice. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section and by Section 6.06 of these bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 3.03. Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice. Whenever the language of a proposed resolution is in-
cluded in a written notice of a meeting, the meeting considering the resolution may without further notice adopt it with such clarifying or other amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

Section 3.04. Conference Telephone Meetings and Meetings by other electronic means. One or more persons may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, including but not limited to electronic meetings providing video conferencing utilizing telephone or other audio methods, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in the meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. Conference and electronic meetings will follow procedures approved by Board from time to time.

ARTICLE IV Officers

Section 4.01. Number, Qualifications and Designation. The officers of the Corporation shall be [a president, an executive vice president/chief financial officer, a President, a Chief Financial Officer, one or more vice presidents, Vice Presidents, (including but not limited to executive vice presidents and senior vice presidents), a secretary, a treasurer, Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a controller, Controller, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.02 of this Article. The President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be the President of the Corporation. Any number of the offices may be held by the same person. Officers may, but need not be Directors or members of the Corporation, and shall be natural persons of full age. The [chair] Chair of the Board of Directors elected under Section [2.05] 2.06 shall also be an officer of the Corporation.

Section 4.02. Selection and Term of Office. The officers of the Corporation shall be selected and their terms of office shall be determined as follows:

(a) The [president] President shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and shall be eligible for relection. [Other] Annually other officers of the Corporation shall be [elected annually] nominated by the Personnel/Nominating Committee upon the recommendation of the President and elected by the Board of Directors.

(b) The Board of Directors may from time to time elect such other officers as the business of the Corporation may require, including a [secretary] Secretary and one or more assistant secretaries, each of whom has such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee of the Corporation the power to elect subordinate or other officers and to retain or appoint employees or other agents, or committees thereof, and to prescribe the authority and duties of such subordinate or other officers, committees, employees or other agents.

Section 4.03. Resignations. Any officer [or agent] may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, or to the [president] President or the [secretary] Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4.04. Removal. Any elected or appointed officer, may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors or other authority which elected or appointed such officer. The term of any offices held by an employee ends the earlier of the employee’s last day of employment or last day in the office.

Section 4.05. Vacancies. A vacancy in any elective office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board of Directors[4] (where appropriate, [subject to confirmation by the General Assembly) or by the authority to which the power to fill such office has been delegated, pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article, as the case may be, and if the office is one for which a term is prescribed by or pursuant to these bylaws, shall be filled for the
unexpired portion of the term. The refusal of the General Assembly to confirm an election, where such confirmation is required by these bylaws, shall result in the creation of a vacancy in the office affected.

Section 4.06. General Powers. All officers of the Corporation, as between themselves and the Corporation, shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be determined by resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, as may be provided in these bylaws.

Section 4.07. The Chair of the Board. Generally, the Chair of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board of Directors [or the Executive Committee].

Section 4.08. The President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors. The President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, by virtue of office, shall be the President of the Corporation. The President shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. In the event of an extended absence of the President, the President shall assign one of the officers of the Corporation to fulfill the duties of the office during the absence of the President.

Section 4.09. Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation shall be responsible for corporate, financial, and accounting functions. The Chief Financial Officer shall perform the duties of the president in the absence of the President or as otherwise assigned by the Board of Directors or the president. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the Board of Directors, or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the [executive vice president/chief financial officer] President.

Section 4.10. The Vice Presidents. The vice presidents shall perform the duties of the executive vice president/chief financial officer in the absence of the executive vice president/chief financial officer as assigned and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to them or authorized by the Board of Directors[or the president,] or the [executive vice president/chief financial officer]. President. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the [vice presidents] Vice Presidents to be accountable to the [executive vice president/chief financial officer] President or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.11. The Secretary. The Secretary or an assistant secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall cause to be recorded personally or by an assistant secretary Assistant Secretary or by the person designated by the Board of Directors the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of committees of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose[s]. The Secretary shall ensure that notices are given and records and reports properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law[or assistant Secretaries] shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal. In general, the Secretary or assistant Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary or assistant Secretary, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Secretary or assistant Secretary or the president, or the executive vice president/chief financial officer. President. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Secretary to be accountable to the [executive vice president/chief financial officer] President or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.

Section 4.12. The Treasurer. The Treasurer or an assistant treasurer shall have or provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Corporation and shall keep a separate account of the same [as Treasurer; shall collect and receive or provide for the collection and receipt of moneys earned by or in any manner due to or received by the Corporation; shall deposit all funds in [his or her credit as treasurer] in such banks or other places of deposit (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation hereinafter “Fiduciary Corporation”) as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an account showing his or her transactions as treasurer, and accounting of the Corporation’s funds, and in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board of Directors, the [president, or executive vice president/chief financial officer] President, or Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Treasurer to be accountable to the [executive vice president/chief financial officer] Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position. The CFO may be elected Treasurer.
Section 4.13. The Controller. The Controller shall be responsible for maintaining the chart of accounts, accounting records, and accounting procedures of the Corporation; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the results of operations and financial condition of the Corporation (at least annually) and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Controller by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Controller to be accountable to the President, or the Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

Section 4.14. Officers' Bonds. Any officer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office held by such officer in such sum, if any, and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall require, and the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

Section 4.15. Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the authority to which the power to elect such officers or to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been delegated pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article. All compensation shall be consistent with any general compensation structure established by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving such compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The Chair of the Board of Directors as an officer shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.12 of these bylaws.)

Section 4.16. Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, are covered by the personnel policies, as adopted by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and set forth in the Employee Handbook.

ARTICLE V
Indemnification of Directors, Officers, etc.

Section 5.01. Scope of Indemnification (a) The Corporation shall indemnify an indemnified representative against any liability incurred in connection with any proceeding in which the indemnified representative may be involved as a party or otherwise, by reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in an indemnified capacity, including without limitation any liability resulting from any actual or alleged breach or neglect of duty, error, misstatement or misleading statement, negligence, gross negligence or act giving rise to strict or products liability, except:

1. where such indemnification is expressly prohibited by applicable law;

2. where the conduct of the indemnified representative has been finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to constitute willful misconduct or recklessness as may be defined by applicable law or any other conduct sufficient in the circumstances to bar indemnification against liabilities arising from the conduct;

3. to the extent the liability is finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to be based upon or attributable to the indemnified representative gaining any personal pecuniary profit to which such indemnified representative was not legally entitled; or

4. to the extent such indemnification has been finally determined in a final adjudication pursuant to Section 5.06(d) to be otherwise unlawful.

(b) If an indemnified representative is entitled to indemnification in respect of a portion, but not all, of any liabilities to which such person may be subject, the Corporation shall indemnify such indemnified representative to the maximum extent for such portion of the liabilities.

(c) The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the indemnified representative is not entitled to indemnification.

(d) For purposes of this Article:

1. “indemnified capacity” means any and all past, present and future service by an indemnified representative in one or more capacities as a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation or a Constituent Corporation, or, at the request of the Corporation, as a Director, officer, employee, agent, fiduciary or trustee of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other entity or enterprise;

2. “[ ] ‘indemnified representative’ means any and all Directors and officers of the Corporation, including any and all officers elected or committee members, employees or other agents appointed under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; [ ] ‘indemnified representative’ also means any and all officers, committee members, employees and other agents elected
or appointed under the power delegated to the General Assembly, or to any General Assembly agency under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; ["""]""""indemnified representative[""] shall include any other person so designated by the Board of Directors.

(3) ["""]""""liability[""] shall mean any damage, judgment, amount paid in settlement, in settlement (provided, in the case of settlements, that the Corporation shall have given its consent to such settlement in advance of the payment thereof) fine, penalty, punitive damages, excise tax assessed with respect to an employee benefit plan, or cost or expense of any nature (including, without limitation, attorneys' fees and disbursements); and

(4) ["""]""""proceeding[""] shall mean any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, appeal or other proceeding of any nature, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, whether formal or informal, and whether brought by or in the right of the Corporation, a class of its security holders, if any, or otherwise.

Section 5.02. Proceedings Initiated by Indemnified Representatives. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Corporation shall not indemnify under this Article an indemnified representative for any liability incurred in a proceeding initiated (which shall not be deemed to include counter-claims or affirmative defenses) or participated in as an intervene or amicus curiae by the person seeking indemnification unless such initiation of or participation in the proceeding is authorized, either before or after its commencement, by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Directors of the Corporation. This section does not apply to reimbursement of expenses incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending an arbitration under Section 5.06(d) or otherwise successfully prosecuting or defending the rights of an indemnified representative granted by or pursuant to this Article.

Section 5.03. Advancing Expenses. The Corporation shall pay the expenses (including attorneys' fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by a Director or officer and may, by act of the Board of Directors (including the votes or consents of interested Directors), pay the expenses (including attorneys' fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by any other indemnified representative in advance of the final disposition of a proceeding, described in Section 5.01 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified representative to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation pursuant to this Article. The financial ability of an indemnified representative to repay an advance shall not be a prerequisite to the making of such advance.

Section 5.04. Securing of Indemnification Obligations. To further effect, satisfy or secure the indemnification obligations provided herein or otherwise, the Corporation may maintain insurance, obtain a letter of credit, act as self-insurer, create a reserve, trust, escrow, cash collateral or other fund or account, enter into indemnification agreements, pledge or grant a security interest in any assets or properties of the Corporation, or use any other mechanism or arrangement whatsoever in such amounts, at such costs, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Directors shall deem appropriate. Absent fraud, the determination of the Board of Directors with respect to such amounts, costs, terms and conditions shall be conclusive against all security holders, if any, officers and Directors and shall not be subject to voidability.

Section 5.05. Payment of Indemnification. An indemnified representative who is entitled to indemnification shall be entitled thereto within 30 days after a written request for such indemnification has been delivered to the [secretary].

Section 5.06. Indemnification Procedure.

(a) An indemnified representative shall use such indemnified representative's best efforts to notify promptly the [secretary].

(b) The Corporation shall be entitled, upon notice to any such indemnified representative, to assume the defense of any proceeding with counsel reasonably satisfactory to the indemnified representative, or a majority of the indemnified representatives involved in such proceeding if there be more than one. If the Corporation notifies the indemnified representative of its election to defend the proceeding, the Corporation shall have no liability for the expenses (including attorneys' fees and disbursements) of the indemnified representative incurred in connection with the defense of such proceeding subsequent to such notice, unless (i) such expenses (including attorneys' fees and disbursements) have been authorized by the Corporation, (ii) the Corporation shall not in fact have employed counsel reasonably satisfactory to such indemnified representative or indemnified representatives to assume the defense of such proceeding, or (iii) it shall have been determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) that the indemnified representative was entitled to indemnification for such expenses under this Article or otherwise. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the indemnified representative may elect to retain counsel at the indemnified representative's own cost and expense to participate in the defense of such proceeding.
(c) The Corporation shall not be required to obtain the consent of the indemnified representative to the settlement of any proceeding which the Corporation has undertaken to defend if the Corporation assumes full and sole responsibility for such settlement and the settlement grants the indemnified representative an unqualified release in respect of all liabilities at issue in the proceeding. Whether or not the Corporation has elected to assume the defense of any proceeding, no indemnified representative shall have any right to enter into any full or partial settlement of the proceeding without the prior written consent of the Corporation (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), nor shall the Corporation be liable for any amount paid by an indemnified representative pursuant to any settlement to which the Corporation has not so consented.

(d) Any dispute related to the right to indemnification as provided under this Article shall be decided only by arbitration in the metropolitan area in which the principal executive offices of the Corporation are located at the time, in accordance with the commercial arbitration rules then in effect of the American Arbitration Association, before a panel of three arbitrators, one of whom shall be selected by the Corporation, the second of whom shall be selected by the indemnified representative and the third of whom shall be selected by the other two arbitrators. In the absence of the American Arbitration Association, or if for any reason arbitration under the arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association cannot be initiated, and if one of the parties fails or refuses to select an arbitrator, or the arbitrators selected by the Corporation and the indemnified representative cannot agree on the selection of the third arbitrator within 30 days after such time as the corporation and the indemnified representative have each been notified of the selection of the other's arbitrator, the necessary arbitrator or arbitrators shall be selected by the presiding judge of the court of general jurisdiction in such metropolitan area. The party or parties challenging the right of an indemnified representative to the benefits of this Article shall have the burden of proof. The Corporation shall reimburse an indemnified representative for the expenses (including attorneys' fees and disbursements) incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending such arbitration. Any award entered by the arbitrators shall be final, binding and nonappealable and judgment may be entered thereon by any party in accordance with applicable law in any court of competent jurisdiction, except that the corporation shall be entitled to interpose as a defense in any such judicial enforcement proceeding any prior final judicial determination adverse to the indemnified representative under Section [5.01](a)(2) or(3) in a proceeding not directly involving indemnification under this Article. This arbitration provision shall be specifically enforceable.

(e) Upon a payment to any indemnified representative under this Article, the Corporation shall be subrogated to the extent of such payment to all of the rights of the indemnified representative to recover against any person for such liability, and the indemnified representative shall execute all documents and instruments required and shall take such other action as may be necessary to secure such rights, including the execution of such documents as may be necessary for the Corporation to bring suit to enforce such rights.

Section 5.07. Discharge of Duty. An indemnified representative shall be deemed to have discharged such person's duty to the Corporation if he or she has relied in good faith on information, advice or an opinion, report or statement prepared by:

(a) one or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom such indemnified representative reasonably believes to be reliable and competent with respect to the matter presented;

(b) legal counsel, public accountants or other persons as to matters that the indemnified representative reasonably believes are within the person's professional or expert competence; or

(c) a committee of the Board of Directors on which he or she does not serve as to matters within its area of designated authority, which committee he or she reasonably believes to merit confidence.

Section 5.08. Contract Rights: Amendment or Repeal. All rights to indemnification under this Article shall be deemed a contract between the Corporation and the indemnified representatives pursuant to which the Corporation and each indemnified representative intend to be legally bound. Any repeal, amendment or modification hereof shall be prospective only and shall not affect any rights or obligations then existing.

Section 5.09. Scope of Article. The indemnification of indemnified representatives, as authorized by this Article, shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any statute, agreement, vote of the General Assembly or disinterested Directors or otherwise, both as to action in an official capacity and as to action in any other capacity. The indemnification provided by or granted pursuant to this Article shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an indemnified representative in respect of matters arising prior to such time, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators and personal representatives of such a person.

Section 5.10. Reliance on Provisions. Each person who shall act as an indemnified representative of the Corporation shall be deemed to be doing so in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided by this Article.
ARTICLE VI
Miscellaneous

Section 6.01. Corporate Seal. The Corporation shall have a corporate seal in the form of a design adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with the words: "PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION--FOUNDED 1799 PENNSYLVANIA."

Section 6.02. Checks. All checks, notes, bills of exchange or other orders in writing shall be signed by such person or persons as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Section 6.03. Contracts. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or to execute or deliver any instrument on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 6.04. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon the order of, or checks signed by, or bearing the authorized facsimile signature of such one or more officers, employees or agents as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. The name or accounts to which such deposits are made, and the name of the Corporation on checks drawn against such accounts may be "Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),", and may include such other words including the name of the Corporation and an appropriate designation to identify by purpose or otherwise. Funds of the Corporation may also be deposited with the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.05. Annual Report of Directors: Accounting System.

(a) The Board of Directors shall direct the President and Chief Financial Officer to present at a regular meeting of the Board in every year a report, verified by such officer, showing in appropriate detail the following:

1. The assets, liabilities and fund balances, including the trust funds, of the Corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report.

2. The principal changes in assets, liabilities and fund balances, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report.

3. The revenue and receipts of the Corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

4. The expenses or disbursements of the Corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(b) The annual report shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting of the Board and shall be transmitted to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

(c) Financial statements reported on by independent certified public accountants may be statements which have been combined with those of the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.06. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted either (1) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days' written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (2) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. The substance of any proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall first be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Section 6.07. Constituent Corporations. A list of Constituent Corporations is attached hereto as Appendix A. The bylaws of the Constituent Corporations shall conform to the laws of the state in which the Constituent Corporation is chartered and shall be, in so far as legally possible consistent with these bylaws.
10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

ANNEX A

CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)

2. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC. (Incorporated in North Carolina)

3. THE HUBBARD PRESS (Incorporated in Ohio)

4. PEDCO, INC. (Incorporated in Delaware)

5. THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

6. PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC. (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

7. PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)

8. BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)

9. COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL MISSION AND RELATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)

10. THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)


As instructed by the 204th General Assembly (1992), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board presents to the General Assembly, the work of all task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies established by the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its divisions, or other assembly entities (Minutes, 1992, Part I, pp. 144, 147, 277–78).

All ministries and the Executive Director’s Office were requested to disclose information on how many task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies were currently at work in their area. Sixty-seven such groups are currently operating. Fifty-three of the groups were reported as having ongoing responsibilities. The other fourteen groups have set completion dates with a written report expected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or the General Assembly. Whenever it is possible, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board assigns tasks to an existing part of its structure. All persons serving on a board, committee, task force, or work group with an expected life of more than two years are selected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process.

1. Compassion, Peace & Justice

Ongoing responsibilities: Mission Responsibility Through Investment, Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People.

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy—In most cases, a liaison member of ACSWP serving on the team will continue to track the posting, publishing, and other implementation of reports after the General Assembly, but the teams themselves will be dismissed with thanks for their volunteer service.

a. Advisors for Unbound: An interactive journal of Christian Social Justice, both from the church more broadly and from staff in the building. Face-to-face meetings of outside church advisors only at General Assembly and Big Tent, with staff advisors meeting periodically in Presbyterian Center.


c. Sustainable Development and Precautionary Principle: This six-person team will request an extension of their time to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

d. Two ad hoc groups of four persons working on Global Order and Honest Patriotism.

2. Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Intercultural Network Resolution Team [Ends with the 223rd General Assembly (2018); Churchwide Conference on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Doctrine of Discovery Team [ends with the 223rd General Assembly (2018)].

3. Theology, Formation, and Evangelism


4. World Mission

Ongoing responsibility: Human Trafficking Roundtable—This group does not exist solely within World Mission. Rather, it is comprised of individuals from offices throughout the PMA as well as the OGA. U.S. Advisory Committee/Jinishian Memorial Program.

5. Executive Director’s Office


Ongoing responsibility: The Mid Council Advisory Board is a representative group of mid council leaders who meet with Presbyterian Mission Agency staff leaders to discuss ways that the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the mid councils can work together in partnership; Presbyterian Mission Agency and Presbyterian Foundation Working Group was formed to strengthen the working relationship between the two agencies.

Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)


6. Funds Development Ministry

None

7. Shared Services

None

D. Report to the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination from the Presbyteries of Baltimore, Charlotte, Western Reserve, New York City, and Pittsburgh in Response to Item 10-03, 222nd General Assembly (2016).

History

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) requested the following specific actions be taken (Item 10-03):

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

b. Encourage the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), mid councils, and congregations to develop programs that address recidivism;

c. Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to develop programs that address and engage local congregational and community members that speak the language of and to African American males aged 6–25 years;
d. Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to develop programs that empower African American males to develop hirable skills so that all of the beloved community benefits;

e. Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to collaborate with established agencies/groups such as National Black Presbyterian Caucus, My Brother’s Keeper, 100 Black Men of America, Amachi, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Boy Scouts of America: Scoutreach (an urban emphasis program), and the Open Table;

f. Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to provide resources for the establishment and support of programs that provide for prevention and rehabilitation in the areas of substance abuse and job placement and security;

g. Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to celebrate particular black males who are role models and members of extended families for the contributions to the whole society. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 570)

Five pilot cities were selected by the assembly for pioneering this work:

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

Update

For the past two years, each of the five presbyteries in which these cities are located (Baltimore, Charlotte, Western Reserve, New York City, and Pittsburgh) have undertaken regular conference calls to speak about initiatives each mid council has chosen to pursue within and beyond their bounds, including a national launch in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, opening donor accounts with the Presbyterian Foundation, and promotion through the Peacemaking and Global Witness Offering. We named this initiative “Freedom Rising,” in memory of the Reverend Eugene “Freedom” Blackwell of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, who advocated for this overture at the 222nd General Assembly (2016), just weeks before dying from cancer. Other presbyteries have adopted similar initiatives on their own. Fundraising for these projects is ongoing in each of the presbyteries.

In light of other overtures from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and those before the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that address systemic racism, we encourage the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to continue and expand its support of Freedom Rising. We urge that similar efforts be launched by other presbyteries, and that churchwide financial support continue to be channeled to the national Freedom Rising account.

“So let us not become weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up” (Gal. 6:9).


In accordance with the above, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board reports the following changes to the appendices of the Manual of Operations, as approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board between the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD
MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

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I. Board Operations

A. Board Purpose

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is called to:

- discern where God is leading,
- oversee the development of plans to pursue that calling,
- attend to the long-term sustainability of the PC(USA)’s work,
- react to changing priorities within the context of organizational mission,
- create strategies and policies to fulfill General Assembly directives for mission
- inspire, equip and connect the broader PC(USA) for mission engagement,
- ensure that gift restrictions are honored, and
- manage assets toward mission fulfillment.

Fulfilling this purpose requires:

- Listening to diverse constituencies in the church, while not losing sight of the direction of the General Assembly.
- Commitment to the Presbyterian connectional system—where no one has sole authority, and everything is worked out through prayerful dialogue, patient discernment and submission to the will of the General Assembly;
- Relationships with members, mid councils, staff and the best thinkers in various fields;
- Awareness of the political and legal contexts affecting mission—in order to minimize short-sighted mistakes;

B. Core Values

The Board has identified the following core values as essential for faithful mission:

- **Mindfulness of Justice and Peace:** Holistic mission pursues justice and peace in our society, in all of its forms, for the fulfillment of human life and redemption of Creation.

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Faithful and fruitful discernment and decision making necessitates broad inclusiveness of the diverse cultural and theological perspectives within the denomination. The mission with which we have been entrusted must be particularly attentive to underrepresented and minoritized populations as it seeks to “hear the voices of peoples long silenced” within the denomination. (Brief Statement, 70)

- **Creativity:** The willingness to move in new directions, if the Spirit so leads, brings excitement, and requires boldness to leave behind what impedes faithfulness. Creativity cultivates what enables mission to grow.

- **Collaboration:** Mission involves a diversity of contexts and depth of challenge that cannot be adequately addressed by one body alone. Therefore, a collaborative spirit between denominational entities and mid councils must embody ministry.

- **Transparency:** The fruit of transparency is integrity, which in turn yields greater trust in the Board and Agency’s efforts and allows us to better incorporate the critical wisdom of others.

- **Impact:** Fruitfulness in ministry and mission requires that intentions are matched by quality of impact. A word of “Yes” to God’s mission must be matched by requisite deeds.
Faithful Stewardship: Being good stewards of financial, time, and human resources requires a commitment to pursuing the least wasteful and most sustainable use of resources. This ensures that a maximum amount of finite resources is spent on furthering mission.

C. Board Meetings

1. Stated/Regular Meetings

   a. The Board will meet quarterly, including an annual mid-year orientation/planning meeting. Some meetings may be held by electronic means.

   b. Recommendations regarding the scheduling of meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be prepared by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee and brought to the Board for approval.

   c. Transition: in light of the gradual transition to a smaller Board size and budgetary limitations, the full implementation of a quarterly meeting cycle may not be realized until after the 224th General Assembly (2020). (This paragraph will automatically be deleted when the Board moves to quarterly meetings or at the conclusion of the 225th General Assembly (2022), whichever comes first.)

2. Special/Called Meetings

   A Special Meeting of the Board can be called by the Chair, Coordinating Committee, or by a written request to the Chair from at least three voting members of the Board.

   Written notice of the meeting shall be provided, specifying the subject matter to be considered, to all members of the Board at least forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting date.

   All members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be notified of the resulting decisions as soon as possible after the meeting.

3. Quorum—The quorum for all Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Meetings and its committees shall be 51% of voting members.

4. Development of the Agendas

   a. Board Meetings

      The Board Chair, in conjunction with the Executive Director, and the Coordinating Committee, shall develop the agenda for meetings of the Board. Groups who wish to be placed on the agenda may communicate their requests to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Chair (or designee). Any member of the Board may propose an item for consideration.

      Each agenda shall include opportunity for prayer and/or worship.

   b. Community Conversations

      At each Board meeting, time will be set aside for community conversations, outside of a parliamentary framework, for theological reflection, discernment, and mutual sharing regarding the current context for the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Discussions will not ordinarily be led by the Board Chair.

   c. Committee Meetings

      The Committee Chair, in conjunction with the lead resource staff shall develop the agenda for meetings of Board committees. Groups who wish to be placed on the agenda may communicate their requests to the Board Committee Chair (or designee). Any member of the Committee may propose an item for consideration prior to Committee action to adopt the agenda. Each agenda shall begin and end with prayer.

5. Closed Meetings and Privileged Communications

   a. Closed Meetings

      Closed Board or Committee meetings shall be held in accordance with the General Assembly Open Meeting Policy

      1) During a meeting, any Board member may request a closed Board session, and any Committee member may request a closed Committee session.
2) The Board or Committee will determine, by majority vote, if its members wish to deliberate in a closed meeting.

3) Ordinarily, when the use of a closed meeting can be anticipated, the Chair will provide advance notice to the Board or Committee that a closed meeting is recommended and the reason for closing.

4) In closed Board meetings, only voting members, at-large members of the Committees, and other persons explicitly invited are to be present.

5) In closed Committee meetings, invited persons shall include any voting Board member who wishes to attend, unless individual Board members are the topic of conversation.

6) Minutes of a closed session will only include actions taken, in keeping with the Open Meeting Policy. Actions will be made public as soon as possible.

7) All present in a closed meeting are bound to limit discussion of the item to others who were in the closed meeting.

8) Any information given in a closed session is available to any other voting Board member in a closed session, unless the topic of conversation is individual Board members or prospective employees.

9) Recognizing the General Assembly Open Meeting Policy allows closed sessions to consider property negotiations, personnel, and litigation, the Boards recognize that information given to committees in closed sessions that is not privileged, shall be available to all voting Board members, and shall be reported to the Boards (or a majority of a quorum of either Board) in closed session unless it involves the Board members or their actions.

10) All closed committee meetings shall be open to all voting Board members whether they serve on the committee or not, unless the topic is

   a) discussions about nominations of Board members;

   b) discussions involving the application of the Ethics Policy to a Board member; and

   c) discussions about employment candidacies for individuals who are selected to positions by the Board.

11) If the meeting is closed and privileged, only voting board members and invited legal counsel may remain, all others are to be excused from the closed/privileged session.

b. Privileged Communications

Recognizing that privileged communications is a legal principle that allows the exchange of confidential information and counsel between attorneys and their clients and that the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation (“the Boards”) must utilize this tool to effectively manage the mission and ministries of the Agency:

1) The “client” in such relationships is defined as the Boards acting by and through voting Board members as a whole or a majority of a quorum of either Board.

2) Consequently, “client” cannot be defined as an individual member, officer, committee, subgroup of the Boards, or staff; provided, however, that authorized representatives of the Boards (such as the Coordinating Committee or Board Chair) may act as and on behalf of the Boards when permitted by other governing documents.

3) In no event, however, shall any such members, officers, committees, subgroups of the Boards, or staff, be considered a separate “client” of any attorney or independent of the attorney-client relationship between any such attorney and the Boards.

4) All privileged conversations and communications in committees shall be reported to the Boards in privileged closed sessions with the attorney present. The only exceptions shall be

   a) discussions about nominations of Board members;

   b) discussions involving the application of the Ethics Policy to a Board member; and

   c) discussions about employment candidates for individuals who are selected to positions by the Boards.
6. Recording Secretary

Ordinarily, the Executive Director will designate a Recording Secretary for Board meetings.

7. Elected Member Job Expectations and Requirements

Committing to the Board covenant, board members are expected to be faithful and accountable in the following ways:

a. Requirements:

1) Fulfill the Board Member’s duties of loyalty and care; provide fiduciary, generative and strategic leadership necessary for guiding and directing the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

2) Every elected Presbyterian Mission Agency Board member, except the Board Chair and Chair-elect, will serve on one program and one administrative committees.

3) Additionally, Board members may be called upon to serve the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the church in a variety of ways, whether it be through internal committees, ministerial teams and task forces, national committees and task forces, or appointed liaison relationships.

4) Board members give high priority to attendance, active participation and prayerful discernment at regular meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board whether held in person or remotely.

   a) One absence from a regular meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or its related committees, without prior notification to the Office of the Executive Director shall be a basis for a review of the member’s standing with the Board.

   b) Upon two consecutive absences, or three absences in a three-year period, for any reason, the Board chair may recommend to the Stated Clerk that the position be declared vacant.

b. Expectations:

1) Actively participate in a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) worshiping community, committing to spiritual disciplines and a pattern of discipleship that will inform their deliberation and discernment as board members.

2) Develop their knowledge of and demonstrate their commitment to the mission, goals, and policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Board.

3) Openness to new vision and direction emerging within the life of the church.

4) Informed and honest participation, including appropriate inquiry, in all meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and its related committees.

5) Faithful discipleship regarding stewardship, confidentiality, and leadership roles, acting in the best interests of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

6) Positive and active interpretation of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to and with external audiences (congregations, individuals, Presbyteries, Synods); this can be done in a variety of ways building on the gifts and talents of each Board member.

7) Financial support for the Presbyterian Mission Agency – all gifts, large or small help ensure that the work of the Agency can continue and links the Board member to that work.

8) Provide constructive feedback in response to surveys and evaluations relating to the Board meetings and activities.

c. Resignation:

A member of a General Assembly entity who finds it necessary to resign shall send his or her resignation to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shall notify the entity and the nominating committee or other body that originated the person’s nomination or election. When any member of an entity of the General Assembly shall resign or become unable to serve because of chronic or permanent physical or mental illness or disability, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall declare the position vacant. (Organization for Mission, IV. B.2.o.) Additionally, any Board member resigning shall send a copy of the resignation to the Office of the Executive Director.
D. Officers of the Board

The Board will be led by a Chair and a Chair-elect (who serves as Vice-Chair). The Chair and Chair-elect serve a two-year term, then the Chair-elect becomes Chair and a new Chair-elect is selected. Members shall have served at least eighteen months on the Board prior to being nominated as Chair-elect. (This means that individuals selected as Chair-elect will be recommended to the GA Nominating Committee for election to a second four-year term.)

1. Chair
   a. Duties
      1) Presides at meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
      2) Is a member of, and chairs, the Coordinating Committee.
      3) Guides the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities identified in the Organization for Mission.
      4) Appoints one Board member to serve with the Chair on the Presbyterian Mission Agency/Foundation Work Group.
      5) Requests and appoints a parliamentarian to advise the Chair, and upon request of the Chair speak to the body, during Board meetings.
      6) Provides guidance and support to the Executive Director, with the assistance of the Chair-elect, on behalf of the Coordinating Committee. The Executive Director is supervised by and reports to the Coordinating Committee and the Board itself.
      7) Represents the Board (but not the Agency) to General Assembly agencies, committees, task forces, and the public.
      8) Participates in annual meeting of the General Assembly agency leaders.
      9) The Board Chair serves as an ex-officio member of all Board Committees with voice and no vote (with the exception of the Coordinating Committee where the Chair does have a vote.).
     10) Reviews and approves, in agreement with the Chair-elect, requests to celebrate Holy Communion between regular meetings of the Coordinating Committee (as directed by the General Assembly) and report any approvals at the next meeting of the Coordinating Committee.
     11) Appoints committees of counsel for Permanent Judicial Commission cases as described in Book of Order D-6.0302. These committees shall have a maximum of three (3) members, but may have fewer as determined by the Board Chair. The Legal Office shall serve as the primary staff support to Board committees of counsel
   b. Term
      1) The Board Chair term shall be for two years without renewal.
      2) The Chair will serve in ex-officio positions as mandated by the Manual of Operations but may not be elected to an additional office by the Board during the term of office.
   3) Vacancy
      a) First year vacancy—If the position of Chair becomes vacant during the first year of the Chair’s term (or if the rising Chair is unable to take office at the conclusion of a General Assembly), then the Chair-elect becomes Chair and serves the full term of the original Chair and is ineligible for re-election. A special election for a new Chair-elect will be held at the next possible regular meeting, allowing adequate time for the nomination process.
      b) Second year vacancy—If the position of Chair becomes vacant during the second year of the Chair’s term, then the Chair-elect becomes chair and serves the remainder of the original Chair’s term as well as their own two-year term as chair. A new chair-elect is elected at the regular schedule (the first meeting of a General Assembly year) and begins service immediately upon election.

2. Chair-elect
   a. Duties
      1) Serves as Vice-Chair,
2) Assumes the responsibilities of the Chair when requested by the chair or when the Chair becomes vacant (but in no event, shall a chair serve more than three years. See Chapter 2, D1b3 above).

3) Becomes the next Chair, at the end of the current Chair’s term.

4) Shall rotate among all committees, rather than being assigned to a particular committee.

5) Serves as a member of the Coordinating Committee. Upon election as Chair-elect and prior to assuming office, serves as a corresponding member (voice but no vote) of the Coordinating Committee.

6) Serves as a corresponding member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

7) Assists the Chair in providing supervision and support to the Executive Director, on behalf of the Coordinating Committee. The Executive Director reports to the Coordinating Committee and the Board itself.

8) Obtain some form of parliamentary training, such as is offered at the Moderators’ Conference, during their two years as Chair-elect.

9) Leads the Executive Director performance review process (described below).

10) Reviews and approves, in agreement with the Chair, requests to celebrate Holy Communion between regular meetings of the Coordinating Committee, as directed by General Assembly, and reports any approvals at the next meeting of the Coordinating Committee.

b. Term Error! Bookmark not defined.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall elect its Chair-elect from among its voting members at the first Board meeting of the calendar year in which there is a General Assembly. The Chair-elect will serve two years as Vice-Chair, and then become Chair at the conclusion of the following General Assembly.

E. Election Procedures

1. Chair-elect

a. Only Presbyterian Mission Agency Board voting members who have served at least eighteen months on the Board before taking office are eligible for election as Chair-elect.

b. Nominating Process: At the start of each nominating process, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Personnel and Nominating Committee will:

1) At the start
   a) compile a list of gifts, abilities, and skills that they believe will be needed by the Board leadership during the ensuing biennial period
   b) draft two or three questions to be answered by potential candidates for Board leadership. The questions will address the anticipated key challenges facing the Board during the ensuing biennial period.

2) Staff to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Personnel and Nominating Committee will identify all Board members eligible for election as Chair-elect. The list of gifts, abilities, and skills, as well as the questions (referenced above in C1b1), will be sent to eligible members with a letter that:
   a) Informs the Board member of his or her eligibility for election as Chair-elect.
   b) Asks the member to consider whether God might be calling them to serve as Chair-elect.
   c) If the response is affirmative, request that he or she answer the leadership questions, and return them to Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Personnel and Nominating Committee staff.

3) Staff will then send the following materials to the Personnel and Nominating Committee:
   a) Affirmative responses from members considering a call, with their answers to the questions
   b) The Board’s listing of member skills, gifts and abilities
c) A record of the Board service for each member to be considered, including attendance at called meetings.

d) The members’ full biographical form.

4) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Personnel and Nominating will review all the submitted forms and will also go through a discernment process as to whether or not eligible Board members who have not submitted forms have leadership gifts that justify an invitation to consider a call to candidacy for Chair-elect. If so, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Personnel and Nominating Committee will extend a specific invitation to submit answers to the leadership questions.

5) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Personnel and Nominating Committee will evaluate the final list of Chair-elect candidates who have submitted responses to identify a candidate whom it wishes to nominate. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Personnel and Nominating Chair will notify all interested candidates of the Committee’s nominee.

6) The names of the nominee, along with her or his biographical form and their responses to the questions, will be communicated to all Board members a minimum of three weeks prior to the first meeting of the calendar year.

7) Ordinarily, the election will be conducted during the first meeting of the calendar year in which there is a General Assembly. Nominations from the floor will be accepted. The election will be by written ballot.

8) The two-year term of office will begin with the close of the upcoming General Assembly meeting and end with the close of the next General Assembly meeting.

9) In the event of vacancy during the term of the Chair, the Chair-elect assumes the Chair (but in no event shall the chair serve more than three years).

2. Committee Chairs

   a. Committee Chairs shall be elected for two-year terms, and they are not eligible for re-election.

   b. The Chairs shall begin their service at the end of the General Assembly.

   c. Board voting members completing at least eighteen consecutive months on a committee are eligible for election as committee Chair.

   d. The Personnel and Nominating Committee shall nominate committee Chairs, with a view toward diversity on the PMAB Coordinating Committee. These nominees shall be presented in committees at the first Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting in the calendar year. Nominees may also come from the floor.

   e. Ordinarily, committee Chairs shall make appointments and assignments of committee members to subcommittees or committee task forces, as necessary, giving consideration to experience, interest, and representation.

   f. Committees chairs are responsible for ensuring that the plenary session has a closed session to discuss any matters discussed in closed sessions of the committee.

F. Board Committees, Task Forces and Teams

   1. Authority

      The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may create any committees, task forces, and teams as may be necessary to carry out its work. Committees, Task Forces and Teams, as well as their Chairs, derive their authority from, and are accountable to, the full Board. Consequently, no committee, task force or team can keep information confidential from the full Board.

   2. Collaboration

      The committees, task forces and teams of the board are expected to collaborate with other committees, task forces and teams on matters of common concern.

   3. Special/Called Meetings

      A Special Meeting of a Committee, Task Force or Team may be called by its Chair, or by written request to the Chair from at least three voting members of the Committee, Task Force or Team. Notice must be given at least forty-eight hours in advance for any called meeting.
4. Ministerial Teams and Task Forces
   a. Ministerial Teams
      1) Ministerial Teams are short-term, specifically-focused work groups. They address immediate matters of consequence to the organization and have limited duration. The source of the topics they address may come from community conversations, Board members, staff or the ongoing work of the agency. A limited number of Ministerial Teams shall be commissioned upon recommendation of Coordinating Committee and approved by the Board.
      2) These teams are commissioned for a limited duration with regular required updates to the Board. A decision would then be made to discontinue or extend their work. They may be comprised of voting members, at-large members, non-voting members and staff. All members (regardless of Board status) have voice and vote in the team. Process and procedures for operation are more flexible (i.e., not necessarily parliamentary procedure). Decisions and/or recommendations must come to a plenary session of voting Board members for approval and authorization.
   b. Task Forces
      1) If need is determined for a temporary special committee, task force or work group that will involve Presbyterian Mission Agency Board membership and/or non-Presbyterian Mission Agency Board membership, a proposal shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, through the Coordinating Committee, for approval. All proposals for temporary special committees, task forces and work groups shall include the following information:
      2) Temporary special committee, task force or work group name.
      3) Statement of purpose and tasks to be accomplished.
      4) Explanation as to why these tasks cannot be accomplished by the current Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Committees.
      5) Expertise, skills and experience needed by the members.
      6) Duration of the committee, task force or work group shall not exceed two years.
      7) Size of the committee, task force or team. Ordinarily not to exceed seven members.
      8) Annual budget with the source of funding.
      9) Proposed names of the committee, task force or work force members with sensitivity to diversity.

5. Program Committees
   Program Committees are standing committees that address the programmatic and fiduciary responsibilities of the Board. They focus on the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to inspire, equip and connect. Committee assignments in the lists below are not meant to limit access to other committees as determined to be appropriate. Committees operate in accordance with parliamentary procedures. Membership is composed of Voting Members only. (From 2018 until 2022, at-large members of Finance will continue to serve on Committee for Resource Allocation and Stewardship.)
   a. Committee to Nurture the Body
      The Committee to Nurture the Body will focus on the impact and strategic alignment of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency that inspires, equips and connects congregations and other worshiping communities as centers of discipleship. This work includes:
      • developing leaders to and from those communities,
      • aiding mid-councils and congregations in their mission and ministry, and
      • researching issues, providing input to staff, and developing well-considered and related proposals for Board action from the work of the agency and related entities.
      1) Oversight
         The Committee is responsible for the Board’s oversight in these areas including:
a) Working with the Executive Director and staff to develop theological expressions for the work of the agency which can be communicated to the broader church.

b) Working with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director and Leadership Cabinet to establish criteria that can be used to evaluate Agency effectiveness.

c) Developing processes and procedures necessary for calculating measurement results in light of the Board’s Mission Work Plan and other relevant documents.

d) Recognizing and identifying work that cannot be measured in ordinary ways because it is too new and innovative or unusual circumstances are involved.

e) Reviewing results on a scheduled basis to identify trends (positive and negative)

f) Bringing to the Board recommendations for program and mission realignment based on results.

2) Functions

Functions within the Agency reporting through this committee include:

a) Young Adult Volunteers

b) Stony Point

c) Women’s Leadership Development & Justice Ministries

d) Theology and Worship

e) Equipping the Church for Mission Involvement

f) Theological Reflection for the Church

g) Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Intercultural Ministries

h) Racial Ethnic Leadership Development

i) Christian Formation

3) Broader Relationships

Its broader relationships will include:

a) Committee on Theological Education (COTE)

b) Presbyterian Men

c) Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE)

d) Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities

e) Montreat Conference Center Board of Directors

f) Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA)

g) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP)

h) Mission Development Resources Committee (MDRC)

i) President’s Roundtable (of Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Educational Institutions)

b. Committee for Outreach to the World

The Committee for Outreach to the World will focus on the impact and strategic alignment of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency that inspires, equips and connects to witness to God’s love and justice in the world.

This work includes:

- Providing expression for compassionate and prophetic ministries through advocacy and networking,
Insuring the furtherance of ecumenical and interfaith relations,

Researching issues, providing input to staff, and developing well-considered proposals for Board actions from the work of the agency and related entities with respect to ministry outside of the congregational context.

1) Oversight

The Committee is responsible for the Board’s oversight in these areas including:

a) Working with the Executive Director and staff to develop theological expressions for the work of the agency which can be communicated to the broader church.

b) Working with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director and Leadership Cabinet to establish criteria that can be used to evaluate Agency effectiveness.

c) Developing processes and procedures necessary for calculating measurement results in light of the Board’s Mission Work Plan and other relevant documents.

d) Recognizing and identifying work that cannot be measured in ordinary ways because it is too new and innovative or unusual circumstances are involved.

e) Reviewing results on a scheduled basis to identify trends (positive and negative)

f) Bringing to the Board recommendations for program and mission realignment based on results.

2) Functions

Functions within the Agency reporting through this committee include:

a) Evangelism

b) Mission Personnel

c) Stony Point

d) Women’s Leadership Development & Justice Ministries

e) Partner Relations—Area Coordinators

f) 1001 Worshiping Communities

g) Compassion, Peace & Justice

3) Broader Relationships

Its broader relationships will include:

a) Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel

b) General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR)

c) Jinishian Memorial Program Advisory Committee

d) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee

e) Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee

f) Presbyterian Self-Development of People Committee

g) Mission Responsibility through Investment Committee (MRTI)

c. Committee for Resource Allocation and Stewardship

1) The Committee for Resource Allocation and Stewardship will focus on the impact and strategic alignment of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency that inspires, equips and connects generous support and partnership through gifts, responsible stewardship and transparent reporting.

2) The Committee is responsible for the Board’s oversight in these areas including:
a) Working with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director and Leadership Cabinet to establish criteria that can be used to evaluate Agency effectiveness. Criteria will be evaluated each year to determine if changes are needed.

b) Working with the Executive Director and staff to develop theological expressions for the work of the agency which can be communicated to the broader church.

c) Developing processes and procedures necessary for calculating measurement results in light of the Board’s Mission Work Plan and other relevant documents.

d) Overseeing expenditures.

e) Reviewing and making recommendations for the annual budget based on priorities identified and approved by the Board.

f) Regularly reviewing financial statements and policies, making the Board aware of issues that will need Board attention and recommending any changes needed.

g) Reviewing cash flow, revenue trends and support from individuals, congregations and mid councils for the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

h) Recommend grantmaking policies for Board approval.

i) Reviewing performance by investment advisors and managers, ensuring adherence to appropriate benchmarks and industry standards.

j) Monitoring financial projections and making such information available to the Board.

k) Partnering with other Board committees in areas of common concern.

l) Reviewing and recommending for Board approval unbudgeted programmatic or capital expenses.

m) Reviewing reserve requirements, usage, and limits in partnership with the Chief Financial Officer.

3) Functions within the Agency reporting through this committee include:

   a) Jinishian Memorial Program Advisory Committee (Investments)

   b) Mission Engagement and Support

   c) IT/Finance/Accounting

4) Its broader relationships will include:

   a) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

   b) The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

   c) The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

6. Administrative Committees

Administrative Committees are standing committees that address the fiduciary and corporate responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. They are responsible for the stewardship of tangible assets including financial, personnel, legal, property. Administrative Committees operate in accordance with parliamentary procedures. Membership is composed of Voting Members only. (From 2018 until 2022, at-large members will continue to serve on the Audit Committee.)

Specific committee responsibilities

a. Personnel and Nominating Committee

The Personnel and Nominating Committee reviews, provides advice and recommends for action to the Board on employment-related policies, procedures and initiatives that affect the staff, and is responsible for the nominations of Board members.

1) It is responsible for the Board’s oversight in these areas including:
a) Presbyterian Mission Agency personnel policies and procedures
b) Compensation guidelines within which salaries are administered.
c) Equal employment and affirmative action guidelines.
d) Working with the General Assembly Nominating Committee to recruit new Board members.
e) Securing nominations to those committees and Agencies that require Presbyterian Mission Agency participation and/or approval.
f) Send “Guidelines for Liaisons to Other Entities” to all individuals nominated to serve on other entities.
g) Recommend the assignment of new members to Program and Administrative Committees for Board approval, ensuring diverse representation on each committee.
h) Nominating Chairs for the Program and Administrative Committees for election by the committees, ensuring that the nominations as a whole reflect a diverse slate, since these individuals will comprise the Coordinating Committee.
i) Nominating Chair-elect of the Board.
j) Any other responsibilities assigned under the Employee Handbook, and any other employment-related assignment from the Coordinating Committee or the Board.

2) Functions within the Agency reporting through this committee include:
a) Human Resources
b) Nominations
c) Mission Personnel

3) Its broader relationships will include
a) General Assembly Nominating Committee
b) General Assembly Committee on Representation

b. Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is responsible for insuring the financial and ethical integrity of the Presbyterian Church (USA) A Corporation. The Audit Committee is responsible for pre-approving all auditing services and is directly responsible for the appointment, compensation, retention, dismissal and oversight of the work of any external auditing firm engaged. The Committee will resolve any disagreements between management and the auditor regarding financial reporting. The Audit Committee has the authority to conduct any investigation appropriate to fulfilling its responsibilities, and in this regard, it has direct access to the external auditors as well as anyone in the organization.

1) Oversight

It is responsible for the Board’s oversight in these areas including:

a) Monitor the integrity of the financial reporting process and system of internal control regarding finance, accounting, legal compliance and ethics.
b) Monitor the independence and performance of the Corporation’s external auditors.
c) Provide an avenue of communication among the external auditor, internal auditing unit, management and the Board.

2) Functions

Functions within the Agency reporting through this committee include:

a) Audit
b) Internal audit
c) Legal compliance

d) Risk management/Insurance

3) Broader Relationships

Its broader relationship will include:

a) Independent audit firm

b) Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA)

c. Property/Legal Committee

The Property/Legal Committee focuses on the proper management of the legal and property matters of the agency and ensures appropriate consideration on matters of risk by the agency and its employees, including:

- Assertion of attorney-client privilege, work-product privilege, self-critical analysis privilege, ecclesiastical privileges, and any other applicable privileges;
- Management, control, and decision-making with respect to pending or threatened litigation or other legal claims or proceedings;
- Management, control, and direction of former, current, or future outside counsel;

1) Oversight

It is responsible for the Board’s oversight in these areas including:

a) Review and make recommendations to the Board for changes to the Charter and By-Laws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

b) Review and make recommendations for corporate matters including officers, housing allowances, etc.

c) Review with legal staff and the Executive Director all legal and property matters to ensure their proper management, and work to educate the Board on these matters.

d) Review with staff the appropriate enterprise risk management policies and concerns necessary for ensuring that the ministry and the mission of the agency are performed without undue hindrance or delay.

e) Hiring outside legal counsel, when required by the board

2) Functions

Functions within the Agency reporting through this committee include:

a) Legal

b) Enterprise risk management

c) Property

3) Broader Relationships

Its broader relationships will include:

a) Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA)

4) Designations

a) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Property/Legal Committee expressly elect to be governed exclusively by the law of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and expressly reject to be governed by the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with respect to the matters addressed in this Manual.

b) If for any reason, it is determined by any court of competent jurisdiction that Legal/Property Committee, or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is unable to assert any privilege, Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC (“SKO”) is authorized and directed to do so under Kentucky Rule of Evidence 503 and Federal Rules of Evidence 501, 502.
7. Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee is composed of the Board Chair, Chair-elect, and the chairs of each of the program and administrative committees. It is responsible for coordinating the work of the Board, ensuring the effectiveness of the committees and teams, and supervising the Executive Director or an interim when needed. As it works, it will seek creative new ways to approach the Board’s tasks. Its areas of responsibility include:

a. Member Engagement
   1) Ensuring timely communications with the Board.
   2) Ensuring Board members are engaged and meeting expectations.

b. Meeting Planning
   1) Recommending schedule of Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings for Board approval
   2) Conducting the annual mid-year orientation/planning meeting that will include:
      a) Training on *Roberts’ Rules of Order*
      b) Chair orientation
      c) New member orientation
      d) Preparation for the biennial budget process, with select mid council representatives
      e) Calendar for the upcoming year
   3) Ensuring regular cultural humility (power and privilege) training for board members.
   4) Approving topics for Community Conversations.
   5) Recommending meeting agendas for Board approval
   6) Providing an opportunity, annually, for reports from Liaisons to other committees and agencies as provided in II.I, Guidelines for Liaisons to Other Entities.

c. Board Governance
   1) Evaluating the effectiveness of the Board, based on annual criteria approved in advance by the Board upon recommendation by the Coordinating Committee.
   2) Monitoring performance of both Program and Administrative Committees.
   3) Bringing to the Board recommendations for Board realignment and/or changes based on results, including a biennial review of the Board’s governing documents:
      a) Bylaws
      b) Organization for Mission
      c) Manual of Operations
         i  Reviewing, in even-numbered years, the assignment of agency functions to board committees.
         ii Reviewing, in odd-numbered years, the assignment of broader relationships to board committees.
   4) Ensuring integration and collaboration among Committees (Program and Administrative) on matters of common concern.
   5) Proposing topics and members to Ministerial Teams and Task Forces, ensuring diverse representation on each team or task force.

d. Supervision of Executive Director
   1) Supervises and evaluates the Executive Director of the Agency including the development of recommendations to the Board regarding re-election, corrective discipline and termination.
2) Oversees the employment of any interim Executive Director, including the responsibility for hiring, supervision, evaluation and termination.

e. General Assembly Responsibilities

1) Planning strategies and initiatives for Board engagement at the General Assembly, in partnership with the Executive Director.

2) Attending General Assembly to represent the Presbyterian Mission Agency with key constituencies, to monitor Assembly actions, and to relay General Assembly concerns to the Board.

3) Interfacing, with the help of the Personnel and Nominating Committee, with the GA Nominating Committee in the recruitment of Board members.

G. Budget Development

1. Mission Budget Cycle

The Mission Budget will be developed in budget cycles. Each budget cycle will consist of two consecutive calendar years, where the first year is the year following the General Assembly meeting and the second year is the year of the next General Assembly. A separate working budget will be developed for each year within the cycle.

2. Basic Budget Design

The basic working budget is designed through a dual track process.

a. Identification of priorities

1) After the General Assembly, staff will prepare an analysis and list of the top ten priorities from previous General Assemblies.

2) The list of priorities will be presented to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board at its midyear retreat for their consideration and refinement. During this refinement process, the Board will consult with synod executives (where no synod executive exists, the stated clerk of the synod) and the presbytery leader from the two largest and two smallest presbyteries (with no more than one representative per synod).

3) The consultation and refinement process will result in a list of no more than five priorities.

b. Identification of funding streams

1) After the General Assembly, staff will prepare an analysis of the funding streams available to advance General Assembly mission.

2) The analysis will include all available restricted and unrestricted revenue sources.

   a) First, restricted funds are applied to the appropriate budget items.

   b) Then, unrestricted funds are applied toward fulfilment of all budget items.

   c) This use of unrestricted funds provides for equalization within the budget. This process supports orderly planning and budgeting decisions while honoring appropriate restrictions and designations.

3) At the September meeting, the Board will review the funding analysis against the five priorities and direct staff to prepare a revised working budget and staffing rationale reflecting the identified priorities, including any necessary funds development efforts.

c. Mission Work Plan

1) The five identified priorities, the revised working budget and staffing rationale and the funds development plan, with a theological framework, collectively constitute the Mission Work Plan.

2) The Mission Work Plan prepared by staff will be submitted to a task force of the Board for review to ensure alignment with the identified priorities.

3) At the February stated meeting, the Board will consider the Mission Work Plan for adoption.
4) Between February and April of a General Assembly year, this Mission Work Plan serves as the foundation for the development of the working budget proposed for General Assembly approval, subject to changes in anticipated revenue streams and emerging needs.

3. The General Assembly
   a. At the General Assembly, the appropriate assembly committee will receive the Mission Work Plan for approval and recommendation to the full assembly.
   b. The appropriate assembly committee of the General Assembly will recommend a balanced working budget for each year in the budget cycle, incorporating work from the proposed working budget and overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, and other actions of the General Assembly, for approval as the outline of work for the budget cycle. The General Assembly shall approve the working budgets and may add or subtract elements to them. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will then make appropriate adjustments.

4. Budget Monitoring
   a. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will monitor the accomplishment of the Mission Work Plan and the appropriate expenditure of funds throughout the budget cycle.
   b. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will report to each biennial General Assembly on the results of the work undertaken during the previous two budget years including full disclosure of the financial results of each year and other information related to the financial condition of the church. These two budget years will not be within the same budget cycle.

5. Roles and Responsibilities in Developing Budgets
   a. The General Assembly does the following:
      1) Determines churchwide mission priorities upon which a working budget development will be based.
      2) Has the authority to institute and terminate programmatic emphases and activity.
      3) Approves both the Mission Work Plan and the working Per Capita Budget.
   b. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board does the following:
      1) Implements General Assembly decisions regarding
         a) Mission Work Plan goals and objectives and
         b) Programmatic activity.
      2) Recommends a Mission Work Plan for each budget year to the General Assembly, after appropriate consultation.
      3) Presents the proposed working budget to the General Assembly.
      4) Approves detailed working budgets based upon General Assembly action and subsequent changes in funding throughout the budget cycles.
      5) Oversees programmatic activity funded through the General Assembly Mission working Budget and Program and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board related work from the proposed Per Capita Budget.
   c. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the following:
      1) Manages the process for budget development.
      2) Prepares budget presentations for both the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.
   d. The President/Executive Director is responsible for the following:
      1) Prepare descriptions of programmatic activities in appropriate form for budget consideration, reflecting the adopted Mission Work Plan goals.
      2) Develop detailed budgets based on budget allocations made by the General Assembly and as instructed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
6. Per Capita Budget

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) jointly have responsibility for developing a per capita budget and apportionment for recommendation to the General Assembly. The per capita budget will be finalized for recommendation to the General Assembly at least 120 days prior to General Assembly.

H. Ethics Policy for Board Members

**Ethics Policy**

_for Elected\(^1\) and Appointed Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)_

1. **Introduction**

This Ethics Policy for Elected and Appointed Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (“PMA BOARD”) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (“COGA”) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“Ethics Policy”) addresses business ethics and does not include the other ethical values and policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“PCUSA”). The Ethics Policy applies to all elected and appointed members of the PMA BOARD and COGA and members of their committees, task forces and workgroups in matters relating to the performance of their duties and responsibilities for the PMA BOARD/COGA. Hereinafter the term “elected member” will be used to collectively refer to those individuals listed in Footnote 6 below. The term “PMA BOARD/COGA” collectively refers to those two ecclesial bodies, their elected members, their respective staff members, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and all subparts thereof.

All funds and property received and administered by the PMA BOARD/COGA are entrusted to the organization by God through the faithful financial support of PCUSA members and friends. The highest degree of stewardship and fiduciary responsibility is expected of all elected members, including the receiving, reporting, and use of funds, property, and time. Elected members are responsible for complying with laws, regulations\(^3\), and PMA BOARD/COGA and PCUSA policies and procedures.

*As an elected member, what does this Ethics Policy require of me?*

The required standards of this Ethics Policy are set out in 1-6 immediately below. The forms and processes are set out in the five attachments.

2. **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

a. **Duty of Loyalty and Care.** The duty of loyalty and care as well as the obligation of good stewardship requires all elected members to act first in the best interests of the PMA BOARD/COGA rather than in the elected member’s own interests or the interests of another entity or person. All elected members shall exercise reasonable efforts to inform themselves of the mission and ministry of the PMA BOARD/COGA. All elected members shall act as a reasonable elected member would act under the same or similar circumstances. These responsibilities are set forth below.

b. **Conflicts of Interest.** All elected members shall avoid conflicts of interest, potential conflicts of interest, and situations that give even the appearance of a conflict of interest.\(^4\)

   1) **Definition.** “Conflict of interest” means any situation in which the elected member may be influenced or appear to be influenced in decision-making or business dealings by any motive or desire for personal advantage other than the success and well-being of the PMA BOARD/COGA. Personal advantage means a

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\(^1\) The term “elected members” collectively means elected and appointed members and members of their committees, task forces and workgroups.

\(^2\) For other policies, see the Standards of Ethical Conduct approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

\(^3\) Federal and state constitutional religious free exercise provisions, as well as laws and ordinances, exempt religious organizations from some laws. An elected member should consult with the General Counsel if such questions arise.

\(^4\) Personal investments with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., or employee benefits provided by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are not considered a conflict of interest.
financial interest or some other personal interest, whether present or potential, whether direct or indirect. This standard applies to both actual and contemplated transactions. When in doubt, the elected member is to assume there might be a conflict and should raise the question pursuant to this Ethics Policy.

2) Employment Ineligibility. No PMA BOARD elected member shall be eligible to become an employee of PMA or otherwise render compensable services to the PMA for the duration of their term. For purposes of this paragraph, resignation does not result in the premature end of term. For example, an elected person who resigns with one year left in his/her term continues to be prohibited from becoming an employee until the expiration of that remaining year. No COGA elected member shall be eligible to become an employee of OGA or otherwise render compensable services to OGA for the duration of their term. This prohibition does not apply to a member serving as an ex officio member of the PMA BOARD or COGA. For purposes of this paragraph, resignation does not result in the premature end of term. Exceptions, however, may be made under the following two circumstances if the PMA BOARD Executive Committee or COGA Coordinating Committee (as appropriate) votes by 2/3 to allow the exception:

a) To facilitate development of specified projects through limited contracts of less than 18 months in duration. The elected member may be compensated under the contract.

b) To fill an officer or employee position on an interim or acting basis for two years or less. The elected member may be compensated for such service. The elected member must resign his/her elected position.

3) Disclosure Deadlines. All present and potential conflicts of interest issues must be disclosed in writing annually (See Attachment 1) and thereafter as they arise. If the conflict is known in advance of any meeting, business transaction, contract, or other activity at which issues may be discussed or on which the issues may have a bearing on the elected member’s approach, whether directly or indirectly, it shall be disclosed ahead of time and the elected member shall abstain from any participation in the discussion or decision. If the conflict is not known in advance, it shall be disclosed when the actual or potential conflict becomes apparent. All disclosures are to be made promptly in writing to the chair/moderator of the body and to the General Counsel. (See Attachment 2). See Attachment 5 for procedures to follow at meetings of the elected body or its committees, task forces and workgroups to document disclosure and action by disinterested members.

4) Potential Conflicts of Interest. All elected members are likewise to disclose promptly, in writing, matters and relationships that have the potential for giving rise to the appearance of a conflict in business dealings with the PMA/OGA. Examples include, but are not limited to, financial interests, leadership roles, or board membership with vendors and other organizations doing business with the PMA/OGA. PMA/OGA business dealings with an elected member’s friends and family are particularly sensitive and are to be disclosed and carefully evaluated because of the potential for inferences of tangible or intangible personal advantage and the appearance of impropriety. All disclosures are to be made promptly in writing to the chair/moderator of the body and to the General Counsel. (See Attachment 2).

5) Gifts and Relationship Building To avoid appearances of impropriety, any gifts, gratuities, special favors, and hospitality to an elected member shall not be accepted by any elected member from any person or organization that sells, delivers, or receives any goods, materials, or services to or from the PMA/OGA. This prohibition includes those persons or organizations that desire to enter into such relationships with PMA/OGA. There are four exceptions to this rule:

a) Gifts, meals, outings, and relationship-building activities provided by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) churches, middle governing bodies, partner churches or related organizations in connection with PMA/OGA business. Elected members shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount.

b) Gifts that primarily benefit the PMA/OGA and not an individual elected member, such as gifts of complimentary rooms given to the PMA/OGA by hotels, conventions, and conferences in relation to official PMA/OGA business. Elected members shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount.

c) Occasional small gifts (less than $50.00 in value, such as flowers or foodstuffs) to an individual elected member. Where gifts are shared with other elected members or PMA/OGA staff (e.g., foodstuffs set out for all to partake), then the gift is not deemed to be to an individual elected member. Elected members shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount.

d) Luncheons, dinners, outings, and relationship-building activities in connection with PMA/OGA business may be received. If an activity permitted under this section #4 results in a value of over $100

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5 “Family” includes the elected member’s spouse, parents, siblings, spouses of siblings, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, the spouses of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, any other blood relative, and individuals who live in the elected member’s home.
6) **Process and Resolution.** All conflict of interest disclosures, reports, or questions are to be made promptly and in writing to the chair of the body and to the General Counsel. The General Counsel will consult with the chair of the body and the PMA Executive Director or the Stated Clerk, as appropriate. After consultation, the General Counsel will make a recommendation to the PMA BOARD Executive Committee or the COGA Coordinating Committee, as appropriate. Those bodies provide the final decision on any elected member conflict of interest matters.

c. **Confidentiality of PMA BOARD/COGA Information.** Elected members shall not disclose information about the PMA BOARD/COGA that is not known outside of the PMA BOARD/COGA or is not known by public means. Of course, it is expected that elected members will share certain PMA BOARD/COGA information with other parts of the PCUSA, related entities and the public when asked to do so by the PMA BOARD/COGA. If questions arise, the elected member should inquire of the chair of the body. If the chair/moderator of the body needs assistance, the General Counsel should be consulted by the chair/moderator.

d. **Transactions, Reporting, and Document Retention.** Each elected member has a duty to prepare, process, maintain, and report complete, accurate, and timely records pertaining to their role, including, but not limited to, expense reports. This also includes safeguarding all physical, financial, informational, and other PMA/PMA BOARD/COGA assets and records. Elected members shall comply with the Records Retention Schedule of the Office of the General Assembly’s Department of History and related schedules as part of the normal course of business and use the schedules in a consistent and accountable manner for both records retention and destruction purposes.

See [http://www.history.pcusa.org/records/national/retention_schedules.cfm](http://www.history.pcusa.org/records/national/retention_schedules.cfm). See also the Electronic Records Policy for PMA and OGA (anticipated release in 2008). Any document relevant to actual or anticipated internal investigations, legal proceedings or governmental investigations (civil or criminal) must not be destroyed and must be preserved in a manner that would ease accessibility and retrievability of the document. In addition, elected members shall not direct or participate in establishment or maintenance of undisclosed or unrecorded funds or assets, nor shall the elected member direct the making of any artificial or false entries in the financial or other records of the PMA/COGA.

e. **Duty to Disclose/Whistleblower Policy.** Elected members have a duty to report violations of this Ethics Policy, whether the violation is by themselves or by another. This includes, but is not limited to, financial, accounting, or auditing irregularities. See Attachment 2 for Self-reports. See Attachment 3 for Whistleblower Reports concerning others. See Attachment 4 for Procedures for processing a Whistleblower Report. Likewise, concerns about the appearance or the possibility of violations should be reported. Care must always be taken to be factual and objective. Violations shall be reported promptly in writing to the General Counsel, and may be reported anonymously. **Anonymous whistleblower reports can also be made by calling the hotline at (888) 236-6877 or submitting a report at www.ethicspoint.com.** An anonymous whistleblower report must include sufficient corroborating evidence to justify initiating an investigation. (If the alleged violation involves the General Counsel or one of her staff members, it should be reported to the Internal Auditor.)

1) **No Retaliation.** There shall be no retaliation within PMA/PMA BOARD/COGA for good faith complaints, reports, participation in an investigation or for providing truthful information relating to an alleged violation of this Ethics Policy. In addition, there will be no retaliation where an elected member makes a good faith report of the commission or possible commission of any criminal offense to a law enforcement officer. Elected members are protected even if the allegations are mistaken or unsubstantiated, as long as the elected member reasonably believes the reported conduct constitutes a violation of the Ethics Policy. One who makes a claim or report under this Whistleblower Policy in bad faith, or knows, or has reason to know that such claim or report is false or materially inaccurate may be subject to disciplinary sanctions by the governing body with jurisdiction over the elected member.

2) **Confidentiality of Investigation.** Reports under this Whistleblower Policy will be treated confidentially with disclosures made on a need-to-know basis only to those directly involved in the investigation of the reported concern. To the extent possible within limitations of the law, policy and the need to conduct a competent investigation, confidentiality will be maintained.
f. **Violations.** Violation or noncompliance with this policy may result in discipline by the governing body with jurisdiction over the elected member.

g. **Amendments.** The Ethics Policy may be amended from time to time. In consultation with the General Counsel, the PMA Executive Director and the Stated Clerk (as appropriate) are authorized to make reasonable and necessary changes to this Ethics Policy. Substantive changes must be reported back to the elected body approving this Ethics Policy. Editorial changes need not be reported back.

h. **Designees.** Where this Ethics Policy assigns a duty to a particular officer or staff position, that officer or staff position may use a designee to complete the duties.

i. **No Waiver by PMA BOARD/COGA.** Nothing in this Ethics Policy shall be construed to waive any claim, assertion or defense of the PMA BOARD/COGA to exemption or exclusion from applicability of a statute and/or regulation or lack of jurisdiction of a civil court or governmental agency.

j. **Trainings.** Trainings to familiarize the elected members with this Ethics Policy and its related forms and procedures will be conducted for PMA BOARD/COGA elected members by the Legal Services Office as frequently as deemed necessary by the PMA BOARD Chair and COGA Moderator, as appropriate.

3. **ATTACHMENT 1—Annual Ethics Policy Representation by Elected and Appointed Members (Annual Report)**

This form is to be completed annually and signed by all “elected members” of the PMA BOARD/COGA as defined in the Ethics Policy. Upon completion, send it to the General Counsel.

I acknowledge I have received a copy of the Ethics Policy for Elected and Appointed Members of the PMA BOARD and COGA (Ethics Policy).

I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with the Ethics Policy and any revisions made to it.

I understand:

- I am subject to the Ethics Policy and am required to comply with it.
- I am responsible for reporting immediately in writing any possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves me, is reported to me, or that I observe.
- I am responsible for reporting immediately in writing any whistleblower reports I receive under the Ethics Policy, as well as any other violations of the Ethics Policy I observe.

Initial all of the following statements that apply:

- I am not aware of any violations of the Ethics Policy that involve me or that I have observed in regards to others.
- No employee or elected member has submitted a whistleblower report or a self-report to me that I have not reported already to the General Counsel.
- I am aware of a possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves me or that I have observed in regards to others. By submitting the information immediately below, I am reporting the alleged violation.

Name of employee, elected member, or organization with the possible violation:

Facts of the possible violation:

Signature: _______________ Date: __

Name (Please print)________________________

4. **ATTACHMENT 2 -- Report of Ethics Policy question, violation, or possible violation in regards to the reporting elected or appointed member (Question/Self-report)**

This form is to be completed, signed, and sent to the General Counsel and the chair of PMA BOARD or COGA moderator, as appropriate by “elected members” as that term is defined in the Ethics Policy. It is important to report questions promptly. Generally, the chair/moderator of the body, Executive Director of the PMA and the Stated Clerk, as appropriate, and the General Counsel will consult with the elected member to resolve the conflict of interest, if any.

- I am aware of a possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves me or I have a question about the Ethics Policy.
Elected Member’s name:__________________________________________________________

Facts about the elected member’s possible violation or the question presented:

Date the elected member became aware of the possible violation or question:_________

Signature:________________________________________________________Date:_________

Name (Please print)_____________________________________________________________________________

5. ATTACHMENT 3 -- Whistleblower Report of possible Ethics Policy violation in regards to another elected member, an employee, or organization

This form is to be completed, signed (unless submitted anonymously), and sent to the General Counsel. The term “elected member” is defined in the Ethics Policy.

Anonymous whistleblower reports can also be made by calling the hotline at (888) 236-6877 or submitting a report at www.ethicspoint.com. An anonymous whistleblower report must include sufficient corroborating evidence to justify initiating an investigation.

• I am aware of a possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves another elected member, an employee, or an organization.

Name of person(s) involved:________________________________________________________

Name of organization(s) involved:____________________________________________________

Facts about the possible violation:

Date the elected member became aware of the possible violation:_____________________________

(***DO NOT SIGN IF BEING SUBMITTED ANONYMOUSLY***)

Signature:________________________________________Date:_____________________

Print name:_____________________________________________________________________________

6. Attachment 4 -- Procedures for processing a Whistleblower Report of possible Ethics Policy violation in regards to another elected member, an employee, or an organization

a. All reports under the Whistleblower Policy (See the Ethics Policy) shall be submitted in writing promptly to the General Counsel. Anonymous whistleblower reports may be made by calling the hotline at (888) 236-6877 or submitting a report at www.ethicspoint.com. An anonymous whistleblower report must include sufficient corroborating evidence to justify initiating an investigation. If the alleged violation involves the General Counsel or one of her staff members, it should be reported to the Internal Auditor. The General Counsel will decide if the reported activity, if confirmed, would be an Ethics Policy violation, a possible violation of a policy or procedure not covered by this Ethics Policy, or a matter to be processed through another avenue, typically supervisor review with a report to the General Counsel. If the General Counsel decides the report will not be processed under this Ethics Policy, the General Counsel will respond to the accuser unless the report was filed anonymously. The General Counsel shall keep a log of all reports received under the Whistleblower Policy. Whether or not an investigation was done, the log will include the resolution of all reports. The log will be available at all times to the Chair of PMA BOARD, the Moderator of COGA, and the Chair of the Audit Committee. If the person reporting is simply confused about an issue and how it applies, then the General Counsel will ensure clarification is provided by the chair of the body or the General Counsel. If the chair of the body provides a written response to the elected member, a copy of the response will be provided to the General Counsel.

b. All other reports shall be initially reviewed by a three-person committee (Investigative Committee) comprised of the General Counsel, the Internal Auditor and a third person appointed by the PMA BOARD Chair or COGA Moderator (as appropriate). The Investigative Committee will first determine whether or not an investigation is warranted. If it is not, the Investigative Committee shall so report. If an investigation is warranted, the Investigative Committee shall proceed as set forth below.

c. The following processes shall apply to an investigation conducted by the Investigative Committee:
1) If the report alleges a violation by a PMA BOARD elected member, then the PMA BOARD Chair and the PMA Executive Director shall be notified an investigation has commenced. If the report alleges a violation by a COGA elected member, then the COGA Moderator and the Stated Clerk shall be notified an investigation has commenced.

2) If the report alleges a violation by the PMA BOARD Chair, then the vice-chair and the PMA Executive Director shall be notified an investigation has commenced. If the report alleges a violation by the COGA Moderator, then the vice-chair and the Stated Clerk shall be notified an investigation has commenced.

3) The Investigative Committee shall be allowed to retain the services of experts it may need to conduct a reasonably thorough investigation.

4) The Investigative Committee may recommend administrative leave for any involved employees while the investigation is in process.

5) The Investigative Committee will promptly conduct its work. The typical investigation will include the following steps:

   a) Interview all parties involved with relevant knowledge, including but not limited to the accuser and the accused (if possible). Secure and review any relevant documents or other communications (if available and appropriate).

   b) Determine if there is a potential for risk to persons or property. If there is a potential risk, take reasonable measures as appropriate to protect those persons and property.

   c) Complete a written report of the findings and recommendations, (including discipline of the elected member). The Investigative Committee will provide a copy of its report (including all relevant documents) to the Audit Committee. At the same time the report is submitted to the Audit Committee, copies will be provided to the accused and the accuser. The chair/moderator of the body and the PMA Executive Director or Stated Clerk (as appropriate) will also receive a copy. Generally, the accused and the accuser will have seven business days to submit written comments to the Audit Committee in response to the Investigative Committee’s written report. The Chair of the Audit Committee may extend this period if such an extension is reasonably necessary.

6) All elected members and employees are required to fully cooperate with these investigations, and shall not be retaliated against by supervisors or anyone for cooperating and participating in the investigation.

7) The Audit Committee shall consider all the submissions promptly and reach a conclusion. While the Audit Committee does not have the authority to discipline elected members of PMA BOARD/COGA, its decision shall include any recommendations in that regard. PMA BOARD or COGA, as appropriate, shall give great weight to the decision of the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee shall make a full report of the matter to the PMA BOARD Executive Committee and the Executive Director or the COGA Coordinating Committee and the Stated Clerk (as appropriate). Thereafter, the PMA BOARD Executive Committee or the COGA Coordinating Committee (as appropriate) will affirm, modify, or reverse the decision of the Audit Committee. In reaching its decision, the PMA BOARD Executive Committee or the COGA Coordinating Committee (as appropriate) may also hear from any of the following as it deems fit: the accused, the accuser, the Investigative Committee, and others it deems relevant.

8) PMA BOARD/COGA will ensure that whistleblower reports submitted under this Ethics Policy are dealt with impartially and confidentially. To that end, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis so as to fulfill the process. Any elected member who violates the confidentiality of this process shall be subject to disciplinary action by the body with jurisdiction over the elected member.

9) PMA BOARD/COGA prohibit retaliation, including but not limited to making any threatening communication by verbal, written, or electronic means, against anyone who reports in good faith or provides any information concerning violations of the Ethics Policy or applicable state or federal laws or who provides truthful information relating to the commission or possible commission of any criminal offense to a law enforcement officer. PMA BOARD/COGA will not discipline any elected member where the elected member in good faith (or any person acting pursuant to the request of the elected member) reports, discloses, testifies, or otherwise informs PMA BOARD/COGA, pursuant to this Ethics Policy, of a violation by an elected member, employee, or organization.

10) Any elected member found engaging in retaliation will be subject to discipline by the body with jurisdiction over the elected member.
7. Attachment 5 -- Meeting Procedure

Actions taken by the PMA BOARD and COGA are recorded in minutes. For purposes of this document, “minutes” includes administrative notes. If an employee, officer or elected member has a conflict of interest with regard to a proposed transaction under consideration at the meeting, that person shall leave the meeting and henceforth refrain from discussing or voting on the matter. The person with the conflict of interest may, however, respond to questions posed by an elected member. The minutes must reflect:

a. the date of the meeting;

b. the names of employees, officers and/or elected members with conflicts of interest regarding the proposed transaction;

c. the names of those who left the meeting;

d. the names of those members who voted on the matter;

e. description of data obtained and relied upon by the PMA BOARD or COGA and how the data was obtained;

f. if the transaction is approved between PMA BOARD/COGA and the person with a conflict of interest, the basis for the approval (include any difference in comparability data and value of transaction to PMA BOARD/COGA and how that affected the approval); and

g. terms of the transaction as approved.

I. Guidelines for Liaisons to Other Entities

The General Assembly elects individuals to serve as members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. As part of their call to service on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, some members or former members will be invited to represent the board on other entities (committees or boards). These additional assignments are secondary to the purpose for which the General Assembly has called members into service on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. In each of these roles, members are to represent the concerns and established interests of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The following guidelines are designed to help members cultivate the connection between their work on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and their service on other boards and committees. In this document, “liaison” refers to anyone who serves on another committee by virtue of first having been elected to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Liaisons may be voting members or corresponding members, depending upon the particular assignment.

1. Prior to committee meetings:

Liaisons will review the agenda for the upcoming committee meetings, and seek input from the designated staff liaison regarding:

• Background materials that may be helpful for the committee discussion

• Presbyterian Mission Agency Board interests that might relate to the discussion.

2. At the committee meetings:

Liaisons will participate and engage as a full member of the committee (whether voting or corresponding) with particular attention on those issues that relate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. On any issue where the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has taken a position, the liaison will voice and support that position in discussions and votes. On issues that relate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency where no official position has been taken by the Agency, the liaison will prioritize the concerns and interests of the Agency in discussions and votes.

3. After committee meetings:

Liaisons will keep the Presbyterian Mission Agency apprised of the work of the other committees they serve. Following each committee meeting, liaisons will send a brief note to the Board chairperson and the designated staff liaison, outlining significant items from the meeting, which will be passed on to the appropriate committee of the Board. PMA Board committee chairs may, at their discretion, highlight an information item for further discussion in committee at any Board meeting. If this is anticipated, the board committee chair will notify the liaison in advance that her or his presence may be needed during the committee session.

4. Prior to a designated Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting:
Annually (prior to a Board meeting designated by the Board chairperson), liaisons will prepare a written report for distribution to board members as means of keeping the board informed about the committee’s work. The report will be posted online to be received by the Board. (these items of business are due in the Executive Director’s office four weeks prior to a board meeting.)

J. Relationship with Staff

1. The President/Executive Director

a. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the President/Executive Director include:

1) Enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to fulfill its responsibility to the General Assembly;
2) Nurturing relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the other General Assembly agencies, mid councils and racial ethnic caucuses (see Covenant of Understanding);
3) Directing the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
4) Providing leadership to, and administrative oversight of, the staff;
5) Leading the personnel decision-making processes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
6) Coordinating, with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the budget planning process of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
7) Serving a major role in all Presbyterian Mission Agency efforts, including funds development.
8) Leading the Presbyterian Mission Agency in implementing policies and procedures, not limited to those related to inclusiveness, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity;
9) Serving as president of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and
10) Serving as primary spokesperson for Presbyterian Mission Agency program and policies.

b. Election and Review

The President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who shall be a Presbyterian, is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The President/Executive Director is accountable to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Upon election, the President/Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office until confirmed by the next General Assembly following election. Should the General Assembly refuse to confirm any President/Executive Director, the position becomes vacant immediately. Periodic in-depth reviews of the President/Executive Director are the responsibility of the Coordinating Committee. The President/Executive Director is elected for a term of four years and may be reelected for additional terms. Initial four-year terms start on the date of election. The President/Executive Director may be dismissed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in conformity with current personnel policies and procedures.

c. Unexpected Vacancy

The Chair of the Board contacts the Coordinating Committee and together they will take all steps deemed necessary to secure temporary leadership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. These actions shall be binding until ratified at the next stated meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

d. End-of-Service/Resignation Procedures

1) If the Executive Director intends to resign or not stand for re-election, a letter should be sent to the Chair of the Board.
2) Upon receipt of the letter, the Chair of the Board confers with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee regarding next steps.
3) The decision is announced on a schedule agreed to by the Executive Director and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee.
4) The Coordinating Committee, and other such persons as may be deemed necessary, shall conduct an exit interview with the Executive Director.

5) The Coordinating Committee will take all steps deemed necessary to provide temporary leadership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. These actions shall be binding until ratified at the next stated meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

e. Search Procedures

1) When the Chair is notified that the Executive Director position will be permanently vacant, a search committee composed of seven members of the Board shall be elected by the Board. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Nominations and Personnel Committee shall nominate the membership of the committee, including a Chair, representative of the diversity of the Board.

2) In order for the General Assembly Committee on Representation to carry out its assigned functions, G-3.0103, a representative of the committee may participate in meetings of special committees elected by the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to select nominees for Executive Director during discussions of the position description, advertising, and interview procedures. Discussions of the qualifications of individual candidates and interviews of candidates shall be closed to members of the Committee on Representation unless invited as provided in section 3.(a & c) of the Open Meeting Policy.

3) When a final candidate is selected, that person shall be provided an opportunity to meet privately (electronically if needed) with the interim/acting Executive Director.

4) The chair and chair-elect will meet (electronically if needed) with the final candidate to draft goals for the coming year.

5) The final candidate shall meet (electronically if needed) with the Coordinating Committee for the purpose of finalizing goals for the coming year.

6) The final candidate shall meet with the Board in closed session, (electronically if needed) prior to release of the candidate’s nomination and consideration for election, with the following information being provided to the Board in anticipation of that meeting:
   a) a brief biographical sketch;
   b) a personal statement of faith;
   c) reason(s) candidate is deemed to be suitable for the position;
   d) the candidate’s goals, as approved by the Coordinating Committee, for the first year of office.

7) The public presentation of the final candidate and his/her election shall take place at a subsequent open meeting of the Board.

2. General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer.

a. The General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer are selected and hired by the Executive Director, using a search committee that includes elected members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and subject to a confirmation vote by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. These positions do not have a term.

   1) In the case of the Chief Financial Officer search, the committee shall include the chairs of the Audit and the Resource Allocation & Stewardship Committees

   2) In the case of the General Counsel search, the committee shall include the chair of the Legal & Property Committee

b. The General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer are directly responsible to the Board to provide complete and accurate information.

c. When one of these positions is being submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for confirmation, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be provided with the following:

   1) a brief biographical sketch;

   2) reason(s) the individual is deemed to be suitable for the position;
d. The chairs of the Audit and the Resource Allocation & Stewardship committees will participate in the annual review of the Chief Financial Officer.

e. The chair of the Legal/Property Committee will participate in the annual review of the General Counsel.

f. The Executive Director has authority to terminate the General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer, or any persons serving in those roles, after consultation with the Chairs of the Audit and Resource Allocation & Stewardship Committees, in the case of the Chief Financial Officer position or the chair of the Legal/Property Committee in the case of the General Counsel position AND with prior notice to the Board.

g. In the event of a vacancy in either one or both of these positions, the search process shall be initiated as quickly as possible, which may include the search for an acting/interim position.

3. Other Staff

a. All staff are staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and are accountable to the Executive Director. Staff are not members of any Board committees or task forces, but may be asked to serve on a Board ministerial team.

b. Board members requiring assistance from staff shall work through the Executive Director to be assigned a resource person.

c. Staff who resource Board members, committees or task forces shall keep the Executive Director informed.

d. Staff will notify the Executive Director of any conflict of instructions from board members or between board members and staff supervisors, so that resolution may be found.

K. Comprehensive Performance Review Process for the President/Executive Director

1. Introduction

a. The purpose of all performance reviews described in these processes is to discuss, share, and assess goals, performance, successes, and challenges related to the work of the President/Executive Director.

b. The performance review cycle has four annual review conversations, plus a comprehensive review (with 360-degree input) in the third year.

2. Annual Review

a. Purpose

The purpose of the annual review conversation is:

1) to report on the accomplishment of goals

2) to provide feedback to the President/Executive Director regarding performance

3) to establish goals for the coming year

b. Timelines:

1) At the end of the calendar year, the President/Executive Director will complete a self-evaluation.

2) The review is conducted during the first quarter of the new year.

3) The Coordinating Committee reports a summary of the review at the Board’s Spring meeting.

3. Comprehensive Review with 360-degree input

a. Purpose

The purpose of this review conversation is:

1) to evaluate the leadership of the President/Executive Director over a period of three years

2) to receive feedback from selected individuals from the Mission Agency staff, other agency leaders and some mid council leaders who are familiar with the work of the President/Executive Director

3) to evaluate the Executive Director’s eligibility and willingness to serve for an additional four-year term
b. Timelines:

1) 3 months prior to the midyear Board retreat in the third year of an Executive Director’s term, Human Resources will provide review instruments to the Executive Director and Coordinating Committee for consideration. Following approval, the review instruments (typically survey forms) will be sent to selected individuals for feedback on the leadership of the Executive Director.

2) The Executive Director prepares a self-evaluation 45 days prior to the midyear Board retreat.

3) The review is conducted as part of the Coordinating Committee meeting during the Board’s midyear retreat.

4) The Coordinating Committee will report a summary of its review to the Board at its Fall meeting. If it is clear that the Executive Director will not be continuing for another term, transition planning will begin as defined in the Manual of Operations.

5) If there is eligibility and willingness for another term, then the Coordinating Committee will ordinarily recommend this action to the Board at its Spring meeting in year four.

4. Process

The Coordinating Committee may conduct these performance reviews or may appoint a subcommittee of its members. In either instance, the review shall be led in that process by the Chair-elect of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

At the beginning of each performance year, the Coordinating Committee in coordination with the Executive Director, will establish goals and objectives by which the Executive Director will be evaluated. Measurable goals and objectives for each area of ministry shall be clearly identified and, for the sake of vertical integration, will impact the performance plans of all senior staff as well. These ministry goals and objectives should be derived from surveys, discussions with mid-councils and congregations, input from staff, and input from PMA Board members.

A confidential written summary of the review with goals and objectives shall be prepared by the Chair-elect of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Both the Chair-elect and the Executive Director will sign the summary and it will be placed in the Executive Director’s personnel file.

When an Executive Director leaves the position, the Coordinating Committee will conduct an exit interview.

5. Visual Model

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L. Public Statements by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

1. Statements on Public Issues by Entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
It is understood that duly constituted entities, boards, and councils may address statements or resolutions to the church or public officials, based on specified General Assembly actions, concerning matters clearly related to their assigned responsibilities. Such statements or resolutions may also be released to church and public news media. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has been assigned a particular responsibility by the General Assembly to act on behalf of the General Assembly according to previously enacted General Assembly policies [between meetings of the General Assembly], reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions. Since the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall, in effect, be acting on behalf of the General Assembly, clear procedure defining the occasions and process for preparing and approving interim statements addressed to the church or the public order on issues and events in the society are essential. While the procedure outlined below focuses on such interim statements, the interim actions of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall, of course, encompass a wider scope.

Procedures Governing Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Interim Statements on Public Issues:

a. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board policy on interim statements governs those occasions when the Board speaks to members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to public officials, or to other audiences on behalf of the General Assembly. When the intent is to facilitate the church’s understanding of a General Assembly policy or to encourage general support of that policy, an interim statement shall be prepared.

b. An interim statement is a formal statement of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board issued between meetings of the General Assembly on an event or issue in the public order that merits immediate response by the church. An interim statement should not be confused with statements issued by the Stated Clerk in fulfillment of the responsibility to interpret and communicate General Assembly actions, nor with personal statements that may from time to time be made by church officials.

c. Interim statements should be reserved for significant occasions rather than viewed as a routine responsibility. The following questions shall be used to evaluate the need for such statements:

1) Is this event or issue of sufficient gravity or moment to merit an interim statement by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board?

2) Is such a statement by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board deemed appropriate, timely, and helpful?

3) Are sufficient time and expertise available to prepare a credible and responsible interim statement on the matter?

d. Proposals for interim statements may be initiated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board itself or by any General Assembly entity, synod, or presbytery. Any proposals arising between meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be communicated to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director.

e. When the proposal is for an interim statement at a forthcoming regular meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the following procedures shall apply:

1) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director shall refer the proposal to the appropriate person(s), depending on the subject, who shall prepare a recommendation concerning the need for an interim statement. If further action is appropriate, those persons in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Chair, the Executive Director, and the Stated Clerk shall prepare a draft.

2) The draft of any proposed interim statement shall be circulated to members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in advance if possible; otherwise, at the beginning of the meetings.

3) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee shall review the proposed interim statement and recommend a method for considering it in the meeting.

4) Ordinarily, no final vote on an interim statement shall be taken until at least twenty-four hours following the circulation of a draft.

f. When the proposal for an interim statement arises during a meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the following procedures shall apply:

1) The matter shall be referred immediately to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee which, in consultation with the persons named above in item “5.(a)” in attendance, shall report its recommendation to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board as to whether an interim statement is merited. The recommendation shall be based on consideration of the questions in section “3.” above.

2) If the proposal to issue an interim statement is approved, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Chair shall immediately appoint a small task group to prepare a draft, drawing upon particular competencies among the
members and expertise of those present. They shall work in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Chair, the Executive Director, and the Stated Clerk.

3) Consideration shall proceed as in items “5.c” and “5.d” above.

g. When the proposal is for an interim statement between meetings because of urgent need, the following procedures shall apply:

1) The Chair and Vice Chair of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Moderator of the General Assembly, in consultation with the appropriate persons depending on the subject, the Executive Director and the Stated Clerk may jointly agree that an interim statement is merited and authorize the preparation of a draft.

2) On completion of a draft, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Chair shall call a meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee, by telephone conference if necessary, to consider the proposed statement.

3) When the matter is of sufficient urgency in the judgment of those named in “[5].a” above, notification and the circulation of a draft here described can be compressed into one. In such case, the proposed statement shall be carefully read at the beginning of the special/called meeting, an explanation of the background circumstances shall be made, and the statement shall be read again before it is placed for debate.

4) All members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall ordinarily be notified of the proposed interim statement, and every attempt shall be made to circulate the draft in advance.

h. In all instances, a majority of those voting, provided a quorum is present, shall be sufficient to approve an interim statement.

2. Other Statements by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

On other occasions, when the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is invited to endorse the statement of another recognized Presbyterian group or ecumenical partner, or when the Board identifies an occasion when it wishes to speak on its own behalf, it may do so upon recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee. In no case shall such a statement be made in contradiction of General Assembly action.

III. Staff Operations

A. Overview

I. The Executive Director reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee and the Board itself.

II. The Executive Director provides direction, leadership, coordination, review and evaluation for the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

III. The Executive Director carries out these responsibilities with staff in the following ministries:

A. Communications
B. Compassion, Peace and Justice
C. Mission Engagement and Support
D. Office of the Executive Director
E. Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries
F. Shared Services
G. Theology, Formation and Evangelism
H. World Mission

IV. Structural changes

A. Changes to the structure described above in III A 3 must be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation by the Coordinating Committee and the Executive Director.
B. Structural changes within the areas described above in III A. 3 must be reported to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and Coordinating Committee.

B. Organizational Charts
C. Impact Study Process

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has been mandated by its Board to have a systematic process of program evaluation. The process is intended to focus on the impact of programs.

The process has both a staff and elected member component.

1. Staff

The Mission Impact Team plays an important role of outside input and accountability for programs in the impact study process.\(^6\)

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\(^6\) The Impact Study process is based on the Kellogg Logic Model developed by the Kellogg Foundation. Their key realization is programs should be evaluated primarily on the basis of impact. Program evaluation often can get side-tracked.
Within the Presbyterian Mission Agency, staff leadership determines the appropriate ‘altitude’ for impact assessment. The Mission Agency has decided to gauge impact at the level of collective groupings. Collective groupings, with some exceptions, are typically smaller than a ministry area but larger than an office. There are about 25 collective groupings within the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Each collective grouping has a “point person.”

Each collective grouping sets goals for its work, with a plan of work and impact milestones, using this template:

When the time comes for a grouping’s impact study, Research Services will meet with the point person for the grouping to develop a research instrument designed to measure impact in the light of the collective goals that have been established. Once responses have been received, Research Services will prepare a report for the point person.

Using the Research Services report, the point person will develop a report reviewing quantitative data (from the research or from measurable elements in the previously established goals) as well as qualitative data (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) regarding the impact of the collective grouping.

Human Resources and Finance will prepare brief reports of the resources (or Inputs) available to the grouping.

When the three major documents (Research Services report, Point Person report, Resources report) are available, Research Services will also produce an executive summary of the material.

The Mission Impact Team meets twice a year to review the reports prepared by the point persons, and to make suggestions regarding the work. Suggestions are tracked and presented to the point person for consideration in conversation with the area director.

Four to Six weeks later, the area director presents the collective grouping’s response to the suggestions at a Leadership Cabinet meeting.

2. Elected members

Twice a year, at Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings, the impact studies will be shared at program committee meetings, based on the most closely-related committee for each of the collective groupings. The point person will make a brief presentation and then engage members of the committee in direct feedback regarding the work of the program. Suggestions will be tracked for follow-up by staff at the next meeting of the committee.

Board committees will use impact studies to inform the evaluation of PMA effectiveness in fulfilling the Mission Work Plan and General Assembly directives.

D. Ethics Policy for Staff

Ethics Policy for Employees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

I. Introduction

This Ethics Policy for Employees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) and the Office of the General Assembly (“OGA”) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“Ethics Policy”) addresses business ethics and does not include the other ethical values and policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“PCUSA”)7. The Ethics Policy applies to all employees of the PMA and the OGA in matters relating to the performance of their duties and responsibilities for the PMA/OGA. These employees have Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation as their legal employer. The term “PMA/OGA” collectively refers to those two ecclesial bodies, their elected members, their respective staff members, the corporation, and all subparts thereof.

All funds and property received and administered by the PMA/OGA are entrusted to the organization by God through the faithful financial support of PCUSA members and friends. The highest degree of stewardship and fiduciary responsibility is expected of all employees, including the receiving, reporting, and use of funds, property, and time. Employees are responsible for complying with laws, regulations8, and PMA/OGA and PCUSA policies and procedures.

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7 For other policies, see the employee handbooks of the PMA and OGA and the Standards of Ethical Conduct approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as it applies to employees.
8 Federal and state constitutional religious free exercise provisions, as well as laws and ordinances, exempt religious organizations from some laws. An employee should consult with the General Counsel if such questions arise.
As a PMA/OGA employee, what does this Ethics Policy require of me?

The required standards of this Ethics Policy are set out in 1-6 immediately below. The forms and processes are set out in the four attachments.

II. Standards of Ethical Conduct

A. Duty of Loyalty and Care. The duty of loyalty and care as well as the obligation of good stewardship requires all employees to act first in the best interests of the PMA/OGA rather than in the employee’s own interests or the interests of another entity or person. These responsibilities are set forth below.

B. Conflicts of Interest. All employees shall avoid conflicts of interest, potential conflicts of interest, and situations that give even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

1) Definition. Conflict of interest means any situation in which the employee may be influenced or appear to be influenced in decision-making or business dealings by any motive or desire for personal advantage other than the success and well-being of the PMA/OGA. Personal advantage means a financial interest or some other personal interest, whether present or potential, whether direct or indirect. This standard applies to both actual and contemplated transactions. When in doubt, the employee is to assume there might be a conflict and should raise the question pursuant to this Ethics Policy.

2) Disclosure Deadlines. All present and potential conflicts of interest issues must be disclosed in writing annually (See Attachment 1) and thereafter as they arise. If the conflict is known in advance of any meeting, business transaction, contract, or other activity at which issues may be discussed or on which the issues may have a bearing on the employee’s approach, whether directly or indirectly, it shall be disclosed ahead of time and the employee shall abstain from any participation in the discussion or decision. If the conflict is not known in advance, it shall be disclosed when the actual or potential conflict becomes apparent. All disclosures are to be made promptly in writing to the employee’s supervisor and to the General Counsel. (See Attachment 2)

3) Potential Conflicts of Interest. All employees are likewise to disclose promptly, in writing, matters and relationships that have the potential for giving rise to the appearance of a conflict in business dealings with the PMA/OGA. Examples include, but are not limited to, financial interests, leadership roles, or board membership with vendors and other organizations doing business with the PMA/OGA. PMA/OGA business dealings with an employee’s friends and family are particularly sensitive and are to be disclosed and carefully evaluated because of the potential for inferences of tangible or intangible personal advantage and the appearance of impropriety. All disclosures are to be made promptly in writing to the employee’s supervisor and to the General Counsel. (See Attachment 2).

4) Gifts and Relationship Building. To avoid appearances of impropriety, any gifts, gratuities, special favors, and hospitality to an employee shall not be accepted by any employee from any person or organization that sells, delivers, or receives any goods, materials, or services to or from the PMA/OGA. This prohibition includes those persons or organizations that desire to enter into such relationships with PMA/OGA. In regards to employees being offered honoraria or being paid in a temporary pastoral relationship with a particular church, see Section 105 of the Employee Handbooks of the PMA and the OGA. There are four exceptions to this rule:

a) Gifts, meals, outings, and relationship-building activities provided by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) churches, middle governing bodies, partner churches or related organizations in connection with PMA/OGA business. Employees shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount.

b) Gifts that primarily benefit the PMA/OGA and not an individual employee, such as giftsof complimentary rooms given to the PMA/OGA by hotels, conventions, and conferences in relation to official PMA/OGA business. Employees shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount.

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9 Outside employment, including but not limited to serving in a paid, temporary pastoral relationship with a particular church, is permitted as long as it does not interfere with the performance of work duties for the PMA/OGA or result in a conflict of interest as that term is defined in this Ethics Policy.

10 Personal investments with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., or employee benefits provided by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are not considered a conflict of interest.

11 “Family” includes the employee’s spouse, parents, siblings, spouses of siblings, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, the spouses of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, any other blood relative, and individuals who live in the employee’s home.
c) **Occasional small gifts (less than $50.00 in value),** such as flowers or foodstuffs, to an individual employee. Where gifts are shared with the work area (e.g., foodstuffs set out for all to partake), then the gift is not deemed to be to an individual employee. Employees shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount.

d) **Meals, outings, and relationship-building activities in connection with PMA/OGA business may be received.** If an activity permitted under this section 4 results in a value of over $100 to the employee and/or the employee’s family member, the employee shall promptly report this in writing to the employee’s supervisor and the General Counsel. Employees shall not accept monetary gifts of any amount. The written report will include a description of the activity, the dollar value, the name of the person/organization providing it, and the business that person/organization does with PMA/OGA. The General Counsel shall maintain a log that includes all of the written reports submitted under this section 4. This log will be available at all times to the PMA Board Chair, the PMA Executive Director, the COGA Moderator, the Stated Clerk and the Chair of the Audit Committee.

5) **Process and Resolution.** All conflict of interest disclosures, reports, and questions are to be made promptly and in writing to the employee’s supervisor and the General Counsel. The General Counsel will consult with the supervisor and make a recommendation to the PMA Executive Director or the Stated Clerk, as appropriate. Those officers provide the final decision on any employee conflict of interest matters. Conflict of interest disclosures, reports, or questions related to activities of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and/or the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are submitted in writing to the General Counsel who will submit for decision to their respective elected bodies (COGA Coordinating Committee or the PMA Board Executive Committee).

C. **Confidentiality of PMA/OGA Information.** Employees shall not disclose information about the PMA/OGA that is not known outside of the PMA/OGA or is not known by public means. Of course, it is within the duties of some employees to share PMA/OGA information with other parts of the PCUSA, related entities, and the public. Employee questions should be posed to the supervisor. If the supervisor needs assistance, the General Counsel should be consulted by the supervisor.

D. **Transactions, Reporting, and Document Retention.** Each employee has a duty to prepare, process, maintain, and report complete, accurate, and timely records pertaining to their role, including, but not limited to, journal entries, expense reports, disbursement requests, time reports, and payroll transactions. This also includes safeguarding all physical, financial, informational, and other PMA/OGA assets and records. Employees shall comply with the Records Retention Schedule of the Office of the General Assembly’s Department of History and related schedules as part of the normal course of business and use the schedules in a consistent and accountable manner for both records retention and destruction purposes. See www.history.pcusa.org/national/schedules.html. Also see the Electronic Records Policy for PMA and OGA (anticipated release in 2007). Any document relevant to actual or anticipated internal investigations, legal proceedings or governmental investigations (civil or criminal) must not be destroyed and must be preserved in a manner that would ease accessibility and retrievability. In addition, no undisclosed or unrecorded fund or asset will be established, and no artificial or false entries will be made in the financial or other records of the PMA/OGA.

E. **Duty to Disclose/Whistleblower Policy.** Employees have a duty to report violations of this Ethics Policy, whether the violation is by themselves or by another. This includes, but is not limited to, financial, accounting, or auditing irregularities. See Attachment 2 for Self-reports. See Attachment 3 for Whistleblower Reports concerning others. See Attachment 4 for Procedures for processing a whistleblower report. Likewise, concerns about the appearance or the possibility of violations should be reported. Care must always be taken to be factual and objective. Violations shall be reported promptly in writing to the General Counsel, and may be reported anonymously. **Anonymous whistleblower reports can also be made by calling the hotline at (888) 236-6877 or by submitting a report at www.ethicspoint.com.** An anonymous whistleblower report must include sufficient corroborating evidence to justify initiating an investigation. (If the alleged violation involves the General Counsel or one of her staff members, it should be reported to the Internal Auditor.)

1) **No Retaliation.** There shall be no retaliation for good faith complaints, reports, for participation in an investigation or for providing truthful information relating to an alleged violation of this Ethics Policy. In addition, there will be no retaliation where an employee makes a good faith report of the commission or possible commission of any criminal offense to a law enforcement officer. Employees are protected even if the allegations are mistaken or unsubstantiated, as long as the employee reasonably believes the reported conduct constitutes a violation of the Ethics Policy. One who makes a claim or report under this Whistleblower Policy in bad faith, or knows or has reason to know that such claim or report is false or materially inaccurate may be subject to disciplinary sanctions.
2) **Confidentiality of Investigation.** Reports under this Whistleblower Policy will be treated confidentially with disclosures made on a need-to-know basis only to those directly involved in the investigation of the reported concern. To the extent possible within the limitations of law, policy, and the need to conduct a competent investigation, confidentiality will be maintained.

F. **Violations.** Violation or noncompliance with this Ethics Policy may result in discipline, including termination of employment under the employee handbook of the respective entity.

G. **Amendments.** The Ethics Policy may be amended from time to time. In consultation with the General Counsel, the PMA Executive Director and the Stated Clerk (as appropriate) are authorized to make reasonable and necessary changes to this Ethics Policy. Substantive changes must be reported back to the elected body approving this Ethics Policy. Editorial changes need not be reported back.

H. **Designees.** Where this Ethics Policy assigns a duty to a particular officer or staff position, that officer or staff position may use a designee to complete the duties.

I. **No Waiver by PMA/OGA.** Nothing in this Ethics Policy shall be construed to waive any claim, assertion or defense of the PMA/OGA to exemption or exclusion from applicability of a statute and/or regulation or lack of jurisdiction of a civil court or governmental agency.

J. **Training.** Trainings to familiarize the staff with this Ethics Policy and its related forms and procedures will be conducted for PMA/OGA staffs by the Legal Services Office as frequently as deemed necessary by the Executive Director of the PMA and the Stated Clerk, as appropriate. Each member of the PMA/OGA staffs will be required to attend such trainings.

**Attachment 1**

**Annual Ethics Policy Representation by Employee**

(Annual Report)

This form is to be completed annually and signed by all employees of the PMA/OGA.

Upon completion, send it to the General Counsel.

I acknowledge I have received a copy of the Ethics Policy for Employees of the PMA and OGA (Ethics Policy).

I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with the Ethics Policy and any revisions made to it.

I understand:

- I am subject to the Ethics Policy and am required to comply with it.
- Any employees under my supervision are also subject to the Ethics Policy and I am responsible for ensuring those employees are aware of the Ethics Policy and attend related trainings.
- I am responsible for reporting immediately in writing any possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves me, is reported to me, or that I observe.
- I am responsible for reporting immediately in writing any whistleblower reports I receive under the Ethics Policy, as well as any other violations of the Ethics Policy I observe.

Initial all of the following statements that apply:

- I am not aware of any violations of the Ethics Policy that involve me or that I have observed in regards to other employees or elected or appointed members.

- No employee has submitted a whistleblower report or self-report to me that I have not reported already to the General Counsel.

- I am aware of a possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves me or that I have observed in regards to other employees or by elected or appointed members. By submitting the information immediately below, I am reporting the alleged violation.

Name of persons(s) with the possible violation: ________________________________

Facts of the possible violation:

______________________________________________________________________
Report of Ethics Policy question, violation, or possible violation in regards to the reporting employee (Question/Self-report)

This form is to be completed, signed, and sent to the employee’s supervisor and the General Counsel. It is important to report questions promptly. Generally, an employee’s supervisor and the General Counsel will consult with the employee to resolve the conflict of interest, if any.

I am aware of a possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves me or I have a question about the Ethics Policy as it involves me.

Employee name:

Facts about the employee’s possible violation or the question presented:

Date the employee became aware of the possible violation or question:

Signature: Date:

Print name:

Whistleblower Report of possible Ethics Policy violation in regards to another employee, elected member, or organization

This form is to be completed, signed (unless submitted anonymously), and sent to the General Counsel.

Anonymous whistleblower reports can also be made by calling the hotline at (888) 236-6877 or submitting a report at www.ethicspoint.com. An anonymous whistleblower report must include sufficient corroborating evidence to justify initiating an investigation.

I am aware of a possible violation of the Ethics Policy that involves another employee, an elected member, or an organization.

Name of person(s) involved:

Name of organization(s) involved:

Facts about the possible violation:

Date the employee became aware of the possible violation:

(DO NOT SIGN BELOW IF SUBMITTING ANONYMOUSLY)

Signature: Date:

Print name:

III. Attachment 4 -- Procedures for processing a Whistleblower Report of possible Ethics Policy violation in regards to another employee, elected member, or organization.

A. All reports under the Whistleblower Policy (See Ethics Policy) shall be submitted in writing promptly to the General Counsel. Anonymous whistleblower reports may be made by calling the hotline at (888) 236-6877 or submitting a report at www.ethicspoint.com. An anonymous whistleblower report must include sufficient corroborating evidence to justify initiating an investigation. If the alleged violation involves the General Counsel or one of her staff members, it should be
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reported to the Internal Auditor. The General Counsel will decide if the reported activity, if confirmed, would be an Ethics Policy violation, a possible violation of a policy or procedure not covered by this Ethics Policy, or a matter to be processed through another avenue, typically supervisor review with a report to the General Counsel. If the General Counsel decides the report will not be processed under this Ethics Policy, the General Counsel will respond to the accuser unless the report was filed anonymously. The General Counsel shall keep a log of all reports received under the Whistleblower Policy. Whether or not an investigation was done, the log will include the resolution of all reports. The log will be available at all times to the Chair of the PMA Board, the Moderator of the COGA and the Chair of the Audit Committee. If the person reporting is simply confused about an issue and how it applies, the General Counsel will ensure clarification is provided by the supervisor or the General Counsel. The supervisor will provide a written response to the employee with a copy to the General Counsel.

B. All other reports shall be initially reviewed by a three-person committee (Investigative Committee) comprised of the General Counsel, the Internal Auditor, and a third person appointed by the PMA Executive Director or Stated Clerk (as appropriate). The Investigative Committee will first determine whether or not an investigation is warranted. If it is not, the Investigative Committee shall so report. If an investigation is warranted, the Investigative Committee shall proceed as set forth below.

C. The following processes shall apply to an investigation conducted by the Investigative Committee:

1) If the report alleges a violation by PMA employees, then the PMA Executive Director shall be notified an investigation has commenced. If the report alleges a violation by OGA employees, then the Stated Clerk shall be notified an investigation has commenced. If the report alleges a violation by either of these officers, then the Chair of the PMA Board or the Moderator of COGA, as appropriate, shall be notified an investigation has commenced.

2) If the report alleges a violation by an elected member, then the chair of the body and the PMA Executive Director or the Stated Clerk (as appropriate) shall be notified an investigation has commenced. If the report alleges a violation by the chair/moderator of the body, then the vice-chair and the PMA Executive Director or Stated Clerk (as appropriate) shall be notified an investigation has commenced.

3) The Investigative Committee shall be allowed to retain the services of experts it may need to conduct a reasonably thorough investigation.

4) The Investigative Committee may recommend administrative leave for the accused, the accuser, or others while the investigation is in process.

5) The Investigative Committee will promptly conduct its work. The typical investigation will include the following steps:
   a) Interview all parties involved with relevant knowledge, including but not limited to the accuser and the accused (if possible). Secure and review any relevant documents or other communications (if available and appropriate).
   b) Determine if there is a potential for risk to persons or property. If there is a potential risk, take reasonable measures as appropriate to protect employees and property.
   c) Complete a written report of its findings and recommendations (including employee discipline or discharge). The Investigative Committee will provide a copy of its report (including all relevant documents) to the Audit Committee. At the same time the report is submitted to the Audit Committee, copies will be provided to the accused and the accuser. The PMA Executive Director or Stated Clerk (as appropriate) will also receive a copy. Generally, the accused and accuser will have seven business days to submit written comments to the Audit Committee in response to the Investigative Committee’s written report. The Chair of the Audit Committee may extend this period if such an extension is reasonably necessary.
   d) All employees are required to fully cooperate with these investigations and shall not be retaliated against by supervisors or anyone for cooperating and participating in the investigation.

6) The Audit Committee shall consider all the submissions promptly and reach a conclusion. The Audit Committee’s conclusions shall be final and not subject to appeal. While the Audit Committee does not have the authority to discipline or discharge PMA/OGA employees, its conclusions may include recommendations in that regard. Management shall give great weight to the conclusion and recommendations of the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee shall make a full report of the matter to the PMA Board Executive Committee and the Executive Director or the COGA Coordinating Committee and the Stated Clerk (as appropriate). The PMA Board Executive Committee or COGA Coordinating Committee receives the report, and does not take further action other than to follow up with the PMA Executive Director or Stated Clerk to ensure appropriate action was taken. An employee who has received a disciplinary action (including employment termination) may appeal that action via the process set out in the applicable employee handbook.
7) PMA/OGA will ensure that whistleblower reports under this Ethics Policy by an employee are dealt with impartially and confidentially. To that end, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis so as to fulfill the process. Any employee who violates the confidentiality of this process shall be subject to disciplinary action, including employment termination.

8) PMA/OGA prohibit retaliation, including but not limited to making any threatening communication by verbal, written, or electronic means, against any employee who reports in good faith or provides any information concerning violations of the Ethics Policy or applicable state or federal laws or who provides truthful information relating to the commission or possible commission of any criminal offense to a law enforcement officer. PMA/OGA will not discharge or discriminate against any employee with respect to compensation, terms conditions, or privileges of employment because the employee in good faith (or any person acting pursuant to the request of the employee) reports, discloses, testifies, or otherwise informs PMA/OGA, pursuant to the Whistleblower Policy, of a violation by any employee, elected member, or organization.

9) Any employee found engaging in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Any elected member found engaging in retaliation will be subject to discipline by the PMA or OGA (as appropriate).

IV. Relationships and Other Policies

A. Relationships

I. Deployments

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board deploys a limited number of its members to support the work of other organizations, as directly mandated by the Organization for Mission, and as required to facilitate intra-agency collaboration:

A. Board of Pensions – 1 voting member
B. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly – 1 corresponding member
C. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation – 1 corresponding member
D. Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program – 2 voting members
E. Presbyterian Women, Inc. – 1 voting member
F. Mission Responsibility through Investment – 2 voting members
G. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations – 1 voting member

II. Missional Relationships

The Presbyterian Mission Agency acknowledges that we are not solely responsible for the achievement of the Great Ends of the Church identified in Book of Order F-1.0304. Our role is to be faithful stewards of God’s blessings by focusing only on what the Church needs from the national church today, using the unique resources of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. We often work in partnership through missional relationships. This document identifies the types of missional relationships and the relevant approval processes.

There are four categories of formal Presbyterian Mission Agency missional relationships:

- Institutional relationships
- Professional associations
- Missional Partnerships
  - Presbyterian Mission Agency organization wide
  - Office partnerships

A listing of the current missional relationship partners may be found on the Board website (http://pmab.pcusa.org)

A. Institutional Relationships

Institutional Relationships are those between the General Assembly and another organization. In these cases, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for cultivating the relationship and requesting General Assembly approval, but the relationship isn’t limited in scope to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
There are relatively few of these relationships. A covenant between PC(USA) and the other organization will place the relationship in the context of the church’s missional directives, describe appropriate expectations for staff services and support, as well as note any special responsibilities granted as part of the relationship.

Approval: The General Assembly, upon recommendation by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

B. Professional Associations

Professional Associations are related organizations of church professionals within a given area of expertise. Professional associations also serve the missional purposes of the church, and in that context the Presbyterian Mission Agency role is one of recognizing and networking leaders. A relationship agreement between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the other organization will place the relationship in the context of Presbyterian Mission Agency missional directives and describe appropriate expectations for Presbyterian Mission Agency staff services and support.

Approval: Leadership Cabinet, upon recommendation from the respective ministry area director, for a four-year term

Notification: Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

C. Presbyterian Mission Agency Organization-wide Missional Partnerships

Presbyterian Mission Agency organization-wide missional partnerships are groups whose relationship with the Presbyterian Mission Agency is not limited to a single ministry area, but extends across the work of the Agency. Because covenanted groups carry out specialized ministries on behalf of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, their covenant is not established with an office, but rather with the Agency as a whole. These organizations are linked by common cause and a specific relationship to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. There are relatively few of these organizations, as most of missional partnerships are with particular offices. A covenant between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the other organization will place the relationship in the context of Presbyterian Mission Agency missional directives, describe appropriate expectations for Presbyterian Mission Agency staff services and support, as well as note any special responsibilities granted as part of the relationship.

Approval: The Leadership Cabinet, upon recommendation from any two ministry area directors, for a term of four years.

Notification: Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

D. Presbyterian Mission Agency Office Partnerships

Presbyterian Mission Agency Office Partnerships are relationships between a Presbyterian Mission Agency office or ministry area and another organization. These relationships are bound together by common cause and a specific relationship with another organization. An office partnership is typically limited in scope to a given office or ministry area. An office relationship document will place the relationship in the context of Presbyterian Mission Agency missional directives and describe appropriate expectations for Presbyterian Mission Agency staff services and support.

Approval: The Leadership Cabinet, upon recommendation from the Ministry Directors Team (MDT) a ministry area director, for a term of four years.

Notification: Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

III. Racial Ethnic Caucuses

There are six racial ethnic caucuses within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- African American: National Black Presbyterian Caucus
- Asian: National Asian Presbyterian Council
- Hispanic: National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Caucus
- Korean: National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches
- Middle Eastern: National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus
Native American Consulting Committee.

In 2014, the racial ethnic caucuses, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approved a covenant of understanding regarding the role and relationship of racial ethnic caucuses within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

IV. Other Denominational Committees

A. General Assembly Advisory and Advocacy Committees

The 205th General Assembly (1993) approved the creation of one advisory committee and two advocacy committees. They are:

- Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy
- Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns
- Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

An advisory committee is related to an entity or agency of the General Assembly that is formed for the purpose of providing advice, recommendations, resources, information, or counsel to its parent body.

An advocacy committee is related to an entity or agency of the General Assembly that is formed for the purpose of providing resources and support for a stated cause, constituency, policy, or defined interest through recommendations, advice, counsel, and efforts that endorse, define, or encourage.

The committee reports regularly to its parent body and constituency. The above-named committees shall have members as detailed below; elected for four-year terms with a maximum of eight years. For those who continue from the similar committees, continuous service is counted.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall nominate the members, for election by the General Assembly, and shall monitor the rotation of committee members among the synods.

The Chairs of the advisory committee and advocacy committees shall be elected by the members of the respective committees.

Whenever the work of the committee takes the members beyond the audience of the PC(USA), nationally or internationally, there shall be intensive pre-trip briefing which shall include current church policy, political situations and possible conflicting ideologies and shall include training on dealing with people of differing cultures, faith and backgrounds. When statements to the media are necessary they shall ordinarily be made by the Chair of the committee, based on the approved policies of the General Assembly.

1) Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

This advisory committee shall consist of twelve at-large members selected for special expertise and geographical diversity.

a) Accountability

i. The committee shall be accountable to carry out the processes and procedures, and for the identification of financial implications, generally required by all entities for presentation of material to the General Assembly. However, it is understood that the nature of the committee’s work occasionally may create difficulties for all concerned in these areas.

ii. The committee shall be accountable for the content of its work to the General Assembly in accordance with the Manual of the General Assembly, “Forming Social Policy;”: “The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy will be responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. If any other entity is involved in processes of developing and recommending social witness policy, then appropriate consultation and linkage with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy shall be undertaken.”

iii. Staff responsible for the planning and coordination work of the committee shall be accountable to the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency through the Director, Compassion, Peace and Justice, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.
b) Search Procedures

i When the coordinator position becomes vacant, a search committee of seven members shall be appointed by the Executive Director, with membership as follows:

(a) In consultation with the Chair of ACSWP, three shall be appointed from the Committee, one of whom shall be the Chair of the Search Committee.

(b) In consultation with the Chair of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, three shall be appointed from the elected members of the Board.

(c) The Director of Compassion, Peace and Justice shall provide staff services to the Search Committee and shall have voice but not vote.

(d) The Chair of the Search Committee shall communicate the Search Committee’s recommendation to the Director of Compassion, Peace and Justice.

ii The Director of Compassion, Peace and Justice shall appoint and have supervision of the coordinator for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

iii The search and appointment shall be guided by, and in accordance with, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Employee Handbook.

c) Budget

Funding for the work of the committee comes from the per capita budget except for the staffing costs which are accounted for in the budget of the office where the staff is lodged.

d) Staff Relationships

The Social Witness Policy Office and the Committee relate most closely to the Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry Area in order to be a regular part of information channels, staff meetings, teams and discussions. Relationships with other ministries shall be developed through staff participation in ‘staff week’ meetings, staff teams and consultative processes.

e) Access

Access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Leadership Cabinet for planning and consultation shall be on invitation of the Executive Director or at the request of the coordinator for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. At least annually, there will be a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and representatives of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee for strategic reflection and anticipation regarding social witness policy concerns.

The committee shall submit its General Assembly report to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee for review and possible comments by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

f) Liaisons

A staff person shall be named from the Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry as liaison to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

g) Relation to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be in the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, social involvement reports, Advice and Counsel Memoranda, a yearly narrative report, and other appropriate correspondence. Advice and Counsel Memoranda are to be developed cooperatively with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns as appropriate.

h) Assigned Functions

i Prepare policy statements, resolutions study papers, social involvement reports, or Advice and Counsel Memoranda on the church’s social witness for study and recommendation to the General
Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative; seek concurrence of the Board relative to financial implications on plans for studies.

ii Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of social witness policy or strategy, including interim statements concerning pressing social issues, the Board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly. Facilitate two-way communication with all parties throughout policy development and advisory processes.

iii Prepare special studies at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or its Ministries on matters of social witness.

iv Work cooperatively with the Ministries and all councils in coordinating the interdependent process of social policy formation, implementation, and monitoring.

v Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its representative committees on overtures, commissioner resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that recommend policy direction or action on social witness.

vi Maintain an up-to-date and accurate Social Policy Compilation of General Assembly social witness policy and provide information to the church as requested.

vii Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret the social witness policies of the General Assembly.

viii Identify facets of the church’s social witness that enable or obstruct effective action. Analyze, in cooperation with the General Assembly Ministries, the effectiveness of social witness in councils, institutions, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. After consulting entities that have primary ministry responsibility and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, report to the General Assembly on the advisory committee’s findings, together with recommendations for improving social witness.

ix Report directly to the General Assembly because of the need to maintain and advance a prophetic witness of the church.

2) Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC)

This advocacy committee shall consist of the following persons:

- Two African American (*)
- Two Asian American (*)
- Two Hispanic (*)
- Two Middle Eastern (*)
- Two Native American (*)
- Two At-large members elected with consideration for special expertise, fast-growing racial ethnic segments, geographic diversity and ethnic balance.

(*) Members of the five racial ethnic caucuses (African American, Asian American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and Native American) shall select one member from each caucus to be elected through the General Assembly Nominating process to serve a four year-term with eligibility for one additional term.

a) Accountability and Lodgment

Staff responsible for the planning and coordination work of the committee shall be appointed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director in consultation with the Advocacy Committee. The staff shall be lodged within the office of the Executive Director, unless the Advocacy Committee consents to staff being lodged outside that office. Such staff shall be accountable for the work of the committee to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director through the Manager for Diversity and Reconciliation.
b) Budget

Funding for the work of the committee comes from the per capita budget except for the staffing costs which are accounted for in the budget of the office where the staff is lodged. The Advocacy Committee shall propose a yearly budget to the Manager for Diversity and Reconciliation.

c) Access

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns shall have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. In accordance with the recommendation of the 220th General Assembly (2012), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall meet at least once every two years with the elected leadership of the advocacy committees for strategic reflection and anticipation concerning racial ethnic concerns.

Access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be in the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, racial involvement reports, a yearly narrative report, Advice and Counsel Memoranda, and other appropriate correspondence. Advice and Counsel Memoranda shall be developed in consultation with other advisory and advocacy committees as appropriate.

The committee shall submit its General Assembly report to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee for review and possible comments by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

d) Participation in Review Process

In each year when the Presbyterian Mission Agency is being reviewed by a General Assembly committee, either individually, or collectively with respect to the “service of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives,” the Mission Agency Board will:

- Assign one of its elected members to attend an ACREC meeting for the purpose of developing a collaborative work relationship,
- Invite a representative from ACREC to attend a meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

e) Assigned Functions

i Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and Advice and Counsel Memoranda on racial ethnic concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.

ii Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of racial ethnic concerns including statements concerning pressing issues the Board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.

iii Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of racial ethnic concern.

iv Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on racial ethnic concerns and provide information to the church as requested.

v Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on racial ethnic concerns.

vi Monitor the implementation of racial justice policies and programs relative to racial ethnic concerns.

vii Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of racial ethnic concern.

3) Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

This Advocacy Committee shall consist of:
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- Two clergywomen
- One woman church lay employee
- One Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace
- Eight members at-large, chosen to balance the committee geographically, racially and ethnically, and with consideration to age and expertise.
- At least four members of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall be racial ethnic women. At least two, but no more than three members of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns will be men.

a) Accountability and Lodgment

Staff responsible for the planning and coordination work of the committee shall be appointed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director in consultation with the Advocacy Committee. The staff shall be lodged within the office of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director, unless the Advocacy Committee consents to staff being lodged outside that office. Such staff shall be accountable for the work of the committee to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director through the Manager for Diversity and Reconciliation.

b) Budget

Funding for the work of the committee comes from the per capita budget except for the staffing costs which are accounted for in the budget of the office where the staff is lodged. The Advocacy Committee shall propose a yearly budget to the Manager for Diversity and Reconciliation.

c) Access

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. In accordance with the recommendation of the 220th General Assembly (2012), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall meet at least once every two years with the elected leadership of the advocacy committees for strategic reflection and anticipation concerning women’s concerns.

Access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be in the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, a yearly narrative report, Advice and Counsel Memoranda. Advice and Counsel Memoranda, and other appropriate correspondence shall be developed in consultation with other advisory and advocacy committees as appropriate.

The committee shall submit its General Assembly report to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee for review and possible comments by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

d) Assigned Functions

i  The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, G-4.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society.

ii Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and Advice and Counsel Memoranda on women’s concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.

iii Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of women’s concerns including statements concerning pressing issues the Board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.

iv Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women’s concerns.
v Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women’s concerns and provide information to the church as requested.

vi Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women’s concerns.

vii Monitor the implementation of women’s policies and programs relative to women’s concerns.

viii Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women’s concerns.

B. Committee on Theological Education

The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) has direct access to the General Assembly and their work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry.

As constituted by the 198th General Assembly (1986) and reaffirmed by the 205th General Assembly (1993) the Committee on Theological Education has the following purposes: to further the cause of theological education in the church; to provide a vehicle through which the individual theological seminaries can coordinate their activities and report to the church; to provide for official communication from the church to the seminaries; to preserve the freedom of the seminaries for the benefit of the church; and to assure visible representation of theological education at the national level of the church’s organization.

1) Committee Membership

This committee of the General Assembly will consist of:

- One representative appointed by each of the ten PC(USA) seminaries;
- Thirteen at-large members for special expertise and geographical diversity, who are elected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process to serve four-year terms, with eligibility for one additional term;
- Corresponding members representing seminaries that have renewable covenant relationships with the PC(USA);
- A corresponding member representing the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation; and up to three corresponding members representing non-Presbyterian seminaries as determined by annual vote of the Committee on Theological Education.

2) Staff Accountability and Lodgment

Staff responsible for planning and coordinating work of the committee shall be appointed by the Director of the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry in consultation with the Committee on Theological Education. The staff shall be lodged within the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry and be directly accountable to the Director of the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry.

3) Budget

Funding for the work of the Committee on Theological Education, including related staffing costs and allocations to the seminaries on behalf of the denomination, shall be accounted for in the budget of the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry.

4) Access

The Committee on Theological Education shall have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Access shall be in the form of resolutions, a yearly narrative report, comments on issues before the Assembly, and other appropriate correspondence. The yearly narrative report shall be forwarded to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee for possible comment. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Committee to Nurture the Body will be responsible for developing relationships with the Committee on Theological Education.
5) Assigned Functions

a) To develop and maintain a comprehensive overview of theological education from the perspective of the whole church.

b) To identify, develop, and propose strategies for a systemic approach to theological education within the denomination.

c) To serve as an advocate before the whole church for theological education and to interpret the mission of the denomination’s seminaries to the whole church.

d) To provide a way for the church’s needs to be addressed to the denomination’s seminaries.

e) To review the effectiveness and stewardship of the seminaries on behalf of the church.

f) To encourage and enhance cooperation among the theological seminaries of the denomination.

g) To relate the councils and agencies of the PC(USA), particularly those which have responsibilities for theology and worship, for education, for candidacy, and for leadership development for pastors and church members.

h) To maintain appropriate relationships with those responsible for theological education in other branches of the church catholic.

i) To receive and act upon requests and recommendations from the church.

j) To receive and review reports from the theological seminaries appropriate to the work of the committee;

k) To identify the issues, needs, and opportunities of the seminaries, individually and corporately, and, where appropriate, address these as requests and recommendations to the church;

l) To authorize use of Theological Education Fund monies, prepare an appropriate formula for disbursements to the theological seminaries of the PC(USA), and to advocate for financial support of the seminaries.

m) To maintain relations with educational and ecumenical associations which share common concerns with the committee.

n) To serve as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological seminaries other than those of the PC (USA).

o) To recommend to the General Assembly those theological seminaries which shall qualify as members of the Committee on Theological Education.

C. Other Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Related Committees

The following committees have reporting relationships established by the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. If the Chairperson of one of these committees wishes to address a Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Committee, he or she may request time from the Chair of the committee prior to the meeting. Ordinarily, such requests will be granted subject to available time on the docket, and the relevance of the request.

1) Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI)

The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) is responsible for implementing General Assembly policy related to mission responsibility through investment. MRTI assists the church at all levels to utilize its investments as key instruments to promote its mission goals in society. MRTI provides leadership for effective engagement of the private sector in partnership with ecumenical colleagues in the United States, and in collaboration with indigenous churches, ecumenical bodies and local groups in other nations.

a) Budget

The budget for MRTI is developed by staff and proposed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for approval by the General Assembly.
b) Composition

MRTI is composed of:

- two elected representatives named by each of its member agencies:
  - Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,
  - Board of Pensions and
  - Presbyterian Church(USA) Foundation/New Covenant Trust Company

- one representative each from the elected membership of:
  - the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy,
  - the Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns and
  - the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns.

In addition, the General Assembly elects three At-Large members bringing MRTI’s total membership to 12 persons.

c) Relation to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly, this committee reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Committee for Outreach to the World.

d) Staffing Relationship and Lodgment

Staffing for MRTI is provided by Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry Area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

e) Assigned Functions:

MRTI’s primary function is to develop and implement a coordinated strategy for the General Assembly’s Investment Policies and Guidelines for the General Assembly and for subsequent General Assembly action related to investment or divestment. Specific assigned functions include:

i. recommend, as needed, revisions or additions to the General Assembly’s Investment Policies and Guidelines (for use by the Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation, Inc., New Covenant Trust Company; and other fiduciaries within the church family) designed to reach mission goals of the General Assembly,

ii. recommend to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board specific actions on the exercise of investor rights and responsibilities such as proxy voting, initial filing of shareholder resolutions, and joining with other shareholders in litigation calling for regulatory oversight or other forms of redress,

iii. recommend to appropriate ministry areas or related bodies, middle governing bodies, institutions and communicant members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) ways and means to carry out General Assembly investment policies respecting social concerns, including the voting of proxies on shareholder resolutions,

iv. appoint representatives to ecumenical organizations through which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to advance its work in the area of mission responsibility through investments, and

v. assist Compassion, Peace and Justice in coordinating corporate responsibility concerns with mission program and strategies on economic and social justice.

2) Mission Development Resources Committee (MDRC)

The Mission Development Resources Committee makes decisions on Church Loans, Walton Awards for New Church Development and Mission Program Grants (New Church Development, Congregational Transformation and Specialized Ministries). Nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly, this committee reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Committee to Nurture the Body.
a) Budget

MDRC provides input on the work of the Mission Program Grants, Church Loans and the Sam and Helen R. Walton Award. The budget for these items is included in the Racial Ethnic and Women’s ministry area.

b) Staff Relationships and Lodgment

The Office of Mission Program Grants staff that is responsible for planning, coordinating, and supporting the work of MDRC reports to the Director of Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministry Area or designee.

c) Search Procedures for Staff

The Associate and Administrative Assistant staff members within the Office of Mission Program Grants shall be appointed by the director of Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministry Area in accordance with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Employee Handbook.

d) Relation to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

MDRC reports to the Committee to Nurture the Body, typically in the form of action items, information reports and changes to the MDRC Manual of Administrative Operations.

e) Assigned Functions

The primary focus of the MDRC is to respond faithfully to the church growth commitment of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This work is conducted in partnership with synods and presbyteries engaged in church growth mission through the allocation of grants and loans. The MDRC implements its work through the following functions:

i Allocating grants for new church development, new worshiping communities, and presbytery support for continual congregational transformation;

ii Originating and overseeing the payment and repayment of Presbyterian Mission Agency loans to new and existing congregations for site acquisition, building construction, renovation, and other related projects;

iii Recommending policies, procedures and guidelines that govern the grant and church loan programs;

iv Interpreting the purpose and availability of the grant and church loan programs to the whole church, instilling hope for future ministry to keep the church alive and growing;

v Responding in partnership with mid councils to new and emerging ministries;

vi Reviewing and recommending to the Presbyterian Mission Agency new congregation projects nominated to receive Sam & Helen R. Walton Awards.

3) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee (PDAAC)

a) Purpose

The purpose of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee is to review the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and give policy advice. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance “is a ministry of relief and response to national and international disasters, aid to refugees and displaced persons, refugee resettlement and efforts toward development.” This ministry is “carried out through ecumenical partnerships, related church agencies, mid councils, and congregations.” Nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly. This committee reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Committee for Outreach to the World.

b) Budget

The budget for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is developed by staff and proposed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for approval by the General Assembly.
c) Composition

The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee is comprised of seven (7) At-Large members, nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly. Members serve a one four-year term and are eligible for consideration to one additional term.

d) Accountability

This committee reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Committee for Outreach to the World.

e) Staff Accountability and Lodgment

Staff responsible for planning and coordinating the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance are appointed by and accountable to the Director of the Compassion, Peace & Justice Ministry Area.

f) Assigned Functions

i. Assist in setting strategic program direction.

ii. Contribute knowledge and expertise in disaster relief.

iii. Ensure that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is strategically aligned with the priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

iv. Promote and interpret the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering.

v. Provide advice concerning expenditure of designated funds over $500,000 in response to large scale disasters.

vi. Provide input on the development of an annual budget.

vii. Work with staff to develop and implement communication and fund-raising strategies.

4) Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee (PHPAC)

a. Purpose

The purpose of the Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee is to guide the church’s response to hunger and its underlying causes.

b. Budget

The budget for the Presbyterian Hunger Program is developed by staff and proposed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for approval by the General Assembly.

c. Staff Relationships and Lodgment

Staff responsible for planning and coordinating the work of the Presbyterian Hunger Program are appointed by and accountable to the Director of Compassion, Peace and Justice.

d. Relation to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly, this committee reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Committee for Outreach to the World, typically in the form of minutes and changes to the PHP Advisory Committee Operating Guidelines.

e. Assigned Functions

The committee carries out the following tasks:

i. Recommend Presbyterian Hunger Program operating guidelines in concordance with PMA goals and work plan.

ii. Recommend policies, procedures and guidelines that govern the Presbyterian Hunger Program grant process.
iii. Review grant requests and make funding (grant) decisions within the approved guidelines.

iv. Promote the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering through highlighting the work of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

v. Promote Presbyterian Hunger Program initiatives in congregations and presbyteries.

vi. Suggest the development of programs and strategies for implementing the “Common Affirmation on Global Hunger,” and other General Assembly policies related to hunger and poverty.

5) Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (PCSDOP)

The National Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People provides the opportunity for the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and non-members to help establish partnerships with economically poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people in the United States and around the world, which helps them to develop toward their own potential, self-determination, and human dignity. (People who are not Presbyterian may be nominated, elected, and serve). The National Committee shares this ministry with mid council committees, as the focal point of the Church’s efforts to promote the self-development concept and cause.

a. Direction & Accountability

The Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People (PCSDOP) receives direction for its work through the Mission Work Plan, and the Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People Manual of Operations, which are approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board through the Board’s Committee for Outreach to the World.

b. Staff Accountability and Lodgment

Staff responsible for planning and coordinating work of the committee shall be appointed by the Director of the Compassion Peace & Justice Ministry in consultation with the Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People (PCSDOP). When seeking a new coordinator for SDOP, an interview team will be identified in consultation with the PCSDOP Steering Committee. At least two members of the PCSDOP shall serve as a part of the interview team. The staff shall be lodged within the Compassion Peace & Justice Ministry and be directly accountable to the Director of the Compassion Peace & Justice Ministry.

c. Assigned Functions (to be performed with accountability to the Committee for Outreach to the World and/or the Compassion Peace and Justice Ministry area, and subject to available funds).

i. SDOP shall be responsible for creating and maintaining its own Manual of Operations.

ii. SDOP shall provide program, strategy and oversight for the church’s mission of self-development with poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people.

iii. SDOP will implement the criteria and guidelines for funding local projects.

iv. SDOP will be responsible for receiving, reviewing and approving/rejecting local project proposals.

v. SDOP will be responsible for training and certifying local SDOP committees.

vi. SDOP will work in collaboration with PDA and PHP to carry out joint projects consistent with the mandate of each committee.

vii. Work cooperatively with ecumenical partners in carrying out SDOP’s mandate.

viii. Educate the church on the condition and status of poor and oppressed communities and train the church in theological issues related to poverty.

ix. Promote and Interpret the OGHS offering within the church at both the congregational and mid-council levels.

6) United States Advisory Committee (USAC) of the Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP)

The Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP) is an endowed ecumenical ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and part of the World Mission ministry area that supports ongoing programs benefitting Armenians.
in need in Armenia, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and Jerusalem. JMP has a U.S. Advisory Committee (USAC) composed of three individuals of Armenian descent, and two who are members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff. The USAC is mandated by the will of Mr. Vartan H. Jinishian. USAC’s function is to give advice and guidance, especially as to the amount and direction of the appropriations to effectuate Mr. Jinishian’s wishes. The USAC operates pursuant to the terms of Mr. Jinishian’s will and the Guidelines for the Administration of the Jinishian Memorial Program (Guidelines) then in effect. The Guidelines are approved by the USAC and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

D. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

(This relationship is described in a separate document.)

E. Other Policies

1. Open Meeting Policy for business gatherings

   Open Meeting Policy
   Approved by the 209th General Assembly (1997)
   Amended by 218th General Assembly (2008)

   a. The work of the church is strengthened when it is done in a spirit of openness and trust. Church members have a basic right to know about the work done and the decisions made by entities within the church. Church leaders have a basic responsibility to honor that right by conducting their business with a spirit of openness and vulnerability to public scrutiny. Therefore, open meetings shall be the norm for all such entities.

   b. It is the policy of the General Assembly; the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the entities and work groups related to them, that their meetings shall be open to all interested persons. A separate policy exists for governing non-business gatherings. Documents being considered at such meetings shall be available to interested persons at the meeting.

   c. In certain circumstances, when the confidentiality of the subject matter is impeding the open work of the group, its meetings may be closed. These requirements apply:

      1) Subjects dealt with must be limited to property negotiation, personnel, civil and criminal litigation, including cases under the Rules of Discipline, or security.

      2) Closed meetings may be authorized only after serious consideration and by a majority vote of the members present. Such closure must be limited in time and scope to matters in 3(a) above.

      3) In closed meetings, only voting members and other persons invited by the group to serve it are to be present.

      4) The reason(s) for closing must be announced before closure and also must be recorded in the minutes.

      5) The decisions reached shall be recorded in the minutes, and shall be made public as soon as possible following the end of the closed meeting.

   d. Since staff groups have neither authority nor responsibility for establishing policy; their meetings are not subject to these provisions. This does not preclude them from opening their meetings.

   e. The provisions of this policy shall apply to visitors and to representatives of both church and public media, including print, electronic and photographic journalists.

   f. All the provisions of this policy are to be applied equitably to all persons and groups.

   g. The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is responsible for resolving questions relating to the application and interpretation of the open meeting policy.

   A separate policy exists to govern non-business gatherings.

   Note: The 218th General Assembly (2008) directed the entities subject to the PC(USA) Open Meeting Policy to post the dates, times, and locations of their open meetings on the PC(USA) calendar Web page within a reasonable time of making such plans.

2. Media and Visitor Policy for Non-Business gatherings
Representatives of the media and visitors are welcome at non-business gatherings of groups structurally related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Many non-business gatherings are intended to provide participants with the opportunity to openly examine personal and corporate issues of faith and life. Media representatives and visitors are asked to honor this atmosphere of openness and acceptance. If there is a business session within a non-business gathering, the open meeting policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall apply during that session.

The following policy pertains to non-business gatherings of groups structurally related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

a. Media representatives will register as such, including the name of the publication or media outlet for which they are acting as a media representative. Media representatives and visitors should wear name tags identifying themselves as such during all portions of the gathering.

b. Media representatives will not be required to pay registration fees. They will be responsible for their own accommodations, meals, and transportation. Visitors will register and be required to pay appropriate fees.

c. Media representatives are observers and may not speak or actively participate in any portion of the gathering unless invited.

d. All plenary sessions are open.

e. All non-plenary sessions are also open. Media representatives and visitors are asked to identify themselves as such at the beginning of non-plenary sessions. In small groups whose purpose is the sharing of personal issues of faith and life, the discussion may be closed to media representatives and visitors at the choice of the small group participants.

f. The provisions of this policy shall apply to visitors and representatives of both church and public media, including print, electronic, and photographic journalists.

g. All the provisions of this policy are to be applied equitably to all persons and groups.

h. The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is responsible for resolving questions relating to the application and interpretation of this policy.


3. Gift Acceptance Policy
4. Reserve Policy
5. Sexual Misconduct Policy and its Procedures
6. Standards of Ethical Conduct
7. Five to One Salary Ratio for PMA employees
9. Guidelines for Reimbursement for PMA Elected Members and Staff
10. Criteria and Standards Applied by the General Assembly Council When It Considers Proposals for New Corporations
11. Covenant of Understanding
10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

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## 2016 Unrestricted

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### Support from Congregations and Presbyteries

- **Support from Congregations**: $5,125,000 (62.7% of 2015 Budget)
- **Special Offerings**:
  - Christmas Joy: $3,765,456 (19.0% of 2015)
  - One Great Hour of Sharing: $6,255,600 (18.6% of 2015)
  - Peace and Global Witness: $971,214 (14.6% of 2015)
  - Special Offering Catalogs (SO projects): $459,319 (67.9% of 2015)
  - Pentecost: $464,313 (13.6% of 2015)
- **Witness**: $3,150 (82.5% of 2015)

### Subtotal Special Offerings

- **Total Contributions**: $5,625,000 (6.3% of 2015 Budget)

### Additional Forms of Giving

- **Presbyterian Women**: $475,940 (86.0% of 2015 Budget)
- **Gifts and Bequests**: $400,000 (82.9% of 2015 Budget)
- **Grants from Other Foundations**: $480,000 (92.5% of 2015 Budget)

### Endowments, Interest, and Dividends

- **Endowment Income**:
  - Held by the Foundation: $4,940,100 (61.7% of 2015 Budget)
  - Extra Commitment: $3,845,067 (12.1% of 2015)
  - Special Missionary Support: $1,200,000 (12.1% of 2015)
  - Hunger: $480,000 (12.1% of 2015)
- **Total Endowments, Interest, Div., & Od**: $7,369,042 (7.3% of 2015 Budget)

### Total Receipts

- **Total Receipts**: $12,964,842 (11.3% of 2015 Budget)

### Expenses

- **Policy Administration & Board Support**: $728,033 (45.3% of 2015 Budget)
- **Mission Resources**: $154,033 (45.0% of 2015 Budget)
- **Theology, Formation & Evangelism**: $4,283,832 (26.9% of 2015 Budget)
- **Compassion, Peace and Justice**: $1,978,994 (20.9% of 2015 Budget)
- **World Mission**: $6,407,377 (35.5% of 2015 Budget)
- **Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries**: $2,659,078 (26.7% of 2015 Budget)
- **Shared Services**: $2,127,666 (26.3% of 2015 Budget)
- **Foundation BGE Transactions**: $480,000 (12.1% of 2015 Budget)
- **Ghost Ranch Uncollectible Expense**: $3,168,467 (12.1% of 2015 Budget)
- **Stony Point Uncollectible Expense**: $0 (100.0% of 2015 Budget)
- **Other**: $1,052 (26.4% of 2015 Budget)

### Total Expenses

- **Total Expenses**: $16,230,517 (14.7% of 2015 Budget)

### Change in Net Assets

- **Change in net assets**: $(3,553,415) (86.4% of 2015 Budget)
### Support from Congregations and Presbyteries

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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal Total Contributions</td>
<td>$5,088,971</td>
<td>$5,357,629</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowments, Interest and Dividends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from endowment funds</td>
<td>$5,483,828</td>
<td>$6,206,215</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>held by the Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Income &amp; gifts held by Foundation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from investments</td>
<td>$599,099</td>
<td>$2,339,078</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from funds held by others</td>
<td>$1,126,000</td>
<td>$1,151,160</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$7,166,828</td>
<td>$9,734,141</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Endowments, Interest, Divs. &amp; Other</td>
<td>$12,777,994</td>
<td>$15,271,378</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Receipts</td>
<td>$45,885,596</td>
<td>$65,746,327</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$58,063,398</td>
<td>$81,388,000</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director Office</td>
<td>$487,649</td>
<td>$456,666</td>
<td>(4.6%)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Minister Resources</td>
<td>$69,813</td>
<td>$225,142</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
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<td>Theology, Formation &amp; Evangelism</td>
<td>$3,087,454</td>
<td>$2,955,736</td>
<td>(3.9%)</td>
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<td>Compassion, Peace &amp; Justice</td>
<td>$1,505,649</td>
<td>$1,357,549</td>
<td>(9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Mission</td>
<td>$4,807,220</td>
<td>$4,609,661</td>
<td>(4.1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Ethnic &amp; Women's Ministries</td>
<td>$1,940,176</td>
<td>$1,357,988</td>
<td>(19.1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared Services</td>
<td>$2,230,880</td>
<td>$1,765,153</td>
<td>(20.9%)</td>
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<td>Santa Fe Disposal Cost* $40,341 in 2016 expense</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$846,000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Foundation BCE Transition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stock Point Discount Coverage</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$1,488,376</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghost Ranch Unallocated Grounds</td>
<td>$1,368,467</td>
<td>$1,648,467</td>
<td>(100.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Pensions</td>
<td>$1,480,005</td>
<td>$1,422,719</td>
<td>(9.9%)</td>
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<td>Shared Expenses</td>
<td>$358,818</td>
<td>$255,705</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>$255,705</td>
<td>$255,705</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$12,002,956</td>
<td>$12,339,684</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in net assets</td>
<td>$174,843</td>
<td>$2,532,162</td>
<td>1577.0%</td>
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</table>
### Revenue, gains and other support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregations</td>
<td>$4,330,663</td>
<td>$3,195,943</td>
<td>$7,526,606</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Women</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$370,602</td>
<td>$370,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifts and bequests</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>285,000</td>
<td>$535,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special offerings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Joy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,755,829</td>
<td>$2,755,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Great Hour of Sharing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,183,785</td>
<td>$5,183,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Global Witness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>892,493</td>
<td>$892,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>603,700</td>
<td>$603,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Offerings Catalog</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>$800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific appeals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency and Disaster Relief</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,700,000</td>
<td>$1,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Missionary Support</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>508,400</td>
<td>$508,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>430,000</td>
<td>$430,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Education Fund</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Contributions</td>
<td>4,580,663</td>
<td>25,505,846</td>
<td>30,086,509</td>
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<td>Income from endowment funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>held by the Foundation</td>
<td>5,432,842</td>
<td>6,674,397</td>
<td>$12,107,239</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income and New Gifts held by the Foundation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from investments</td>
<td>509,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>$609,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from funds held by others</td>
<td>1,126,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,126,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubbard Press</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,925</td>
<td>$100,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales of resources</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>987,000</td>
<td>$987,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,112,516</td>
<td>$9,112,516</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income from endowment funds</td>
<td>7,117,842</td>
<td>18,924,830</td>
<td>26,042,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net revenue, gains, and other support</td>
<td>11,698,505</td>
<td>44,430,684</td>
<td>$56,129,189</td>
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<td>Reserves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Undesignated</td>
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<td>881,061</td>
<td>$1,055,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency and Disaster Relief</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>$6,788,236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowment Funds held by Foundation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,107,700</td>
<td>3,107,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,174,449</td>
<td>1,174,449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Reserves</td>
<td>11,873,348</td>
<td>56,382,130</td>
<td>68,255,478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>438,896</td>
<td>1,613,656</td>
<td>2,052,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Resources</td>
<td>93,312</td>
<td>991,885</td>
<td>1,085,197</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mission Engagement and Support</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43,107</td>
<td>43,107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theology, Formation and Evangelism</td>
<td>2,849,242</td>
<td>6,714,204</td>
<td>9,563,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion, Peace and Justice</td>
<td>1,584,195</td>
<td>16,487,296</td>
<td>18,071,491</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Mission</td>
<td>4,885,950</td>
<td>19,252,840</td>
<td>24,138,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries</td>
<td>2,016,954</td>
<td>6,546,609</td>
<td>8,563,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Expense</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,494,966</td>
<td>1,494,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,423,312</td>
<td>1,423,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4,799</td>
<td>1,814,255</td>
<td>1,819,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>11,873,348</td>
<td>56,382,130</td>
<td>68,255,478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in net assets: $ - $ - $ -
## Revenue, gains and other support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congregations</td>
<td>$ 5,200,000</td>
<td>$ 4,000,000</td>
<td>$ 9,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Women</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>310,488</td>
<td>310,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and bequests</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>285,000</td>
<td>535,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special offerings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Great Hour of Sharing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,700,000</td>
<td>5,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Global Witness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Offerings Catalog</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>850,000</td>
<td>850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific appeals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency and Disaster Relief</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,850,000</td>
<td>2,850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Commitment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Missionary Support</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Education Fund</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Contributions</strong></td>
<td>$ 5,450,000</td>
<td>$ 26,245,488</td>
<td>$ 31,695,488</td>
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<td>Income from endowment funds</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>held by the Foundation</td>
<td>$ 5,400,000</td>
<td>$ 7,274,000</td>
<td>$ 12,674,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income and New Gifts held by the Foundation</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from investments</td>
<td>735,000</td>
<td>275,000</td>
<td>1,010,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from funds held by others</td>
<td>1,625,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,625,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubbard Press</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,925</td>
<td>100,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales of resources</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>922,766</td>
<td>922,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11,708,453</td>
<td>11,708,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$ 7,810,000</td>
<td>$ 22,291,144</td>
<td>$ 30,101,144</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net revenue, gains, and other support</strong></td>
<td>$ 13,260,000</td>
<td>$ 48,536,632</td>
<td>$ 61,796,632</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>6,439</td>
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<td>2,080,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mission Resources</td>
<td>58,577</td>
<td>1,137,229</td>
<td>1,195,806</td>
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<td>Mission Engagement and Support</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>26,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology, Formation and Evangelism</td>
<td>3,166,385</td>
<td>10,002,238</td>
<td>13,168,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion, Peace and Justice</td>
<td>1,685,727</td>
<td>15,130,991</td>
<td>16,816,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Mission</td>
<td>6,027,018</td>
<td>18,483,044</td>
<td>24,510,062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries</td>
<td>2,299,235</td>
<td>6,447,474</td>
<td>8,746,709</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared Expense</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,360,545</td>
<td>1,360,545</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared Services</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1,338,297</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>$ 58,329,237</td>
<td>$ 71,589,237</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Change in net assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in net assets</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Revenue, gains and other support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congregations</td>
<td>$5,200,000</td>
<td>$4,000,000</td>
<td>$9,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Women</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>312,142</td>
<td>312,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and bequests</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>285,000</td>
<td>535,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special offerings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Joy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,700,000</td>
<td>5,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Global Witness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Offerings Catalog</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>850,000</td>
<td>850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific appeals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,850,000</td>
<td>2,850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency and Disaster Relief</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>7,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Commitment</td>
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<td>600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Missionary Support</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Education Fund</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Contributions</td>
<td>5,450,000</td>
<td>26,247,142</td>
<td>31,697,142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Income from endowment funds held by the Foundation
- 5,400,000
- 7,304,000
- 12,704,000

### Income and New Gifts held by the Foundation
- 1,625,000
- 1,010,000
- 1,625,000

### Income from investments
- 50,000
- 50,925
- 100,925

### Services of resources
- 882,630
- 882,630

### Other
- 333,023
- 333,023

### Total Expenses
- 7,810,000
- 20,598,975
- 28,408,975

### Net revenue, gains, and other support
- 13,260,000
- 46,846,117
- 60,106,117

### Reserves
- Unrestricted Undesignated
- Emergency and Disaster Relief
- Endowment Funds held by Foundation
- Other

### Total revenue, gains, and other support
- 13,260,000
- 57,271,957
- 70,531,957

### Expenses

| Executive Director | 162,716 | 1,989,942 | 2,152,658 |
| Mission Resources | 119,314 | 1,177,265 | 1,296,579 |
| Mission Engagement and Support | - | 26,677 | 26,677 |
| Theology, Formation and Evangelism | 3,133,463 | 7,969,850 | 11,103,313 |
| Compassion, Peace and Justice | 1,825,431 | 15,009,325 | 16,834,756 |
| World Mission | 5,698,191 | 19,432,436 | 25,130,627 |
| Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries | 2,299,414 | 6,613,667 | 8,913,081 |
| Shared Expense | - | 1,442,627 | 1,442,627 |
| Shared Services | - | 1,349,192 | 1,349,192 |
| Other | 21,471 | 2,320,976 | 2,342,447 |

### Total Expenses
- 13,260,000
- 57,271,957
- 70,531,957

### Change in net assets
- $ - $ - $ -
## Capital Reserve Fund and Capital Expenditure Plan as of March 31, 2018

### INVESTMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INVESTMENTS</th>
<th>COMMITMENTS</th>
<th>COMBINED TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance as of January 1, 2018</td>
<td>3,386,477</td>
<td>(504,001)</td>
<td>2,882,476</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earnings/(loss)</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement reserve</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New allocations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of allocations</td>
<td>(79,816)</td>
<td>79,816</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cancellation of allocation</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>(793)</td>
<td>(793)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration expenses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(22,527)</td>
<td>(22,527)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Decrease) YTD</td>
<td>(78,801)</td>
<td>56,495</td>
<td>(22,306)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance as of March 31, 2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,307,676</strong></td>
<td><strong>(447,506)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,860,170</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2018 Projected Additions

- Camera System Upgrade: $25,000
- Furniture Replacement: $323,695
- Desk Chair Replacement: $221,000
- Energy Management System Upgrade: $250,000
- Roof Flashing Repair and Coating: $9,500
- HVAC Replacement: $190,000
- Restroom Remodel: $87,500
- Copier Replacement: $162,500
- Black and White Copier: $60,000
- Inserter & Folder: $17,490
- Color Copier: $75,000
- Crown Fork Lift: $25,000
- Shipping Software: $5,000
- Domain Servers: $20,000
- SQL Server License: $35,000

**Total 1 - 2018 Projected Allocations:** $1,506,685

### 2019 Projected Additions

- Energy Management System Upgrade: $250,000
- HVAC Replacement: $190,000
- Roof Repair: $250,000
- Skylight Roof Repair: $118,300
- Copier Replacement: $118,000
- Website Development: $300,000
- Van: $25,000
- OSX Mac Server ($10k) & CTRESXEXT Server ($12k) Replacements: $22,000
- CAT5 Replacement: $150,000
- Citrix Environment Replacement: $20,000

**Total 2 - 2019 Projected Allocations:** $870,695

### 2020 Projected Additions

- Energy Management: $250,000
- HVAC Replacement: $250,000
- Roof Repair: $250,000
- Skylight Roof Repair: $118,300
- Copier Replacement: $118,000
- Website Development: $300,000
- Van: $25,000
- OSX Mac Server ($10k) & CTRESXEXT Server ($12k) Replacements: $22,000
- CAT5 Replacement: $150,000
- Citrix Environment Replacement: $20,000

**Total 3 - 2020 Projected Allocations:** $1,443,300

### BOARD DESIGNATED SUMMARY

- Camera System Upgrade: $25,000
- Furniture Replacement: $323,695
- Desk Chair Replacement: $221,000
- Energy Management System Upgrade: $250,000
- HVAC Replacement: $190,000
- Roof Flashing Repair and Coating: $9,500
- Restroom Remodel: $87,500
- Copier Replacement: $162,500
- Black and White Copier: $60,000
- Inserter & Folder: $17,490
- Color Copier: $75,000
- Crown Fork Lift: $25,000
- Shipping Software: $5,000
- Domain Servers: $20,000
- SQL Server License: $35,000

**Total 1 - 2018 Projected Allocations:** $1,506,685

- Energy Management System Upgrade: $250,000
- HVAC Replacement: $190,000
- Roof Repair: $250,000
- Skylight Roof Repair: $118,300
- Copier Replacement: $118,000
- Website Development: $300,000
- Van: $25,000
- OSX Mac Server ($10k) & CTRESXEXT Server ($12k) Replacements: $22,000
- CAT5 Replacement: $150,000
- Citrix Environment Replacement: $20,000

**Total 2 - 2019 Projected Allocations:** $870,695

- Energy Management: $250,000
- HVAC Replacement: $250,000
- Roof Repair: $250,000
- Skylight Roof Repair: $118,300
- Copier Replacement: $118,000
- Website Development: $300,000
- Van: $25,000
- OSX Mac Server ($10k) & CTRESXEXT Server ($12k) Replacements: $22,000
- CAT5 Replacement: $150,000
- Citrix Environment Replacement: $20,000

**Total 3 - 2020 Projected Allocations:** $1,443,300

**Total Projected Balance as of December 31, 2020:** $5,597,454

**Total Projected Additions:** $679,778

**Total Projected Allocations:** $(1,506,685)

**Total Combined:** $2,860,170
### PC USA, A Corp.

**Unrestricted, Undesignated Net Assets**  
**March 31, 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Mission Agency</td>
<td>5,697,605</td>
<td>6,844,338</td>
<td>12,541,943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less: Underwater Endowments</td>
<td>(8,020,422)</td>
<td>3,643,423</td>
<td>(4,376,999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Per Audited Financial Statements</td>
<td>(2,322,817)</td>
<td>10,487,761</td>
<td>8,164,944</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita</td>
<td>5,725,657</td>
<td>768,601</td>
<td>6,494,258</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$3,402,840</td>
<td>$11,256,362</td>
<td>$14,659,202</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Unrestricted, Designated Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Balance January 1, 2017</th>
<th>Net Change</th>
<th>Balance December 31, 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Designated Funds (detail below)</td>
<td>5,030,971</td>
<td>(4,111,692)</td>
<td>919,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic Loan Fund</td>
<td>223,155</td>
<td>(124,247)</td>
<td>98,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Reserves</td>
<td>199,891</td>
<td>101,095</td>
<td>300,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Investment</td>
<td>4,706,593</td>
<td>70,734</td>
<td>4,777,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Recovery</td>
<td>10,375</td>
<td>2,695,891</td>
<td>2,706,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student In Fees &amp; National Presbyterian College Scholarship</td>
<td>5,388</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,388</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>326,870</td>
<td>(15,085)</td>
<td>311,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNC Credit Cards - Rebates</td>
<td>44,747</td>
<td>(18,859)</td>
<td>25,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Rent at UN</td>
<td>51,887</td>
<td>(3,219)</td>
<td>48,668</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific Property Fund</td>
<td>753,331</td>
<td>32,597</td>
<td>785,928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Insurance Fund</td>
<td>6,102,566</td>
<td>660,825</td>
<td>6,763,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and Equipment Fund</td>
<td>10,639,085</td>
<td>(443,058)</td>
<td>10,196,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>(51,778)</td>
<td>(22,801)</td>
<td>(74,579)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Triennium</td>
<td>3,628</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,628</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hubbard Press</td>
<td>2,342,383</td>
<td>103,763</td>
<td>2,446,146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oiko CPJ Investment</td>
<td>23,916</td>
<td>(7,835)</td>
<td>16,081</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oiko SDOP Investment</td>
<td>462,196</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>462,196</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oiko CPJ Investment</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe/Plaza Property and Equipment Fund</td>
<td>387,471</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>387,471</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stony Point Unrestricted Designated</td>
<td>575,670</td>
<td>82,863</td>
<td>658,533</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stony Point Property and Equipment Fund</td>
<td>1,600,899</td>
<td>(59,870)</td>
<td>1,541,029</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita Unrestricted Designated</td>
<td>1,124,733</td>
<td>(140,568)</td>
<td>984,165</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita Property and Equipment Fund</td>
<td>5,599</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,599</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Unrestricted Designated</td>
<td>2,213,043</td>
<td>(1,196)</td>
<td>2,211,847</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Plant Fund</td>
<td>674,579</td>
<td>(130,178)</td>
<td>544,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Loans Funds (CLS05)</td>
<td>1,309,581</td>
<td>(37,603)</td>
<td>1,271,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Loans Funds (CLS06)</td>
<td>15,559,665</td>
<td>381,871</td>
<td>15,941,536</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>(268,772)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(268,772)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 54,507,672</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ (986,572)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 53,521,100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Board Designated Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amounts Allocated for 2016 Budget</th>
<th>Amounts Allocated for 2018 Budget (BOP Medical Dues Add'l)</th>
<th>Amounts Allocated for 2018 Budget (BOP Medical Dues Add'l)</th>
<th>Amounts Allocated for 2018 Budget (BOP Medical Dues Add'l)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amounts Allocated for 2016 Budget</td>
<td>3,553,414</td>
<td>(3,553,414)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts Allocated for 2018 Budget (BOP Medical Dues Add'l)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45,652</td>
<td>45,652</td>
<td>45,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Holmes College</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Abuse Review Panel</td>
<td>68,023</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>68,023</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dream Fund</td>
<td>70,835</td>
<td>(65,327)</td>
<td>5,508</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Mission Contingency Expense</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghost Ranch NGRF Severance</td>
<td>14,222</td>
<td>(14,126)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott Estate Gift</td>
<td>824,477</td>
<td>(824,477)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Board Designated Funds</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 5,030,971</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ (4,111,692)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 919,279</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 919,279</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Gifts</td>
<td>659,553</td>
<td>(166,919)</td>
<td>492,634</td>
<td>34,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMS Funds</td>
<td>68,870,985</td>
<td>14,268,557</td>
<td>83,139,542</td>
<td>3,581,273</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Endowments</td>
<td>24,031,052</td>
<td>11,622,595</td>
<td>35,653,647</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Rest Investment</td>
<td>27,566,936</td>
<td>2,618,783</td>
<td>30,185,719</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. T. Young Investment</td>
<td>266,541</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>267,365</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. T. Young Investment</td>
<td>225,056</td>
<td>(827)</td>
<td>224,229</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Gibson Investment</td>
<td>498,042</td>
<td>(3,414)</td>
<td>494,628</td>
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<td>TWE Fund for Pastoral Formation SEPINV 6</td>
<td>408,897</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>409,809</td>
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<td>Life Income Plan</td>
<td>1,240,860</td>
<td>(139,687)</td>
<td>1,101,173</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Lilly Foundation Grants</td>
<td>67,640</td>
<td>(201)</td>
<td>67,439</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas Joy Offering (CJO)</td>
<td>564,932</td>
<td>325,980</td>
<td>890,912</td>
<td>41,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>68,329</td>
<td>(54,311)</td>
<td>14,018</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>MJHH Mission Initiative</td>
<td>8,928</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>9,644</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>948,583</td>
<td>264,239</td>
<td>1,212,822</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>ECO Contribution</td>
<td>10,598,310</td>
<td>333,333</td>
<td>10,931,643</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<td>1% Theological Education Fund</td>
<td>19,608</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>20,026</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validated Mission</td>
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<td>(3,300)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Women Restricted Gifts/Grants</td>
<td>390,504</td>
<td>(10,886)</td>
<td>379,618</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joslin Gift</td>
<td>25,922</td>
<td>59,292</td>
<td>85,214</td>
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<td>Q Funds</td>
<td>855,288</td>
<td>5,662,887</td>
<td>6,518,175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speer TR SPR316</td>
<td>17,795</td>
<td>(17,795)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speer TR SPR384</td>
<td>44,920</td>
<td>(40,000)</td>
<td>4,920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speer TR SPR374</td>
<td>17,600</td>
<td>(8,000)</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directed Mission Support</td>
<td>2,084,370</td>
<td>1,050,608</td>
<td>3,134,978</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Special Missionary Support</td>
<td>196,409</td>
<td>52,002</td>
<td>248,411</td>
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<td>Special Offering</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peace &amp; Global Witness Offering</td>
<td>705,768</td>
<td>(22,987)</td>
<td>682,781</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jinishian Fund</td>
<td>19,528,534</td>
<td>2,836,736</td>
<td>22,365,270</td>
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<td>Presbyterian Disaster Relief</td>
<td>11,830,560</td>
<td>7,065,597</td>
<td>18,896,157</td>
<td>413,650</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDOP Self-Development of People</td>
<td>706,907</td>
<td>600,754</td>
<td>1,307,661</td>
<td>310,687</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Hunger Fund</td>
<td>476,283</td>
<td>182,654</td>
<td>658,937</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stony Point Conference Center</td>
<td>23,728</td>
<td>(11,792)</td>
<td>11,936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Loan Funds</td>
<td>2,665,937</td>
<td>(108,521)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita</td>
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<td>261,370</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>1,094,170</td>
<td>118,565</td>
<td>1,212,735</td>
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<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td>$ 46,476,812</td>
<td>$ 223,450,429</td>
<td>$ 4,410,610</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMS Restricted Endowments</td>
<td>82,469,444</td>
<td>1,117,121</td>
<td>83,586,565</td>
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<td>General Endowments</td>
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<td>6,746</td>
<td>96,480,453</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separately Invested - House of Rest</td>
<td>3,592</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,592</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Income Plans</td>
<td>2,799,030</td>
<td>(202,373)</td>
<td>2,596,657</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside Trusts</td>
<td>67,340,669</td>
<td>7,188,031</td>
<td>74,528,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jinishian</td>
<td>10,157,795</td>
<td>41,661</td>
<td>10,199,456</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Loan Funds</td>
<td>4,778,484</td>
<td>34,214</td>
<td>4,812,698</td>
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<td>Per Capita</td>
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<td>89,569</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>695,060</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>695,060</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$264,807,350</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,185,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>$272,992,750</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christmas Joy Offering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Pensions</td>
<td>1,489,516</td>
<td>1,385,028</td>
<td>-7.01%</td>
<td>1,247,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Ethnic Leadership Development</td>
<td>1,366,689</td>
<td>1,275,254</td>
<td>-6.69%</td>
<td>1,150,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>414,496</td>
<td>387,801</td>
<td>-6.44%</td>
<td>384,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,270,701</td>
<td>3,048,083</td>
<td>-6.81%</td>
<td>2,782,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Great Hour of Sharing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</td>
<td>1,759,699</td>
<td>1,371,783</td>
<td>-22.04%</td>
<td>1,699,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Development of People</td>
<td>1,689,084</td>
<td>1,651,587</td>
<td>-2.22%</td>
<td>1,612,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Hunger Program</td>
<td>1,912,492</td>
<td>1,741,968</td>
<td>-8.92%</td>
<td>1,796,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>637,598</td>
<td>568,104</td>
<td>-10.90%</td>
<td>529,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5,998,873</td>
<td>5,333,442</td>
<td>-11.09%</td>
<td>5,638,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peacemaking/Peace and Global Witness Offering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacemaking/Peace and Global Witness</td>
<td>491,183</td>
<td>483,177</td>
<td>-1.63%</td>
<td>369,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>381,390</td>
<td>346,401</td>
<td>-9.17%</td>
<td>336,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>872,573</td>
<td>829,578</td>
<td>-4.93%</td>
<td>706,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pentecost Offering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost Offering</td>
<td>322,702</td>
<td>412,644</td>
<td>27.87%</td>
<td>429,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>334,184</td>
<td>304,377</td>
<td>-8.92%</td>
<td>269,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>656,886</td>
<td>717,021</td>
<td>9.15%</td>
<td>698,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Offerings Catalog</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Offerings</td>
<td>261,948</td>
<td>402,201</td>
<td>53.54%</td>
<td>485,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>353,766</td>
<td>369,702</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>397,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>615,714</td>
<td>771,903</td>
<td>25.37%</td>
<td>883,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Witness Offering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness Offering</td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
<td>-1,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
<td>-1,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>11,416,473</td>
<td>10,703,177</td>
<td>-6.25%</td>
<td>10,708,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>429,159</td>
<td>324,904</td>
<td>-24.29%</td>
<td>334,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Relief</td>
<td>4,289,614</td>
<td>4,755,268</td>
<td>10.86%</td>
<td>14,547,437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

Consolidated Financial Statements

Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

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Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

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<th>Page</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Consolidated Statements of Financial Position</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Statements of Activities and Changes in Net Assets</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7 - 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplemental Information</td>
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<td>Consolidating Statement of Financial Position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidating Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets</td>
<td>31</td>
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Independent Auditor's Report

Audit Committee
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and its constituent corporations, which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as of, December 31, 2017 and the related consolidated statements of activities and changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related consolidated notes to the financial statements.

Management’s Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor’s Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.
Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation as of December 31, 2017, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matter

The financial statements of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation for the year ended December 31, 2016, before the restatement described in Note 17, were audited by another auditor whose report dated June 29, 2017, expressed an unmodified opinion on those statements.

As part of our audit of the December 31, 2017 consolidated financial statements, we also audited the adjustments described in Note 17 that were applied to restate the 2016 consolidated financial statements. In our opinion, such adjustments are appropriate and have been properly applied. We were not engaged to audit, review, or apply any procedures to the 2016 consolidated financial statements of the entity other than with respect to the adjustments and, accordingly, we do not express an opinion or any other form of assurance on the 2016 consolidated financial statements as a whole.

Cincinnati, Ohio
April 16, 2018
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Consolidated Statements of Financial Position
December 31, 2017 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Restated 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$16,128,477</td>
<td>$9,951,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in pooled Investments held by the Foundation - short-term</td>
<td>66,159,612</td>
<td>57,761,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other investments and accrued income</td>
<td>54,140,970</td>
<td>54,692,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions receivable from congregations</td>
<td>3,523,455</td>
<td>3,668,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables from related entities, net</td>
<td>4,421,206</td>
<td>3,715,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due from the Foundation church loans</td>
<td>3,609,790</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other accounts receivable</td>
<td>597,057</td>
<td>54,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgages and loans on churches and manses, including accrued interest - net</td>
<td>473,965</td>
<td>601,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories, prepaid expenses and other assets</td>
<td>1,021,742</td>
<td>1,012,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation</td>
<td>10,486,316</td>
<td>11,079,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property available for sale</td>
<td>387,471</td>
<td>387,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in pooled investments held by the Foundation - long-term</td>
<td>338,189,072</td>
<td>308,053,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Investments held by the Foundation</td>
<td>7,694,357</td>
<td>7,322,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
<td>78,226,530</td>
<td>71,380,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$585,060,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>$529,682,303</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Restated 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>$6,546,864</td>
<td>$7,964,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts received from congregations and designated for others</td>
<td>575,665</td>
<td>580,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts held for missionaries and committed for projects</td>
<td>7,170,691</td>
<td>6,477,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount due other agencies</td>
<td>5,553,609</td>
<td>5,155,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to the Foundation church loans</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,134,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>366,261</td>
<td>364,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>223,442</td>
<td>2,671,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,436,532</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,347,399</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Assets</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Restated 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated - General Mission</td>
<td>8,164,950</td>
<td>(2,322,817)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated - OGA per capita</td>
<td>6,494,258</td>
<td>5,725,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated</td>
<td>53,521,100</td>
<td>54,507,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Unrestricted</strong></td>
<td><strong>68,180,308</strong></td>
<td><strong>57,910,511</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>223,450,429</td>
<td>180,617,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently restricted</td>
<td>272,992,751</td>
<td>264,807,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>564,623,488</strong></td>
<td><strong>503,334,904</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$585,060,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>$529,682,303</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See accompanying notes.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Consolidated Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended December 31, 2017 with Comparative Totals for the Year Ended December 31, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues, Gains and Other Support</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Restated</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregations</td>
<td>$16,833,566</td>
<td>$3,895,372</td>
<td>$20,728,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts, bequests and grants</td>
<td>813,599</td>
<td>3,377,588</td>
<td>1,165,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special giving and special offering</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38,863,806</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Contributions</strong></td>
<td>17,647,165</td>
<td>46,136,766</td>
<td>1,165,528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Investment return                |      |          |      |
| Income from endowment funds      |      |          |      |
| held by the Foundation           | 2,099,153 | 2,919,081 | 19,723 | 4,947,957 | 4,316,663 |
| Income from other investments    | 3,559,681 | 231,207 | - | 3,790,888 | 2,441,455 |
| Realized gains on investments, net | 4,011,857 | 4,991,126 | 43,235 | 9,046,218 | 9,231,792 |
| Unrealized gain (losses) on investments, net | 2,371,077 | 29,247,436 | 7,480,592 | 39,899,105 | (391,820) |
| Change in value of beneficial interest in life income trusts | - | (139,687) | (202,373) | (342,060) | 67,796 |
| **Total Investment Return**      | 11,931,768 | 37,249,163 | 7,341,177 | 56,542,108 | 15,665,886 |

| Interest income from loans       | 21,693 | 24,659 | 12,367 | 58,710 | 80,271 |
| The Hubbard Press                | 1,285,374 | - | - | 1,285,374 | 1,314,101 |
| Sales of resources               | 2,486,484 | 3,720 | - | 2,490,204 | 3,468,319 |
| Program services                 | 9,099,800 | 27,815 | - | 9,127,615 | 15,259,217 |
| Other                            | 648,626 | 838 | (333,673) | 315,791 | 3,353,935 |
| **Net assets released from restrictions** | 43,140,910 | 83,442,952 | 8,185,399 | 134,769,261 | 89,632,794 |
| **Total Revenue, Gains and Other Support** | 80,107,051 | 46,476,811 | 8,185,399 | 134,769,261 | 89,632,794 |

| Expenses                          |      |          |      |
| Policy administration and board support | 1,814,848 | - | - | 1,814,848 | 2,087,886 |
| Communication and mission engagement and support | 962,630 | - | - | 962,630 | 908,699 |
| Theology, formation and evangelism | 8,546,496 | - | - | 8,546,496 | 10,734,198 |
| Compassion, peace and justice      | 13,677,782 | - | - | 13,677,782 | 13,905,922 |
| World mission                     | 18,618,843 | - | - | 18,618,843 | 21,452,527 |
| Racial, ethnic and women's ministries | 6,865,644 | - | - | 6,865,644 | 7,823,295 |
| Shared services                   | 1,623,464 | - | - | 1,623,464 | 1,682,213 |
| Office of the General Assembly    | 8,338,916 | - | - | 8,338,916 | 10,837,259 |
| Presbyterian Mission Agency       | 3,766,321 | - | - | 3,766,321 | 4,294,046 |
| Presbyterian Historical Society  | 794,832 | - | - | 794,832 | 722,840 |
| Santa Fe - Plaza Resolana (Ghost Ranch) | 864,060 | - | - | 864,060 | 5,499,959 |
| Conference center - Story Point   | 2,489,928 | - | - | 2,489,928 | 1,388,666 |
| The Hubbard Press                 | 1,006,712 | - | - | 1,006,712 | 1,006,043 |
| Related bodies and other programs | 605,986 | - | - | 605,986 | 721,653 |
| Shared Expenses                   | 1,568,332 | - | - | 1,568,332 | 3,361,623 |
| Depreciation                      | 1,648,498 | - | - | 1,648,498 | 1,876,248 |
| Other                             | 267,385 | - | - | 267,385 | 293,863 |
| **Total Expenses**                | 72,480,677 | - | - | 72,480,677 | 88,977,210 |

| Changes in Net Assets Prior to Change in Endowment Funds with Deficiencies and Transfers |      |          |      |
| Funds with Deficiencies and Transfers | 6,626,374 | 46,476,811 | 8,185,399 | 61,288,584 | 655,584 |
| Change in Endowment Funds with Deficiencies | 3,643,423 | (3,643,423) | - | - | - |
| Ghost Ranch Transfer of Operations | - | - | - | - | (9,082,788) |
| **Change in Net Assets**           | 10,269,797 | 42,833,388 | 8,185,399 | 61,288,584 | (8,427,204) |

| Net Assets at Beginning of Year, as previously reported | 42,350,847 | 182,722,821 | 275,576,490 | 500,651,158 | 598,490,581 |
| Net Assets at Beginning of Year, as Restated | 57,910,511 | 180,617,041 | 264,880,352 | 503,334,904 | 511,762,108 |

| Net Assets at End of Year         | $68,180,308 | $223,450,429 | $272,992,751 | $564,623,488 | $503,334,904 |

See accompanying notes.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation  
Consolidated Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets (Continued) 
Year Ended December 31, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues, Gains and Other Support:</th>
<th>Restated 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregations</td>
<td>$17,836,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts, bequests and grants</td>
<td>$4,032,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special giving and special offering</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Contributions</td>
<td>19,035,657</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Investment return                 |               |
| Income from endowment funds        |               |
| held by the Foundation             | 1,679,607     |
| Income from other investments      | 2,144,468     |
| Unrealized gain on investments, net| 4,156,076     |
| Unrealized gain (losses) on investments, net | 865,942 |
| Change in value of beneficial interest in life income trusts | - |
| Total Investment Return            | 8,846,093     |

| Interest income from loans         |               |
| The Hubbard Press                  | 33,782        |
| Sales of resources                 | 3,463,861     |
| Program services                   | 15,259,217    |
| Other                              | 3,526,342     |
| Total Net assets released from restrictions | 51,479,053 |

| Total Revenue, Gains and Other Support |               |
| 90,030,070 | (3,656,663) | 3,239,387 | 89,632,794 |

| Expenses |               |
| Policy administration and board support | 2,087,786 |
| Communication and mission engagement and support | 908,699 |
| Theology, formation and evangelism | 10,734,198 |
| Compassion, peace and justice | 13,905,932 |
| World mission | 21,452,527 |
| Racial, ethnic and women's ministries | 7,823,295 |
| Shared services | 1,862,213 |
| Office of the General Assembly | 10,837,259 |
| Presbyterian Mission Agency | 4,294,406 |
| Presbyterian Historical Society | 722,840 |
| Conference center - Ghost Ranch | 5,499,959 |
| Conference center - Stony Point | 1,588,666 |
| The Hubbard Press | 1,006,043 |
| Related bodies and other programs | 721,653 |
| Shared Expenses | 3,361,623 |
| Depreciation | 1,876,248 |
| Other | 293,863 |
| Total Expenses | 88,977,210 |

| Changes in Net Assets Prior to Change in Endowment |               |
| Funds with Deficiencies and Transfers | 1,052,860 |
| Change in Endowment Funds with Deficiencies | (96,784) |
| Ghost Ranch Transfer of Operations | (8,193,672) |
| Total Change in Net Assets | (7,237,596) |

| Net Assets at Beginning of Year, as Previously Reported |               |
| 49,753,798 | 185,910,231 | 272,826,552 | 508,496,581 |

| Prior period adjustment |               |
| 15,394,309 | (1,396,845) | (10,725,937) | 3,271,527 |

| Net Assets at Beginning of Year, as Restated |               |
| 65,148,107 | 184,513,386 | 262,100,615 | 511,762,108 |

| Net Assets at End of Year |               |
| $57,910,511 | $180,617,041 | $264,807,352 | $503,334,904 |

See accompanying notes.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Restated 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in net assets</td>
<td>$ 61,288,584</td>
<td>$ (8,427,204)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>1,648,498</td>
<td>1,876,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net recoveries of losses on church loans</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and revolving loan fund investment earnings restricted for long-term investment</td>
<td>(960,431)</td>
<td>(1,548,506)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realized and unrealized gains on investments, net</td>
<td>(48,145,323)</td>
<td>(8,839,972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in beneficial interests in life income funds</td>
<td>342,060</td>
<td>(1,273,503)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions to beneficial interests in life income funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss on disposal of property and equipment</td>
<td>214,585</td>
<td>434,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost Ranch transfer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,082,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in operating assets and liabilities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables from congregations</td>
<td>144,674</td>
<td>204,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to/from Foundation</td>
<td>(6,744,330)</td>
<td>5,507,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other accounts receivable</td>
<td>(348,592)</td>
<td>93,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories, prepaid expenses and other assets</td>
<td>(8,791)</td>
<td>96,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>(1,417,310)</td>
<td>2,150,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts received from congregations and other liabilities</td>
<td>(1,953,243)</td>
<td>931,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts due to other agencies</td>
<td>398,168</td>
<td>(105,949)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>(468,554)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Operating Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,460,724</strong></td>
<td><strong>(287,153)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchases of investments</td>
<td>(49,862,337)</td>
<td>(44,557,962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales of investments</td>
<td>52,325,204</td>
<td>53,967,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments received on church loans</td>
<td>127,590</td>
<td>315,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net repayments of receivables from related entities, mortgages and loans</td>
<td>(706,048)</td>
<td>(2,934,075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of property and equipment, net</td>
<td>(1,269,586)</td>
<td>(2,151,187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturities of beneficial interests in life income funds</td>
<td>140,506</td>
<td>436,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Cash Provided by Investing Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>755,329</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,075,946</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash Flows from Financing Activities</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and revolving loan fund investment earnings restricted for long-term investment</td>
<td>960,431</td>
<td>1,548,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash Provided by Financing Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>960,431</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,548,506</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents</td>
<td>6,176,484</td>
<td>6,337,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents at Beginning of Year</td>
<td>9,951,993</td>
<td>3,614,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash and Cash Equivalents at End of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 16,128,477</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,951,993</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplemental Disclosure of Cash Flow Information
Donated stock

See accompanying notes.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation  
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements  
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 1 - Organization and Nature of Operations

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), ("PCUSA") is an unincorporated body of Reformed Christians, who have agreed to conduct worship and other religious activities in conformity with the then current version of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution, which contains among other things, in its Book of Order, a Form of Government setting forth a detailed formal structure of the PCUSA. As an ecclesiastical organization, PCUSA does not exist under any federal law. Central to the structure of PCUSA is the concept of mid councils (formerly referred to as governing bodies). At the national level, the council is the General Assembly. The ecclesiastical work of the PCUSA at the General Assembly level is carried out by a number of ministry units and related agencies.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation ("PCUSA, A Corporation") is a corporate entity of the General Assembly of PCUSA, and is the principal corporation of the General Assembly. All voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are members of the Board of Directors of PCUSA, A Corporation. PCUSA, A Corporation receives and holds title and/or maintains and manages property and income at the General Assembly level related to mission activities; generally maintains and manages all real and tangible property not held for investment, including the insuring of such property; effects short-term investment of funds prior to either their disbursement or transfer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the "Foundation") for longer-term investment; acts as the disbursing agent for all funds held for the General Assembly and for other governing bodies and entities upon their request; and provides accounting, reporting, and other financial and related services as the General Assembly or Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may direct or approve.

PCUSA, A Corporation is a tax-exempt religious corporation under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

Note 2 - Basis of Presentation and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Presentation: The accompanying consolidated financial statements reflect the consolidated operations of PCUSA, A Corporation and its constituent corporations, which are presented on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The constituent corporations of PCUSA, A Corporation are the following: General Assembly Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Inc.; The Hubbard Press; Pedco, Inc.; The Presbyterian Historical Society; Presbyterian Life, Inc.; Presbyterian Publishing House of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.; Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and The Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). All intercompany transactions have been eliminated in consolidation.

For external reporting purposes, PCUSA, A Corporation's financial statements have been prepared to focus on the organization as a whole and to present balances and transactions classified in accordance with the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets and related activity are classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted as follows:

- **Unrestricted-Undesignated:** Net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions. Unrestricted undesignated net assets consist of the accumulation of certain contributions, gifts, bequests, and related income thereon, which are available for general church purposes.

A minimum reserve requirement for unrestricted undesignated net assets is monitored by the Board. If the reserve falls below the minimum reserve requirement, further action could be taken by the Board to redesignate unrestricted designated net assets.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 2 - Basis of Presentation and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

- Temporarily Restricted: net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions that may or will be met either by actions of PCUSA, A Corporation or the passage of time. Temporarily restricted net assets primarily consist of contributions and related investment income.

- Permanently Restricted: net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions to be maintained permanently by PCUSA, A Corporation. Generally, the donors of these assets permit PCUSA, A Corporation to use all or part of the income earned on related investments for general or specific purposes. Permanently restricted net assets consist primarily of endowment funds and revolving loan funds.

Cash Equivalents: For purposes of reporting cash flows, PCUSA, A Corporation considers investments with an original maturity of three months or less when purchased to be cash equivalents.

Investments: Investments are recorded at fair value. Investment transactions are recorded on a trade-date basis. Realized gains and losses are recorded using the specific identification of securities sold on funds held by the Foundation and using the historical cost of securities sold on funds held by other investment managers.

The Trustees ("Trustees") of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the "Foundation") believe that the net asset value of its alternative investments is a reasonable estimate of fair value as of December 31, 2017 and 2016. Since alternative investments are not readily marketable, the estimated value is subject to uncertainty and therefore may differ from the value that would have been used had a ready market for the investments existed, and such differences could be material.

Long-term investments held by the Foundation represent General Assembly endowment funds, which are generally not available for immediate use.

Contributions from Congregations: Contributions from congregations include amounts in-transit at year-end.

Allowance for Loan Losses: The allowance for loan losses is maintained at a level considered by management to be adequate to provide for loan losses inherent in the loan portfolio. Management determines the adequacy of the allowance based upon reviews of payment history, recent loss experience, current economic conditions, the risk characteristics of the various categories of loans, and such other factors, which in management's judgment deserve current recognition in estimating loan losses. The allowance for loan losses is increased by the provision for loan losses and reduced by net loan charge-offs.

Annuity and Life Income Funds: PCUSA, A Corporation is an income beneficiary of trust funds held by the Foundation. In accordance with current accounting standards, PCUSA, A Corporation has recorded, as an asset, the net present value of the future income to be received from the funds.

Inventories: Inventories represent books, periodicals, and curriculum produced by PCUSA, A Corporation for distribution. These items are stated at average cost.

Property and Equipment: Property and equipment consists principally of the PCUSA, A Corporation headquarters building and related land and equipment, domestic properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land, and property held for disposition.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 2 - Basis of Presentation and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

Property and Equipment (Continued): The PCUSA, A Corporation headquarters building and related land and equipment are stated at cost or fair value at the date of donation, if donated. The domestic properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land, and other properties are recorded based on fair value at the date of donation, appraisal value, or replacement cost. Expenditures greater than $5,000 which increase values or extend the useful lives of the respective assets are capitalized. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

PCUSA, A Corporation holds title to various other foreign properties. Such properties include properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land, and property held for disposition. PCUSA, A Corporation has administrative responsibility for property taxes, insurance, maintenance, and improvements for these properties. Generally, it is PCUSA, A Corporation's policy to exclude the cost or donated value of foreign properties from its financial records.

PCUSA, A Corporation reviews for the impairment of long-lived assets subject to depreciation and amortization, including property and equipment, whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of these assets may not be recoverable. If this review were to result in the conclusion that the carrying value of long-lived assets would not be recoverable, then a write down of the assets would be recorded through a charge to net assets equal to the difference in the fair market value of the assets and their carrying value. No such impairment losses were recognized for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016.

Property Available for Sale: At December 31, 2017 and 2016, property in Santa Fe, New Mexico is classified as available for sale. PCUSA, A Corporation entered into a contract for sale of this property in March 2017 and expects to close in 2018.

Deferred Revenue: PCUSA, A Corporation holds special events each year. Monies received to support future special events are recorded as deferred revenue.

Collections: PCUSA, A Corporation's collections consist of works of art, ecclesiastical objects and papers, historical treasures, archeological specimens, and other assets. The collections, which were acquired through purchases and contributions since PCUSA, A Corporation's inception, are not recognized as assets on the consolidated statements of financial position. Purchases of collection items are recorded as decreases in unrestricted net assets in the year in which the items are acquired or as temporarily or permanently restricted net assets if the assets used to purchase the items are restricted by donors. Contributed collection items are not reflected on the consolidated financial statements. Proceeds from deaccessions or insurance recoveries are reflected as increases in the appropriate net asset classes.

Use of Estimates: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements. Estimates also affect the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period.

Income Taxes: PCUSA, A Corporation is exempt from income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. However, PCUSA, A Corporation is subject to federal income tax on any unrelated business taxable income.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 2 - Basis of Presentation and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

Income Taxes (Continued): Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America prescribe
recognition thresholds and measurement attributes for the financial statement recognition and measurement of a tax
position taken or expected to be taken in a tax return. Tax benefits or liabilities will be recognized only if the tax
position would "more-likely-than-not" be sustained in a tax examination, with a tax examination being presumed to
occur. The amount recognized will be the largest amount of tax benefit or liability that is greater than 50% likely of
being realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the "more-likely-than-not" test, no tax benefit or liability
will be recorded. Management has concluded that it is unaware of any tax benefits or liabilities to be recognized at
December 31, 2017, and does not expect this to change in the next 12 months.

PCUSA, A Corporation would recognize interest and penalties related to uncertain tax positions in interest and income
tax expense, respectively. PCUSA, A Corporation has no amounts accrued for interest or penalties as of
December 31, 2017 and 2016. PCUSA, A Corporation is no longer subject to examination by taxing authorities for
the years before December 31, 2013.

New Accounting Pronouncements: In August 2016, the FASB issued Accounting Standards Update
No. 2016-14 (ASU 2016-14), Presentation of Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Entities. This updated guidance
changes presentation and disclosure requirements for not-for-profit entities to provide more relevant information
about their resources (and the changes in those resources) to donors, grantors, creditors and other users. This guidance
included qualitative and quantitative requirements in the following areas: 1) net asset classes; 2) investment return;
3) expenses; 4) liquidity and availability of resources; and 5) presentation of operating cash flows. This standard will
be effective for the calendar year ending December 31, 2018.

In May 2014, the FASB issued ASU 2014-09, Revenue from Contracts with Customers. The standard's core principle
is that a company will recognize revenue when it transfers promised goods or services to customers in an amount that
reflects the consideration to which the company expects to be entitled in exchange for those goods or services.
This standard also includes expanded disclosure requirements that result in an entity providing users of financial
statements with comprehensive information about the nature, amount, timing, and uncertainty of revenue and cash
flows arising from the entity's contracts with customers. This standard will be effective for the calendar year ending
December 31, 2019.

In February 2016, the FASB issued ASU 2016-02, Leases. The standard requires all leases with lease terms over
12 months to be capitalized as a right-of-use asset and lease liability on the balance sheet at the date of lease
commencement. Leases will be classified as either finance or operating. This distinction will be relevant for the pattern
of expense recognition in the income statement. This standard will be effective for the calendar year ending December

In June 2016, the FASB issued ASU 2016-13, Financial Instruments-Credit Losses. The standard requires a financial
asset (including trade receivables) measured at amortized cost basis to be presented at the net amount expected to be
collected. Thus, the income statement will reflect the measurement of credit losses for newly-recognized financial assets as well as the expected increases or decreases of expected credit losses that have taken place during the period. This standard will be effective for the calendar year ending December 31, 2021.

PCUSA, A Corporation is currently in the process of evaluating the impact of the adoption of these ASUs on the
consolidated financial statements.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 2 - Basis of Presentation and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (Continued)

Subsequent Events: Subsequent events for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation have been considered through the date of the Independent Auditor's Report which represents the date the consolidated financial statements were available to be issued.

Reclassifications: Certain reclassifications have been made to the prior year consolidated financial statements to conform to the current year consolidated financial statement presentation. These reclassifications had no effect on the change in net assets.

Note 3 - Net Assets

Temporarily restricted net assets at December 31, 2017 and 2016 are available for the following purposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church and student loans</td>
<td>$ 2,557,416</td>
<td>$ 2,665,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinshian Memorial Program</td>
<td>22,365,270</td>
<td>19,528,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational seminars and publications</td>
<td>22,073,310</td>
<td>19,152,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission work</td>
<td>25,913,802</td>
<td>17,771,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</td>
<td>18,896,157</td>
<td>11,830,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism and Church Growth</td>
<td>15,938,333</td>
<td>14,158,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>16,574,119</td>
<td>14,764,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary support</td>
<td>41,626,402</td>
<td>37,591,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education</td>
<td>12,546,827</td>
<td>11,011,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacemaking/Justice</td>
<td>2,147,249</td>
<td>1,953,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>1,410,101</td>
<td>1,131,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
<td>1,101,173</td>
<td>1,240,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Ethnic</td>
<td>251,643</td>
<td>243,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>618,647</td>
<td>609,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Foundation</td>
<td>1,474,103</td>
<td>1,355,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General endowments</td>
<td>35,653,647</td>
<td>24,031,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-development of People</td>
<td>1,307,661</td>
<td>706,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>994,568</td>
<td>869,352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$223,450,429 $180,617,041
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation  
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)  
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016  

Note 3 - Net Assets (Continued)

Permanently restricted net assets at December 31, 2017 and 2016 are available for the following purposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church and student loans</td>
<td>$ 4,812,698</td>
<td>$ 4,778,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinshian Memorial Program</td>
<td>10,199,456</td>
<td>10,157,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational seminars and publications</td>
<td>23,126,961</td>
<td>22,817,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission work</td>
<td>5,135,704</td>
<td>5,067,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism and Church Growth</td>
<td>7,262,168</td>
<td>7,165,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>14,097,697</td>
<td>13,909,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary support</td>
<td>16,663,043</td>
<td>16,440,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education</td>
<td>15,322,375</td>
<td>15,117,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacemaking/Justice</td>
<td>93,666</td>
<td>92,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>450,460</td>
<td>444,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
<td>77,125,357</td>
<td>70,139,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Ethnic</td>
<td>244,648</td>
<td>241,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>112,588</td>
<td>111,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Foundation</td>
<td>784,629</td>
<td>784,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General endowments</td>
<td>96,480,453</td>
<td>96,473,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,080,849</td>
<td>1,066,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$272,992,751</strong></td>
<td><strong>$264,807,352</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net assets released from restrictions during the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016 consisted of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jinshian Memorial Program</td>
<td>$ 1,284,385</td>
<td>$ 1,289,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational seminars and publications</td>
<td>2,737,392</td>
<td>2,959,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission work</td>
<td>6,335,296</td>
<td>6,849,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</td>
<td>6,711,633</td>
<td>5,985,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism and Church Growth</td>
<td>6,105,182</td>
<td>6,600,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2,887,730</td>
<td>3,121,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary support</td>
<td>1,926,388</td>
<td>2,082,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education</td>
<td>4,590,771</td>
<td>4,962,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacemaking/Justice</td>
<td>1,990,951</td>
<td>2,152,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>1,642,725</td>
<td>1,421,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Development of People</td>
<td>753,688</td>
<td>1,126,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$36,966,141</strong></td>
<td><strong>$38,551,017</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 4 - Investments

Investments, including long-term investments, are primarily held in common funds managed by the Foundation on behalf of PCUSA, A Corporation. A summary of PCUSA, A Corporation’s investments, including the interest in common funds managed by the Foundation, at December 31, 2017 and 2016 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pooled Investments Held by the Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial Interest in Pooled Investments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term</td>
<td>$ 66,159,612</td>
<td>$ 57,761,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>338,189,072</td>
<td>308,053,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Beneficial Interest in Pooled Investments</strong></td>
<td>404,348,684</td>
<td>365,814,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Investments Held by the Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equities</td>
<td>2,756,400</td>
<td>2,522,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares in New Covenant Mutual Fund</td>
<td>4,937,957</td>
<td>4,800,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Investments Held by the Foundation</strong></td>
<td>7,694,357</td>
<td>7,322,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Investments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash equivalents</td>
<td>734,630</td>
<td>1,287,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. treasury securities</td>
<td>13,068,386</td>
<td>15,327,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. agency securities</td>
<td>1,917,840</td>
<td>1,452,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate debt securities</td>
<td>26,308,250</td>
<td>24,879,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage-backed securities</td>
<td>3,109,157</td>
<td>2,813,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other fixed income securities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity securities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>denominational account receipts</td>
<td>8,082,919</td>
<td>8,012,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Investments</strong></td>
<td>54,140,970</td>
<td>54,692,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Investments</strong></td>
<td>$ 466,184,011</td>
<td>$ 427,830,092</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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970
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 4 - Investments (Continued)
The Foundation's investment portfolio as of December 31 comprised the following types of investments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred and common stock</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed income</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedge funds</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private equity</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income received by PCUSA, A Corporation from the Foundation is net of administrative fees of outside managers.

Note 5 - Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts

Funds held in trust by others represent resources neither in the possession nor under the control of PCUSA, A Corporation, but held and administered by outside trustees, with PCUSA, A Corporation deriving only income from such funds. Such investments are recorded in the consolidated statement of financial position at the fair value of the principal amounts, which represents the estimated present value of the expected future cash flows, and the income, including fair value adjustments of $7,188,030 and $1,512,944 during the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively, is recorded in the consolidated statement of activities and changes in net assets.

PCUSA, A Corporation is a named beneficiary in certain trusts for which it has been unable to obtain the necessary information to measure its interest. Therefore, these trusts are not recorded.

Note 6 - Endowment Composition

In accordance with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA), the Organization considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor-restricted endowment funds:

1) The duration and preservation of the fund.
2) The purposes of the donor-restricted endowment fund.
3) General economic conditions.
4) The possible effect of inflation and deflation.
5) The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments.
6) Other resources of the Organization.
7) The investment policies of the Organization.

Appropriation of Endowment Assets: PCUSA, A Corporation receives spending formula from the Foundation whereby PCUSA, A Corporation receives investment income from unrestricted and restricted endowments. The endowments are owned, held and invested by the Foundation for the General Assembly's use as the PCUSA, A Corporation has a beneficial interest in the income of these endowment funds.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 6 - Endowment Composition (Continued)

The current policy calls for a 4.25% annual total return payout rate of the average market value based on the 20-quarter rolling average with an eighteen-month lag. Pursuant to this policy, the Foundation paid the beneficiaries of certain endowments 4.5% (based on the December 31, 2016 market value) and 4.4% (based on the December 31, 2015 market value) in 2017 and 2016, respectively. The spending formula will be monitored to determine the effects of changing return and inflation expectations on the preservation of purchasing power and the generation of appropriate levels of spendable income.

Investment Policies: The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation are charged with the responsibility of managing the endowment assets that benefit the Church. The overall goal in management of these funds is to generate a long-term rate of return that provides sustainable distributions to support the mission within reasonable levels of risk.

The Trustees adhere to modern portfolio theory, which has as its basis risk reduction through diversification. Diversification is obtained through the use of multiple assets classes as well as multiple investments within these asset classes. Asset classes that may be used include (but are not limited to) domestic and international stocks and bonds, hedge funds, private equity (venture capital and corporate finance), and real property (real estate, minerals and timber). The investment strategy is implemented through the selection of external advisors and managers with expertise and successful histories in the management of specific asset classes.

The Trustees' role is one of setting and reviewing policy; and retaining, monitoring, and evaluating advisors and investment managers. It is the Trustees' desire to find ways to invest these funds in accordance with the social witness principles of the PCUSA. The Trustees will review the investment policy statement at least annually.

The primary financial objectives of the permanent endowment funds (the "Fund") are to (1) provide a stream of relatively stable and constant earnings in support of annual budgetary needs and (2) to preserve and enhance the real (inflation-adjusted) purchasing power of the Fund.

The long-term investment objective of the Fund is to attain a real total annualized return of at least 5%. The calculation of real total return includes all realized and unrealized capital changes plus all interest, rent, dividend, and other income earned by the portfolio, adjusted for inflation, during a year, net of investment expenses, on average, over a five-to-seven year period. Secondary objectives are to (1) outperform the Fund's custom benchmark, a weighted average return based on target asset allocation and index returns and (2) to outperform the median return of a pool of endowment funds with broadly similar investment objectives and policies. The Fund's objective is to attain estimate nominal compound return of 9% with a standard deviation of 11.3% of the current portfolio.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation  
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)  
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016  

Note 6 - Endowment Composition (Continued)  
Endowment net asset composition as of December 31:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Permanently Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor-restricted endowment funds</td>
<td>$ (4,376,999)</td>
<td>$ 196,513,995</td>
<td>$ 194,738,708</td>
<td>$ 386,875,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board-designated funds</td>
<td>53,521,100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53,521,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Endowment Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>49,144,101</td>
<td>196,513,995</td>
<td>194,738,708</td>
<td>440,396,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets other than endowment</td>
<td>19,036,207</td>
<td>26,936,434</td>
<td>78,254,043</td>
<td>124,226,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$ 68,180,308</td>
<td>$ 223,450,429</td>
<td>$ 272,992,751</td>
<td>$ 564,623,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor-restricted endowment funds</td>
<td>$ (8,020,422)</td>
<td>$ 149,824,145</td>
<td>$ 178,575,916</td>
<td>$ 320,379,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board-designated funds</td>
<td>54,507,671</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>54,507,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Endowment Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>46,487,249</td>
<td>149,824,145</td>
<td>178,575,916</td>
<td>374,887,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets other than endowment</td>
<td>11,423,262</td>
<td>30,792,896</td>
<td>86,231,436</td>
<td>125,763,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$ 57,910,511</td>
<td>$ 180,617,041</td>
<td>$ 264,807,352</td>
<td>$ 500,651,158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes in endowment net assets for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Permanently Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Balance, January 1, 2017</strong></td>
<td>$ 46,487,249</td>
<td>$ 149,824,145</td>
<td>$ 178,575,916</td>
<td>$ 374,887,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment Return</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from Endowment Funds</td>
<td>2,009,153</td>
<td>2,919,081</td>
<td>19,723</td>
<td>4,947,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Appreciation</td>
<td>4,791,191</td>
<td>49,949,710</td>
<td>16,143,069</td>
<td>70,883,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Investment Return</strong></td>
<td>6,800,344</td>
<td>52,868,791</td>
<td>16,162,792</td>
<td>75,831,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriation of endowment</strong></td>
<td>(4,143,492)</td>
<td>(6,178,941)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(10,322,433)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending Balance, December 31, 2017</strong></td>
<td>$ 49,144,101</td>
<td>$ 196,513,995</td>
<td>$ 194,738,708</td>
<td>$ 440,396,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Balance, January 1, 2016</strong></td>
<td>$ 49,135,158</td>
<td>$ 144,534,632</td>
<td>$ 178,283,320</td>
<td>$ 371,953,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment Return</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from Endowment Funds</td>
<td>1,679,607</td>
<td>2,625,773</td>
<td>11,283</td>
<td>4,316,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net (Depreciation) Appreciation</td>
<td>(109,984)</td>
<td>8,962,393</td>
<td>281,314</td>
<td>9,133,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Investment Return</strong></td>
<td>1,569,623</td>
<td>11,588,166</td>
<td>292,597</td>
<td>13,450,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriation of endowment</strong></td>
<td>(4,217,532)</td>
<td>(6,298,653)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(10,516,185)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending Balance, December 31, 2016</strong></td>
<td>$ 46,487,249</td>
<td>$ 149,824,145</td>
<td>$ 178,575,916</td>
<td>$ 374,887,310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 6 - Endowment Composition (Continued)

Funds with Deficiencies: From time to time, the fair value of assets associated with individual donor restricted endowment funds may fall below the level of the donor's requirement to retain as a permanent endowment fund. Deficiencies of this nature are reported in unrestricted and undesignated net assets were $4,376,999 and $8,020,422, respectively, as of December 31, 2017 and 2016.

Note 7 - Mortgages and Loans on Churches and Manses

A summary of the activity relating to mortgages and loans on churches and manses during the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receivables at January 1</td>
<td>$598,658</td>
<td>$913,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New loans</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayments</td>
<td>(124,928)</td>
<td>(315,125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables at December 31</td>
<td>473,730</td>
<td>598,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add accrued interest receivable</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>3,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less allowance for loss</td>
<td>(680)</td>
<td>(965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Receivables at December 31</td>
<td>$473,965</td>
<td>$601,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ability of each borrower congregation to pay PCUSA, A Corporation for the loan(s) made to the congregation may depend on the contributions the congregation receives from its members. Therefore, payments to PCUSA, A Corporation may depend on the level of membership of the borrower congregations, and on the maintenance of adequate contributions by individual members to their congregations, as well as on prudent management by those congregations of their finances. The following is a summary of the gross loan balances for each Synod at December 31, 2017 and 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Trails</td>
<td>$203,857</td>
<td>$135,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>144,527</td>
<td>30,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California/Hawaii</td>
<td>125,346</td>
<td>223,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>209,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Mortgages and Loans Receivable</td>
<td>473,730</td>
<td>598,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued interest receivable</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>3,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less allowance for loan loses</td>
<td>(680)</td>
<td>(965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgages and Loans Receivable, net</td>
<td>$473,965</td>
<td>$601,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 8 - Receivables from Related Entities

A summary of the activity relating to receivables from related entities, which includes unsecured student loans of approximately $768,000 and $957,000, during the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receivables at January 1</td>
<td>$ 5,637,857</td>
<td>$ 5,918,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments and other</td>
<td>22,716,397</td>
<td>39,500,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections of assessments and Other</td>
<td>(22,463,523)</td>
<td>(35,330,364)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New loans</td>
<td>183,112</td>
<td>108,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan repayments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(3,767,715)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge-offs</td>
<td>(1,061,828)</td>
<td>(791,144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivables at December 31</td>
<td>5,012,015</td>
<td>5,637,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less allowance for loan loss</td>
<td>(590,809)</td>
<td>(1,922,699)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Receivables at December 31</td>
<td>$ 4,421,206</td>
<td>$ 3,715,158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 9 - Receivables from Related Entities, Mortgages and Loans

The outstanding principal balances of loans to churches, students and Presbyterian schools and colleges for which an impairment has been recognized at December 31, 2017 and 2016 were $16,125 and $89,774, respectively, and the related allocated allowances for loan losses at December 31, 2017 and 2016 were $0, resulting in no additional provision for loans in December 31, 2017 and 2016. There was no interest received by PCUSA, A Corporation, on the impaired loans during 2017. The total average impaired loan balances were approximately $2,367 and $2,693 at December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

Note 10 - Property and Equipment, net

The components of property and equipment, net at December 31, 2017 and 2016 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>$ 2,407,347</td>
<td>$ 2,407,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings and building improvements</td>
<td>37,323,278</td>
<td>36,985,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>13,227,587</td>
<td>13,025,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and fixtures</td>
<td>477,042</td>
<td>470,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less accumulated depreciation</td>
<td>(42,948,938)</td>
<td>(41,808,537)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>$ 10,486,316</td>
<td>$ 11,079,813</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 10 - Property and Equipment, net (Continued)

Property and equipment decreased 34.6% due to the transfer of the Ghost Ranch Education and Retreat Center operations to the National Ghost Ranch Foundation (NGRF) effective December 31, 2016, with the Foundation's constituent corporation, the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ("BCE") resuming control of the real property and improvements. PCUSA, A Corporation previously operated Ghost Ranch Education and Retreat Center under limited power of attorney from the Foundation. The property is now held by BCE as investment property.

Note 11 - Benefits Data

Substantially all employees of PCUSA, A Corporation participate in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the "Benefits Plan") which is administered by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the "Board of Pensions"). The Benefits Plan is a comprehensive benefits program, which provides a defined benefit pension plan, a long-term disability plan, a death benefit plan, and a major medical plan. The assets of the Benefits Plan are commingled for investment purposes; however, accounting for each plan is separately maintained.

The defined benefit pension plan's total net assets available for benefits, as reported by the Board of Pensions, were $8,658,320,000 and $7,734,336,000 at December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. The defined benefit pension plan's total Accumulated Plan Benefit Obligations, as reported by the Board of Pensions, were $6,600,749,000 and $6,228,650,000 at December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. Since the Benefits Plan is a Church Plan under the Internal Revenue Code, PCUSA, A Corporation has no financial interest in the Benefits Plan assets nor does it have any liability for benefits payable, contingent or otherwise, under the Benefits Plan or its components.

PCUSA, A Corporation pays the entire cost for employee participation in the defined benefit pension plan, long-term disability plan, death benefit plan and employee-only coverage associated with the medical plan. There is employee cost sharing for employee-elected levels of coverage related to spouse and/or dependents. Employees have the option to purchase additional coverage such as dental, long-term care, and life insurance.

PCUSA, A Corporation makes two levels of employer contributions for the lay and term contract benefit eligible employees into the retirement savings plan. The OGA regular lay exempt staff receive employer contributions that adheres to the lay equalization schedule. Effective 2017, all PMA lay staff and OGA lay non-exempt staff receive an employer contribution of 4% of base salary. Contributions to the lay equalization plan were $72,126 for 2017 and $610,379 for 2016; and contributions to the 403b plan were $520,197 for 2017 and $0 for 2016, respectively.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 11 - Benefits Data (Continued)

PCUSA, A Corporation's expenses for the plans for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016 were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administered by Board of Pensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension Plan</td>
<td>$2,725,968</td>
<td>$3,100,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death and Disability Plan</td>
<td>256,887</td>
<td>285,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Medical Plan</td>
<td>5,220,101</td>
<td>7,203,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,202,956</td>
<td>10,590,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administered by Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Savings Plan - Lay Equalization</td>
<td>72,126</td>
<td>610,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Savings Plan - ER 403B Contribution</td>
<td>520,197</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>592,323</td>
<td>610,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$8,795,279</td>
<td>$11,200,448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 12 - Concentration of Risks

Revenue Risk: PCUSA, A Corporation's primary source of revenue is contributions from Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods and individuals. The majority of these contributions are transmitted via the Presbyteries that are grouped into 16 Synods comprised of a total of 171 Presbyteries. The following is a summary of the contributions by each of the Synods during the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016:
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation  
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)  
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska-Northwest</td>
<td>$707,691</td>
<td>$598,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant</td>
<td>2,616,056</td>
<td>2,381,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes and Prairies</td>
<td>2,270,052</td>
<td>1,737,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Trails</td>
<td>1,713,084</td>
<td>1,558,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Waters</td>
<td>1,492,867</td>
<td>1,298,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-America</td>
<td>1,248,971</td>
<td>973,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>4,692,322</td>
<td>3,586,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>2,954,313</td>
<td>2,326,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>1,985,392</td>
<td>1,768,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>13,895</td>
<td>23,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
<td>3,155,727</td>
<td>2,427,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California/Hawaii</td>
<td>1,203,143</td>
<td>1,052,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>605,741</td>
<td>470,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rocky Mountains</td>
<td>642,531</td>
<td>666,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sun</td>
<td>2,226,897</td>
<td>1,928,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>3,368,789</td>
<td>3,646,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals and Other Church-Related</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,202,657</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,255,485</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 44,100,128</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 36,700,302</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 12 - Concentration of Risks (Continued)

Credit Risk: PCUSA, A Corporation maintains cash and cash equivalents with various financial institutions. At times, such cash and cash equivalents may be in excess of the FDIC insurance level. PCUSA, A Corporation has not experienced any losses in such accounts and management believes PCUSA, A Corporation is not exposed to any significant credit risks on cash and cash equivalents.

Note 13 - Fair Value

United States generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) define and establish a framework for measuring fair value and expand disclosures about fair value measurements. GAAP emphasizes fair value is a market-based measurement and enables the reader of the financial statements to assess the inputs used to develop those measurements by establishing a fair value hierarchy for ranking the quality and reliability of the information used to determine fair values.

The assets and liabilities carried at fair value are classified and disclosed in one of the following three categories:

- Level 1: Valuations for assets and liabilities traded in active exchange markets, such as the New York Stock Exchange. Valuations are obtained as of the measurement date from readily available pricing sources for market transactions involving identical assets or liabilities (market approach).
- Level 2: Valuations for assets and liabilities traded in less active dealer or broker markets. Valuations are obtained from quoted prices by third party pricing sources for similar assets or liabilities; quoted prices in markets that are not active; or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated. The valuation methodology for Level 2 investments consists of both income and market approaches, as appropriate for the specific investment.
- Level 3: Valuations for assets and liabilities are unobservable and significant. Valuations reflect management's best estimate of what market participants would use in pricing an asset or liability at the measurement date.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. The lowest level of significant input determines the categorization of the entire fair value measurement in the hierarchy.

Treasury bonds, equities and mutual funds are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the bonds are traded (Level 1 inputs). Corporate bonds and agency bonds are valued at quoted prices for identical or similar assets in non-active markets since these bonds trade infrequently (Level 2 inputs - market). Mortgage backed securities are valued using matrix pricing, which is a mathematical technique widely used to value debt securities without relying exclusively on quoted prices for the specific securities, but rather by relying on the securities' relationship to other benchmark quoted securities (Level 2 inputs - market).

The fair value of the certificates of deposit, equity investment, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("PILP") denominational accounts were recalculated by applying the interest rate to the initial investments, and no discounts for credit quality or liquidity were determined to be applicable (Level 2 inputs).

The investment in the unitized pool is managed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. The investment objectives of the fund are to (1) provide a stream of relatively stable and constant earnings in support of annual budgetary needs and (2) preserve and enhance the real (inflation-adjusted) purchasing power of the fund. The Foundation's investment policy is documented in the Statement of Investment Policies and Objectives for the Endowment Fund amended November 14, 2013.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 13 - Fair Value (Continued)

The underlying investments in the unitized pool are held in accordance with specific guidelines set forth by the Foundation and various targets have been established with regard to allowable investments purchased by the unitized pool.

At December 31, 2017, the underlying investments of the unitized pool consist of the following asset classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset Type</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stock</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Income</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedge Funds</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Equity</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Withdrawals from the unitized pool are available within 90 days with prior written notice. Pursuant to U.S. GAAP, management has considered redemption restrictions to assess classification of the fair value inputs. As a result, unitized pool assets with redemption periods of 90 days or less are considered Level 2 fair value measurements. The fair value of the beneficial interests in the perpetual trust assets (life income funds and funds held in trust by others) is based on a valuation model that calculates the present value of estimated distributed income. The valuation model incorporates the fair value of investment holdings, which are readily marketable securities valued at quoted prices and incorporates assumptions that market participants would use in estimating future distributed income. PCUSA, A Corporation is able to compare the valuation model inputs and results to widely available published industry data for reasonableness. PCUSA does not have the ability to redeem the investment within 90 days (Level 3 inputs - market).

Assets and Liabilities Measured on a Recurring Basis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset Type</th>
<th>2017 Total</th>
<th>Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)</th>
<th>Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)</th>
<th>Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pooled investments held by the Foundation</td>
<td>$404,348,684</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ 404,348,684</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in pooled Investments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other investments Held by the Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equities</td>
<td>2,756,400</td>
<td>2,756,400</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares in New Covenant Mutual Fund</td>
<td>4,937,957</td>
<td>4,937,957</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Investments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash equivalents</td>
<td>734,630</td>
<td>734,630</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. treasury securities</td>
<td>13,068,386</td>
<td>13,068,386</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. agency securities</td>
<td>1,917,840</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,917,840</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate debt securities</td>
<td>26,308,250</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26,308,250</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage-backed securities</td>
<td>3,109,157</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,109,157</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity securities</td>
<td>919,788</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>919,788</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILP Securities</td>
<td>8,082,919</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,082,919</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Investments</td>
<td>466,184,011</td>
<td>21,497,373</td>
<td>444,686,638</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts</td>
<td>78,226,530</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>78,226,530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$ 544,410,541 $ 21,497,373 $ 444,686,638 $ 78,226,530
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation  
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)  
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 13 - Fair Value (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)</th>
<th>Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)</th>
<th>Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooled investments held by the Foundation</td>
<td>$365,814,939</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$365,814,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in pooled investments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other investments held by the Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equities</td>
<td>2,522,400</td>
<td>2,522,400</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares in New Covenant Mutual Fund</td>
<td>4,800,301</td>
<td>4,800,301</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other investments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash equivalents</td>
<td>1,287,081</td>
<td>1,287,081</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. treasury securities</td>
<td>15,327,693</td>
<td>15,327,693</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. agency securities</td>
<td>1,452,251</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,452,251</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate debt securities</td>
<td>24,879,456</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24,879,456</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage-backed securities</td>
<td>2,813,638</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,813,638</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity securities</td>
<td>919,788</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>919,788</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILP Securities</td>
<td>8,012,545</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,012,545</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Investments</td>
<td>427,830,092</td>
<td>23,937,475</td>
<td>403,892,617</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
<td>71,380,559</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>71,380,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$499,210,651</td>
<td>$23,937,475</td>
<td>$403,892,617</td>
<td>$71,380,559</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below presents a reconciliation of gains and losses for all assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis using significant unobservable inputs (Level 3) for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance, January 1, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total realized and unrealized gains and losses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance, December 31, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total realized and unrealized gains and losses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance, December 31, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 14 - Functional Classification

A summary of PCUSA, A Corporation's operating expenses by functional classification for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program expenses</td>
<td>$61,228,359</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>$74,796,698</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and General expenses</td>
<td>8,056,270</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9,432,889</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising expenses</td>
<td>4,196,048</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4,747,623</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$73,480,677</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$88,977,210</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of fundraising expenses as a percentage of funds raised was 9% and 13% for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. Please note that in 2017, there were more disasters than typically have occurred in recent years and the Presbyterian Disaster Program received $12.8 million above their budgeted amount for disaster relief. This affects the lower 2017 fundraising percent.

Note 15 - Commitments and Contingencies

PCUSA, A Corporation holds and participates in a self-insurance fund that exists to provide a source of funds for that portion of certain losses not covered by commercial insurance to cover deductibles on commercial insurance and for certain classes of uninsured losses. Various General Assembly-level agencies and corporations are included in the Fund. The largest possible loss to be assumed in any one event or occurrence is $250,000, with $1,000,000 as the largest potential aggregate of all claims in a single calendar year.

The minimum balance of the self-insurance fund shall not fall below $5,000,000 as a result of claims paid. In the event this happens, an assessment will be made to the insured entities to return the fund to the $5,000,000 minimum balance. The assessment will be based on each insured entity's 5-year loss ratio. A 1% minimum assessment will be made by the entities that have not experienced any losses in the 5-year period. The balance of the Fund reflected as designated net assets by PCUSA, A Corporation was $6,763,390 and $6,102,565 at December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

During the ordinary course of business, PCUSA, A Corporation is subject to pending and threatened legal actions. Management of PCUSA, A Corporation does not believe that any of these actions will have a material adverse effect on PCUSA, A Corporation's consolidated financial position or change in net assets.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 16 - Related Party Transactions

Foundation: The Foundation provides certain investment, custodial, and deferred giving services to PCUSA, A Corporation. The Foundation recoups the cost of those services not covered from the income of its own endowment funds by quarterly charges against the investment pools in which the funds administered by the Foundation are invested. These charges were recovered from the principal and income of these pools. Such costs consist of salary and benefits; outside investment services; and other operating expenses.

The income received by PCUSA, A Corporation from the Foundation is net of administrative fees of outside managers as described previously. PCUSA, A Corporation's investments and unrestricted and restricted endowment owned and held by the Foundation totaled $308.2 million and $281.1 million and investments held by the Foundation totaled $68.4 million and $59.6 million on behalf of the General Assembly at December 31, 2017 and December 31, 2016 respectively.

The Foundation's administration, custodial and investment management fees are assessed monthly based on the prior month end market value against the total fund.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation approved to transfer the operations of Ghost Ranch Education and Retreat Center to the National Ghost Ranch Foundation (NGRF), with responsibility being transferred to the Foundation's constituent corporation, the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ("BCE"), effective December 31, 2016.

Board of National Missions: There are certain church loan funds whereby the fiduciary ownership belongs to the Board of National Missions, a constituent corporation of the Foundation. PCUSA, A Corporation is the disbursing agent for those funds under a limited power of attorney from the Foundation. PILP administers the Loan Program under an administrative services agreement with PCUSA, A Corporation. Accordingly, these funds are not reflected in the consolidated financial statements but are administered by PCUSA, A Corporation. These loan funds were approximately $267,000,000 and $247,000,000 at December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

Board of Pensions: PCUSA, A Corporation served as a receiving agent for funds designated for the Board of Pensions. PCUSA, A Corporation received $1,160,266 and $1,149,266 from congregations for the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, of which $303,303 and $325,385 was yet to be remitted to the Board of Pensions.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.: PCUSA, A Corporation leases office space and provides administrative support to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("PILP") by contract. For the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, administrative support charged to PILP was $158,402 and $153,788, respectively. Office space charged to PILP was $63,447 and $61,599 for 2017 and 2016, respectively.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 16 - Related Party Transactions (Continued)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (Continued): On June 29, 2000, PCUSA, A Corporation entered into an operating agreement with PILP under which PILP will provide administrative services (e.g., origination and loan servicing) for PCUSA, A Corporation's church loan program at cost in an effort to streamline the coordination process between PCUSA, A Corporation's church loan program and PILP's loan program. PCUSA, A Corporation reimbursed PILP $774,950 and $775,171 for the actual costs of such services during 2017 and 2016, respectively.

PCUSA, A Corporation and PILP have issued joint loans through participation agreements. For the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, total loans outstanding were $30,427,273 and $30,228,014 respectively, under these participation agreements.

PILP issued a secured loan to PCUSA, A Corporation for the benefit of the Presbyterian Historical Society during 2015. The balance was $330,000 and $306,940, respectively, as of December 31, 2017 and 2016. The terms of the agreement call for 120 payments, with an interest rate of 4.25% and a maturity date of February 1, 2027.

PCUSA, A Corporation has a current commitment, effective May 1, 2014, to PILP for five years to invest up to $5,000,000 in short and intermediate term accounts called denominational account receipts (DAR). As of December 31, 2017 and 2016, investments with PILP were $8,082,918 and $8,012,432, respectively. At December 31, 2017 and 2016, fixed interest rates ranged from 0.30% to 1.49% and 0.45% to 1.74%, respectively, and the adjustable rate ranged from 0.25% to 1.19% and 0.40% to 1.14%, respectively. For the year ended December 31, 2017, the Foundation did not invest with PILP from PCUSA, A Corporation's unrestricted endowment funds.

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation: PCUSA, A Corporation leases office space to Presbyterian Publishing Corporation ("PPC") under an operating lease. For the years ended December 31, 2017 and 2016, rental income was $164,889 and $161,278, respectively. PPC's lease expired at the end of 2014 and a new lease addendum was signed for 2015-2018. Other related expenses charged to PPC for telephone, postage, and copy services were $62,365 and $49,849 in 2017 and 2016, respectively.

PPC pays PCUSA for supplemental warehousing and distribution services. Fees paid by PPC under this agreement in 2017 and 2016 were $37,021 and $27,549 for fulfillment fees and $188,188 and $102,929 for freight, respectively.

PPC publishes various pamphlets, magazines, and books for PCUSA, A Corporation during the year on a project-by-project basis. Expenses related to this type of work in 2017 and 2016 were $157,442 and $171,826, respectively. PPC also pays PCUSA, A Corporation for advertising space in various church publications. Advertising expense under such arrangements was $2,269 and $1,725 in 2017 and 2016, respectively.
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)
Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

Note 16 - Related Party Transactions (Continued)

Insurance: PCUSA, A Corporation participates in commercial insurance programs, whereby premiums are negotiated and paid by PCUSA, A Corporation on behalf of all General Assembly entities. The Board of Pensions, Foundation, PILP, and PPC reimburse PCUSA, A Corporation for expenses paid on their behalf. Expenses incurred for commercial insurance paid by PCUSA, A Corporation and for which we have been reimbursed for December 31, 2017 and 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>$ 115,813</td>
<td>$ 121,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Pensions</td>
<td>483,132</td>
<td>458,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILP</td>
<td>86,629</td>
<td>90,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPC</td>
<td>84,565</td>
<td>88,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$ 770,139</td>
<td>$ 758,644</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 17 - Prior Period Adjustment

During the year ended December 31, 2017, PCUSA, A Corporation identified misstatements in the prior year's financial statements. PCUSA, A Corporation determined several outside trusts for which it is the beneficiary had not been recorded. The value of these trusts as of January 1, 2016 was $4,668,371 which increased beginning permanently restricted net assets. Certain expenses relating the Theological Education Fund for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2016 totaling $1,396,845 and $709,935, respectively were not expensed. Properly reflecting these expenses resulted in a decrease to temporarily restricted net assets as of January 1, 2016 of $1,396,845. In addition, during 2017, the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Legal Office reviewed the General Assembly Mission Board's ("GAMB") Restricted Fund and determined it was board restricted rather than donor restricted. This resulted in an increase to unrestricted designated net assets and a decrease to permanently restricted net assets of $15,394,309 as of January 1, 2016.
Note 17 - Prior Period Adjustment (Continued)

The effect on the December 31, 2016 consolidated financial statements as a result of the above items is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Originally Reported</th>
<th>Adjustment</th>
<th>Restated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted net assets, 1/1/16</td>
<td>$ 49,753,798</td>
<td>$ 15,394,309</td>
<td>$ 65,148,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted net assets, 1/1/16</td>
<td>185,910,231</td>
<td>(1,396,845)</td>
<td>184,513,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently restricted net assets, 1/1/16</td>
<td>272,826,552</td>
<td>(10,725,937)</td>
<td>262,100,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
<td>66,590,033</td>
<td>4,790,526</td>
<td>71,380,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts due other agencies</td>
<td>3,758,596</td>
<td>1,396,845</td>
<td>5,155,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other liabilities</td>
<td>1,961,249</td>
<td>709,935</td>
<td>2,671,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from endowment funds held by the Foundation, permanently restricted</td>
<td>61,546</td>
<td>(50,263)</td>
<td>11,283</td>
</tr>
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<td>Income from other investments, permanently restricted</td>
<td>38,100</td>
<td>(38,100)</td>
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<td>Unrealized gain (losses) on investments, permanently restricted</td>
<td>1,517,672</td>
<td>51,355</td>
<td>1,569,027</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest income from loans, permanently restricted</td>
<td>48,128</td>
<td>(32,285)</td>
<td>15,843</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income, permanently restricted</td>
<td>(180,118)</td>
<td>26,092</td>
<td>(154,026)</td>
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<td>Income from endowment funds held by the Foundation, unrestricted</td>
<td>1,629,344</td>
<td>50,263</td>
<td>1,679,607</td>
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<td>Income from other investments, unrestricted</td>
<td>2,106,368</td>
<td>38,100</td>
<td>2,144,468</td>
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<td>Unrealized gain (losses) on investments, unrestricted</td>
<td>795,143</td>
<td>70,799</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest income from loans, unrestricted</td>
<td>1,497</td>
<td>32,285</td>
<td>33,782</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income, unrestricted</td>
<td>3,552,434</td>
<td>(26,092)</td>
<td>3,526,342</td>
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<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
<td>37,841,082</td>
<td>709,935</td>
<td>38,551,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related bodies and other programs</td>
<td>11,718</td>
<td>709,935</td>
<td>721,653</td>
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Supplemental Information
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<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
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<th>Youth Triennium</th>
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<th>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</th>
<th>Self Development of People</th>
<th>Presbyterian Hunger Program</th>
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10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION
Item 11-01

Moved to 10 Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, as Item 10-11. [See p. 831.]

Item 11-02

[The assembly approved Item 11-02 as amended. See pp. 55–56.]

On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Join the 171st (1959), 177th (1965), and the 189th (1977) General Assemblies of the United Presbyterian Church; the 106th General Assembly (1966) of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.; and the 197th General Assembly (1985), 212th General Assembly (2000), 219th General Assembly (2010), and 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and declare its continuing opposition to capital punishment.

2. Call for an immediate moratorium on [all executions] [the imposition of the death penalty] in all jurisdictions that impose capital punishment [and for the commutation of all death sentences to sentences of life imprisonment].

[3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries, to post and publicize an updating of its resources on criminal justice and capital punishment, including the General Assembly’s resolution on Restorative Justice (2000), guidance for prison ministries, and any actions from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) advocating greater fairness in policing, provision of public defenders, availability of diversion and treatment programs, bail and sentencing standards for drug and other crime, consistent with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s vision of a less violent and more healing society, based in the teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth.]

[3.] [4.] Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate the call for an immediate moratorium and our continuing opposition to capital punishment to the president of the United States, our representatives in Congress, as well as the governors and legislators of the thirty-three states with persons incarcerated while awaiting execution [and to call for the commutation of all life sentences to sentences of life imprisonment].

Rationale

This is the fourth anniversary of the last resolution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding capital punishment.

Since 2007, seven more states—New Jersey, New York, New Mexico, Illinois, Connecticut, Maryland, and Delaware—have abolished the death penalty. We give thanks that the death penalty has been abolished in a total of nineteen states.

Both as Christians and as citizens of the United States of America, we believe that one of the greatest tragedies that can occur is the execution of an innocent person by the state, yet we know that this has occurred repeatedly throughout history. Human judgment is always fallible, including the judgments of juries and judges deciding death penalty cases.

It has been recognized by numerous authoritative sources that the death penalty has been imposed in a racially discriminatory manner. No state has been found to be in full compliance with the American Bar Associations Guidelines and other ABA policies regarding the death penalty. Even those states that have “adopted” the guidelines often have fallen short in finding qualified defense counsel and providing adequate compensation for defense counsel and supporting services (Director of ABA Death Penalty Representation Project July 31, 2017).

We recognize that the death penalty is a moral issue that demands paramount discernment by legislative and judicial bodies. Since 1973, 159 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. From 1973–1999, there was an average of three exonerations per year, nationally. From 2000–2011, there has been an average of five exonerations per year, nationally (Death Penalty Information Center, Facts about the Death Penalty, current as of July 7, 2017). Given these rates, it is reasonable to assume that judges and juries will continue to make such errors in future death penalty cases. Yet such errors are not morally defensible.

Nor can the legal system, as presently structured, provide any assurance against innocent persons being subjected to the death penalty. In recent years, prisoner appeals have actually been curtailed, increasing the risk of the execution of innocent people.

In 1996, new legislation drastically limited federal court review of death penalty appeals and gutted public funding of legal aid services for death row prisoners (PC(USA), 212th General Assembly [2000]).
Further, human judgment is flawed and influenced by human sinfulness. For example, in 1990, the United States General Accounting Office reported a pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in charging, sentencing, and imposition of the death penalty. In 82 percent of their studies, race of the victim was found to influence the likelihood of being charged with capital murder or receiving a death sentence, i.e. those who murdered whites were found to be more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murdered blacks. This finding was remarkably consistent across data sets, states, data collection methods, and analytic techniques. The finding held for high-, medium-, and low-quality studies (U.S. General Accounting Office, Report GGD-90-57, Death Penalty Sentencing: Research Indicates Pattern of Racial Disparities, February 26, 1990, 5).

A comprehensive study of the death penalty in North Carolina found that the odds of receiving a death sentence rose by 3.5 times among those defendants whose victims were white (Professor Jack Boger and Dr. Isaac Unah, “Preliminary Report on the Findings of the North Carolina Death Penalty Study 2001.” University of North Carolina, April 16, 2001).

A study in California found that those who killed whites were more than three times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who killed blacks and more than four times more likely than those who killed Latinos (Glenn Pierce and Michael Radelet, “The Impact of Legally Inappropriate Factors on Death Sentencing for California Homicides, 1990–1999.” Santa Clara Law Review, Vol. 46. 2005).

As of July 7, 2017, among the 1,456 people who have been executed in the United States since 1977, 307 have been executed for interracial murders. Of these, 20 involved white defendants and black victims and 287 involved black defendants and white victims (Death Penalty Information Center, Facts about the Death Penalty, current as of July 7, 2017).

Our legal system does not currently assure that persons accused of crimes receive full economic justice. The right to effective counsel is recognized as one of our most fundamental rights, and one of our most important protections against wrongful convictions. However, about 90 percent of those persons facing capital charges cannot afford their own attorney.

As Christians, we recognize God as sovereign in all spheres of human life, including the political sphere. We declare that God’s commandment against killing is still good law. We follow a Lord who taught us to go beyond “an eye for an eye.” We believe that human individuals and institutions are sinful and make mistakes. And, as humans, we lack any power to correct our errors if we wrongly execute another human being.

Concurrences to Item 11-02 from the Presbyteries of Baltimore, de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Missouri River Valley, Palo Duro, Santa Fe, Upper Ohio Valley, and Wabash Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-02 calls for renewed witness for a moratorium on the death penalty in the states where it remains on the books.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval with amendment by adding a new Recommendation 3. and renumbering current Recommendation 3. as Recommendation 4.

“[3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries, to post and publicize an updating of its resources on criminal justice and capital punishment, including the General Assembly’s resolution on Restorative Justice (2000), guidance for prison ministries, and any actions from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) advocating greater fairness in policing, provision of public defenders, availability of diversion and treatment programs, bail and sentencing standards for drug and other crime, consistent with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s vision of a less violent and more healing society, based in the teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth.]”

The Advisory Committee commends the Presbytery of Atlanta and concurring presbyteries in putting forth this overture and helping increase the number of states adopting a more humane policy than capital punishment. This overture is rightly similar to that approved in 2000: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/5-Presbyterian Teachings on the Death Penalty-2000.pdf.

The overture’s rationale underlines the racial, economic, regional, and other inequities in the application of the death penalty and the resultant rate of false convictions. At the same time, the fundamental theological and ethical arguments against the death penalty would stand even if the administration of justice in each case were flawless. The Gospel is about calling people to repentance and protecting people from violence in thought as well as deed. Past General Assemblies have considered arguments for the purported deterrent effect of capital punishment, ways that survivors may find recovery and (sometimes) the capacity to forgive, and modes by which other countries have decreased their murder and violent crime rates without the death penalty (murder rates in the U.S. are currently declining in most jurisdictions).

The amendment ACSWP proposes seeks to make Presbyterians more aware of the Christian moral logic undergirding the church’s positions, as is found in the Restorative Justice policy: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/4-
restorative-justice-2002.pdf. Clearly past commissioners, for example, have recognized that the innocent victim of a sociopath cannot be restored to this life, but that restorative justice encompasses the character of the whole community that must “weep with those who weep” and yet “repay no one evil for evil” (Romans 12:15b, 17a, NRSV).

The amendment would also cover dissemination of any measures approved in the reports, The “Gospel from St Louis” on urban ministry in the context of racial and class division, and “Healing Not Punishment” on reforming drug laws.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02**

_A dvise & Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns._

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-02.

Believing that “The LORD gives both death and life; he brings some down to the grave but raises others up,” (1 Samuel 2:6, New Living Translation), the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), informed by the committee’s advocacy purpose to address injustices toward people of color both within the PC(USA) and society, is in total agreement with the following statement in the overturing, and thus it strongly supports its approval:

It has been recognized by numerous authoritative sources that the death penalty has been imposed in a racially discriminatory manner. No state has been found to be in full compliance with the American Bar Associations Guidelines and other ABA policies regarding the death penalty. Even those states that have “adopted” the guidelines often have fallen short in finding qualified defense counsel and providing adequate compensation for defense counsel and supporting services (Director of ABA Death Penalty Representation Project July 31, 2017).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has a helpful summary of the PC(USA)’s policy and teachings on the Death Penalty, including this action from the 212th General Assembly (2000):

The 212th General Assembly (2000) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Reaffirms the positions of the 171st (1959), 177th (1965), and 189th (1977) General Assemblies of the United Presbyterian Church, the 106th General Assembly (1966) of the Presbyterian Church U.S., and the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (Minutes, 1985, Part I, p. 682) and declares its continuing opposition to capital punishment.

2. Calls for an immediate moratorium on all executions in all jurisdictions that impose capital punishment.

3. Directs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate the call for an immediate moratorium and our continuing opposition to capital punishment to the President of the United States, our representatives in Congress, as well as the governors and legislators of the thirty-eight states with persons incarcerated while awaiting execution.

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02**

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-02.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta has clearly articulated adequate rationale for this overture calling for an immediate moratorium on all executions, and the ACWC wholeheartedly advocates for its passage.

Our rationale is approached through the lens of gender justice. That is, looking at how the execution of human life extinguishes not only the accused, but also extinguishes the possibility of restored relationship and healing between the accused and their family, and even the healing of the murdered individual’s family.

The Death Penalty Information Center states “The death penalty adversely affects both families of murder victims and families of the accused, according to two recent journal articles in _Psychology Today_:

1. Dr. Robert T. Muller reports that psychological studies have found that the death penalty produces negative effects on families and friends of murder victims (referred to as “co-victims”). One University of Minnesota study found that just 2.5 percent of co-victims reported achieving closure as a result of capital punishment, while 20.1 percent said the execution did not help them heal. That may be because, as one co-victim described it, “Healing is a process, not an event.” A 2012 Marquette University Law School study reported that co-victims had improved physical and psychological health and greater satisfaction with the legal system in cases where perpetrators received life sentences, rather than death sentences. The authors of that study said co-victims, “may prefer the finality of a life sentence and the obscurity into which the defendant will quickly fall, to the continued uncertainty and publicity of the death penalty.” Lula Redmond, a Florida therapist who works with family members of murder victims, said, “More often than not, families of murder victims do not experience the relief they expected to feel at the execution. Taking a life doesn’t fill that void, but it’s generally not until after the execution that families realize this.” A number of co-victims expressed sympathy for family members of the condemned, but the death penalty process also can polarize the families, obstructing healing for both.
2. An article for the University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform by Professor Michael Radelet of the University of Colorado at Boulder describes the retributive effects of the death penalty on the family, friends, and attorneys of death row prisoners. Radelet compares these impacts to the effect of life without parole and argues “that the death penalty’s added punishment over life without parole often punishes the family just as much as the inmate, and after the execution the full brunt of the punishment falls on the family. This added impact disproportionately punishes women and children.” These effects on people other than the inmate, he writes, “undermine the principle that the criminal justice system punishes only the guilty and never the innocent. The death penalty affects everyone who knows, cares for, or works with the death row inmate.” [R. Muller, “Death Penalty May Not Bring Peace to Victims’ Families,” Psychology Today, October 19, 2016; M. Radelet, “The Incremental Retributive Impact of a Death Sentence Over Life Without Parole,” University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform, Volume 49, Issue 4, 2016.) See Studies and Victims. https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/node/6539.]

Continuing, the ACWC examined how a moratorium on all executions might positively impact women and families. No matter if the person is a woman or a man serving life without parole, that person is still a spouse, partner, or parent even though they are incarcerated, and opportunities for having relationships with their family members are encouraged at most prison facilities. Relationships are the key to transformation from brokenness to wholeness for every human being, each one created in God’s Holy Image. C.S. Lewis said, “The majority of people’s problems are caused by the fact that they are disconnected with the rest of creation.” If disconnection is the root of many of our problems, then reconnection with family members can be a significant key to a person’s transformation, even while incarcerated, and the maintenance of connection (relationship) can positively impact the lives of all involved.

Terry Kupers, M.D. writes, “The most striking feature of the literature about the benefits of visits for prisoners, their families and communities, is that there is little if any contrary argument and conflicting data to the general principle that the better the quality of visitation throughout a prisoner’s incarceration, the better the effects on the prisoner, his or her post-release adjustment, the family of the prisoner and the community. There is such a strong and universal consensus on this point that many states assume the positive correlation in their official policies.” [Terry A. Kupers, M.D., “Brief Literature Review, re: Prison Visiting,” (October 9, 2000), National Organization of Forensic Social Work, nofsw.org/wp-content/.../11/THE-IMPORTANCE-OF-FAMILY-VISITATION.docx.]


Thus, if no one benefits from the execution of a human life, and everyone has the potential to benefit from a sentence of life without parole, the ACWC sees the advocacy of the approval of this overture as a no-brainer.

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**Item 11-03**

[The assembly approved Item 11-03 as amended. See pp. 41, 56–57.]

*On Recognizing the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet’s Prophetic Voice for Today—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.*

The Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Recognize the prophetic witness of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet, pastor of 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.[4] and Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City,[4] and founding pastor of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

2. Authorize an anniversary publishing of “A Memorial Discourse,” to be published by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, with the proceeds to benefit [the 175-year-old] 15th Street Presbyterian Church, Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, and St. James Presbyterian Church, which will soon celebrate its 125th anniversary, in close proximity to Hamilton Grange National Park. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) shall consult with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns on how the new publication can best meet the needs of contemporary and future ministries of the PC(USA) including the unique needs of local congregations and youth ministries [the successor church to Shiloh Presbyterian Church].

3. Encourage the members of the [denomination] [PC(USA)] to visit [these congregations] as shrines to freedom [these congregations] and to actively support their continuing ministry.
4. Encourage Presbyterian seminaries and other institutions of higher learning to actively study the impact of this divinely gifted orator and writer, and the way in which his witness helped lead to such documents as the Confession of Belhar.

5. Request Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to include “A Memorial Discourse” in any materials developed in the future for the study of The Confession of Belhar.


Rationale

The Reverend Henry Highland Garnet gave what is considered the most important speech in African American history as the first of his race to address Congress on February 12, 1865. The stakes were immense. President Abraham Lincoln, a frequent visitor to New York Avenue Presbyterian Church a block from the White House, had just achieved the Congressional passage of the first constitutional amendment in sixty years. Lincoln, through the House chaplain, decided that Garnet could make the moral case for the prosecution of a bloody war and a watershed change in American society during a Memorial Service on his 56th birthday. The lesson for today’s times was that Lincoln chose the most strident and most eloquent opponent of slavery over the preceding two decades instead of seeking a conciliatory or middle-of-the-road approach.

In a Memorial Discourse published by the Session of 15th Street Presbyterian Church soon after the speech—the speech, which became known by its signature phrase “Let the Monster Perish, Perish Now and Perish Forever”—was combined with Garnet’s first major address to those enslaved in the United States in Buffalo in 1843 and his message of thanks to the relief committee after the anti-draft riots in New York City in 1865. That original speech was considered inflammatory because it called for a general strike and armed rebellion by those in slavery. In 1863, as the dean of black pastors in New York City, Garnet was sought by mobs for lynching.

Senator Charles Sumner, the architect of Congressional Reconstruction, gave his copy of “A Memorial Discourse” to the Harvard University library where the heavily annotated passages show how Garnet guided Sumner’s subsequent passage of the 14th Amendment and 15th Amendment. That a mere eighteen months later, Garnet saw his faith confirmed through God’s movement in history is a profound Scriptural lesson, the modern equivalent of the parting of the Red Sea. As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) discerns its adherence to the new Confession of Belhar, Garnet’s witness is the roadmap for addressing such issues as the retention of Confederate statues and continuing disparities in wealth, education, health, and well-being. In that first speech, Garnet said, “Let Your Motto Be Resistance, Resistance, Resistance.”

Garnet has been obscured in a tide of revision that tells the story of the American Civil War through the lens of the Confederacy. Having ordained Garnet, still a fugitive slave, as an elder and then a pastor in the Presbytery of Troy, the PC(USA) has a responsibility to history and to the Creator to witness his prophetic voice and to let his words speak not only for those in bondage but for the spirit of unity and moral righteousness displayed by the American people in 1865 with the passage of the 13th Amendment. Garnet tells us today that the tough issues can be addressed, that right can prevail and that justice only awaits our courage to speak as God would have us to do.

Many people are unaware of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet’s extraordinary impact. This video, at 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., from last Easter, reenacts three of his most important messages. Here is a digital copy of A Memorial Discourse, which the session of 15th Street printed soon after the most important speech in African American history.

Concurrence to Item 11-03 from the Presbyteries of De Cristo and National Capital.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-03 reminds the church of the witness of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet and requests reprinting of a key speech.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval based upon additional considerations below.

In their rationale, the proponent presbyteries suggest a connection between the prophetic work of Rev. Garnet and the recent adoption of The Confession of Belhar by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Such a link could be made in the writing of the U.S. Accompanying Letter recommended in Item 14-01. Remembering the role played by abolitionists in the Presbyterian church in the pre-Civil War years would be part of the contextualization of Belhar called for in that overture.

In the comment from the Presbyterian Publishing House (Westminster/JohnKnox Press), they factor in the cost of commissioning a new introduction to what would be a small booklet containing several of Garnet’s powerful orations. The challenge would be to put Garnet’s forthright call for slaves to rebel into dialogue with other approaches to black liberation up to Martin
Luther King Jr. and the South African authors of The Confession of Belhar. Garnet, born into a family that escaped slavery when he was young, was uncompromising in his abolitionism and held a position similar to that of John Brown.

For commissioners unfamiliar with Garnet’s role, an online search can reveal some of the numerous treatments of his life that testify to his influence. For an early recovery of his role, including the reprinting of ten of Garnet’s writings, see Earl Ofari, “Let Your Motto Be Resistance:” The Life and Thought of Henry Highland Garnet (Boston: Beacon, 1972).

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-03.

ACREC supports this overture as it brings awareness to the rich diversity of voices combating racism and prejudices from the church, honors the prophetic voice of our diversity, and supports our commitment to human diversity and accepting people’s expression of world and societal issues.

PPC COMMENT ON ITEM 11-03

Comment on Item 11-03—From the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC).

The Reverend Henry Highland Garnet served as pastor of Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City, Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Washington D.C., as president of Avery College, a co-ed school for free people of color, and later as the pastor of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, both in Pittsburgh. His “A Memorial Discourse,” delivered February 12, 1865, in the House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., is considered by many as one of the important speeches in African American history. The speech was reenacted by John William Templeton as part of the 175th anniversary of Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church.

His lecture now resides in the public domain and is available to view and download free of charge through several sources on the Internet, including Google Books, Archive.org, the Hathi Trust Digital Library, the New York Public Library digital collection, and other sources. Hardback and paperback reprint editions of a short book that includes Garnet’s speech along with an introduction, a biography of Garnet, and various responses to his speech, are available for sale on Amazon.com.

Westminster John Knox Press, the book imprint of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, receives no denominational funding for its work. To reprint this title would require typesetting, proofreading, and printing costs, in addition to the cost to hire someone to write a new introduction to the work. We estimate the cost at $4,825, including the cost of a new introduction, for a paperback printing of 1,000 copies. Alternately, an ebook-only edition of the book could be produced for $2,335. The work would require approximately twelve months to complete. Given the wide availability of free editions of the work, we do not expect that a new edition would generate many proceeds.

Item 11-04

[The assembly approved Item 11-04 as amended. See pp. 13, 57.]

On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty—From the Presbytery of Boise.

The Presbytery of Boise respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to take the following actions to affirm and clarify the position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding the appropriate boundaries of religious liberty:

1. Affirm the “Guiding Principles for Ethical Decisions Concerning Religious Freedom Around the World” as approved by the 214th General Assembly (2002) (Minutes, 2002, Part I, pp. 666ff), as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s position regarding the intersection of religious freedom and human rights, and a sound application of the denomination’s policy statement, God Alone Is Lord of Conscience, as adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988);

2. Affirm, consistent with these actions of previous assemblies, and the principles of the Confession of Belhar, that religious freedom is not a license for discrimination against any of God’s people, and cannot justify the denial of secular employment or benefits, healthcare, public or commercial services or goods, or parental rights to persons based on race, ethnicity, [sex], gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion], or gender expression.
3. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to oppose legislative, judicial, and administrative efforts at the state and federal levels to limit the protection of persons based upon race, ethnicity, [sex,] gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion,] or gender expression in the guise of religious freedom.

4. Encourage synods and presbyteries to oppose legislative, judicial, and administrative efforts at the state and federal levels to limit the protection of persons based upon race, ethnicity, [sex,] gender, physical limitations, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion,] or gender expression in the guise of religious freedom.

5. Encourage all Presbyterians to distinguish between our historical understanding of our religious freedom to practice the essential tenets of our faith, and the misuse of the term religious freedom as a justification for discrimination in the provision of secular employment or benefits, healthcare, public or commercial services or goods, or parental rights to persons based on race, ethnicity, [sex,] gender, physical limitations, sexual orientation, gender identity, [religion,] or gender expression.

Rationale

The misuse of “religious liberty” is costing lives and depriving individuals of basic human rights. The federal government and state legislatures are considering and passing legislation, and adopting administrative rules and regulations, under the guise of religious freedom, that in reality are nothing more (or less) than a targeted attempt to promote a singular religious viewpoint that does not believe LGBTQ individuals are entitled to the full scope of human rights to employment, healthcare, and parenting rights. These laws give businesses, service and healthcare providers, government workers, and private citizens engaged in commercial activities the unfettered right to discriminate against others, deny them needed services, and impose their own religious beliefs on others, so long as they cite their religious or moral belief as the reason for doing so. Similarly, individuals found to have violated laws guaranteeing against discrimination in public accommodations and the delivery of commercial services are claiming a right to assert religious freedom as a shield against liability for such discrimination. Categorizing discrimination against individuals on the basis of such individuals’ race, ethnicity, physical limitations, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression as an exercise of religious freedom flies in the face of the foundation of such freedom—the assurance of the dignity and basic human rights of all human beings—and should not be condoned by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The General Assembly, in its previous approval of “Guiding Principles for Ethical Decisions Concerning Religious Freedom Around the World” by the 214th General Assembly (2002), of the policy statement, God Alone Is Lord of Conscience by the 200th General Assembly (1988), has laid a firm foundation for the necessity of and boundaries for the exercise of religious freedom. However, neither statement addressed the misuse of religious freedom to justify denial of basic human rights to individuals based upon race, ethnicity, physical limitations, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Recent executive and legislative actions—such as the “Presidential Executive Order Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty,” issued May 4, 2017, and the so-called “First Amendment Defense Act”—seek to justify discrimination against individuals, particularly individuals who face discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression under the guise of religious freedom. Likewise, in Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, the United States Supreme Court is currently determining whether individuals can avoid liability for violating state anti-discrimination laws regarding public accommodations and the delivery of commercial goods and services by claiming a religious right to engage in such discrimination. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should speak with a clear voice for “the destitute, the poor and the wronged” (Book of Confessions, Confession of Belhar, 10.7) to affirm that “religious freedom” can never be a pretext for denying all of God’s children basic human rights and freedom from discrimination in secular employment or benefits, healthcare, public or commercial services or goods, or parental rights.

Concurrences to Item 11-04 from the Presbyteries of Heartland, Mission, and Scioto Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-04 requests that the General Assembly affirm and clarify the position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding the appropriate boundaries of religious liberty.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 11-04 be approved as amended below:

That the category “sex” be included in all of the listings of identification throughout the overture.

Recommendations 2 and 3 would now list “… persons based on race, ethnicity, [sex,] gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression…”

Recommendations 4 and 5 would now list “… persons based on race, ethnicity, [sex,] gender, physical limitations, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression…”
ACSWP has submitted a related item for approval by the assembly, Item 11-15, “A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination.” The committee regards Items 11-04 and 11-15 as supportive of each other and advises approval of both. However, Item 11-15 specifically addresses religiously motivated discrimination against women in their reproductive capacities, among other differences between the two statements.

As Item 11-15 notes, numerous claims of “religious freedom” have sprung up in the courts. In addition to the denial of goods and services to LGBTQ persons, these claims often involve women’s access to reproductive health care.

The 204th General Assembly (1992) approved a report on “Problem Pregnancies and Abortion,” which stated that churches must support “full and equal access to contraceptive methods.” It also affirmed “the ability and responsibility of women, guided by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, in the context of communities of faith, to make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies,” including “the considered decision of a woman to terminate a pregnancy.” The basic human right to control one’s reproductive decisions is now being threatened by those who use their religious values to discriminate against women (and men) who choose to make different, legal decisions. This position was reaffirmed by the 220th General Assembly (2012) in the resolution “On Providing Just Access to Reproductive Healthcare.”

All categories describing human sexuality and identity are cultural constructs. Sex and gender are not the same, so it is wise to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and on the basis of gender identity and expression. Including “sex” in the listing of identifiers ensures that the church oppose all forms of religiously motivated discrimination.

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ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-04.

As people of color continue to be subjected to discrimination, ACREC echoes the need to advocate for justice and oppose any efforts to legalize or legitimate actions that are oppressive, particularly in the name of religious liberty.

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ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-04.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns agrees that “religious freedom” is not a license to discriminate against God’s people. ACWC feels that such language is distorted and misused for oppressive and marginalizing purposes. Additionally, so called religious freedom has been used to interfere with women’s rights to safe and affordable medical care and for the purposing of controlling women’s bodies by way of limiting reproductive healthcare options. As people of faith, committed to justice, we should all be troubled by the continued assaults on the reproductive wellbeing and healthcare for women. We affirm that God alone is Lord of Conscience and that women, with their healthcare providers, are the only persons informed and equipped to make the best decisions about their bodies, their health, and their wellbeing, as well as that of their families. [For more on the specifics of PC(USA) policy, see When You Need Wisdom, Problem Pregnancy Resource produced by the Office of Gender and Racial Justice, Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women, 2010. (pp. 7–10). Available free here: http://store.pcusa.org/2752610004?sc=10&category=16403.]}

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**Item 11-05**

The assembly approved Item 11-05 as amended. See pp. 13, 57–58.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

“[1. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to change its name to Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).]

“[4.] [2.]Direct all six agencies of the PC(USA) to move toward changing “racial ethnic people” to “people of color” in all documents, parlance, and programs from this point forward.

“[3. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to change its name to Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).]
“3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) to change “Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC)” to “Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)” in all documents, parlance, and programs.”

**Rationale**

These recommendations are a final response to the following referral:


The ACREC sought to ensure that terminology changes would be made denomination-wide. The first recommendation assumes that the agencies will immediately update any web-based references to “racial ethnic people” to “people of color,” and that any already printed documents will be used up and then updated to reflect the new language as new printings are required. This allows for good stewardship of the resources already in print.

This referral response also made evident the need to update ACREC’s own name to replace the term “racial ethnic.”

Reflection on scripture led to many passages that made clear that God, at times through human servants, administered justice and equity to all the people. Psalm 9:7 supports this, as does Isaiah 11:4, Micah 3:9, Psalm 99:4, Exodus 23:6, and Isaiah 30:18, just to name a few.

The following is a summary of the process followed by the committee in coming to the name, Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC):

1. The ACREC engaged in a daylong training about white supremacy and the components of systems that support and perpetuate systems of white privilege and power.
2. From this training and follow-up conversations, members of ACREC concluded that “racial equity” was a more accurate representation of the work and ministry to which the advocacy committee is called on behalf of people of color.
3. Unlike racial equality, racial equity results when you cannot predict advantage or disadvantage by race. Rather, the route to achieving equity will not be accomplished through treating everyone equally. It will be achieved by treating everyone equitably, or justly according to their circumstances, which we believe is the work of the committee advocating for people of color.
4. As referenced in the response to referral to Item 11-24 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016), people of color must be the ones to name themselves, and it is always most appropriate to ask individuals how they prefer to identify. This is the committee name that the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee has chosen for ourselves.
5. Language is ever evolving, and this terminology must be revisited regularly and appropriate naming determined by people of color themselves.
6. This conversation again raises the urgency of deconstructing systems of white privilege/supremacy and paternalism—work that must be completed by white people themselves.

**Item 11-06**

Moved to 04 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, as Item 04-07. [See p. 468.]

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**Item 11-07**

[The assembly approved Item 11-07. See pp. 55, 58.]

*A Resolution to Respond to Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) to form a five-member task group (majority black women and members to be identified by ACWC with a passion and experience of advocating for black girls and/or women) to:
1. Study the research on disparities of black girls and women, including the results of the report “Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls’ Childhood” published by the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality with the intention of interjecting and expanding the work that is already being done around the national church in the area of racial justice to include the particular lived experiences of black women and girls.

2. After study and discernment, make recommendations on how the PC(USA) can strategically and prophetically engage and determine how the church might be most effective in impacting in this important social issue.

3. Propose an action plan that acknowledges and makes visible the predicament of black girls and women to the church, recognizing the humanity of black girls and women so that the PC(USA) might take the disparities seriously and develop programming and resources that participates in addressing these disparities.

4. Meet two times in-person as well as electronically as needed.

5. Utilize annual funds ($7,000) allocated by the 220th General Assembly (2012) to the Women of Color Joint Working Group to supplement costs of meeting and necessary resourcing.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $11,060. Total—$22,120]

Rationale

“Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism.”

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has consistently understood our heritage to include both public witness and practical discipleship for God’s justice in the world, particularly on behalf of the most marginalized in our midst. Although we recognize the pervasive sin of racism, in conversations in the church around racism and racial disparities, black girls and women are often overlooked, undervalued, and rendered invisible. These external views and tropes seek to dehumanize and stereotype black girls and women. At this critical moment in history, when racism, sexism, and misogyny explicitly abound throughout the current culture, causing significant spiritual and emotional violence against women, it imperative for the church to hear the voices of those long silenced. This proposed task force would be action toward the commitment of the PC(USA)’s decade of “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God.”

Studies consistently demonstrate that starting at a young age, black girls are disproportionately suspended and expelled, a crisis that has continued repercussions for black girls, women, and whole communities. And, although black girls and women are only 13 percent of the overall population, they make up 1/3 of the people killed by police. Further, research indicates that black girls’ childhoods are erased as they are viewed as needing less nurturing, protection, support, and comforting, and as more independent, knowing more about adult topics, and knowing more about sex.

Endnotes


ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-07.
ACREC supports this overture as it brings awareness to the rich diversity of voices combating racism and prejudices from the church. This overture supports our commitment to human diversity and the inclusion of those who are marginalized and oppressed by racism.

“Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism.”

From Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls’ Childhood:

Studies consistently demonstrate that starting at a young age, black girls are disproportionately suspended and expelled, a crisis that has continued repercussions for black girls, women, and whole communities. And, although black girls and women are only 13 percent of the overall population, they make up 1/3 of the people killed by police. Further, research indicates that black girls’ childhoods are erased as they are viewed as needing less nurturing, protection, support, and comforting, and as more independent, knowing more about adult topics, and knowing more about sex.

Endnotes for ACREC Advice and Counsel


Item 11-08

[The assembly approved Item 11-08 as amended. See pp. 13, 58.]

A Report with Recommendations on Drug Policy: Putting Healing Before Punishment—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following affirmation and recommendations:

Affirmation

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a responsibility to provide advocacy “for effective drug policies grounded in science, compassion, and human rights” (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 630). The “war on drugs” has generated numerous destructive and deadly side effects while failing to deliver an adequate or effective response to the problems associated with illicit drug use. In light of this, we call on church and society to shift approaches: to put healing before punishment.

This report begins by showing that the war on drugs is not working. While we can’t know what the world would look like if we had not declared war on drugs, attempts at eradication have become at least as destructive as the drugs themselves. Our punitive approach has spread violence at home and abroad. It has caused disproportionate harm to communities of color, contributed to crime and to the crisis of mass incarceration. At the same time, its harsh penalties failed to prevent an opioid crisis, which has become the leading cause of death for young adults in many states. This report comes at a time when the public’s acceptance of marijuana is propelling efforts to decriminalize and legalize cannabis for medical and recreational use.

Instead of punishment, this report advocates a therapeutic approach to the problems associated with psychoactive drug use and abuse. This includes effective campaigns to discourage drug use and an expansion of harm reduction programs, such as needle exchanges. It calls the church to learn from the successes and failures of nations and states that have decriminalized or legalized drug use and developed social service networks to reduce the harms associated with drug use.

This report distinguishes between “decriminalization” and “legalization.” “Decriminalization” refers to reforms such as those that legalize growing and possessing small amounts of cannabis. “Legalization,” by contrast, refers to laws that would legalize its commercial production and sale.

The healing model envisioned in this paper would move away from criminalizing all drug use, but would still require drug regulation (as with tobacco, alcohol, and other pharmaceuticals). Therefore, in line with earlier General Assembly action supporting medical marijuana, it calls for an evidence-based revision of the 1970 categorization of drugs upon which the drug war was based. We need a scientific basis for proportionate criminal sanctions, responsible regulation, and effective therapy.

This report expects that the scientific evidence may suggest that some drugs are so addictive and dangerous that they require strict regulation and possibly proscription. But it also anticipates that the evidence will indicate that other
drugs should be decriminalized or have the penalties associated with them lightened. Fines and penalties may need to be attached to particular drugs to encourage addicts to seek treatment.

This report recommends that State and Federal Governments decriminalize personal cannabis production, possession, and use. It does not recommend legalization at this time because an evidence-based policy requires further research, particularly into the impact of cannabis on the developing brains of late adolescents. Our experience with big tobacco and pharmaceutical companies involved in the opioid epidemic teaches us that drug companies habitually put profits before people. Too swift a move to legalization is creating a trillion dollar industry that will fund bogus research, corrupt our politics, and advertise to the detriment of public health.

This paper is concerned about the harmful potential of many currently illegal (and some legal) drugs, including the possibility of addiction. Some drug use can injure health, impair human performance, and harm relationships. Drug use has spiritual dimensions. Even non-addictive drug use can orient life away from life with God in community with others. In addition to calling Christians to promote prevention and treatment, this report invites the church to recognize that the scale and scope of compulsively consumed drugs, including alcohol, reveals a culture-wide, spiritual problem. It calls the church to respond to the deeper issues that drive people, even non-addicts, to escape reality and numb pain.

A. Principles for Building a House for Healing

1. Presbyterians should be guided by the wisdom of our theological and ethical tradition as we consider reforms to drug laws.

2. Drug policy should be based on scientific evidence and informed by practical experience gathered from states, national, and international “experiments” with criminality and legalization.  

3. Our theological tradition teaches us that God intends secular law to restrain evil and to guide and restore.

4. The criminal justice system should be dedicated to “restraining evil,” protecting citizens from behavior that harms or puts others at risk. A responsible community should protect the common good by legislating restrictions and protective interventions.

5. The bulk of government, church, and private resources dedicated to addressing the public health consequences associated with substance use and abuse should be dedicated to guiding and restoring people; this includes education, prevention, harm reduction, as well as physical and mental health care.

6. Specialized drug courts should offer treatment, restitution, and other alternatives to incarceration whenever possible.

7. The lives and rights of poor people, communities of color, and women in the United States and around the world are no less sacred or valuable than anyone else’s lives or rights.

8. Good drug policies are equitable with regard to race, income, and gender.

9. As a denomination that is predominately white, PC(USA) members have opportunities and responsibilities to address racist structures, processes, and social outcomes that cause the war on drugs to disproportionately impact people of color.

10. Drug use and addiction reflects and contributes to a broken societal ethos that calls for a holistic and communal response.

11. Public, cultural, and societal messages concerning drug use can set social expectations that can create an ethos of prevention and recovery.

12. The church is called to respond to drug addicts and abusers with compassion and healing. When possible, the church should support alternatives to incarceration.

13. Economic incentives for involvement in drug production and trafficking need to be addressed. Current drug policy has had unacceptable, unintended consequences for low-income populations at home and abroad.

14. The increase in gun violence in Latin America attributable to U.S. drug policy and U.S. gun industry exports is inconsistent with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s theology of peacemaking.

15. People should have access to essential medicine. With careful controls and under medical guidance based on good scientific research, cannabis, opiates and other therapeutic medications should be available for people who would benefit from them.
B. **Recommendations Based on Principles for Building a House for Healing**

The goal of these recommendations is to encourage each congregation to develop a referral plan for cases of problematic drug use, to gather insight into the structural violence that underpins current drug policies, and to understand how to support healing and advocate for constructive change.

**Recommendations**

A. **Recommendations for PC(USA) Action and Policy**

1. Each presbytery is encouraged to designate a drug policy facilitator to support congregational engagement and awareness of advocacy and treatment options. The Presbyterian Mission Agency is similarly encouraged to assist presbyteries in identifying facilitators, drawing on earlier health ministries contacts, and the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) networks of mutual support.

2. Facilitators are urged to visit congregations in their presbyteries to support their deeper reflection, learning, and engagement, and to assist interested congregations in the following processes:

   a. **Education**

      (1) Use material that is accurate scientifically, age-appropriate and credible, oriented to harm reduction and not simply abstinence, and which presents Christianity as a grace-filled and body-affirming way of joyful service in the world.

      (2) Survey congregation members’ experiences (or absence of experiences) of drug use, drug enforcement, incarceration, treatment, and recovery, and determine the best ways for members to learn from their communities and obtain reliable information.

      (3) Hold congregation and community forums on changing drug law so that they are made more just, effective, and compassionate. These should include listening to people of color and seeking economic diversity.

      (4) Produce worship materials that refer to this report’s goals and recommendations. These may encourage a celebration of God as healer and source of joy and connection, in contrast to our culture’s over-stimulation and worship of unlimited consumption.

      (5) Educate church leaders that substance abuse is often a co-occurring disorder with mental illness and in order to move towards recovery on one, both must be addressed.

   b. **Community Service**

      (1) Help Presbyterian congregations develop a referral process for problematic drug use, including non-punitive treatment and recovery facilities, harm reduction programs, and police and non-police options in their communities.

      (2) While recognizing the benefits of abstinence-based approaches for many people, promote non-prohibitionist efforts to reduce the harms from high-risk drug use among both youth and adults.

      (3) Support reentry programs for people released from incarceration.

   c. **Engagement and Advocacy**

      (1) Encourage churches to host addiction recovery groups and to engage in constructive dialogue about treatment, prevention of abuse, and harm reduction. Congregations, 12-step programs, and counselors are also encouraged to explore how both drug use and recovery relate to the quest for meaning and joy in life, found by Christians in Christ and God’s reign.

      (2) Advocate for harm reduction legislation and measures, such as needle exchanges and all-night drop-in centers. To this end, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) invites other faith groups, including members of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., to join us in this endeavor.

      (3) The 223rd General Assembly (2018) recommend that PC(USA) participate in the UNGASS follow-up to the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Drugs.

B. **Public Policy Recommendations**

In addition to congregational engagement in the process of drug policy reform, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) recommends the following reforms and actions by federal, state, and local governments. Presbyterians can advocate these changes with both elected officials and candidates.
1. Encourage Congress and the Executive Branch of the Federal Government to:

   a. Call on the U.S. government and the United Nations to revisit the global prohibition regime and allow states’ and nations’ flexibility to explore alternatives to criminalizing illicit drugs and to test them against the realities on the ground. For instance, recognizing that some states have fully legalized marijuana with regulation, U.S. federal law should also allow this.

   b. In concert with the Federal Government, encourage states to examine decriminalizing and reducing punishments for the use and possession of some currently illicit drugs by adults. In particular, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) recommends decriminalizing cannabis, pardoning and expunging the records of those who have been arrested for cannabis infractions, and enact laws that would allow states to try different approaches to cannabis regulation. As the goal of drug reform is to increase public health and safety, further movement towards legalization generally should take place after publicly funded study of social, educational, crime-related, and medical impacts. Particular care must be taken to restrain commercial interests who will seek to privatize profits while socializing the costs. To this end, it is advisable to prohibit all advertising and lobbying. It is also important to separate production and sale, using state-run (not simply licensed) facilities for sale, monitoring purity, and studying consumption patterns. Appropriate warnings, labels, age-limits, and other restrictions should be applied. We anticipate that the science may dictate that some drugs continue to retain penalties to encourage people to enter treatment.

2. With regard to public health:

   a. Revise the current outdated scheduling of controlled substances, based on publicly funded, scientific, public health criteria.

   b. In connection with Recommendation 2.a. above, increase epidemiological and biomedical research on effects of drugs, patterns of drug use, and impacts of punishment and regulation in order to support best practices in treatment, recovery, and public health.

   c. Expand treatment availability based on scientific findings in 2.b., above, and medically assisted treatment for those who may otherwise find stability hard to achieve.

   d. Provide city and county public health agencies the resources they need to serve as first responders to overdose, problematic drug-induced behavior, and mental illness, so that law enforcement is not the only or primary first responder. Establish overdose prevention as a public health goal and make the antidote Nalaxone available. Promote Good Samaritan legislation to protect persons who notify emergency responders of an overdose.

   e. Drawing on evidence of effectiveness, reevaluate which behavioral health treatments are supported by insurance coverage. In the absence of universal health care, the eighteen states that have not done so should embrace the Affordable Care Act’s expansion of Medicaid coverage to low-income individuals.

   f. Lift the ban on federal funding for needle exchange programs and revise laws on drug paraphernalia (including the possession of clean needles), which is consistent with reducing risks of the drugs themselves and associated diseases of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.

3. With regard to the judicial system and policing:

   a. Condition grants of federal funds to local police and sheriff’s departments on ending racially and ethnically discriminatory policing and expanding community trust.

   b. Eliminate the sentencing disparities between crack and powdered forms of cocaine. Expand the scope of executive orders and group pardons for the release of drug offenders who were sentenced unjustly under the 100-to-1 crack-cocaine and other inequitable and excessive sentencing provisions.

   c. Make our criminal justice system more just by reforming mandatory sentencing and restraining prosecutorial discretion, especially with defendants who are unable to receive or afford effective counsel and cannot review the evidence against them.

   d. Eliminate preemptive post-incarceration sanctions for drug offenses that create barriers to recovery and family reintegration, including employment discrimination, restrictions on public housing, and voting.

   e. Enable social service agencies and community representatives to engage in restorative justice and investment practices together with people who have been harmed by police violence, unjust mandatory minimum sentences, and disparate drug law enforcement.
f. Increase and improve the use of drug courts that deal knowledgeably with persons accused of crimes, particularly nonviolent offenses, probation or parole violations, and cases where children are impacted, to facilitate treatment, training, education, and employment.

g. End or radically reform asset-forfeiture laws to prevent police seizures of property without due process.

h. Offer people convicted of the nonviolent sale of illicit drugs opportunities for training, education, and employment as an alternative to incarceration and a felony record.

i. When laws legalize or decriminalize possession of cannabis, appropriate governmental bodies should pardon or commute penalties of those sentenced under the old rules and expunge the old conviction from their records.

j. Offer diversion options or pathways for offenders that replace prosecution within the criminal justice system. These alternatives can be pursued at any stage of the process: pre-booking, post-charge, or post-conviction. Examples of the pre-booking model is the (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) LEAD program initiated in Seattle in 2011, now in six cities. This four-year pilot program permits police to refer offenders directly to housing, treatment, and other services. Another example is the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI), started in Gloucester, Massachusetts, where if individuals come to the police department and turn in their paraphernalia, police do not arrest them but instead would steer them to treatment. This is now being done by more than 300 police jurisdictions nationwide. (These options would precede drug courts, which are generally post-conviction).

4. Economic Policy:

a. Many foreign regions that grow coca and poppies have become economically dependent on the exports to the U.S. of drugs made from these plants. While our drug problem results mainly from our demand, a successful program to squelch that demand will require complementary adjustment in these places to develop agriculture and other beneficial economic activities, to replace coca and poppy growing. To promote sustainable economic development in these countries, the U.S. should modify its foreign policy in at least these four ways:

   (1) Demilitarize our foreign aid. It undercuts development prospects when we put more weapons in the hands of governments with, at best, weak democratic and humanitarian institutions.

   (2) Provide financial and technical aid for infrastructure and social services in rural areas, increasing their capacity to produce and market non-drug products. For instance, drugs have high value to weight; switching to other products and activities requires more efficient transport facilities.

   (3) Do not punish countries that allow cultivation of coca or other drug crops for domestic consumption, especially when these are part of the traditional culture, as with coca leaf in the Andean countries. Doing this, or pressuring them to carry out defoliation campaigns, fuels resentment toward the U.S. and pushback against our drug policy.

   (4) Pursue international trade policies that facilitate these countries legitimate exports to the U.S., such as fruit and cut flowers.

b. Promote economic investment in or provide opportunity elsewhere for U.S. communities that have been devastated by disinvestment and harmed by discriminatory drug law enforcement and/or drug-related violence. Encourage the limiting of employee drug testing to what is needed to safeguard the person’s performance of a job, and remove punitive drug testing and other penalties on recipients of public assistance, applicants for public professional licenses, scholarship assistance, and other means of self-betterment and participation in society, in concert with Recommendation 3.d. above.

5. Foreign and Immigration Policy:

a. Sharply reduce the transfer of weaponry, training, and equipment from the United States to police and militaries in Latin America as part of the war on drugs. Make such transfers of arms and training transparent to the public, to promote accountability. Disclose the extent and general nature of surveillance cooperation and strengthen financial disclosure laws to reduce corruption, money-laundering, and cross-border tax evasion. Advocate congressional and other public hearings on the human rights and economic development impacts of the war on drugs and any foreign aid linked to it.

b. The President of the United States should take executive action to ban the import of assault weapons into the United States, where many are sold and trafficked to criminal drug-trafficking organizations in Mexico and Central America.

c. Provide political asylum and immediate release from detention, pending appropriate process, for those who have fled violence and have a credible fear of violence in their home countries where the war on drugs is occurring,
These affirmations and recommendations are in response to the following referral: On a Two-Year Study to Discern How to Advocate for Effective Drug Policies—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 631).

PART I: WHY THE WAR ON DRUGS FAILED

This report recommends shifting our approach to drug use and abuse from a punitive to a healing model. It does not deny the serious risks and harm incurred by ingesting some illicit substances, whether one is addicted or not, and it recognizes that one cannot prove a hypothetical, namely, how society would have developed had we tried another approach. But it chronicles how the costs of eradicating illegal drugs have become a cure worse than the disease itself. It encourages the church to love our neighbors, all of them: those harmed by drug abuse, addicts, drug dealers, and people in communities devastated by the drug trade. It calls the church to examine the damage caused by our war on drugs and work to heal our communities.

Contribution to Crime

Experts agree that the drug war contributes to crime and violence, even as they debate the extent of its contribution. The maximal argument goes like this: The war on drug suppliers and users creates a violent, underground, criminal economy. Steal from your local liquor store and the owner need not threaten or use force. She can call the police and they will protect her. By contrast, drug merchants operate outside the law and can’t call the police. They depend solely on violence and intimidation. This explains why studies find that most “drug-related violence” is not due to the drugs themselves (drug induced violence) or addicts committing crime to support their habit, but due to the criminal enterprises that legality makes possible.

Jill Leovy contends that the maximal argument has it almost exactly backwards, claiming that a dysfunctional culture encourages illegal activities to flourish. She observes that where young men have few opportunities and there is weak rule of law, gangs fill the vacuum. She notes that in many urban areas the criminal justice system “is at once oppressive and inadequate.” It is oppressive because it is preoccupied with nuisance abatement and rapidly escalates to violence in response to perceived threats. It is inadequate because it fails to protect black men from bodily injury and death. When the state fails to maintain, in the sociologist Max Weber’s terms, “a monopoly on violence” it sets the stage for gang protection and vigilantism. The Mafia predates prohibition, arising in 19th century Sicily in areas with the weak rule of law.

Leovy’s findings suggest that relaxing criminal penalties for drugs may not reduce drug-related crime as much as is sometimes claimed. So long as policing in poor communities is inadequate and men do not have access to decent employment opportunities, gangs will form. So long as guns are plentiful, gun violence will be the norm. And so long as society upholds barriers to remunerative and legal employment (inadequate schools, community isolation, lack of transportation, racial discrimination, etc.), people who currently go to prison for drug-related crimes will seek other schemes to make money without regard to legality. Ending prohibition did not eliminate the Mafia; it changed their business model as they turned to other criminal activity.

This said, it does not follow that ending the drug war would have no impact. Drug gangs reach for the low-hanging fruit and drug trafficking affords easy and significant profits. The task force, whose initial study informs this report, examined the terrible crime wave that swept over Ciudad Juárez, El Paso’s, sister city along border, which suffered more than 3,000 homicides in 2010. In talking with Susie Byrd, former city council member in El Paso, she explained, “You can buy … a pound of marijuana [in Mexico] for $23 and … sell it in Chicago for $770. So, the markup is extraordinary.” Tremendous revenues make drug trafficking an attractive venture, despite the risks, particularly for those in communities with limited employment opportunities in the legitimate economy. Drug profits fund one side of the drug was as they are “invested in state-of-the-art weapons, hiring gangs to defend their trade, paying off public officials, and making drugs easily available to children. …”

The criminal economy corrupts other sectors of society. Drug traffickers have a particular need to launder money because drugs are primarily paid for with cash, which is bulky, difficult to move, and, in large quantities, draws the attention of law enforcement. Criminal enterprises have used diverse methods to launder money; some involve large banks. Since 2010 federal investigators have accused Wachovia Bank (subsequently taken over by Wells Fargo) and banking giant HSBC of violating banking regulations. They charged that they moved some $420 billion and more than $679 billion, respectively, through their accounts on behalf of Mexican drug cartels. Prosecutors charged that Wachovia “willfully” overlooked the suspicious nature of this probable drug money and knowingly failed to institute standard anti-money laundering mechanisms, ignoring persistent and urgent warnings from a London whistleblower and others. When the investigation of Wachovia began, money-laundering activities simply shifted to banking giant HSBC. Neither the banks nor the individual bankers involved were prosecuted. Instead, Wachovia made a $160 million federal payment, less than one twentieth of one percent of the amount it helped launder, while HSBC paid a much larger forfeiture and fine of $1.9 billion.
The shift from Wachovia to HSBC is an example of what experts call “the balloon effect, where squeezing with tighter enforcement in one place produces a swelling or increase in traffic in another.”\textsuperscript{10} Interdiction efforts push the drug trade somewhere else. Victories in eliminating one source are negated by the emergence of other sources, traffickers, and routes. In this connection, we note that targeting low-level producers, transporters, and sellers of illicit drugs, generally targets poor people who chose the risks associated with drug trafficking because structural poverty presents them with few economic options. Such people are easily replaced.

The balloon effect is also observed in the strategy of going after high-level traffickers. “While the arrests of kingpins make for splashy headlines,” The New York Times noted, “the result has been a fragmenting of the cartels and spikes in violence … as smaller groups fight for control. Like a hydra, it seems that each time the government cuts down a cartel, multiple other groups, sometimes even more vicious, spring up to take its place.”\textsuperscript{11}

The balloon effect is also seen among trafficked substances. During the opioid crisis a crackdown on prescription opioids pushed people to use more deadly heroin and, then, to use even more lethal fentanyl and carfentanil. These are so powerful that they often require multiple doses of naloxone to prevent overdose. Given the danger these drugs pose, some might prefer to crackdown on the dangerous drugs and push people to consume safer drugs.

Drug interdiction and crop eradication efforts in Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Caribbean countries, and most recently Mexico and Honduras all demonstrate the “balloon effect” and suggest the futility of the drug war.

\textit{Contribution to Mass Incarceration}

America’s criminal justice system has been in severe crisis for thirty years. During the 1970s, the U.S. had a relatively low rate of incarceration compared to other industrialized countries. Today, despite some easing of the incarceration rate over the past decade, we have the highest rate of imprisonment in the world.\textsuperscript{12} The U.S. has 5 percent of the world’s population, but jails 25 percent of the world’s prisoners. According to a study by the International Center for Prison Studies, the U.S. locks up 716 per 100,000 people, by contrast most modern industrial countries imprison fewer than 150 per 100,000.\textsuperscript{13} A 2012 study found that United States taxpayers spent $30 billion jailing 2.3 million souls.\textsuperscript{14}

These shocking figures do not tell the whole story. Some states (such as Louisiana) and counties incarcerate people at much higher rates, driving up the national average. Taxpayer expenditures do not include the devastating human costs. These include diminished employment opportunities, earning potential, and marriage possibilities.\textsuperscript{15} In some states, ex-cons lose the right to vote, to serve on a jury, to run for public office, and to live in publicly subsidized housing. There are also lost opportunity costs, the fact that people in prison never develop full potential and are prevented from contributing to society. Taken together, it is impossible to justify how a youthful indiscretion with cannabis should so severely damage life prospects and diminish the community.

Experts agree that America’s war on drugs plays a role in the crisis of mass incarceration, though they disagree somewhat about the extent of its contribution.\textsuperscript{16} Experts, such as John Pfaff, note that the vast majority of people in prison are in for violent crimes and claim that the role America’s war on drugs has played in mass incarceration is sometimes overstated.\textsuperscript{17} Only 16 percent of the people in federal, state, and county prisons are there on drug charges and “freeing every single person who is in a state prison on a drug charge would only cut state prison populations back to where they were in 1996–1997, well into the ‘mass incarceration’ period.” Although Pfaff encourages us to be realistic about what changing drug laws would accomplish, he acknowledges,

The war on drugs is not trivial: about 200,000 people in state prisons and another 100,000 in federal institutions are serving time for drug crimes… most would likely be better handled outside the prison, and many would perhaps be best left alone altogether by the criminal justice system.\textsuperscript{18}

A series of small decisions over forty years created mass incarceration. It is unrealistic to think a single decision will reverse it. That said, changing our drug laws is a good place to start.

Finally, raw national statistics do not express how unevenly mass incarceration and the drug war impact people of color. A recent study found that one in seventeen white males can expect to go to prison. By contrast, it found that one in six Latino males and one in three black males can expect to go to prison.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Impact on People of Color}

The structural racial and economic disparities endemic to U.S. society and its criminal justice system have made America’s drug war particularly destructive to black and Latino minorities and their communities. The historical review in Appendix A shows that this is partially by design, as violations of laws for drugs associated with minority groups regularly receive harsher penalties than drugs used by whites. Consider, the 18-to-1 sentencing disparity that currently exists between chemically identical, crack and powdered forms of cocaine (the disparity used to be 100-to-1!) The main difference is that poor, urban blacks smoke the former, whereas wealthy, white suburbanites snort the latter.
The injustices of America’s criminal justice system are so widespread and systemic that they deserve a separate church study. For the purposes of this paper, we note some enduring problems: the lack of effective community policing; the routine failure to solve violent crime in poor black and Latino communities; the lack of a state monopoly on violence in many urban communities that contributes to gang vigilantism, protectionism, and to a fear to testify; a “warrior ethos” among police and the militarization of police operations and equipment; videos of police encounters that end with excessive, often lethal force; the absence of bail money for poor people; the absence of adequate legal counsel for poor people; the rise of prosecutorial power; mandatory sentences; the decline in jury trials; the fact that black men receive sentences that are 20 percent longer than white men; tactics that systematically target poor minorities, such as those identified by the Attorney General’s report on Ferguson, Missouri. These defects damage people of color, alienate blacks and Latinos from the criminal justice system at every point, and undermine the quality of life in poor and predominately minority communities. Naming the savage institutional racism that distorts America’s criminal justice system does not deny the presence of faithful, and even heroic, police officers, prosecutors, public defendants, and judges.

Many of these inequities are not the direct result of drug policy, per se, but due to racial and economic inequalities endemic to the larger society and its criminal justice system. Still, the drug war adds its own layer of cruelty and injustice. A 2013 study showed that blacks self-report using illicit drugs during the previous month at very slightly higher rates than whites (10.5 percent to 9.5 percent). Yet arrest rates for drug offenses are two to four times the rate of white people. The black imprisonment rates are even more unequal, 5.1 to 5.8 times higher than whites. Meanwhile, a recent study of Massachusetts’s drug courts that mandates treatment instead of prison shows that participants are overwhelmingly non-Hispanic whites.

Even if one supposes that some are imprisoned because they plead guilty to lesser drug offenses, rather than a more difficult to prove violent crime, this represents an injustice. Poor suspects are at a significant disadvantage when they negotiate with prosecutors: they do not have access to the evidence against them (which they would have in a trial) and regularly lack adequate legal counsel. This explains why innocent suspects so often plead guilty to lesser offenses (such as drug crimes) rather than risk a trial that could put them in jail for a more serious offense they did not commit.

Blacks are not the only minority group who disproportionately suffer from the drug war. In the past two to three decades, the policies, rhetoric, and enforcement agencies that address illegal drugs and immigrants have become increasingly of one fabric. The backdrop for this merging of drug, counterterrorism, and immigration policies is the “threat narrative,” which blends the policies through fear. “The dominant public narrative conceives of and portrays immigration as criminals, an economic, social, cultural, and political threat,” observes the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities. A recent example of this narrative is use of the word “surge”—commonly used to describe military offensives—to describe the large number of Central American children fleeing violence to the United States. President Trump has amplified the threat narrative despite conclusive evidence showing that immigrants commit crime at much lower rates than native-born Americans.

As a result, drug laws are applied even more punitively and arbitrarily to immigrants than to U.S. citizens. For example, a U.S. resident with a green card can be deported for a single minor offense occurring decades before. Noncitizens in deportation proceedings who have been convicted of a drug offense (with few exceptions) are also ineligible for bail, and will face mandatory imprisonment until their hearing. “Drug trafficking” in immigration law does not distinguish between drug cartel leaders and someone who sells a small amount of cannabis to a neighbor; both are classified as “aggravated felonies,” with the harshest immigration consequences. The Department of Homeland Security can deport someone if it has “reasonable belief” the person sold drugs, even without a conviction.

Some impacts of the drug war fall more heavily on the poor, regardless of racial group. Civil asset forfeiture, for example, allows police to seize assets from anyone they believe has been involved in a crime, without charging them or showing evidence that they were—that is, without due process. Since 2008, police have seized cash and property worth $3 billion in more than 55,000 seizures on highways and elsewhere, according to a Washington Post investigation. Hundreds of local drug task forces rely on seized cash to cover more than 20 percent of their budgets. The United States also promotes asset forfeiture procedures internationally. In January 2015, then-Attorney General Eric Holder issued a directive prohibiting the use of federal law to seize assets without warrants or criminal charges, although agents may still use existing state forfeiture laws to seize assets. Evidence indicates that, like other aspects of the drug war, these seizures disproportionately impact people of color.

The ACLU has identified the war on drugs as an important driver of the “school to prison pipeline,” which they define as “policies and practices that push our nation’s schoolchildren, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems,” and prioritizes incarceration over education. The pipeline operates through underfunded schools, zero-tolerance discipline policies, reliance on police in schools for discipline, private disciplinary schools, poor legal representation for minors, and lack of educational services in juvenile facilities. In sum, the drug war inflicts a layer of cruelty in a society and criminal justice system riddled with structural economic and racial injustice.

Impact of the Drug War Abroad

The United States has promoted an international approach to drug interdiction. It has compelled other countries to comply with our policies, sometimes using economic and diplomatic sanctions, other times backing up these sanctions with military
Drug trafficking fueled the growth of organized crime in Mexico and Central America, making hundreds of communities in these countries extremely dangerous. Crimes frequently go unreported because law enforcement is widely perceived (and often documented) to be collaborating with criminal groups. The drug economy along the Mexican-American border constitutes something like 70 percent of the economy.47 According to Edgardo Buscaglia, a research scholar in law and economics at Columbia University,

officially the Mexican government acknowledges the disappearances of more than 30,000 people … but the truth is no one knows how many people are missing in Mexico. Not the government, which does not have a national registry of the missing. Not the families caught in emotional purgatory. Not the authorities in states like Veracruz … The entire state is a mass grave.”

The rigid attitude of the U.S. has done much to destroy political and economic relations of the US with Bolivia, and to lesser extents with Peru and Colombia. The war in Colombia, fueled in part by more than $8 billion in U.S. counter-narcotics aid, most of it military, has displaced nearly five million Colombians, with reports of more than 4,700 extrajudicial killings by the armed forces. More than 95 percent of these killings remain unsolved.49

In Brazil, “In the context of the so-called ‘war on drugs,’ military police forces have unnecessarily and excessively used lethal force, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people over the past decade,” according to a report by Amnesty International.50

The futility of military approaches to reduce or control drug production is illustrated by U.S. involvement in Afghanistan since 2001. The United States has spent an estimated $750 billion on military and police assistance and operations.51 Yet the country remains by far the world’s number-one grower and exporter of poppies used to produce heroin—as it was before 2001. Indeed, poppy production has more than doubled during the period of U.S. war and occupation.52 In this connection we note that drug crop “eradication campaigns have frequently had devastating consequences for the environment,” according to the UN Development Program.53

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and police action.34 It has pressured Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia to curtail or cancel opiate maintenance programs.35 It has also exported its incarceration policies, funding prisons in countries such as Colombia and Honduras.36

Drug cartels function by controlling territories through which illicit commerce passes. Some territories, such as those on the U.S. border, are particularly valuable. The organizations’ income comes not just from drug profits, but by taxing all licit and illicit commercial activity in the territory that they control. Those who don’t pay the cartels’ “tax” face their terrible and certain wrath.

The U.S. military has trained soldiers to combat the cartels. Unfortunately, because the cartels pay soldiers and police more than the state can, this has played directly into the drug traffickers’ game. For instance, the United States trained most of the inaugural members of the feared Zetas cartel, when they were members of an elite Mexican Special Forces unit, the GAFEs. In a related episode, the United States Southern Command trained and assisted Guatemalan Special Forces troops, known as Kaibiles, as part of its drug interdiction program. Former members of this group participated in the Guatemalan genocide in the 1980s. But now the Zetas have recruited Kaibiles for their valuable military skills and set up operation in the small jungle town the U.S. built for the Kaibiles training base.39 As Kelly Wells testified to the task force in El Paso:

This has very serious implications for the US strategy for the war on drugs. Up to this point it has focused on giving more resources, more money, more arms, training, etc., to law enforcement in Central America, which overwhelming evidence suggests is often implicated in the crime itself. So we’re basically giving money and arms and training to the criminals. Directly.40

The military approach to U.S. drug control efforts in Latin America has deepened the history of U.S. military intervention in the region, contributed to a serious human rights abuses, undermined civilian governance, militarized police forces, and blurred the distinction between military and civilian police functions.41

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) operates in sixty-five countries and has the largest presence overseas of any U.S. law enforcement agency. Despite this large footprint, Congress exercises little oversight, allowing its actions to remain in shadow.42 A recent study of DEA in Central America and the Caribbean concluded that “the DEA’s coordinated drug enforcement operations contribute to increasing the level of violent and property crimes in the region.”43 Although U.S. policy in Central America has focused on narcotics, the region suffers the highest homicide rate in the world. Perhaps the starkest example of a breakdown of democratic institutions today is Honduras where cocaine cartels have spread violence and corruption.44 After a coup d’état forced the elected president into exile in 2009, the rule of law disintegrated and violence soared with a resurgence of death squad tactics and targeted killings of land rights advocates, journalists, LGBT persons, lawyers, and political activists. Both military and police are allegedly involved in abuses and killings and almost never brought to justice.45

In Mexico, an estimated 100,000 men, women, and children have lost their lives to the war on drugs between 2007 and 2013, when President Felipe Calderón declared the war. In addition, more than 26,000 Mexicans have been disappeared,46 and countless numbers have been wounded and traumatized. Massive deployments of military forces across the country have led to disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and torture.47 Jorge Winckler, Attorney General of the state of Veracruz, says,
In response to these catastrophic outcomes, a growing number of Latin American leaders are calling for formal reconsideration of global prohibition and militarized drug control policies. In March 2016, three former Latin American presidents, who themselves promoted and carried out military approaches to drug eradication, joined their voices to call on the United Nations and the world to call a halt,

Outdated drug policies around the world have resulted in soaring drug-related violence, overstretched criminal justice systems, runaway corruption and mangled democratic institutions. After reviewing the evidence, consulting drug policy experts and examining our own failures on this front while in office, we came to an unavoidable conclusion: The “war on drugs” is an unmitigated disaster.54

Failure to Prevent the Opioid Crisis

An opioid crisis has engulfed the nation even with the war on drugs in full swing. Since 1999 overdose deaths have tripled and in many states death by overdose has become the leading cause of death for young adults. Some states, such as West Virginia and New Mexico, have the highest rates of drug overdose they’ve ever seen.55 Nearly half of non-working, prime working-age men (ages 25 to 54) take opioids daily and some experts claim that the opioid epidemic is a principal contributor to the decline in labor force participation.56 Pew Trusts reports that the opioid crisis has dramatically increased the number of children placed in foster care, overwhelming state resources.57 The problem is so great that it has become increasingly common to hear law enforcement and politicians say, “We can’t arrest our way out of this epidemic.”

The increase in heroin deaths has been almost entirely among white people, while heroin-related deaths and emergency room visits among black and Hispanic people have remained stable.58 For this reason many look cynically upon Americans sudden discovery of compassion in response to the current opioid epidemic.59 They suggest this is largely because whites are using and abusing. Be that as it may, the opioid epidemic points to the ineffectiveness of punitive approaches to the problems associated with drug use and abuse.

Why the Church Must Speak

The drug war has exacted a terrible price. It has targeted communities of color and provided disadvantaged youth with a gateway to more serious crime. It has created a violent, underground, criminal economy and has demanded enormous expenditures in law enforcement at home and massive militarization abroad. It has added a layer of cruelty to a society and criminal justice system that already suffers from pervasive economic and racial injustice. Yet it failed to prevent the emergence of an opioid emergency.

The drug war’s ineffectiveness and human cost demand that the church speak. It is likely that many American Presbyterians are unaware that the war on drugs causes so much harm given how the damages tend not to fall on our largely white congregations. Can there be a different approach? What do our deepest religious tenets of faith call us to do? That is the topic to which we turn.

PART II. TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS, DRUGS, AND COMMUNITY

Christians affirm that human consciousness and drugs that alter consciousness are part of God’s good creation. Crystalline clarity of thought to perceive, reason about, and respond to the world is God’s gift. Vivid cognizance of the self, the world, and God is a source of wonderment and delight.

Human consciousness is not static, but has plasticity. Among the things that can impact consciousness are psychotropic substances. Depending on their properties they may shift our perception of space and time, intensify our sense of connection with others, or diminish perceptions of pain, and stimulate pleasure. Some mask our consciousness, dull our judgment, and diminish our capacity to react quickly. Others sharpen our acuity. The impact on human consciousness may not be due simply to a drug’s psychopharmacology, but may result from cultural conditioning and expectations habituated by prolonged use.

Good Drugs, Fallen World

Psychoactive drugs are part of God’s good creation. Our brains produce opioids and cannabinoids. Nicotine works in the brain and other organs because its molecules are shaped like the neurotransmitter, acetylcholine. Cocaine works on the limbic system. These drugs affect our consciousness because our brains have receptors for them. This accounts for their medicinal effectiveness.

These drugs, like every other part of God’s good but fallen creation, can be misused. Even use of non-addictive substances use can cloud consciousness, diminish the capacity for responsible behavior, and hinder the work of the Spirit. Psychoactive drugs can mask emotional pain, preventing us from squarely facing the truth of our lives. They can distract and demotivate. They can promise the rewards of pleasure without summoning achievement or transformation. This, coupled with the human propensity to self-deception, is what makes some drugs so attractive, insidious, and disorienting. We do well to approach drug use remembering, the “body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19).

Drug abuse reflects and compounds the brokenness of God’s good but fallen world. In a world with a history of racial injustice, where minority communities are abandoned by the larger society, where there is little opportunity, but abundant
alienation, hopelessness, and pain: drug use and the drug trade present possibilities of escape. For those in situations of abundance, drug abuse can be a prideful rejection of the obligations that privilege imposes.

The tragedy of our fallen world is that even putatively honorable attempts to control the problems associated with drug use and abuse can become so broken that they are a cure worse than the disease. This happens when the punishment is worse than the crime. It happens when the war on drugs sacrifices innocents in marginalized communities in order to protect “our youth.” It happens when drug laws reinforce society’s prejudices and structural injustices. It happens when we refuse to fund harm reduction and rehabilitation. Instead of achieving the wholeness God wants for us, we increase the alienation and brokenness of the world. We have fought the drug problems with the wrong weapons,

Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ. (2 Cor. 10:3–5).

Christians often understand drug abuse in terms of character and will power, disregarding how other factors influence behavior. For example, Native Americans have a predisposition to alcoholism due to differences in how they metabolize alcohol. Experiences of pain and loss can incline people to abuse drugs. Social context also influences action, including features of particular social locations, cultural taboos and assumptions. Christians should not only encourage moral and responsible behavior, but they should respond to the personal and structural evil that underlies the drug trade and that motivates people, even non-addicts, to escape reality. Some are drawn into drug subcultures by a lack of opportunity, by the want of a healthy community of adults and peers, or by the absence of noble purpose for their lives. Others take drugs to “self-medicate,” to escape their situation and to dull psychic, physical, and emotional ache. Still others seek transcendence, mystical experience, and pleasure. Some drug usage, such as the use of Ecstasy at a rave, reflects a desire to bond with others in ecstatic community. These cravings differ in important respects, but they suggest dimensions of personal and social brokenness and longing that the church must address.

Alcohol as a Model

As we think theologically about mind-altering substances and their place in human life, we do well to recall that the Bible comes from a culture well acquainted with a powerful, mind-altering substance: alcohol. In places the Bible praises alcohol for “gladdening the heart” (Ps. 104:15), which sounds like a celebration of pleasure. Other passages recommend wine for medicinal purposes (1 Tim. 5:23). We also note that Jesus came “eating and drinking” and was accused of being a habitual drinker (Lk. 7:34). He turned a staggering amount of water into wine at Cana and instituted alcohol for sacramental use in communion.

Such positive appraisals of alcohol wash up against our experience of alcohol’s destructive potential. We know people addicted to alcohol and others who have done catastrophic harm while under its influence. We see the wisdom of scriptures that warn against drunkenness (Gal. 5:21, Eph. 5:18, 1 Pet. 4:23, etc.). When we consider the damage alcohol causes, we sympathize with our Presbyterian forbearers who organized temperance movements (which originally encouraged temperance and did not demand prohibition).

Perhaps we best reconcile scriptural affirmations, warnings, and experience by remembering the Apostle Paul’s advice, “‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are beneficial. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be dominated by anything” (1 Cor. 6:12).

The “me” Paul has in mind is not, “me” in isolation, but “me” in community with God and others, for Paul elsewhere insists, “If we live, we live for the Lord” (Rom. 14:8). Living for the Lord means picking up our cross and following the one who lovingly laid down his life for the world. If we live for the Lord then calculations of what is beneficial for “me” must include others: family, coworkers, drivers and pedestrians on the road, as well as others who may be impacted more indirectly, those who struggle with addiction, and those who would benefit if money spent on alcohol were directed elsewhere.

Jesus’ life demonstrates that consideration of others before God does not demand the denial of pleasure or an ethic of abstinence for everyone all the time. Certainly, we have an obligation not to tempt those who struggle to stay sober. Similarly, we have an obligation to abstain from the recreational use of substances that are highly addictive or harmful to our health. Our obligations to others suggest the contours of an ethic of temperance and prudence that should guide our use of alcohol and other drugs.

Covenant and Obligation

A Christian social ethic regarding drug use and regulation will be shaped by the recognition that humans are social creatures and that God has bound our lives together in covenantal communities: families, congregations, neighborhoods, towns, states, nations, and the great society of being that flows from God. While these communities make our lives possible, we should not approach these communities instrumentally, solely for what we get out of them, or as a means to our ends. They require our care and participation. They are both gift and demand.

A covenantal view of human life intensifies a sense of solidarity with and obligation to others. For this reason, it should heighten our distress at the enormous cost and waste the war on drugs extracts. The prophetic demands of our faith go far
beyond the war on drugs, of course. They call us to address longstanding structural injustices and institutional racism in society and in the criminal justice system that are exacerbated by a punitive approach to drug abuse and which make drug use and the illicit drug trade attractive options for people.

The covenantal insight that our lives are bound together resists the temptation to allow our obligation to God to distract us from our obligations to others who are suffering. As Jesus says, “If you are at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them, then come offer our gift to God” (Mt. 5:23–24). Given the failures of the war on drugs, how can we worship?

Recognizing that our lives are bound together, a covenantal view refuses to ignore “the least of these” (Mt. 25) and must be concerned about the disproportionate toll that the punitive approach to drug interdiction and eradication has taken on communities of color and other nations. Those who ignore “their” suffering or who view it as an acceptable sacrifice to save “our own,” crucify Christ all over again.

A covenantal approach to drug use and regulation will be concerned about the welfare of others impacted by policy decisions, including addicts, potential addicts, drug dealers, and those harmed by inebriated behavior. Our concern must extend to the environmental destruction caused by eradication efforts.

A Christian social ethic regarding drugs will be guided by a theology of grace in its approach to addicts and those who suffer because they love them. It will remember the humanity of drug users; they are made in the image of God. It will resist viewing imprisonment and other anguish that addicts endure as just punishment or as God’s chastisement. Rather, it will recall how, when Jesus was criticized for welcoming the despised Zaccheus, he graciously responded, “I have come to seek and save the lost” (Lk. 19:1–10).

Research indicates that because compulsive drug use is viewed as a personal failure, it is even more stigmatized than criminal behavior. The stigma attached to addiction causes addicts to hide their dependency. It makes them reluctant to enter treatment, worsening clinical outcomes. Even after entering treatment addicts are frequently unwilling to discuss their addiction with families and health-care providers. This isolation confounds their recovery. The stigma associated with addiction sticks to addicts’ families as well, furthering a cycle of silence and shame. The church makes a faithful witness when it frames addiction within God’s redemption and compassion.

Inspired by a theology of grace we recognize that chemical dependency is but one form of addiction and seek ways to offer addicts healing rather than punishment. Even as we want to avoid enabling destructive drug use, we promote harm reduction strategies to keep those who struggle with drug dependency alive, protect the community, and encourage healing. We advocate research into addiction recovery and ensure everyone has access to treatment.

A Christian social ethic regarding drugs will be concerned about potential addicts, recognizing that the easy availability of drugs can lead some to stumble. Prohibition contributed to a steep decline in rates of cirrhosis of the liver. Between 2002 and 2014 cannabis use among adults more than doubled due to legalization and more permissive attitudes. Among pregnant women the prevalence of marijuana use during the past month jumped 62 percent. Of course, by itself, this does not warrant criminalizing cannabis anymore than it justifies criminalizing alcohol. But it does encourage us to fund effective addiction prevention programs, screening, and regulation.

The concern of a Christian drug ethic will extend to those involved in the drug trade. Many enter criminal activity, selling dangerous substances because they believe they have few other options. Some are genuinely indifferent to the suffering they cause. All, however misguided, regardless of how much harm or death they have caused, bear the image of God. While society has a responsibility to restrain evil, this should never be forgotten.

A Christian drug ethic will protect the innocent from drug-induced harm. We want to discourage perilous activities that are compromised by inebriation, such as driving. Toward this end, we need to more clearly understand when users of different drugs are sober and when they are not.

Finally, a Christian social ethic extends its concern to every dimension of creation before God. Given how all creation has value to God, we cannot ignore or discount the environmental side effects of crop eradication.

The Law’s Purpose and Limits

A Presbyterian social ethic regarding drugs will be instructed by John Calvin’s three uses of the law: (1) to convict us of our sin, (2) to restrain evil, and (3) to goad us to righteousness. These three uses of the law are made more helpful when we also differentiate God’s moral law (which operates on the conscience through a communal ethos) from secular law (which is enforced with the power of the sword). Because God orders the world through political authorities, secular law ought to reflect moral principles that serve the divine purpose. This is why it is misleading to say that government should not “legislate morality.”
In a pluralistic society the decision about what should be left to personal or communal morality and what should be legislated into law is inevitably contested. Growing pluralism can force governments to reconsider existing laws. Sectarian communities can try to dominate the political sphere by enacting their narrow moral visions. Though the distinction between God’s moral law and secular law cannot be firmly fixed for all time, we do well to understand the problems associated with legislating too much of God’s moral law as secular law. Secular law is a blunt instrument. When government legislates too much, it fails to account for the moral nuances of particular circumstances. It denies the moral integrity of individuals and encroaches on freedom of conscience. When governments go too far in enforcing God’s moral law with secular power, it dishonors the moral and religious diversity of the public, becoming oppressive. Excessively restrictive laws fail to lead people to righteousness. It provokes cynicism and rebellion and can even be called “immoral.”

Following Calvin’s “second use of the law,” secular government has a responsibility to restrain evil. It does this by preventing criminals from menacing the innocent and by punishing wrongdoers to deter crime. Following Calvin’s “third use of the law,” God intends secular law to have a restorative purpose that coheres with a theology of grace. Our criminal justice system needs to recover this latter, restorative purpose. This will lower recidivism and enable former offenders to more easily reenter and more fully contribute to society upon release.

Calvin’s third use of the law alerts us to the limitations of draconian drug laws and helps us distinguish between the sobriety imposed by jailing people and rehabilitative addiction therapy. It encourages us to lobby for effective drug abuse education and prevention and moves us to seek alternatives to punishment in drug courts and drug treatment.

Finally, a Christian social ethic for drug use and regulation will be humble. It will recognize the likelihood of unintended consequences. It will remember how temperance movements, started to voluntarily curb alcohol abuse, intensified into an intolerant movement that passed a constitutional amendment banning alcohol for all people. A train of unintended consequences followed. The limits of secular law were soon recognized and the amendment was reversed a mere thirteen years later. Many of the ostensibly noble intentions that inspired the war on drugs are being similarly tested. Its evil effects outweigh the good it was trying to do. We invite the church to learn humility as it moves deliberately, but never uncritically, to work for the reconciliation of the world (2 Cor. 5:18).

PART III: THE WAY TO HEALING

In this section, we explore policy recommendations that will contribute to a healing approach to the problems associated with drug use and addiction.

Prevention

The best way to control harmful drug use is through prevention. Prevention campaigns should raise awareness of risks of early exposure of young people to addictive substances, including tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. They should be messaged properly and packaged on appropriate media platforms so that it appeals to audiences of parents, youth, medical personnel, and the broader community.

Prevention also involves screening to identify those at risk of addiction, offering low-level intervention (counseling) for those as low risk of addiction and referral for treatment for those with a high risk for addiction. Screening should be included as a part of a routine health survey in order to provide early intervention. It will require training health-care professionals, nurses, those who serve in primary care offices, emergency rooms, and dental practitioners.

A Call for Research

The way the law treats a given drug ought to correlate with its medical risks. Unfortunately, current U.S. drug classifications are badly outdated and correlate poorly with the risks various drugs pose. Toward this end, it is important to consider addictiveness as well as the possibility of deadly overdose, recognizing that other factors should also be considered when weighing a drug’s risks and potential for abuse. We need publicly funded research so we have a scientific basis for proportionate criminal sanctions, responsible regulation, and effective therapy.

A public health approach to drug policy should also consider the risks that drugs pose to human development. Child abuse pediatrician Dr. Kathryn Wells says, “We know alcohol is the worst substance of abuse you can use during pregnancy, most damaging to the fetus, without a doubt based on the information and research we have now.” Neonatal and breast milk exposure to heroin and cocaine also pose significant risks, including infant withdrawal syndrome. Risks from fetal exposure to cannabis by the mother are not well-studied.

Again, considerable research suggests that adult and adolescent brains respond differently to drugs. Because adolescent brains are still forming, drug use exposes them to greater risk of addiction. This danger is compounded because it occurs during the period when adolescents are typically separating from their parents and other authority figures and forging their own identity. This period of psychological development is frequently characterized by rebellion, risk-taking, and experimentation. We need more publicly funded research to understand the hazards of adolescent drug taking and how it might inform responsible drug policy.
We also need publicly funded research into effective drug treatment and rehabilitation. Currently, there is substantial disagreement about how to best treat opiate addiction. Some claim that maintaining addicts on safer opiates or other drugs provides the most promising approach to treatment. Others counter that this does not move people to sobriety, but constitutes government-supported addiction. Unsurprisingly, pharmaceutical companies that stand to profit are lobbying states to adopt treatment approaches that utilize their products.\textsuperscript{75} In this connection, we note that Casa Columbia recommends establishing evidence-based accreditation standards for treatment programs.\textsuperscript{76}

**Decriminalizing Cannabis**

This report reaffirms previous General Assembly action that the Federal Government and states legalize cannabis for medical use. It also recommends decriminalizing the production and possession of cannabis for personal recreational use at the state-level. It also advocates greater freedom for a diversity of state laws at the federal level, while discouraging the development of commercial interests and thwarting their ability to injure public health.\textsuperscript{77}

We anticipate that decriminalization could be a precursor to some type of legal regulation for recreational use. Legal regulation, if properly constructed, could offer advantages over decriminalization. It would pull the plug on the criminal economy. Depending on research results, it may also mandate cannabinoid content and dosage so that the drug is made safer and less addictive. If that time comes, we anticipate that we would prefer that cannabis be more restricted than in the states where it is currently legal, largely because we are concerned about preventing commercial interest from undermining public health. (Legal-regulation, like decriminalization, can take a variety of forms. For a discussion of this, see footnote 78.\textsuperscript{78})

This brings us to the concerns that preclude recommending legal-regulation at this time. First, much of today’s cannabis is much more potent than the cannabis of a generation ago, with THC levels (the cannabinoid that imparts the high) rising from approximately 4 percent in 1995 to approximately 12 percent in 2014. In addition, the “CBD content (various CBDs can shape the type of high produced and may have protective benefits) has fallen on average from approximately 0.28 percent in 2001 to \(<0.15\) percent in 2014, resulting in a change in the ratio of THC to CBD from 14 times in 1995 to approximately 80 times in 2014.”\textsuperscript{79} Since cannabis was legalized in Colorado, THC levels have increased dramatically, some cannabis tests at 32 percent. In this connection, we note that commercial interests blocked attempts to regulate THC levels for health purposes.\textsuperscript{80} Today’s cannabis presents health risks that were nonexistent in the 1970s.

Second, efforts to legalize cannabis have created an industry with a potential for trillions of dollars in profit. This industry is already lobbying and it will fund “research” and advertise without regard to public health. We have seen the damage done by big tobacco, whose sham studies claimed that smoking was safe and whose campaign contributions blocked sensible regulation, such as laws mandating smoke-free bars, which were key to reducing tobacco use. The current opioid epidemic provides additional warning to how commercial interests put profits over people.\textsuperscript{81} Even now, pharmaceutical companies are lobbying states to mandate their drugs in opiate maintenance programs. They want legislatures to force drug courts to make offenders choose between an injection with their drug (whose benefits remain disputed) or jail.\textsuperscript{82} The lesson is clear: Big Pot does not care about public health.

Before we move to legal-regulation we ought understand the science and what an evidence-based drug policy should look like. Many of cannabis’ psychopharmacological properties remain unknown because research was severely restricted because it has been classified as a Schedule I drug. The brain’s cannabinoid receptor system was only identified in the 1990s and is still little understood. Research is needed in a number of areas. We need to understand the impacts of the different cannabinoids on cannabis abuse disorder and psychosis.\textsuperscript{83} We need to better understand how cannabis interacts with other drugs.\textsuperscript{84}

We need research into how cannabis impacts sobriety.\textsuperscript{85} We know that cannabis intoxication impairs driving, though the deficits associated with cannabis inebriation differ from alcohol and are generally thought to be less severe. For example, people under the influence of cannabis alone tend to compensate by driving more slowly. However, when people consume cannabis with alcohol (as they frequently do), the deficits are frequently worse than either alone.\textsuperscript{86} Unlike like alcohol, cannabis lingers in body fat. Marilyn Huestis, who heads the chemistry and drug metabolism section at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, says,

It gets trickier when you try to factor in the chronic effect of smoking weed. … We found [chronic, frequent smokers’] brains had changed and reduced the density of cannabinoid receptors. … They were cognitively impaired for up to 28 days after their last use, and their driving might also still be impaired for that long. It’s scary.\textsuperscript{87}

How long does it take different dosages to be metabolized? How long should a commercial pilot abstain from consuming cannabis before flying? How long before it is safe for a surgeon to operate? How does chronic use impact performance? Currently we don’t know and there are no accepted standards of practice. We should understand this before making cannabis more widely available.

We also need to learn more about the impact of cannabis on mental health.\textsuperscript{88} Cannabis’ disruption of short-term memory is well-documented. Adolescents and young adults who are heavy cannabis smokers show markedly less connectivity between the neuronal axons of the hippocampus, the part of the brain associated with long-term memory.\textsuperscript{89} We do not know
that whether chronic cannabis use causes permanent damage to learning and memory, though some researchers doubt that the deficits ameliorate.\textsuperscript{90}

High doses of THC can cause mild, transient psychosis. It can also worsen the symptoms of people with schizophrenia. More troubling is evidence that suggests that cannabis is associated with an increased risk for and earlier onset of psychosis. Some believe that the problems associated with cannabis abuse disorder, because it is much more common, exceed the dangers of psychosis. Still, because regular cannabis use among adolescents correlates with significant mental health problems, it is a concern. Two researchers, Meghan Haney and Eden Elvins, who interpret the evidence supporting causality differently, “agree on the biological plausibility of a causal relationship between adolescent cannabis use and negative psychiatric outcome.”\textsuperscript{99} In light of this they call for further longitudinal research, such as the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study—or ABCD Study.\textsuperscript{92} Additional research, exploring whether the mix of cannabinoids in marijuana affects psychosis and addiction, may inform the regulation of cannabinoid content. (For more about the association of prolonged cannabis use and mental problems see Endnote 93.\textsuperscript{93})

Undoubtedly, social attitudes toward cannabis use have changed dramatically in the United States. Currently a majority of U.S. citizens favor its legalization. Given generational differences, this majority will likely grow. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is more ambivalent.\textsuperscript{94} Twenty-nine states have legalized cannabis for either medical or recreational use. Seven states and the District of Columbia have legalized the sale (or made it easier to share) cannabis for recreational use.\textsuperscript{95} We need to follow these “experiments” with an eye to what their successes and failures may teach.\textsuperscript{96}

In summary, legalization requires responsible regulation, which should be based on scientific evidence that we do not yet have. If we move too quickly to allow commercial interests to profit from what promises to be an exceedingly lucrative market, public health will suffer. Having said this, it is hard to justify inflicting draconian sentences on people for growing, possessing, or using small amounts of cannabis. As President Carter once told congress “Penalties against possession of a drug should not be more damaging … than the use of the drug itself.”\textsuperscript{97} Thus, this report recommends decriminalizing the possession and use of cannabis for personal use as the next responsible next step.\textsuperscript{98}

\textit{Harm Reduction}

This report encourages a number of proven and promising harm reduction programs as a way of shifting to a healing approach to the problems associated with drug abuse. It calls for legislation to put naloxone (a medication that prevents opiate overdose) in the hands of first responders. It supports needle exchanges to limit the spread of disease,\textsuperscript{99} Good Samaritan laws to encourage people to report an overdose without fear of legal repercussion, and supervised injection facilities. The latter reduce the possibility of children encountering discarded syringes and other drug paraphernalia. More importantly, these programs have proven to reduce the spread of disease and have a promising track record for getting people into treatment.\textsuperscript{100} This report also encourages creating a stronger network of certified addiction rehabilitation and maintenance programs based on the best addiction science we have.

As we consider how best to craft an effective healing approach, we do well to learn from the experiences of other countries, particularly those that have combined decriminalization (or reduced punishment) with some of programs described above. In 2001 Portugal reduced the penalty for possession of all drugs from a criminal to an “administrative offense.” Instead of prison, they send offenders to a Commission for the Dissuasion of Addiction. These informal panels include drug counselors and social workers. They can levy fines and ban people from raves, concerts, or bars. In addition to the legal changes, Portugal dedicated significant resources to outreach, treatment, and other services.

The results of these changes are somewhat disputed, leading some to compare the Portuguese experiment to a “Rorschach Test.”\textsuperscript{101} On the one hand, within a few years of enacting these policies the rate of drug interdiction (still illegal) had risen by 500 percent, the rate of self-reported life-time, yearly, and monthly drug use rose slightly, and the number of drug users in rehab climbed by 63 percent (largely because rehab was available).

On the other hand, reported yearly and monthly drug use among people aged 15–24, those considered most at risk of addiction, steadily declined from 2001 to 2012.\textsuperscript{102} Despite fears, addiction rates have fallen significantly, by 50 percent. There has also been a decline in overdose deaths and cases of HIV and AIDS. The drug user population has aged, suggesting that fewer people are starting to use.\textsuperscript{103} Today, the Health Ministry estimates that only about 25,000 Portuguese use heroin, down from 100,000 when the policy began.\textsuperscript{104}

Some heroin addicts will use no matter what, often with devastating health and social consequences. Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Canada supply safe places and drug supplies to minimize the risks of harm to self and others, to wean addicts from using, as well as to reduce collateral crime, such as theft to supply their habits. In Switzerland, less than 15 percent of program participants relapsed into daily use after three years, while crimes committed by those in the group fell by more than two thirds. “Some make a virtually complete recovery,” according to a researcher of a similar program in Britain, “but others, we get them from a bad place to a less bad place.”\textsuperscript{105} In Vancouver, British Columbia, a trial of controlled heroin administration in a clean environment led to improved family relations, employment, and mental health, and to lower use of other drugs compared to patients receiving methadone, according to a study in the \textit{New England Journal of Medicine}.\textsuperscript{106}
The U.S. government has actively encouraged these sorts of innovations. In light of the deep, persistent, and varied harms that punitive drug policies have generated worldwide, the United States should allow other nations to implement diverse approaches. There is a similar imperative for the Federal Government to allow states flexibility to remedy racially disparate sentencing, reduce and prevent health harms for drug users, and invest in other public health programs.107

Drug Courts

This report recommends expanding drug courts.108 Drugs courts provide an alternative to incarceration for people who have been arrested for drug offences. Begun in 1989, there are now more than 2,700 such courts in the U.S.109 Drug courts operate in a variety of ways, sometimes offering and other times requiring treatment for addicts. If a convicted person declines or fails in treatment, drug courts can sentence them to prison.110 They can also exercise jurisdiction in cases where it can reasonably be claimed that persons who have committed non-drug crimes were influenced by their drug use in committing the crime.

While experts disagree about the efficacy and ethics of involuntary treatment for addicted persons, meta-analyses of drug court evaluations suggest that this alternative strategy reduces recidivism and substance abuse111 and the drug courts may be a cost-effective alternative to imprisonment.112 Drug courts can also involve faith-based organizations that minister to persons struggling to overcome addiction.

There are several important issues, however, that should be understood regarding drug policy reform and the use of drug courts:

• In some jurisdictions non-addicts arrested for possession can have their cases placed into drug courts. Rehabilitation is inappropriate in these cases. That said, since addicts consume the greatest share of all drugs, they are more likely to be caught possessing drugs.

• Sometimes prosecutors do not cooperate with judicial officers. When this occurs, it can undermine the drug court’s purpose of offering treatment options to drug-dependent people coming into the judicial system.

• A strategy that combines drug courts with decriminalizing or lowering the penalty (levying fines for instance) for the possession of certain drugs could unclog courts and empty jails.

• Drug courts prefer not to incarcerate people for personal drug consumption. This forces society to confront the imperative of providing addicts with effective, publicly funded treatment.

• It may be that we should learn from Portugal’s Dissuasion Commissions adding trained drug counselors or others with expertise regarding to advise the judge and the defendant and enact lesser penalties and fines that won’t require locking up those who refuse.

The Church’s Calling

God calls the church to love the world the way God loves it in Jesus Christ. We live out this calling in a number of ways: by inviting people to new life in Jesus Christ, by casting a vision of graceful flourishing before God, by hosting 12 Step meetings and pursuing policies that prevent drug abuse and that reduce harm, and make treatment available. In short, we work to build a house of healing in our congregations and in God’s world.

APPENDIX A

THE RACIST HISTORY OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

A century ago, opiates and cocaine were freely available, and used medicinally and recreationally by people throughout the United States. Scores of patent medicines, elixirs and tonics contained significant amounts of opium or cocaine. Opiate dependence peaked in the United States near the turn of the twentieth century, when the number of addicts was estimated at close to 250,000 in a population of 76 million—representing a drug addiction rate far higher than that of today’s society.113 The prevailing attitude was that drug addiction was a health problem, best treated by physicians and pharmacists. Obviously, we do not want to return to the era of unregulated drug markets.

Public attitudes concerning drug use changed as perceptions of drug users shifted.114 Although white Americans consumed their fair share of opium, societal prejudice against opiates grew along with the influx of Chinese immigrants whose opium dens were viewed as foreign and threatening. In 1875 San Francisco passed the nation’s first drug law banning only the form of opium smoked in Chinese opium dens. In 1902, the Committee on the Acquirement of the Drug Habit of the American Pharmaceutical Association declared: “If the ‘China-man’ cannot get along without his ‘dope,’ we can get along without him.”115 The first state drug prohibition was passed in 1909, when California outlawed imported opium for smoking.

In 1910, Dr. Hamilton Wright, the progenitor of U.S. anti-narcotics laws, reported that contractors were giving cocaine to their black employees in an effort to get more work out of them. A few years later, stories proliferated about “coca-crazed Negroes” in the South. An article in The New York Times went so far as to state that cocaine made blacks shoot better, and would “increase, rather than interfere with good

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marksmanship.” Another reported that some southern police departments had switched to .38 caliber revolvers because cocaine made blacks impervious to smaller .32 caliber bullets. Evoking highly racially, and gender-charged imagery, an article in Literary Digest, a popular magazine of the era, claimed that, “most of the attacks upon white women of the South are the direct result of the cocaine-crazed Negro brain.”

To read these stories one might not know that blacks were using cocaine and opiates at lower levels than their white counterparts or that the drug users were actually committing very little crime. The gross distortion, rank appeals to racism, and sensationalism of these media stories generated support for the Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914 that restricted the manufacture and sale of opium, coca, and their derivatives.

Cannabis spread alongside the emerging American jazz scene of the 1920s and 30s, as blacks and whites began socializing as equals and smoking the drug together. Anti-marijuana propaganda of the time cited this breach of racial norms as typifying the social degradation caused by the drug. Officials in New Orleans attributed many of the region’s crimes to cannabis and claimed it was a dangerous sexual stimulant. Harry Anslinger, head of the newly formed federal narcotics division, warned political and community leaders about blacks and whites dancing together in “teahouses,” and stoked racial prejudice to stiffen drug laws.

The first federal law targeting cannabis possession and use, the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, was enacted during the Great Depression. Proponents substituted the Spanish word “marijuana” for the more common “cannabis” to scare white Americans. They also employed racist stereotypes, claiming that Mexican immigrants, who competed with unemployed white Americans for agricultural jobs, engaged in cannabis-induced violence against whites. The American Coalition, an anti-immigrant group, stated:

Marihuana, perhaps now the most insidious of our narcotics, is a direct by-product of unrestricted Mexican immigration. … Mexican peddlers have been caught distributing sample marihuana cigarettes to schoolchildren. Bills for our quota against Mexico have been blocked mysteriously in every Congress since the 1924 Quota Act. Our nation has more than enough laborers.

Drug use was again racialized in 1971, when President Nixon declared that drugs were “public enemy number one” and that the threat required an all-out offensive. John Erlichman, Nixon’s top domestic advisor, later clarified Nixon’s motivation,

The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying. We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.

From 1978–1984 cocaine use spiked 700 percent. During this time, partly due to racially charged media hype, the nation became fixated on smokable cocaine known as crack. In response to this, and with black support for a more punitive crime policy, the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act established mandatory minimum prison sentences that made penalties for crack used by urban blacks were made grossly harsher (100-to-1) than penalties for powder cocaine used in the suburbs, despite the fact that use rates were similar and chemically they are identical. The disparity in sentencing guidelines significantly impacted African Americans, not only because whites and blacks consumed cocaine in different forms, but also because the greater penalties for crack, in contrast with the negligible penalties for powdered cocaine, proved an incentive for law enforcement.

In 2010 the U.S. Congress and President Obama took bipartisan action in 2010 to address this gross inequity.

The Fair Sentencing Act did not eliminate this injustice, since the law was not retroactively applied to those sentenced under the 1986 law and still applied a disparity of 18-to-1 for sentences for crack and cocaine.

APPENDIX B
THE HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

This report was requested by the 221st General Assembly (2014) in response to overtures from seven presbyteries, to provide advocacy “for effective drug policies grounded in science, compassion, and human rights” (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 630). To carry out this request, the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy in 2014 designated a team to study drug reform. Their report was delivered to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) along with a recommendation that the report be tested in the church. Materials were distributed to middle judicatories and discussed at meetings in Colorado, Arizona, South Carolina, and other places. A question about support for the legalization of cannabis was included in a Presbyterian Panel Survey in 2017.

With these inputs and fresh evidence from places that have revised their drug laws, in 2017 the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy decided to adjust the initial paper’s recommendations. Instead of calling for legal regulation, this report calls for decriminalization at the state level of the production and possession of cannabis for recreational and medical uses, while calling for federal laws that allow the state-level experiments. The committee felt that this shift was needed to create time to do the scientific research that ought to inform responsible drug regulation.

The paper was rewritten in support of this recommendation and for clarity. The new draft of the paper has been tested with experts on drug addiction and criminal law.

APPENDIX C
Definitions Used in this Paper

Addiction is “any repeated behavior, substance-related or not, in which a person feels compelled to persist, regardless of its negative impacts on the person’s life and the lives of others.” Addiction can be physical and/or psychological. Gerald May provides a five-part definition that combines both: “(1) tolerance (build-up of resistance, requiring higher dosage), (2) withdrawal symptoms, (3) self-deception, (4) loss of willpower, and (5) distortion of attention.”

Decriminalization means to legalize non-commercial production, possession, and consumption of currently illegal drugs for personal use. In the section on Portugal decriminalization refers to an approach that takes drug use and possession of small amounts out of the criminal justice system, while assigning lesser penalties and fines.

Drugs in this paper generally refers to any psychotropic substance, not substances that are administered for therapeutic purposes.

Legalization refers to laws, such as we see in Washington and Colorado that legalize and regulate the commercial production and sale of marijuana.

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Harm reduction refers to efforts to control the deleterious and sometimes deadly effects of drug consumption. These include naproxolene to prevent overdose deaths, needle exchanges, safe houses where addicts can shoot up and be encouraged to seek treatment, and opiate maintenance programs that discourage criminal activity and remove the temptation to seek drugs on the street where purity and uneven dosing pose significant risks.

Institutional racism does not necessarily involve racist intent, but refers to systematic ways that institutions manifest racially disparate and unjust outcomes.

Legal-regulation means to legalize the commercial production, possession, and sale of currently illegal drugs. We hyphenate the term, rather than simply call it “legalization,” in recognition that public safety requires restrictions on some substances.

Mass Incarceration is often used to mean historically high incarceration rates. In this paper it will be used for what is, in effect, the incarceration of entire groups—as in the fact that the incarceration rate for black men without high school degrees can be (depending on the state) as high as one in three.

Prohibition the Volstead Act (1920) prohibited the manufacture, distribution and sale of alcohol, but did not criminalize the possession or consumption of alcohol. Our approach to other drugs has been much more harsh.

Racism refers to racial prejudice plus power that is exhibited by institutions, communities, and individuals. More recent concepts such as “white privilege”, “micro-aggressions”, and “subconscious/internalized racism” help us understand the unconscious dynamics of discrimination. These approaches move us beyond the more limited, individualized, dictionary definition of racism as “belief in the superiority of a particular race and prejudice based on this belief.”

APPENDIX D

Summary of Previous PC(USA) Policy on Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse

Throughout much of its history, the PC(USA) has been concerned about the effects of alcohol and alcoholism. It was actively involved in the temperance movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries, even to the point of nominating in 1873 that “the Church is essentially a temperance society and her members shall use all their influence for the suppression of the liquor traffic.” The 139th General Assembly in 1946 urged reinstating prohibition of alcohol as well as abstinence by PC(USA) members. (Minutes, PCUSA, 1946, Part I, p. 325-7.)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the General Assembly called for increased efforts to medical and therapeutic treatment of alcoholism as well as narcotics addiction, to a large extent adopting a “disease model” for understanding them. As early as 1965, the General Assembly called for efforts to criminalization of drug addiction. The 170th General Assembly in 1976 called narcotics addiction a “medically-social problem arising from many diverse factors, including psychological and physiological dependency on drugs, family instability, cultural conflicts, and social and economic deprivation” which necessitates legal distinction in the criminal punishment between those who sell to support their habit and those who profit from addiction. (Minutes, PCUSA, 1966, Part I, p. 381-382.)

In 1978 the PC(USA) published a special issue of its journal, Church & Society, on drug abuse, titled “A Body Broken: Substance Abuse and the Church.” The following year’s 206th General Assembly issued an extensive statement and recommendations on drugs and drug policy. Much of the language in the 206th statement has been included or adapted in this paper. The statement (Minutes, PCUSA, 1979, p. 326-7.)

The 1993 statement went on to encourage economic reversion and public investment in need-reduction policies:

- Education concerning the addictions, and prevention programs.
- Public health maintenance programs, which include counseling.
- Habilitation of individuals who are addicted, and rehabilitation programs for their families.
- Justice in educational opportunity.
- Justice in economic opportunity.

It also urged “reversal of current U.S. drug supply limiting policies:
- Mandatory drug sentencing.
- Zero tolerance policy and property confiscation without due process.
- Erosion of personal rights and equal protection under the law, etc.
- Decriminalization of possession with judicial focus on drug manufacturers and suppliers.

It called for:
- The nation to establish “treatment on demand” for those with chemical dependencies and their families.
- The support of innovative, economically sponsored treatment programs and halfway houses, with access to medical support, particularly in economically impoverished regions and neighborhoods.
- The decriminalization of U.S. drug war policies in foreign countries, and replace low-intensity conflicts with programs of economic aid and local self-sufficiency.”

ENDNOTES

1. While often characterized as “experiments,” we note that state and international efforts to decriminalize and legalize drugs lack controls and other aspects of the scientific method.


3. Paul Goldstein has identified three categories of “drug-related” murders: psychopharmalogical (drug-influenced), economic (where someone kills another in the process of trying to feed their drug habit), and systemic (the outcome of aggressive patterns of interaction within the system of drug use and distribution). After examining homicides classified as “drug-related, he and other researchers determined that approximately 8 percent were “multidimensional” (they did not fit the three types), 14 percent were psychopharmacological, 4 percent were economic compulsive, and all the rest (74 percent) were systematic, that is due to drug gangs controlling their markets. See “Relationship of

5. From the abstract:

   In this article, we argue that the mafia arose as a response to an exogenous shock in the demand for oranges and lemons, following Lind’s discovery in the late eighteenth century that citrus fruits cured scurvy. More specifically, we claim that mafia appeared in locations where producers made high profits from citrus production for overseas export. Operating in an environment with a weak rule of law, the mafia protected citrus production from predation. …
   
   Some Mexican gangs have similar origin, having arisen to protect avocado trees, https://www.washing-
   mob/?utm_term=e3ee89b1cb9&wpisrc=nl_rainbow&wpmm=1.


8. This section is indebted to a draft paper by Ben Leiter of the Latin America Working Group. See also Celina B. Realuyo, *It’s All About


   try/?utm_term=e454dc61b52f. For a comparison of American incarceration rates with other OECD countries, see https://www.statista.com/sta-
   tistics/300986/incarceration-rates-in-oecd-countries/. Significant problems with our criminal justice system stem from the inordinate power of
   the plea bargain phase, defendants do not have access to evidence that may be used against them and adds to the uncertainty of a trial. This
   coupled with the certainty of mandatory sentences often leads defendants to plead guilty to crimes they did not commit.


15. William J. Stuntz observes, “over the last thirty-five years—the period during which the nation’s inmate population multiplied seven-
   fold—the black marriage rate fell twice as fast as its white counterpart. More than 40 percent of black men and women never marry; the large
   majority of black children are born out of wedlock. One reason for those statistics is that a sizeable fraction of black men of marriage age
   are either in prison, about to go there, or just released. … Black incarceration rates contribute to that gap: even after sentences are served, the
   legal jobs available to former prisoners are few and unappealing.” See *The Collapse of American Criminal Justice* (Cambridge, Massachu-

16. Michelle Alexander claims that America’s war on drugs spawned a system dedicated to mass incarcerating people of color. See Michelle
   has focused on the federal system (where half of prisoners are locked up for drug crimes), ignoring state and county prisons that are ten times
   larger and far fewer are incarcerated for drug crimes.


   as well. Lifetime incarceration rates for black high school dropouts are ten times higher than for African Americans who have attended
   college. No doubt, incarceration decreases educational achievement. See Bruce Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America* (New York: Russell


21. Racial disparities are prevalent in other areas of law enforcement. For example, Champagne and Urbana Illinois are both 16 percent black,
   yet blacks constituted 40 percent of arrests. From 2007–2011, blacks constituted 88 percent of jaywalking arrests in Champagne and
   91 percent of jaywalking arrests in Urbana. See, *https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/08/in-champaign-urbana-illinois-89-
   of-those-arrested-for-jaywalking-are-black/261522/**. For a study of drug use see, https://archive.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2013SummNat-

22. See also Taxy, Sam, Samuels, Julie, and Adams, William, “Drug Offenders in Federal Prison, Estimates of Characteristics Based on
   Linked Data,” The U.S. Department of Justice, *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, (October 2015), at https://www.bjs.gov/conten-
   t/pub/pdf/dofp12.pdf.


29. For an informative and entertaining, if sobering, report on civil forfeiture, see John Oliver’s Last Week Tonight, 5 October 2014, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kEpZWgGgIk.


40. Testimony by Kelly Wells, Staff Attorney, Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services, El Paso, Tex., 2 May 2015.


42. A study of DEA in Central America and the Caribbean concluded that “the DEA’s coordinated drug enforcement operations contribute to increasing the level of violent and property crimes in the region.” Horace A. Bartilow and Kihong Eom, “Busting Drugs While Paying with Crime: The Collateral Damage of U.S. Drug Enforcement in Foreign Countries,” Foreign Policy Analysis (2009) 5, 93-116.


46. To “disappear” a person—an act, typically by state authorities, in which a person is taken and never seen again, though they were presumably killed.


53. UNDP, Addressing the Development Dimensions of Drug Policy, June 2015, p. 27.


56. “The increase in opioid prescriptions from 1999 to 2015 could account for about 20 percent of the observed decline in men’s labor force participation … and 25 percent of the observed decline in women’s labor force participation” https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/09/07/how-the-opioid-epidemic-has-affected-the-u-s-labor-force-county-by-county/.


60. When we celebrate communion, we do not emphasize wine’s intoxicating effects, but it redness and viscosity as “the word made visible” and a means of experiencing Christ’s spiritual presence. See also Paul’s criticisms of drunkenness during communion in the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. 11:17–22).

61. There is considerable debate about whether addiction should be characterized as a “disease.” While the American Medical Association and the American Society of Addiction Medicine both designate addiction as a brain disease, others question whether the disease model is helpful. Lance Dodes says, Addiction has very little in common with diseases. It is a group of behaviors, not an illness on its own. It cannot be explained by any disease process. … In addiction there is no infectious agent (as in tuberculosis), no pathological biological process (as in diabetes), and no biologically degenerative condition (as in Alzheimer’s disease). The only “disease-like” aspect of addiction is that if people do not deal with it, their lives tend to get worse. That’s true of lots of things in life that are not diseases; it doesn’t tell us anything about the nature of the problem. See, “Is Addiction Really a Disease? If Not What Is It?, Psychology Today (Dec. 17, 2011) https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-heart-addiction/201112/is-addiction-really-disease.


64. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2594398.

65. There are many accounts of the three uses of the law, among them Calvin’s in the Instruction in Faith (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 1992, reissue of Fuhrmann translation with Leith forward) especially chapter 17’s discussion of sanctification and the law being written on the heart, and in the answers to questions 93–97 in the Westminster Larger Catechism.


71. The margin of error for developing dependence on heroin was much higher than for other substances—5.6 percent, so the probability of developing heroin dependence among users actually ranged from 17.5 percent to 28.7 percent. JC Anthony, LA Warner, RC Kessler, “Comparative Epidemiology of Dependence on Tobacco, Alcohol, Controlled Substances, and Inhalants: Basic Findings from the National Comorbidity Survey,” Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology, 1994 (2:3), 244–68.


77. The discrepancy between state and federal laws sets a bad precedent, essentially inviting states to engage in the doctrine of nullification, wherein they ignore the federal laws criminalizing pot. This “compromise” undermines rule of law and sets a bad precedent. Why if some states decide, by similar logic, to ignore federal laws against racial discrimination, for minimum wages, or in favor of gay marriage? We believe that the Federal government should have the most liberal laws governing the use of cannabis while encouraging, at this point, decriminalization at the state level. In particular, we would hope that the federal government would discourage commercial production and sales, perhaps preventing the interstate commerce. The goal would be to allow time publically-funded research to proceed and responsible legislation to be written without the corrupting influence of Big Pot.

78. Legal regulation can take a variety of forms. For a survey of different approaches to loosening laws on cannabis, see https://www.rand.org/blog/2016/12/the-legal-marijuana-middle-ground.html. Proponents of legalization for recreational use sometimes point to Uruguay as a model. Uruguay has legalized the sale of cannabis under very strict conditions. It restricted sales to limited number of pharmacies and only allows registered citizens to purchase small amounts. These restrictions are designed to prevent Netherlands’ style drug tourism, profiteering, over indulgence, and the development of a secondary market that resells legally obtained drugs. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/19/world/americas/uruguay-legalizes-pot-marijuana.html.


83. While THC is the psychoactive ingredient in pot, other cannabinoids may regulate marijuana’s addictiveness and psychotic effects. For example, the popular “skunk” type of marijuana is very high in THC, yet contains low levels of CBD that appear to reduce the incidence of harm. See Linda, A Parker’s report of contemporary research in, Cannabinoids and the Brain (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017).


85. The Denver Post did a study of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics for Colorado and found that the number of drivers testing positive for cannabis has risen faster than the increase in usage. It also found that:

The 2013–16 period saw a 40 percent increase in the number of all drivers involved in fatal crashes in Colorado, from 627 to 880, according to the NHTSA data. Those who tested positive for alcohol in fatal crashes from 2013 to 2015—figures for 2016 were not available—grew 17 percent, from 129 to 151. By contrast, the number of drivers who tested positive for marijuana use jumped 145 percent—from 47 in 2013 to 115 in 2016.

The role of cannabis inebriation played in the fatal crash is undetermined and whether the rise is due to legalization is disputed. See, https://www.denverpost.com/2017/08/25/colorado-marijuana-traffic-fatalities/.

86. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2722956/.


94. A Presbyterian Panel Survey found Presbyterians are somewhat ambivalent regarding legalization: 40 percent of Presbyterians opposed legalizing cannabis, 39 percent favored legalizing cannabis, and 21 percent expressed no opinion. Researchers noted, a number of panelists objected to the wording of the cannabis question. The question asked whether panelists believe using cannabis should be legalized. These panelists indicated they might support cannabis use for medical purposes, de-criminalizing but not legalizing cannabis use, or legalizing use for adults only, but not outright legalization. Some panelists stressed cannabis’s harmful effects. See “Report: Advisory Committee Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Self Study and Committee Review Research” Presbyterian Research Services, (9/11/2017), p. 24.


96. Though the different state decriminalization and legalization projects are commonly called “experiments” they technically aren’t because there are no controls, as you would have in a well-structured, scientific experiment.


101. See https://www.npr.org/2011/01/20/133086356/Mixed-Results-For-Portugals-Great-Drug-Experiment.


114. The drug war also has roots in international agreements, such as the Hague Opiate Convention of 1912. But even this agreement reflects a colonial view of drug users. See David F. Musto, The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 25–28.

115. Ibid., p. 17.

116. Ibid., pp. 6–8, 304–305.


119. James Foreman reminds us that first cohort of African American leaders in the nation’s urban centers supported the war on drugs, fearing the rise in crime and drug use would undermine the gains of the civil rights movement. See his response to Michelle Alexander in the Yale Law Review: https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4599&context=fss_papers. Also see his book describing how unintended consequences led to mass incarceration, Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 2017).

120. “Top Adviser to Richard Nixon Admitted that ‘War on Drugs’ was Policy Tool to Go After Anti-War Protesters and ‘Black People,’” see http://www.drugpolicy.org/press-release/2016/03/top-adviser-richard-nixon-admitted-war-drugs-was-policy-tool-go-after-anti. 


ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-08
Advice & Counsel on Item 11-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-08.

ACREC supports this overture as it brings awareness to a misappropriate application of laws unjustly and unfairly applied to people of color who have been marginalized and oppressed by racism. Thus, people of color are suffering punitively but not receiving healing support from the church.

“Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism” (Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community Churchwide Antiracism Policy: https://facing-racism.pusa.org/).

Item 11-09

[The assembly approved Item 11-09 as amended and with comment. See pp. 56, 58–59.]

[Comment: The Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues feels it is necessary to create a new task force as described in Recommendation 5. in order to take immediate and decisive action.]

A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to declare that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) confesses its failure to listen to the long-silenced voices of [victims] [survivors] of clergy sexual misconduct, repents its institutional sins of ineffective sexual misconduct policy, and commits to the deep systemic changes needed to create just systems.

2. Direct the Stated Clerk, in conjunction with the declaration named in Recommendation 1, to commit the PC(USA) to complete transparency on the number of charges of sexual misconduct at all levels of congregational and denominational life and to encourage mid councils, while respecting confidentiality, to voluntarily submit the number of sexual misconduct allegations and charges within their bounds to the Stated Clerk to be reported to each General Assembly.

3. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to provide and, where necessary, develop pastoral, Trauma-Informed Clinical Care (TIC)1 based and theologically-grounded resources for healing [victims] [survivors] and their families, congregations, and presbyteries from sexual misconduct within the church, including:

   a. Healing resources that extend beyond individual victims to:
      • spouses and couples;
      • families and communities;
a. Healing resources that extend beyond individual victims to:
   • spouses and couples;
   • families and communities;
   • congregations and presbyteries.

b. Theological resources for healing the faith of primary and secondary [victims] [survivors] and congregations.

c. Restorative justice resources for healing congregations and presbyteries.

d. Culturally appropriate resources for the full diversity of PC(USA) congregations;

e. Access to the resources of individuals and organizations with proven skills for healing from church sexual misconduct.

4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and the Presbyterian Foundation to provide mandatory, annual sexual misconduct training for their employees that include pastoral and Trauma-Informed Clinical Care resources along with legal resources, and that emphasize representing the denomination as a place of truth-telling, justice, accountability, and pastoral and theologically-grounded healing.

5. Direct the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), [“Safe and Sacred Space Task Force,”] and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to form a five-member task force composed of [victims] [survivors] and advocates for [victims] [survivors] of sexual misconduct. The task force will oversee the implementation of Recommendations 1. thru 4. while undertaking a comprehensive examination of Presbyterian policy, judicial process, and rules of discipline. It will evaluate the need for a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator within each presbytery and the collection of the number of sexual misconduct allegations and charges occurring within the bounds of the denomination. The task force will be staffed by both OGA and PMA, and will report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with recommendations on how the PC(USA) can be more effective in ensuring justice, accountability, and pastoral support for individuals, families, and congregations when charges of sexual misconduct have been made.


Rationale

I have endowed you with my Spirit ...
So gentle that you do not break a bruised reed,
Or quench a wavering flame,
Faithfully you will bring forth true justice.
—Isaiah 42:1b, 3 The Inclusive Bible, 2007

It takes great courage for victims of sexual misconduct to come forward. When sexual misconduct occurs within the church, the risk is even greater for the damage is not only physical and emotional but also spiritual. There is a betrayal of trust that strikes at the heart of a victim’s ability to trust their faith, their faith community, and, ultimately, God.

In the Presbyterian process, victims who file a formal disciplinary accusation expose themselves to rigorous scrutiny and criticism by their congregations and presbyteries. Churches have never been comfortable talking about sexual matters. There is a tendency to view clergy sexual abuse “as a personal matter between an individual and God even when it is an abuse of power, hence, a matter affecting the community.” Fearful that truth-telling might jeopardize membership and funding, the church has been prone to denying sexual misconduct or to minimizing its reality with platitudes like “Why can’t we all be Christian and just forgive?”

Clergy sexual misconduct is particularly difficult to acknowledge since it challenges the protected status ascribed to ministers as representatives of God. The clergy offender is likely to be in a respected position of authority with the power to impinge the credibility of victims from the pulpit, in congregational life, and among colleagues in the presbytery. The likelihood that victims will become alienated from their faith community is very real. As a result, clergy sexual misconduct sends out ripple effects beyond individual victims to impact spouses and children, families and marriages, congregations and presbyteries.

Because all sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power, certain populations are more vulnerable to such abuse. For instance, children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers are often the targets of sexual misconduct. To the extent that our denominational culture has been grounded in white supremacy and patriarchy, it justifies the idolatry of whiteness and maleness thus creating situations ripe for the abuse of perceived power over others.

Gender inequities rooted in theological misunderstandings based in patriarchy leave women within the church particularly...
vulnerable to sexual misconduct, not only from other clergy, but also to sexual harassment from male members of their congregations. For women clergy, sexual misconduct has an impact on their bodies, their emotional well-being, their ministries, and ecclesiastical futures. Yet, according to PC(USA) research in 2016: 84 percent of female teaching elders have experienced discrimination, while only 48 percent of male respondents believe that gender inequity is a problem.3

In an article entitled “This Moment Isn’t (Just) About Sex. It’s Really About Work,” Rebecca Traister says that a focus on sex:

lets us off the hook, permitting us to look away from broader horrors, whole complex systems of disempowerment and economic, professional vulnerability… Gender inequity is what explains why women are vulnerable to harassment before they are even harassed… What makes women vulnerable is not their carnal violability, but rather the way that their worth has been understood as fundamentally erotic, ornamental; that they have not been taken seriously as equals; that they have been treated as some ancillary reward that comes with the kinds of power men are taught to reach for and are valued for achieving.4

The #MeToo/#TimesUp movements have shaken our social institutions with their revelations. With the exception of a response from our PC(USA) Co-Moderators,5 however, the Presbyterian church has remained largely silent. The denomination has failed to live up to its prophetic tradition by calling for systemic change.

As a former Presbyterian mission, Cameron House, in San Francisco’s Chinatown, was the first national PC(USA) program to come forward with its experience of clergy abuse directed at three generations of Chinese American boys over a forty-year period.6 With more than forty known victims—and estimates that the number is in the 100s—Cameron House had the unique experience of working directly with the denomination at the national level. Unfortunately, victims reported an experience that too often did not lead to healing but instead added to a sense of woundedness by the institutional church. Other Presbyterian victims have also reported that they have experienced more justice and compassion in the U.S. court system than they did in the ecclesiastical judicial process.7

At the denominational level, the current PC(USA) structure for handling clergy abuse is divided between the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and focused largely around legal counsel and insurance providers. From a victim’s perspective, the result is confusing, protective of the institution, and poorly communicated. The website, for instance, appears to be primarily designed, not for victims, but to inform and protect presbyteries on the judicial process.

Because of its roots in the interdependent Chinese culture, Cameron House recognized that clergy sexual misconduct does not just impact individuals. It sends out ripple effects on spouses and children, families and marriages, congregations and local communities. Though compassionate justice for victims involves more than just adjudication and discipline of the offender, Presbyteries rarely provide victims, their families, or congregations with the consistent support needed to sustain them during the protracted and difficult investigative proceedings under the Rules of Discipline. In fact, under Presbyterian polity, there is no such thing as an allegation of sexual misconduct since it is not until charges of sexual misconduct have actually been brought that an allegation retrospectively becomes about sexual misconduct.

Though Presbyterians are a connectional denomination, with regards to clergy sexual misconduct, apart from legal implications and the judicial process, the connections between the national denomination and its mid councils are minimal. There is little sharing of sexual misconduct experiences or healing resources between presbyteries, connections that might be particularly helpful for culturally diverse congregations. Currently, the PC(USA) does not even know the full extent of sexual misconduct occurring within its bounds. This only perpetuates an atmosphere of secrecy that allows clergy misconduct to continue.

The PC(USA) is not starting at square one on the issue of sexual misconduct. In the past, there have been studies and policy changes aimed to address inequities and confusion. Yet, the reporting process remains rife with inconsistencies and unclear protocols at great cost to victims, their extended families, their congregations and, ultimately, to the church as an instrument of justice. If the issue of sexual misconduct within the church is to be brought out of the darkness of secrecy and into the light of transparency, the PC(USA) sexual misconduct policy and protocols need to be updated in light of a study by the task force that is called for in this resolution. Theological resources, beyond the ability of mid councils to create, need to be provided and, where necessary, developed—not just to heal individual victims, but to heal secondary victims and congregations.

At this critical moment in history when racism, sexism, and misogyny abound throughout the current culture, causing significant spiritual and emotional violence, it is imperative for the church to hear the voices of victims who have long been silenced. Though confession and repentance are central tenets of the faith, it will require great courage for the PC(USA) to confess its institutional sins of past ineffectiveness and undertake the deep systemic changes that are needed to create just systems. With the current energy surrounding sexual assault issues, the PC(USA) has an opportunity to claim responsible leadership and take the next steps toward justice, accountability and healing.

Time’s Up

It is time for the PC(USA) to set aside its fears that truth-telling will jeopardize membership and funding, confess its failure to listen to the long-silenced voices of victims of clergy sexual misconduct, repent its institutional sins of ineffective sexual misconduct policy, and commit to the deep systemic changes needed to create just systems.
It is time for the PC(USA), while respecting confidentiality, to acknowledge the full extent to which clergy sexual misconduct is occurring in the denomination by collecting aggregate statistics on the actual numbers of sexual misconduct charges within its bounds.

It is time to make a pastoral, theologically-grounded, and trauma-informed healing process central.

It is time to train all program staff, across both OGA and PMA divisions, to represent the denomination as a place of truth-telling, justice, accountability, and healing.

It is time to create a task force of victims’ advocates to ensure that these crucial changes occur.

Definitions

Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this report and recommendations to include:

Child sexual abuse; including, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen.

Sexual abuse as defined in the Book of Order. “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (Book of Order, D-10.0401c).

Sexual harassment; defined for this policy, is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or their continued status in an institution;

b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;

c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or

d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.

Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.

Sexual conduct is offensive, obsessive, or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another.

Sexual Malfeasance is defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship that results in misuse of office or position arising from the professional ministerial relationship.

Misuse of technology use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting or emailing suggestive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

Bibliography


Endnotes

1. “Trauma-informed: A trauma-informed approach to the delivery of behavioral health services includes an understanding of trauma and an awareness of the impact it can have across settings, services, and populations. It involves viewing trauma through an ecological and cultural lens and recognizing that context plays a significant role in how individuals perceive and process traumatic events, whether acute or chronic. In May 2012, SAMHSA convened a group of national experts who identified three key elements of a trauma-informed approach: “(1) realizing the prevalence of trauma; (2) recognizing how trauma affects all individuals involved with the program, organization, or system, including its own workforce; and (3) responding by putting this knowledge into practice.” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Trauma Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services* (Rockville, MD: US Health and Human Services, 2012), 4, xiv. <https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4816/SMA14-4816.pdf> (15 February 2018).


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**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-09**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 11-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-09.

ACREC is grateful for this resolution brought by our partners, ACWC. We would highlight, in particular, the need ACWC has named to provide culturally appropriate resources for the full breadth of diverse cultures included in our denomination. In some contexts, simple translation may be appropriate, but we would also stress the need for resources to be created by or in close partnership with those within the particular communities in order that cultural contexts are taken into account. At a time when the PC(USA) is naming its own complicity in the sin of racism, repenting, and beginning the work of reconciliation and renewed commitment to equitable treatment for all members of the body of Christ, we have no choice but to invest in resourcing the full body of the PC(USA).

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**COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-09**

*Comment on Item 11-09—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to approve Item 11-09.

As the elected body charged with holding the structures and systems of the PC(USA) accountable to the values of our faith, COGA affirms this important call from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) for a reckoning in the PC(USA) around sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The institutional church stands alongside all other institutions in the United States with the structural patterns and marks of white supremacy and patriarchy deeply entrenched in who we are and how we address problems. COGA agrees that the church’s policies, procedures, and practices in response to sexual violence have been inadequate and re-harming in some profound ways for many people, communities, and the church as a whole.

COGA commends to the assembly the comment from the Office of General Assembly (OGA) on this overture, which provides information for past assembly actions and current processes underway to address these issues in the OGA.

COGA urges the assembly to implement a multilayered approach to this complicated problem. The PC(USA) needs more than study and self-examination, the church needs practices and transformation. To that end, COGA commends to the assembly the crucial call in this overture for a “trauma-informed response” to this problem. Sexual trauma runs deep into bodies, relationships, communities, and congregations. Sexual trauma can leave harmful and trivialized patterns of relationship, communication, and problem solving that persist for generations. Avoidance, secrecy, bullying behavior, distrust, and collective shaming and blaming can take hold in ways that are hard to recognize when an individual and a community have not been extended life-giving support in the wake of sexual trauma.

Without a trauma-informed approached, one experience of sexual violence can morph into cultures, systems, and reactions that protect abuse of power and silence truth telling. Trauma-informed work takes time and relationships of trust. COGA acknowledges that the kind of trust required for this work takes intentionality, repentance, and long-term practices on the part of our denomination.
COGA also acknowledges the need for leadership at all levels of our denomination to make this transformation effective. The voices of those most impacted need to lead the way in how this unfolds. COGA, therefore, encourages the assembly to center the voices of those most impacted by sexual violence in its discernment concerning this overture, rather than focus on legal and financial matters. The church’s response must be a compassionate and constructive one, not a corporate and defensive one.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk …” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-09

Comment on Item 11-09—From the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

The OGA advises the assembly to refer Recommendations 3. and 5. in this resolution to the Safe and Sacred Space Task Force appointed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), which will report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directed “the Office of the General Assembly to form a task force made up of representatives from mid councils and local governing bodies to work with congregations on implementing child/youth/vulnerable adults protection policies and appropriate responses.” The Safe and Sacred Space Task Force was appointed in July 2017 and began its work in August 2017.

The members of the task force are in the Exhibit Hall in the Office of the General Assembly booth and would love to talk with folks about your experience and about their work.

The interim report from the Safe and Sacred Space Task Force can be found in the referrals section of pc-biz (Item 01-02, I. Referrals in Progress, E. Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space Interim Report) and is duplicated below:

E. Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space Interim Report


Interim Report from the Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space

The 221st General Assembly (2014) directed the Office of the General Assembly to appoint a task force to help congregations implement child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection policies. Members of the Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space were identified in June of 2017:

Nancy Cavalcante: Synod of Living Waters, Presbytery of Mid Kentucky
Windy Johnston: Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Tropical Florida
Jody LeFort: Synod of the Covenant, Presbytery of the Western Reserve
Doreen Der McLeod: Synod of the Pacific, Presbytery of San Francisco
Sheila Palmer: Synod of South Atlantic, Presbytery of Florida

The task force held its first meeting in Louisville, August 14–15, 2017, reviewing the resources that can be accessed through the PC(USA) website and beginning to identify additional sources for education and training materials. Representatives from the task force attended the October 2017 Mid Council Leaders Gathering to seek feedback regarding the needs of congregations as they implement protection policies. Our continuing work, individually and in conference calls in November and December of 2017 and February of 2018, has been focused on identifying best practices and effective resources for education, training, and response.

The task force will meet in Louisville in March of 2018. Part of that meeting’s agenda will be a conversation with a survivor of sexual abuse in the church. The need for healing materials has surfaced, and we hope this conversation will result in suggestions of processes for congregational healing when abuse does occur.

Because the task force did not begin its work until mid-2017, we are not prepared to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Members of the task force are committed to continuing efforts and anticipate making a final report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Creating Safe Ministries, https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/, in the Presbyterian Mission Agency section of the PC(USA) website begins with this statement: “God intends for the church and its ministries to be a safe place for all to encounter God and grow into lives of service and fulfillment. We are called to be a holy community.” The Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space joins other groups and individuals in the church whose efforts respond to that call.

Item 11-10

[The assembly approved Item 11-10. See pp. 41, 59.]

In support of the Gospel witness from dedicated congregations and pastors in the St. Louis area, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy encourages the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve the following affirmations and actions:

1. Commends the congregations and pastors of greater St. Louis for the Christian witness in their community ministries of justice and service, and commends all those who have engaged in conversations and education about the tensions of race and class that contribute to the need for those ministries.

2. Cautions any Presbyterian Christian reading of the unjust practices and unequal structures of the St Louis area that its racial and economic divisions are not unique, so that the call to each reader and our church as a part of the body of Christ is to learn from and apply the lessons of the tragedy in Ferguson and subsequent protests to our own communities and to our larger society.

3. Affirms the support of the Reformed Christian tradition for public protest, community organizing, and the commitment to social righteousness that has led St Louis area Presbyterians, ecumenical partners, and many others to protest on matters of criminal justice and needed reforms of police practice and accountability.

4. Expresses gratitude to
   a. the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy for its hosting not only the 223rd General Assembly (2018) but the 2017 Big Tent celebration (July 6–8);
   b. those specific congregations that hosted the Congregational Conversations on “Race, Reformation, and Reconciliation,” that contributed to this report; and
   c. the congregations in Giddings-Lovejoy that are not in the St. Louis metropolitan area but which are nonetheless supportive of intentional witness and program in that area.

5. In the calling of urban mission, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) urges greater experimentation in the use and transformation of church properties in ways that preserve Presbyterian and ecumenical ministry and witness in poorer and gentrifying communities, noting the creative “ROC SALT Mission Center” (Rochester Serving and Learning Together), a multi-program initiative in building of a former congregation, approved by the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, in October 2017.

6. In specific learnings from the pastors and others who have shared information and reflection on their congregations’ ministries in and around St. Louis, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) encourages other congregations to consider as examples:
   a. The public and often prophetic leadership role of pastors inside and outside the church and the ways presbytery, synod, and General Assembly assistance can be provided in sometimes very stressful situations, as described in testimonies in this report;
   b. The comprehensive summer program developed by Third Presbyterian Church, noting its training of counselors and the range of support it has received, including from the Dardenne Prairie congregation;
   c. The use of Family Systems analysis of high-stress situations, such as that in Ferguson, Missouri, in church and community;
   d. Participation in church-based community organizing through Metropolitan Congregations United, particularly led by Second and Oak Hill congregations;
   e. Education programs for high school students from suburban communities that give them not only exposure but understanding of urban conflict and tension, such as ventured by the Ladue Chapel senior high program;
   f. Engagement with nearby seminary faculty, staff, and students, as has happened with Eden Seminary; and
   g. Ecumenical participation, particularly with the United Church of Christ, and in interfaith partnerships as well.

7. Further, to the urban mission of the PC(USA), those presbyteries that have developed overall visions for urban ministry and employ policies or principles to determine the use of funds from property sales in racial ethnic communities, are commended for those efforts, such as the historic recommendation of the Presbytery of Detroit that 80 percent of such sales be used for continuing ministry in those areas. Urban congregations and presbyteries are encouraged to review the survey of urban presbytery property policies and practices that is available from the offices of Self-Development of People (SDOP@peusa.org) and Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (acswp@pcusa.org); request Property Policy Survey by Rev. Phil Tom, Urban Ministry Network.
8. Encourage the Presbytery of Baltimore, in its preparation for the 224th General Assembly (2020), to invite city churches and their pastors to reflect on and share with that assembly how the Holy Spirit is moving in their growth and change in membership and mission, including evangelism, mission, and witness to justice, peace, and healing in that city.

9. In the area of criminal justice and police procedure reform, affirms the findings of the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Report of March 4, 2015, on the police practices of the Ferguson municipality, which apply more broadly to many other municipalities and to the city of St. Louis itself. These findings, as summarized by Theodore M. Shaw, Esq.: “Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department illuminates a municipality that is dependent on practices and policies that criminalize its majority black populations through traffic violations, municipal ordinances, false arrests, charging practices, and impositions of penalties for petty violations and charges that lead to debt and imprisonment” (The Ferguson Report (N.Y.: New Press, 2015), p. ix). Remedies thus supported for all civil jurisdictions include:

   a. methods to deescalate confrontations with all citizens, regardless of color, specifically reducing the use of electroshock weapons (and other electronic control weapons, or ECW), chemical mace, tear gas, and attack dogs, as well as guns;

   b. revising guidelines, training, and accountability with regard to use of force and use of deadly force by officers;

   c. hiring a more representative and diverse police force and municipal court staff, and increasing effective civilian oversight of tested community policing practices, together to increase the professionalism of police and respect for the dignity of citizens;

   d. eliminating bond, cash bail, and in-person appearance practices that have no public safety justification and serve to imprison people punitively for petty sums, disrupting family life and employment, and adding to arrest records on technicalities, bringing justice into disrepute;

   e. reducing the incentives for prosecutors to use their discretion in charging and disclosure of evidence to seek higher incarceration rates while increasing the number and capacity of public defenders to protect poor suspects from coercive plea bargains—practices that currently tilt the justice system toward the well-to-do.

10. Further, to the reform of police practice in the arrest of suspects, use of deadly force, and prosecutorial favoritism in the fair trial of officers involved in killing civilians, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) supports gun violence reduction (policies detailed by prior assemblies), better training, greater transparency and departmental accountability to reduce the numbers of persons killed annually by police (1,146 in 2015, of whom 234 were unarmed and 1,091 in 2016, of whom 169 were unarmed), and the pattern by which young African American men are four times as likely to be killed compared to young white men killed (see https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/08/the-counted-police-killings-2016-young-black-men). Reporting of civilian and police officer deaths to the FBI should be standardized and made more comprehensive, including data on the proportion of persons involved with mental illness, with specific protocols for reducing their death and incarceration rates.

11. Further, to the reform of the U.S. prison system, the largest in the world, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirms the longtime Presbyterian church goals of reducing incarceration rates, particularly of nonviolent individuals; restricting the solitary confinement of all prisoners, especially those under 21; developing restorative justice programs involving (when possible) the victims of fraud, theft, or violence, and thus ending mandatory minimum sentencing rules; the removal of financial incentives for incarceration, including the end of for-profit prisons and underpaid convict labor; revision of multidecade sentences and punitive restrictions on parole, particularly with older inmates; and greatly improved education and rehabilitation programs for inmates, including strict enforcement of the provisions of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 in all jails, prisons, and immigrant detention facilities.

Introduction: A Gospel from St. Louis

This report looks at Christian faithfulness in today’s city of St. Louis, Missouri, described through the witness of five congregations, with reflections from a theological educator and the general presbyter of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. It does not presume to speak for all St. Louis Presbyterians or congregations. It does make recommendations that build on previous Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urban mission policy, and for this reason involves the Urban Ministry Network and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Just as protests over police accountability in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Missouri, contributed to a national wave of protest, so the lessons gained from St Louis Presbyterians matter to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), particularly to those in city congregations. The title is not ironic, but a way to affirm the Good News that comes to us from all the peace-seekers in St. Louis.

This is not a report from the presbytery, but testimony from several congregations and their pastors that is part of a conversation about urban ministry begun by the General Assembly report, “The Gospel from Detroit,”
The Role of Congregational Conversations at the Big Tent Conference, July 6–8, 2017

The “Big Tent” is a conference held during the year between General Assemblies, originally a gathering of ten networks of particular concerns from across the church. At the 2017 Big Tent in St. Louis, the theme of “Race, Reconciliation, and Reformation” was addressed by a panel, most of whose pastor members then hosted conversations at their churches for groups of participants (who were bused to each site). This report builds on the presentations made by the pastors on the panel and the congregational conversations, which were distilled in follow-up conversations.

Context of Congregational Public Witness in PC(USA)

For some people, the public witness of the church simply means the condition of its building, seen from the outside and with outsiders’ eyes. Another frequent and more justifiable focus is on the pastor, key representative of the congregation. The pastor not only helps the congregation discern its mission, but often leads in particular areas. If the pastor’s basic worship and caring responsibilities are done with sincere commitment, he or she will be trusted, even if not everyone in a congregation shares all his or her views. The pastor and other leaders in the congregation can then serve as effective bridges to other parts of the community, through ecumenical colleagues, community organizations, other civic partners, and projects. The public witness of the church can then be part of an evangelism that presents the whole gospel of Jesus Christ in places where the community is in need of justice and healing.

Another part of a congregation’s social ministry reflects its denominational tradition and connections to its presbytery. These links can give the members a larger horizon for understanding how God is active in the world. Each congregation’s public witness comes out of that set of relationships and sense of mission, combined with the challenges of their historical moment. In the case of Detroit in 2013, it was a financial crisis and bankruptcy. In St Louis, in 2014, with the killing of a young black man in Ferguson, it was the exposure of racial divisions. This led to some very intentional and Spirit-filled public witness, some of which is described in this set of testimonies.

Context of St Louis City and County

According to the Census Bureau, the demographic context of St Louis is a city of 311,000 in 2016, down from 319,000 in 2010, in a standard metropolitan area (SMA) of almost 3 million, ranking 19th in size in the United States. That SMA contains East St. Louis, a smaller separate city in Illinois. Black (46 percent) and white (44 percent) Americans constitute the majority of the city’s population. Though Hispanic (4 percent), Asian Americans (3 percent), Native Americans and persons claiming two or more races reside in the city, most attention is given to the relations between the two larger populations. The administrative structure restricts the city itself to boundaries established in 1877, constraining its tax base and putting most historic growth in inner- and outer-ring suburbs. There are eighty-nine municipalities in St Louis county, meaning a large number of smaller governmental entities that are demographically primarily white.

Context of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy and Ecumenical Context

The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy consists of 78 congregations with 119,164 members. Ten congregations are in St. Louis, four without ordained pastoral leadership, and a number of other congregations are considered St. Louis congregations though they are in neighboring suburbs. The Presbyterian Historical Society provides an interactive map of Presbyterian presence in the city and region: https://pcusa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?ap-pid=8dfe240a91a44058b4e3e82f03845. As in the case of Detroit and many major cities, policies that led to the creation of largely white suburbs dramatically weakened the “Mainline Protestant” congregations in the city, and some of those congregations themselves moved to the suburbs. The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy is developing new strategies to witness to the reverse migration of middle class young adults into some sections of St Louis and its inner-ring suburbs today. St. Louis is also the historic center of three denominations, the Evangelical & Reformed Church (now part of the United Church of Christ), the Missouri Synod Lutherans, and the Church of God.

From the work of the Urban Ministry Network, which was initiated in response to the Gospel from Detroit, the context of urban mission is one of presbyteries seeking to encourage growth with diversity, to strengthen congregations that serve areas with people of color, to provide creative options for transformation and witness with properties, and to inspire the new wave of gentrification with a concern for justice.
PREFACE: God’s Redemptive Action in St. Louis

From the Reverend Craig Howard, Transitional Presbytery Leader, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

The church of the 21st century is a church of action. Whether we call it missional, community-focused, or outward-motivated, change is the new reality. Congregations are shifting the life of the church from within the confines of pews and walls, into the streets and drama or even liturgy of the public square. We are experiencing it in Giddings-Lovejoy, and in the city of St. Louis.

Some of the activity is newsworthy and garnishes national attention. When the streets came alive with protest over the killing of Anthony Lamar Smith, pastors and members of Giddings-Lovejoy were there. We marched, we chanted, and some were even arrested. It was action for justice that maintains a community’s moral framework. It was action fed by our worship in Spirit and in truth.

Other activities are low key and more humble. After spending a decade stripped of its accreditation, the St. Louis public school system received full accreditation in 2017. In response, several congregations in Giddings-Lovejoy are partnering with individual schools in tutoring, field trips, and providing supplies.

Public protest has created different conversations in our congregations. We are talking about unfair housing, inadequate healthcare, and economic and ecological injustice. These conversations are happening in our pews and in the coffee houses where we meet. As a presbytery, we are committed to dismantling racism and white privilege. This means reading in book groups, attending trainings in presbytery gatherings, and coming together as congregations sharing pulpits, choirs, and fellowship. We are determined to break the habit of Sunday morning being the most segregated public hour of the week.

The experiences of the congregations that follow embody God’s redemptive action. They are in the city, and in suburbs. Some are wealthy in dollars, all are wealthy in justice. These five congregations saw what was happening to the city of St. Louis and decided to turn their faith into action. They are far from the only churches stepping up, but all were involved in Big Tent “congregational conversations” about Race, Reconciliation, and Reformation.

In a letter this past fall inviting the PC(USA) to St. Louis, the presbytery leadership wrote, “St. Louis is by no means alone in struggling with what it means to be an inclusive and just community in the 21st century. Urban, suburban, and rural; North, West, or South; gay, straight, and other; black, brown, yellow, mixed, and white—all of us are learning how to become the beloved community, a reality that Jesus lived and died and rose again to create.”

This is still our struggle. As a presbytery we have not yet attained the goal of being the beloved community. But we press on to make this goal our own, because through his death and resurrection, Christ Jesus has made us his own.

Yours in the faith and action that we share,

(The Reverend) Craig Howard, D.Min.

The Witness and Mission of Third Presbyterian Church, St. Louis

By the Reverend Cedric Portis, Senior Pastor of Third Presbyterian Church.

[This is the first of five congregation-based voices heard by participants in the Big Tent Gathering of Presbyterians, July 6–8, 2017, in St. Louis, Missouri. Rev. Portis presented the meditation below at the “congregational conversation” hosted by Third Presbyterian on July 7th. After the meditation are two brief statements on Third’s approach to mission. Rev. Portis is a member of the Urban Ministry Network, PC(USA), and co-chair of the Committee on Local Arrangements for the 223rd General Assembly (2018).]

Excerpts edited from: “The Reality of Race, Meditation” by the Reverend Cedric Portis

When the Pharisees challenged Jesus, he often replied, “have you not read what it says in scripture?” When longtime white Presbyterians, trapped in the rut of racism, ask this Black disciple for insight on how to change this country, I ask, have you not read Acts 17 and 26, where it says that “God has made of one blood all the nations of this earth”? Is this not a denomination of Word and Sacrament? God has said we are equal. Why don’t we start there, long before the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the contradictions of our history.

Change has to start in the pulpit. We cannot build upon the pre-existing condition of racism developed over almost 500 years. Not your fault? Correct. Contemporary white people didn’t do those horrible things. But you still reap the benefits of slavery. And you are shaped by an inherited belief system as it relates to the African-American. This belief system conditions how you see what appears on TV, and what happens when you are in the company of a person of color.

Pastors, we must preach the truth about the pre-existing condition of racism and not pretend it doesn’t exist or ignore it. Do most PCUSA pastors preach scared because they fear for their jobs? God has not given us the spirit of fear. Do you fear that if you preach the truth about this pre-existing condition, you will be denied a pulpit? But if you don’t preach the truth about this condition, you are denying the people the treatment necessary to eradicate this racism. We cannot excuse a condition that we see when there is more compassion and outrage when a gorilla in a zoo is shot than when a young black man is left dying and dead in the street for hours.

It is not just a church issue. But the spark for change must come from the church. We have been silent, indifferent, or ambivalent about addressing this condition in the context of our local churches for far too long. It is killing people, and it is killing our culture. If we continue to let this condition become terminal, we are to blame.

Due to cell-phone camera technology we have now become more exposed to the epidemic of the killing of unarmed black men by police officers. We are outraged and we should be. But, beloved, this is not a new phenomenon. I believe that God has made it so that humanity as a whole may witness it. So that we might be moved by compassion to do something about it. I feel that God is calling the church to stop crossing to the other side of the street while the person is lying, dying a short distance away. The Lord we serve is still calling us to be the Good Samaritan. But why does the killing racism persist in our United States, despite some advances?

In my view, this has to do with the depth and distinctiveness of American slavery. Slavery has existed as long as there have been human beings, well before the pharaohs of Egypt. But most of the time slavery was not linked to racism, and it did not label the enslaved group, ‘nonhuman.’ But American slavery did. And when Africans were labelled non-human or sub-human, the sixth commandment doesn’t apply anymore. Matter of fact, most
of the Bible doesn’t apply any more. I can kill the African slave because it is not murder, because they are subhuman. They are animals. I can tear their families apart. I can run chemical experiments on them, because no one cares. Society comes to view them as nonhuman.

And this became the attitude of the church, with our balcony seating arrangement for the animals and countless other separations and alienations. And the practice was continued because it provided for a good conscience. The atrocities of Monday through Saturday were nothing more than owners dealing with their animals. The African slave was no different. … Greed allowed for the systematic de-valuing of human life.

So how did people not hear what is written in Exodus 22, Leviticus 18 and 24, and most ironically and cruelly, Deuteronomy 27? That text says that anyone who has sex with an animal must be put to death. Slaveholders must have ignored that as they continued to rape African women and men from the mid-1600’s through the mid-1800’s. Furthermore, legal decisions came up with the perverse formula that African-Americans were to be counted 3/5ths human for the purposes of apportioning state representation. Does that not reflect the less-than-human label? Think of that when you hear today that an African American has to be twice as good to be considered or noticed for achievements. In a way, they are still multiplying that 3/5 by 2 to get at least a whole number.

The condition of domination was part of how our young nation was formed and how it has been informed with through an inherited framework of inequality. This is why there is not outrage of a whole nation when the killing of unarmed black men by police goes on and on. This is why the disappearance of young black girls in Atlanta goes on without alarms going off. This is why the Tuskegee syphilis experiment could go on. This is why Ferguson was burned down but the National Guard protected Clayton … why Watts was burned to the ground but Beverly Hills was untouched. We as a country have grown up viewing the African American as less than human and until that is addressed, the killings will continue, the disappearances will continue, and we as a country will continue to implode.

Brothers and sisters, this history is our pre-existing condition But it does not have to be our reality … or our future. Don’t get me wrong. This is not just a “white people have to change and everything is going to be alright” scenario. There is work to be done in both cultures so that cross-cultural synergy can be possible in a spiritual, emotional, and physical co-existence.

Black lives have to start mattering to Black people inside as well as on signs and slogans, T-shirts and tattoos. We, too, suffer from this pre-existing condition in how we view ourselves, even in little things. I thought all white people could play golf…until I wore out a bunch of colleagues on a course. But children of God, we are called to be trailblazers … Salt and Light. Those elements Jesus calls us don’t accept a reality, those elements change the reality.

So we must stop living like we don’t face a pre-existing condition. How do we change? Maybe you are called to partner with another ministry. [Third partners with the Dardenne Prairie church, which helps support Third’s extensive summer program for children, and their pastor spoke that night at the Big Tent conversation.] Be in prayer about where God is leading your ministry individually and collectively.

When we think of the amount of work to be done, we can be paralyzed. But that is partly because we want the change to occur over night, without us being involved. That is a fantasy. The systemic change that is required to change history may indeed look like a snow mountain when we have only a shovel. Then remember that we believe God can move mountains, but our charge is to start digging! One scoop at a time with our families. One scoop with ourselves, then one scoop with our schools, our elections, our places of work, but our social clubs, and above all, in our places of worship.

We keep shoveling with the expectation that one day we won’t live in fear of one another, one day we won’t live in a city where in one place they have an abundance of food and resources and just a couple miles away there are food deserts and limited resources. One day we can worship together not out of a mandate or out of guilt but because we love God and love one another. One day when the Glory comes it will be ours. One day when the war is won, one day when all is said and done, we will overcome the preexisting condition caused by the existence of dehumanizing slavery in this country. Then we will all stand and cry, Glory!

Community Transformation Strategy and Christian Witness

[The brief statement below was made on April 27, 2017, in affirmation of the presence of the Reverend Cedric and Mrs. Varonaki Portis, and the contribution of Third Presbyterian Church to the Police Officer Memorial Prayer Breakfast of the St. Louis Area Police Chiefs Association.]

Community Transformation has various essential components. Resource provision through partnering with other organizations who serve the community is one of them.

Third Presbyterian Church was proud to be a Silver Level Sponsor of the St. Louis Area Police Chiefs Association at their Police Officer Memorial Prayer Breakfast yesterday.

Third Presbyterian Church understands that financial support to other partners and foundations in community is part of the church being a resource-providing transformational entity.

So yes, we were the only church sponsor and many were shocked and surprised that Third Presbyterian Church was sponsoring at the same level as some multimillion dollar companies. Our church understands that we can’t be everything to everybody. Thus, we are charged—as we are able—to support financially others in community who do what we can’t do to transform our larger community.

Jesus said be salt and light. Don’t blend in ... change things ... and we are doing just that: changing the traditional way the church is thought of in the St. Louis community.

We will be a resource provider—not a resource extractor—in our community. We will continue to be a bright light of transformation.

The church owes a tithe to the community in which it serves. It is blessing when we can also witness as the salt and light of Christ. Be blessed.

Pastor Cedric Portis.

The Summer Program, Flourish Ministry: From the Third Presbyterian Church website

[In early 2017, Rev. Portis, Rev. Crumpton (see two sections further on), and the Reverend Paula Cooper, then of Curby Memorial Presbyterian Church, all spoke to the Urban Ministry Network. Rev. Portis described several distinctive community engagement programs; this summer program has become sufficiently large—300 children—to require a separate administrative structure.]
Cry, the Beloved City: Acute and Chronic Anxiety in Ferguson, Missouri.

By the Reverend Mike Trautman, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Ferguson, Missouri.

On August 9, 2014, an 18 year old African-American by the name of Michael Brown was shot multiple times and killed by a white police officer during what seemed to be a routine police stop for allegedly violating a local Ferguson regulation. This event triggered a series of events that caught the attention of the nation and the world.

A group in our congregation was already involved in a considerably lower intensity dialogue on race with neighbors, and we were totally caught off guard on the aftermath of August 9th. Tension and anxiety spread throughout the church and the metro St. Louis area. I needed to regain my bearings in the midst of the maelstrom that ensued and so I turned to my mentor the Rev. Dr. Paul Smith, who cut his teeth in the Civil Rights Movement and the fight for African Americans that has been ongoing for over the last fifty years. Under Paul’s guidance I turned to Howard Thurman’s “Jesus and the Disinherited” for theological insight and then to the Family Systems theorist, Murray Bowen, in order to understand the psycho-social dynamics that were spiraling out of control. I have also drawn on Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald’s book, Blind Spot, and Daniel Kahnemann’s, Thinking, Fast and Slow. These works were essential in preparing my pastoral and mission responses to the crises at hand.

My title is an adaptation of Alan Paton’s, Cry, The Beloved Country (1948), a novel about tragedy, love, and heroism in apartheid South Africa. The poet, Archibald McLeish, speaking when Paton received the Medal of Freedom in New York (1960), echoes the Family Systems approach to living in places of tension with integrity:

“To live at the center of the contemporary maelstrom; to see it for what it is and to challenge the passion of those who struggle in it beside him with the voice of reason-with, if he will forgive me, the enduring reasons of love; to offer the quiet sanity of the heart in a city yammering with the crazy slogans of fear; to do all this at the cost of tranquility and the risk of harm, as a service to a government that does not know it needs it...”

Family System’s theorists define anxiety as the response of the organism to real and imagined threats in its environment; suggesting that people’s behavior can be greatly affected by such real and imagined threats. They also see anxiety as being manifested in two ways, acute anxiety and chronic anxiety. “Acute anxiety generally occurs in response to real threats and is experienced as time limited.” (Bowen and Kerr, p.113), while chronic anxiety is not time based and usually resides hidden and deep seated in the lives of people affecting their ability to navigate their way through life.

Although Bowen and Kerr tend to think of chronic anxiety as an anxiety caused by an imagined threat, I see chronic anxiety as a culmination of life events that leave its mark on an individual’s sense of self and one’s sense of safety in one’s environment. Certainly in Ferguson we have seen the devastating effects of when an acute anxiety producing event (the shooting of Michael Brown) awakens the chronic anxiety (economic disparity, police enforcement issues) and a sense no one really cares what happens in certain neighborhoods) that lies just beneath the surface producing a tsunami of intense emotional reactivity.

The early burst of looting and property violence coupled with growing crowds of protesters were seen by many to be a real threat to the civic life of the community of Ferguson. While at the same time there was a growing imaginary “real?” fear that all the protesters were potentially dangerous which led police to an overwhelming display of force that resembled more a military intent on combat, than a civic police force called to protect the crowd as well as local businesses. An anxious police confronted an anxious crowd and Ferguson seemed on the verge of intense violence. Fortunately people of courage and insight on both sides of the divide were able to use their presence and their power to make important decisions that prevented more extreme forms of violence. Bowen believed that people who showed such differentiation (maturity) could make a difference even in the midst of such intense reactivity.

“Either or thinking” became commonplace among many, as people increasingly were polarized by the events unfolding around them. I was struck how the anxious environment sped up everything that was happening so much that there was little time for thoughtfulness as everything seemed to be reaction to something else. Context, nuance and complexity were quickly cast aside by the growing anxiety which was manifested in automatic emotional reactions. It was as if all of us were strapped into a giant roller coaster speeding down the tracks with no brakes or hill to stop us from descending into madness. Blame and scapegoating became rampant as people wanted to fix the problem by coming to judgment without having all the information needed to make such important decisions as to the facts of the shooting and who deserves to be punished (if anyone) for the death of Michael Brown.

BFST (Bowen Family Systems Theory) was invaluable in helping me begin the process of thinking and feeling my way through the early weeks. I am convinced feelings are essential in helping the higher functioning cognitive parts of the brain navigate human relationships. Being open to my feelings during this time enhanced my ability to be compassionate and respectful of others, whose journeys are quite different than my own. BFST has spurred me to become curious and to put aside, as much as one can, preconceived notions of who is right or wrong, and come face to face with one’s own reactivity, biases, and internal contradictions. While I certainly was not the ideal “non anxious presence,” I do believe that my work in studying BFST and my work in my own family of origin, provided a small levee that helped hold back the onrushing waters of reactivity and anxiety that surrounded me and that exist within me.

Viewing this event through the BFST lens has made me aware of the roles that all of us play in this ongoing tragedy, and that awareness invites us to a renewed sense of personal responsibility. I relearned how hard it is to step out of linear cause-and-effect thinking and to think through the simultaneous issues using “systems thinking”. Linear cause-and-effect thinking may offer the possibility of immediate relief from the issues at hand, and perhaps indicates a number of quick fixes that can put a damper on the growing anxiety; however, it also leads to a stunted view of the various interactions that fuel much of the anxiety and reactivity at work. Such symptom relief does not provide the depth to get to the deep roots of the presenting problem. Systems thinking helps one reflect on such hot button issues as “white privilege”, “racism”, and racial biases in police enforcement. There is much more that BFST is inviting me to learn from what is happening in Ferguson.

In addition to trying to be “differentiated,” or self-aware and able to step back from group anxiety, the family systems theory does support showing up and being a “non-anxious presence,” and from that independent position determining whether to adopt a more prophetic or pastoral approach. As a pastor and as a church committed to the people of Ferguson for the long haul, our public witness, outreach, and hospitality seek to treat everyone as equals in God’s eyes. The two other resources, Blind Spot, and Thinking, Fast and Slow, add two elements, to my self-understanding at least.

Perhaps the best illustration of “blind spots” or perhaps, “mind bugs,” is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which measures your responses to split second images of people of different races. Despite my conscious commitment to anti-racism, I had a similar experience to that of Malcolm Gladwell:
“I took it the first time and it told me I had a moderate preference for White people... I was biased—slightly biased—against Black people, toward White people, which horrified me because my mom's Jamaican... So I did what anyone else would do: I took the test again!... Same result. Again, same result, and it was this creepy, dispiriting, devastating moment.” Malcolm Gladwell, author, *The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, talking to Oprah Winfrey

Thus, beyond the particulars of Ferguson—which it is our responsibility to address—there is our awareness: “Part of what IAT tells us about us when it reveals hidden biases, whether about the elderly, dark skinned people, or gay people, is that the membrane that divides the culture “out there” from our mind “in here” is permeable. Whether we want them to or not, the attitudes of the culture at large infiltrate us.” pp67-68

What Daniel Kahneman’s book gives us is an understanding of Thinking Fast, or System 1 thinking, which operates automatically and quickly, shaped by evolution to provide a continuous assessment of the main problems that an organism must solve to survive: How are things going? Is there a threat or major opportunity? … approach or avoid? Thinking Slow, or System 2 thinking allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand a lot of attention, and it is this that we are not able to do quickly.

The long-term mission of a church in a place like Ferguson is to live out reconciliation in ways that disrupt the black/white dichotomies of thinking and unthinking—often difficult with our white majority as a traditional Presbyterian Church. It is also challenging as any social body to attempt to transcend (or at least resist) our tribal evolutionary history of distrusting “others.” So we try to tell a different story of respected and valued compassion.

The culture and witness of Second Church is strong in many areas. The historic building, designed by Theodore Link, is an architectural landmark in the city, with a basilica dome, red tile roof, and elegant Tiffany windows. The newly refurbished Schantz organ is known city wide, and the church hosts a free music series each year that draws hundreds of community participants. Curious and progressive in its outlook, Second Church adults engage in serious conversations around issues of race, theology, and social ethics, and the congregation expects strong, progressive preaching. Blessed by significant endowments and generous members, the ministry and witness of this 225 member congregation remains strong.

But the most outstanding strength of this congregation is its extensive community outreach – over 150 of its members are involved in one or more hands on ministries in the community. The Good Ground Food Pantry has been feeding hungry people every Saturday for over 40 years. A dozen members tutor in two inner city schools. Meals are prepared and personally shared with homeless shelters every winter. Second Church hosts the largest hands on ministries in the community. The Good Ground Food Pantry has been feeding hungry people every Saturday for over 40 years. A dozen members tutor in two inner city schools. Meals are prepared and personally shared with homeless shelters every winter. Second Church hosts the largest urban Girl Scout troop in St. Louis, and regularly provides support and counsel to formerly incarcerated individuals. Each month, a group of volunteers provides a birthday party for residents of a nearby home for indigent women. Partner organizations which share the Second Church building include a Care and Counseling Center, an active neighborhood organization providing support and advocacy for the elderly, and a large ecumenical, interfaith social justice advocacy consortium. Second Presbyterian Church sings, talks, and walks the Good News of the Gospel.

The Power of Thinking Without Thinking

The Vision and Journey of Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis.

By the Reverend Susan Andrews, Interim Pastor, and congregation members.

A Vision Is Born

Second Presbyterian Church is a historic urban congregation, established in 1838. Now in its third location, in the eclectic neighborhood of the Central West End, Second Church has mirrored the racial journey of the city. The original founders and members of the congregation were the financial and social elite of the city, with a heart for reaching out to the poor and the needy. But as demographic and racial changes came to St. Louis, these Presbyterians had decisions to make. In the 1880’s when the Civil War was tearing apart the state and the nation, Second Church took a strong pro-Union and abolitionist stance. The church split, and eventually moved to a new location. Then, in the 1960’s, when the Central West End was in decline and civil rights issues were convulsing the nation, Second Church—by a vote of 513 to 500—decided to stay in the city. As a strong anchor institution—along with Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis University, and the Washington University School of Medicine—Second Presbyterian Church has offered leadership and witness as the Central West End has come back to vibrant life.

Since the late 1800’s, Second Church has welcomed black members—though they were few in number until recently. In 2006, when a local black congregation split, 20 members of that community joined Second Church — bringing the balance within the congregation to 20% people of color and 80% white members. Including the growing LGBT membership, Second Church has, all of a sudden, become a truly multi-cultural congregation — with all the gifts and all the challenges that such a reality brings.

Recently the Session has become 50 % white and 50% black — a crucial step in becoming a changed community. Three different sets of conversations related to racism and white privilege have opened up new levels of understanding, resulting in deepened friendships and increased authenticity. Some of these conversations have not been easy, but honest listening to the experiences and feelings of those who are different has enriched the fabric of the congregation’s life. Perhaps most difficult has been acknowledging differences in worship and music styles. Second Church is steeped in classical European liturgical and musical traditions — and opening up to new genres of music continues to be the most challenging part of this multi-cultural journey.

What Second Presbyterian Church is learning is that the church of the future will not be like the church of the past. Given the dynamic demographics in the neighborhood, the secular forces drawing people away from the church, and the changing spiritual needs of younger generations — as well as the thriving life experiences of different racial groups — Second Church has the unique opportunity to become a new kind of spiritual community for curious, contemporary people. May it be so! Susan Andrews

THE JOURNEY OF RACE, RECONCILIATION, AND REFORM

(1838–2017)

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—ST. LOUIS

October 10, 1838—Second Presbyterian Church organized—first building at Fifth and Walnut.

223rd General Assembly (2018)
Session resolved to open one night weekly to preach the Gospel to the people of color in the city.

1840—Greeley Sunday School and Mission started as outreach to the poor—1800 students

1841—Marie Bailey becomes the first African American member of the congregation. She attended the “Colored Sunday School.”

1861—Elder Hamilton Gamble, charter member of 2PC, only dissenting vote on the State Supreme Court in the Dred Scott decision—which reinforced the institution of slavery

1864—church split, with Second taking a strong pro-Unionist and anti-slavery stance

Christmas Day, 1870—new building dedicated at Lucas and thirteenth

1872—Dr. Samuel Niccolls (Pastor, 1865–1915) elected Moderator of the General Assembly

Late 1890’s—a group of Chinese men were welcomed into the church

1896—Second Church moves to Westminster Place and Taylor—a new wealthy neighborhood with mansions and an exclusionary housing covenant—seeds of Delmar Divide are sown—congregation becomes a “blue stocking” church

July 19, 1915—Dr. Niccolls advocated for the leadership of women on national entities

1940’s—neighborhood begins to “decline;” tract of land purchased for eventual relocation in Ladue; plans went awry and Ladue property sold

1950’s—neighborhood continues to change and deteriorate; mansions become boarding houses; whites move out; middle class blacks moved in; hardening of the Delmar Divide; black worshippers were welcomed awkwardly.

June, 1955—Dr. Skinner (a member of GA Committee to write the Confession of 1967) arrives

April 15, 1958—Second Church members commit to pray about their future—leave or stay?

January 25, 1961—by a vote of 511–500, 2PC decides to stay in the city—immediately transforming from a fashionable congregation to an urban, missional congregation

Spring, 1961—Earline Clay becomes the first black member joining through the Confirmation Class process

May 25, 1969—members of the Black Liberation Front marched into the church, demanding to speak and urge reparations; they were welcomed to the pulpit

1970s—ecumenical partnerships focused on strengthening education and housing for the poor; the first black pastor, Paul Smith, becomes a Parish Associate; the church welcomes several black families

1970s—Good Ground General Store (Food Pantry) begins weekly ministry—continuing today

1990’s—tutoring programs and urban Girl Scout troop begin and continue today

2013—Second Church welcomes 20 new black members, supported and welcomed by the Rev. Mary Gene Boteler—bringing the percentage of non-Caucasian members to 20%—the official definition of an inter-cultural congregation. A growing number of LGBTQ believers also join the congregation.

2015—Rev. Boteler is visible and vocal after the police brutality episodes in the Ferguson area; the congregation becomes supportive of the Black Lives Matter movement.

2015-2017—Recommitment to the vision

1) Over an 18 month period, three series of Holy Conversations are held for black and white members to learn about each other’s histories and to talk candidly about Racism and White Privilege.

2) The strong music tradition of 2PC is expanded to include more jazz, gospel, and global music.

3) Black History Month is recognized and celebrated in worship.

4) Session leadership is half black and half white.

And the Journey Continues …

The Ever-Contemporary Context of Church Ministry

by the Reverend Clyde R. Crumpton, Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church, St. Louis

The history of the Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church provides an iconic example of racial change in a major US city. The church is thought to have evolved from an interdenominational mission school and chapel which were located on the Cote Brilliante Tract. As the neighborhood increased, more and more persons requested a formal church organization, and voted in favor of a Presbyterian church. The St. Louis Presbytery organized the new church on September 29, 1885, with approximately forty-five charter members.

At the time of construction (1894-5), the church’s new building was considered one of the most handsome structures in the area. The new church ministered to a Caucasian membership. It grew and prospered for many years. But in the late 1940s and early 1950s change began to occur. The number of White families began to decline due to a breach in a “restrictive covenant,” which restricted non-White families from purchasing properties in
this neighborhood of Cote Brilliante. The case of Shelley vs Kraemer decided by the Supreme Court [344 U.S. 1 (1948)] had a significant impact on Cote Brilliante, as it voiced the widespread practice of keeping African-Americans (and other racial-ethnic persons) from buying property through restrictive covenants.

In 1945, Mr. J. D. Shelley, an African-American, bought a house at 4600 Labadie Avenue (close to the church, at 4673 Labadie). He was unaware that a restrictive covenant existed on that property since 1911. The owner agreed to not enforce the covenant, but another resident, Louis Kratmer, who lived nearby sued in St. Louis Circuit Court to enforce the restrictive covenant to prevent the Shelley family from taking possession of the property. The trial court ruled in Shelley’s favor, but the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision in favor of Kraemer. The Shelley’s appealed to the United States Supreme Court. On May 3, 1948, the United States Supreme Court rendered its landmark decision holding that “racially restrictive covenants” cannot be enforced since this would constitute state action denying due process of law, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The national impact of this victory for racial justice led to the Shelley home being listed as an American Historical Landmark. (It remains a private residence, not open to the public.)

Not surprisingly, African-Americans began to move into the neighborhood at a dramatic rate. The Cote Brilliante School was designated as a school for African-Americans and other changes were made in the community to accommodate the changing population. Despite a continuing decline in the church membership, no effort was made to minister to the new neighbors. The congregation, which had supported Kraemer, sought to sell the building and move the congregation. They also considered combining with other White congregations. Eventually the members began to sell their homes and move to the suburbs, abandoning the church. The final communion service was held on Sunday, May 27, 1956. In just eight years, from the time of the Supreme Court decision in 1948, until the final communion service at Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church in 1956, so many White families had moved out of the neighborhood that the All-White church CLOSED! In just eight years! The epitome of “White Flight!”

The Presbytery retained jurisdiction over the church and its properties. It stipulated that the church be re-opened as a mission for the Black neighbors and that the name “Cote Brilliante” be retained. After extensive search, a call was extended to an alumnus of Johnson C. Smith Seminary, Rev. William G. Gillespie, who was then pastoring as the first black Moderator of both the Synod of Missouri and the Presbytery of St. Louis.

Locally, educational and senior housing facilities had passed. Eighty-nine neighbors responded, of which three joined the church, at that first service. This was the beginning of the reorganized Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church and the legacy of Rev. Dr. William G. Gillespie who, as an activist, re-established Cote Brilliante under the guiding dictum of a loving, caring, sharing, serving congregation. Cote Brilliante today includes in its ministry to the community a food pantry, clothes closet, benevolent fund, youth and senior activities, and encourages community awareness, engagement and activism, i.e. voter registration and voter education, tutoring and mentoring in neighborhood elementary schools, and collaborations with other community organizations for jobs, housing and a prison re-entry program.

Reverend Gillespie arrived in St. Louis on August 1, 1956. There was no fanfare upon his arrival; he had no friends or relatives to greet him, no place to live, and no one from the Presbytery to assist him, as promised. He only had a key to the front door of the church. His family was forced to return to their home in Knoxville, TN, to await a vacancy in the church manse that had been rented to others. His furniture was stored in the church sanctuary and the Pastor’s study. He registered for a room at the Northside YMCA.

The church had been closed during a hot summer. It was surrounded with tall grass and weeds. The interior was shabby and in disrepair and water covered the basement floor. Reverend Gillespie realized he had assumed a tremendous task. Thoughts of leaving the city went through his mind. With encouragement from his wife, he decided to face the challenge before him. He tackled the maintenance problems alone. He was the janitor, the groundskeeper, the secretary, the mechanic, as well as the preacher.

Reverend Gillespie prepared brochures and placed a sign on the lawn and an article in the local newspaper announcing the reopening of the church and introducing himself. He walked the streets knocking on doors inviting neighbors to his first worship service scheduled for September 16, 1956. Eighty-nine neighbors responded, of which three joined the church, at that first service. This was the beginning of the reorganized Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church.

By December 22, 1957 Reverend Gillespie was officially called as Pastor. He became known and respected throughout the country. He was elected as the first black Moderator of both the Synod of Missouri and the Presbytery of St. Louis. Locally, educational and senior housing facilities and programs he pioneered were named after him. He served as Pastor for 53 years until retiring in 2009. He was a pillar in the community. At his funeral in 2011 an apology was presented by the Executive Presbytery, on behalf of the Presbytery, for not being there as promised in 1956 to support Rev. Gillespie in reopening the church and re-establishing its ministry. The apology came 55 years too late, 2 years after he retired and 1 week after he had passed.

Today’s Challenges

Today, Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church continues to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of humanity, our neighbors; continues to maintain divine worship, promote social, economic and political righteousness; to participate in God’s mission to care for the needs of the sick, the poor, and the lonely; and to free people from sin, suffering and oppression. This holistic understanding of the Gospel reflects the Great Ends of the Church and the legacy of Rev. Dr. William G. Gillespie who, as an activist, re-established Cote Brilliante under the guiding dictum of a loving, caring, sharing, serving congregation. Cote Brilliante today includes in its ministry to the community a food pantry, clothes closet, benevolent fund, youth and senior activities, and encourages community awareness, engagement and activism, i.e. voter registration and voter education, tutoring and mentoring in neighborhood elementary schools, and collaborations with other community organizations for jobs, housing and a prison re-entry program.

At the same time, since the death of Michael Brown in 2014 at the hands of Law Enforcement in neighboring Ferguson, MO, events have called us to be clearer about the social implications of the Gospel. The current Pastor of Cote Brilliante, Rev. Clyde R. Crumpton has actively engaged and challenged the Cote Brilliante family and neighbors to take a stand for justice and righteousness for the greater good of the entire community, to oppose racism, oppression and privilege. Our call to action was reinforced after another “Not Guilty” verdict of a White police officer in September 2017, in the shooting death of an unarmed Black man, Anthony Lamar Smith, which was actually caught on video. This pattern of impunity directly contradicts the love and justice of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is at the core of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This is why we actively engage in protest, to seek justice where harmful injustice abides. Our young people want to see clergy on the street, and we need to be there—often in clergy wear—for the awareness and consciousness of everyone.

At the Big Tent panel discussion in July 2017 at Washington Assembly, it was stated that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been “dismantling racism” for decades, yet it still seems pretty intact. In fact, Jim Crow (the name and face of racial discrimination) is now James Crowe, Esquire. An example of James Crowe, Esq. was seen in the campaign rhetoric of now President Donald Trump in his seemingly coded language of fixing the problem with urban America. It seemed to speak particularly to rural White America about Black America, suggesting Black America is the problem with America. Later Mr. Trump appealed to Black America asking, “What do you have to lose?” Our response, “Everything!” Affordable healthcare, livable wages, affordable housing, public education, the right to vote; everything that is currently being challenged, compromised or taken away. James Crowe, Esq. represents the language and culture that makes race in America an issue. This keeps America divided with the age-old tactic of divide and conquer. As it appears, racism has not gone anywhere; he just made a wardrobe change! This is where the church also must be engaged.
But God is not about race and sometimes economies are not either. Keeping people divided appears to allow the rich to oppress everyone and in the process get richer! This appears underway in the weakening and redirection of funding for the Affordable Healthcare Act, although its passage under President Obama may appear as racially motivated by some. Minimum wages continue to be eroded, which puts more money in the pockets of big business. Affordable housing funds are being cut or moved around to benefit developers, with the Secretary of HUD (Housing and Urban Development), a Black man, the one appointed to bring the bad news to urban America. The Secretary of Education has indicated that charter schools will have favor over public schools. Who will control those charter schools? Add now the tilt upward of the tax law. The rich are getting richer, the poor poorer—poorer healthcare, poorer income, poorer housing, poorer education—poorer future. This is where the church must have a voice for the voiceless.

Now, because we say “Black Lives Matter” does not diminish the fact that all lives matter. All lives do matter and whether Black or White, poor, low-income or middle-class, rural, suburban or urban. And, yes, poor, low-income, and middle class White America is also under attack! They, too, have everything to lose! But as long as James Crowe, Esq. and the coded language from leadership make Black America the problem, too much of White America cannot see their pockets being picked and their rights and privileges eroding. Yet, God is still in control and quite aware of how people in America, all people, are being treated, mistreated, abused or neglected. America is behaving like the goats in Matthew 25:31-46 and not the sheep. Look at the massive influx of guns into urban America. This is why the church must take a stand.

Since August 9, 2014, upon the death of Michael Brown, we have been forced to observe the true social, economic, and political dynamics of our community and country. Since that day, more of that top layer of American fabric has been pulled back, uncovering the infectious spread of racism through generations of systemic political, judicial, and educational control and manipulation. The entire nation was afforded this examination, at the expense of the Ferguson community, and communities like Charlottesville, Virginia, where the neo-Nazi edge of White Supremacy came into view. However, just as the St. Louis community was moving into a place of healing, we re-lived the experience of unaccountable police power in the dismissal of charges against the white officer who had been videotaped shooting Anthony Lamar Smith. James Crowe, Esq. showed up in the courtroom masked as the judge. The St. Louis community is again under examination.

Since 2015, across the United States there have been over 600 instances in which a Black civilian has been killed by a police officer or died while in police custody, circumstances that closely parallel the killings of Michael Brown and Anthony Lamar Smith. To name a few, lest we forget: Eric Garner, Tamir Rice (age 12), Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile. Over 600! This is why the church must seek justice.

In her book, The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander identifies the New Jim Crow in various contexts, i.e. social, economic, judicial, and political, among others, each demonstrated through the effects of mass incarceration. (See https://www.vanderbilt.edu/ctp/The New Jim Crow.pdf ) Alexander comments that she “came to see that mass incarceration in the United States had … emerged as a stunningly comprehensive and well-disguised system of racialized social control that functions in a manner strikingly similar to Jim Crow” (p. 4). “Strikingly similar to Jim Crow” is what we identify as James Crowe, Esq. Alexander states,

“Arguably the most important parallel between mass incarceration and Jim Crow is that both have served to define the meaning and significance of race in America.” She adds, “Slavery defined what it meant to be Black (a slave), then Jim Crow defined what it meant to be Black (a second-class citizen). Today mass incarceration defines the meaning of blackness in America: Black people, especially Black men, are criminals. That is what it means to be Black” (p. 197).

In other words, Blacks in the United States are looked upon as slaves, second-class citizens and criminals! This, of course, is by design and viewed this way by the neo-Nazi, white supremacist, other so called hate groups and some poorly educated and/or poorly informed White Americans. This is why the church must educate.

Given this history of slavery, racial discrimination, and mass incarceration, we may wonder how much the protests of Blacks and Whites matter? Our history – America’s history – will not change. Can we seriously think that protest alone will dismantle racism?! Should we not dismantle the Dismantling Racism and Privilege (DRAP) program itself and strengthen Advocacy Committees for justice and equality? Under God, should we not organize as faithfully as we can – economically, socially, politically, and judicially, for the disenfranchised (Black and White) to become stakeholders with the rights and privileges of all other U.S. citizens?

In our contemporary context the church is called to be a voice for those unheard and the oppressed, to advocate for truth, justice and the Christian way, to love thy neighbor and promote peace. We seek to fulfill what the LORD requires, that we act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. This is the legacy on which we must continue to build. Herein lies salvation for both the oppressed and the oppressor. Perhaps not much has changed since Rev. William Gillespie arrived in 1956. But the ministry and mission of Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church endures, striving to further develop a sustainable community of healthy families, schools, and businesses. The legacy of this loving, caring, sharing, serving congregation continues in the love of God, in the light of the Gospel, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

God’s Peace and Blessings from Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church, Rev. Clyde R. Crumpton, Pastor

A Dream-Vision-Hope from Oak Hill, St Louis

By the Reverend Erin Counihan, Pastor, Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, St. Louis

I originally wrote the letter below to share with the presbytery and the congregation I serve during the Stockley Protests in St. Louis in October 2017. Our community was rising up, again, after another police officer was acquitted on murder charges, this time in the 2011 killing of Anthony Lamar Smith. (This case had lingered for a long time, and the judge’s ruling was released only after he had retired and moved out of state). Since 2014 when Michael Brown was killed, and shortly afterward VonDerrit Myers was killed in our Oak Hill neighborhood, our community has been called to both conversation and action.

Starting in those initial protests, the community stood up and said we can’t take this anymore. We people of faith then started trying to listen and follow the young leaders who have refused to be silent, who have refused to accept these injustices, and who have continually called us out and urged us on. We read and discussed books, we worked with community organizers, we listened to speakers and theologians, we had hard conversations over lunch after worship. Some of us marched. Some of us offered our buildings as safe sanctuary for protesters. Some of us went to committee meetings and civilian oversight board meetings, and meetings with elected officials.

But as you can see from this letter I wrote in 2017, more than three years into this work, we still debate how to go about this work and if pastors and churches should be doing this work. I’ve heard good, wise, faithful people speak of their disappointment in specific protest tactics, their frustration about a lack of clearly identified leadership and/or goals of the movement, or that this kind of repeated, public protest is just creating more division.
But I’ve also seen new leaders rise up, new relationships developed, new passions and ministries ignited, new learnings explored, and new understandings take hold. So we continue having hard conversations about race, about justice, about politics, and about how our churches and we as people of faith “should” engage in these conversations. And still, we do the work. There’s been more and more Presbyterians who show up to the meetings, who follow young people of color into the streets and up to city hall, who are reading new news sources and research, who are being changed by a movement that God has called us to hear, notice, and engage.

Because this “Gospel from St Louis” is a way of sharing what our struggle means with readers from across the country, the letter below is only slightly edited. It was written not only for my congregation, but for the presbytery that elected me moderator. These positions of trust require the sharing of truth. Thus my letter reflects conversations in both church communities, and seeks to explain why I—and a growing number of others—cannot let this struggle go.

FROM THE OAK HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER, October, 2017

This is hard.

And I get that. This conversation that we are having in our community here in STL and in neighborhoods, schools, churches, and communities all around our country, about racism and policing and protest. It’s hard. All the emotions. All our different cultural backgrounds and personal relationships, histories and experiences, political leanings and theological positions. It makes it hard and complicated and difficult to talk about. But I have this little flicker of a vision or a dream or a hope that church could be the very place we can go and gather and discuss and debate the things that matter most to us, the passions of our hearts and the great questions of our spirits, and disagree and explore and learn and try, and still stay in relationship with one another. In my dream-vision-hope it is still hard, but it is good and gives us life and reeks of faithfulness and makes God proud. So here it is.

I am a rule-following girl. Looking at my Facebook posts, my photos, well, even listening to my sermons, over these last months and years, you may not think so, but deep in my heart, I am a rule-following girl. I like to make lists and check things off. As a kid I loved getting gold stars on the chart for assignments completed. I love a super detailed worship bulletin and I still read all the instructions before I even take the pieces out to play a board game. My friends tease me because even jaywalking makes me anxious.

I am a rule-following girl. The rules provide structure and order and help me to understand my proper place here, and how things are supposed to run over there. Maps and rules and agendas and plans are how I make sense of the world and my work my church and often, even, my identity.

And much of that is because the rules are designed to work for me. The rules are designed for my comfort. The rules are designed to keep me safe, to help me advance, to keep me wealthy, to keep me protected. I am a straight, white, cis, Christian, middle-class woman. With a very few exceptions, the rules were designed to help me. But the thing I keep learning is this: the rules don’t work that way for people who don’t look like me. Friends and neighbors and strangers and scholars and journalists and authors tell me about how the rules in our society hurt, silence, oppress and kill black and brown people, Muslim and atheist people, and so many others.

I often hear folks who look like me say, “Well, if he just followed the rules...” But then I see another video of someone of color following the rules and getting pulled over and arrested anyway. Of someone going to the bathroom where the rules say they are supposed to and getting assaulted anyway. Of someone trying to follow the rules or obey a command and ending up dead anyway. And so what do I do when the rules that protect and uplift me, are keeping others down? What does God call me to do?

And I hear it in my head: Do justice, seek kindness, walk humbly with God.

For me, doing justice has meant working to change the rules, to make them more equitable. That means doing my research, organizing with others, signing petitions, engaging with elected officials, pursuing legal action, and participating in direct action, too. Yup, that means taking to the streets, and standing there, to demand justice. So, me, the rule-following girl, ends up in the street breaking the very rules that make me so comfortable. Breaking the rules in order to help change them. In order to stop squashing my neighbors. In order to stop the killing of my neighbors. In order to dismantle the white supremacy that serves me so well. In order to be a part of bringing God’s justice to all. In order to bear witness to God’s rule-breaking love and grace and power, even in this time and in this place.

And it’s super uncomfortable. And it is divisive. And it messes with our commutes and our comforts, our theologies and our understandings, our structures and our community. And that is hard. And that is also the point.

I know we don’t all agree. I hope we can all talk about it. I hope that if you are excited or angry, if you are confused or motivated, if you are frustrated or disappointed or inspired or curious, that we can talk about it. I am just a phone call, text, email, or coffee date away. Please reach out. Ask questions. Pray. Join our Touchy Topics Book Club to read and learn, attend a meeting of the STL Anti-Racism Collective and get training, get involved with MCU’s Break the Pipeline campaign and take action.

May God be with us as we discuss. May God be with us as we debate. May God be with us as we work and do the justice that is required of us. May God be with us as we love. As we love.

In order that Love may finally set the rules, Pastor Erin

**Marks of a Faithful Human Freedom Movement in St Louis**

By the Reverend Deborah Krause, PhD, Dean of the Faculty, Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri.

As a religious leader I saw the police killing of Mike Brown and the uprising in Ferguson in 2014 as a revelation. In the true meaning of “apocalypse,” it was an “unveiling” of the deeply entrenched structural racism and white supremacy on which the region of St. Louis is built. It’s not that these structures have not always been present, destroying and demeaning Black lives while benefingiful lives like my own, but Ferguson shone a light on this system that demands a reckoning. As a lifelong resident of this region and a lifelong member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) within it, I would say that the revelation of the “marks of a faithful church” through Ferguson would be to be working actively to dismantle these structures, and to interrogate and root out the idolatrous hold of white supremacy that has blocked the church thus far from being a meaningful agent for anti-racism and social transformation.

In this reflection on the freedom struggles in St Louis since August, 2014, I have looked to the scriptures—my field is New Testament—and to relationships in my congregation and presbytery. Here, however, I point to four marks of a wider faithful movement in which many Christians and
The four marks are (I) the conviction that Black Lives Matter (BLM), a confession of sin and of faith; (II) the call of God to go out into the streets, with ecumenical and interfaith partners; (III) the critical appreciation of our institutional histories, in my case, that of Eden Seminary; and (IV) the energy to work for a different future for the whole community.

I. Racism is a social disease. It is not about personal preference—whether or not we have a black co-worker, or best friend. Racism is about social power—factors beyond our own personal will, and it is knitted historically into the social, economic, political, legal, educational, and religious institutions of our country. In fact, it is so deeply and historically knitted that it poses innocently and naturally as “the way things are.” But the way things are is not natural—it is constructed.

- Disparities of Police stops between white and Black people in which in St Louis, city and county in 2015 roughly 50% of the people stopped were Black even though Black people make up less than 28% of the population—are not natural.

- Disparities in children moved by the public school system from in-school discipline to the juvenile justice system – in 2014 over 1000 Black children were so moved, and just 60 white children—are not natural.

- Disparities in national wealth in which white households hold $142,000 on average, while Black households hold less than $19,000—are not natural.

In this context as a Christian I hear the declaration “Black Lives Matter” to be a confession of sin for white people of faith in America. BLM has for me cut to the truth of where we are and where we are being called to be as a nation. Currently to say “Black Lives Matter” is to confess that our country does not function to value Black lives equally. If it feels like a challenge, or even a prejudicial thing to say, if you want to retract: “All Lives Matter,” please listen. Saying BLM (a phrase begun in Florida) is a way to illumine these disparities of structural racism in our society. It is a way to say that until we can value Black lives in this country, then all lives do not matter. One of the frontline leaders of the Ferguson Freedom movement, Cathy (‘MamaCat’) Daniels puts it this way, “Of course ‘all lives matter,’ but until mine matters as much as yours, I’m going to be specific: Black lives matter.” For those of us in the majority, BLM is to confess that we have much work to do in dismantling the structures and practices of racism in this country that have rendered Black children more vulnerable to illness, poor education, and a racialized prison system, while most of our kids benefit. To me, a mark of the faithful church in America following Ferguson is a church that is confessing the sin of racism and white supremacy.

But that is not the only way I hear this refrain. For me, BLM is also an Affirmation of Faith. In short, while protecting Black and Brown citizens from the wages of structural racism is our duty as white people of faith, eradicating white supremacist ideology from our own psyches, habits, and institutions—even churches—is our collective calling.

BLM is not just a summons to honor and protect the value of Black Lives. It is a call for those of us who are white to relinquish our idolatrous commitment to our whiteness, and to get free to our own humanity. As we work on our racism, therefore, we do not do it simply to be well-intentioned white people trying to help the less fortunate. We do it as Christians who are dependent on the grace and love of our creator God. We do it with the passion to be liberated from the disfiguring and damaging power that racism and white supremacy have over our lives. We do it because we yearn to be free and whole—in God’s image. A mark of the faithful church in America after Ferguson is a church that is affirming its faith in the sovereign God of creation by interrogating our idolatrous worship of whiteness and working to live into our baptismal calling of living in the Spirit of Christ—neither Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female.

Black Lives Matter—Let us say it knowing that our very lives, our full humanity, our freedom in Christ cannot be realized until it is true.

II. A Moral Summons to Be Seen and Heard in STL

A former faculty colleague, Leah Gunning Francis, has written a book that profiles many of the religious leaders who were inspired by the Ferguson Freedom movement: Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership, Awakening Community (Chalice Press, St. Louis, 2015). Through interviews and reflections she chronicles how leaders in different parts of the region heard the summons to come into the streets to stand up for Mike Brown and to call out and work for change. You can feel that call in the testimony of Rev. Erin Counihan, a newly arrived pastor soon elected Moderator of Presbytery, who became a true leader of our churches when another tragic police killing occurred in her part of St. Louis.

For me, this summoning is evidence of how a concept like “Next Church” that we hear hoped for in this historic time of transformation is really happening. Whatever form the church is going to take it must be able to move into spaces with others (of different faiths and no faith at all) to witness to and join the redemptive work of God in the world. The Ferguson protesters called us out of our churches, schools, and homes and into the streets. Following them, and listening for God’s purpose in this work for justice in our region has re-organized us into relationships and activities that hold hope for our ongoing reformation into whatever the Spirit holds in store for the church that is next. We need to honor the organizing work of Metropolitan Congregations United that helped that re-organization take place, and recognize leaders—like Mary Jean Boteler, then at Second Presbyterian, and Rabbi Susan Talve, of Central Reform Congregation, who helped muster support.

As I look back over these past several years, I have found myself in interfaith work like I’ve never been before. I found myself in intercultural dialogue and work on antiracism like I’ve never been before. These are all things I said I cared about, but now I’m doing way more of them. It’s like I
III. Critical Appreciation of our Institutional History:

As Dean, I’ve been thinking a lot about the history and the vocation of Eden Seminary in light of BLM and the need to end structural violence in our society. Think about it – Eden was founded in 1850 by German-Prussian immigrants who were running away from war. They built the school to meet the needs of their growing immigrant population on the frontier, and the place they choose to locate is eastern Missouri in 1850. Turns out, they walk right into a war, and build right on top of where racial tensions are getting ready to blow up. And so from the beginning, quite unwittingly, the school has been involved in this country’s struggle for human freedom. Now it’s had lots of days, decades in fact, where it pretended like that argument wasn’t going on, but the school was founded on the threshold of the Civil War, and in the middle of an on-going struggle.

Maybe this has something to do with why we’re still here. Maybe what happened in Ferguson is not incidental to our history, but integral to it. I can’t help but wonder if the traditions, resources, and mission of our school are called by God to be in service of this particular struggle in North American for human freedom.

In the early years of the school you have events like the Camp Jackson Affair in 1861 where German immigrants helped to hold the armory against a secessionist attack (led by the governor) outside of St. Louis. The role of the German immigrant population (who were largely anti-slavery and pro-Union) in fighting off that attack is well established. Eden students (then on the Marthasville campus), and members of area Evangelical churches were among the civilians who helped to hold the armory. When I think about those students and church members, I cannot help but think of colleagues and students who took to the streets of Ferguson after the shooting of Mike Brown to stand against state sponsored racism and violence. Imagine, back in 1861, the Governor of Missouri was trying to raid the armory for the South. The seminarians and church folk who stood against the governor no doubt withstood a lot of public challenge that they were destructive, disobedient, and out of line. Doesn’t that sound familiar? Then and now, the call to stand in the street and stand up against the forces of dehumanization is consistent. Maybe that’s why we are still here.

But you know it is also a lot more complicated than that. Early on the Germans, who were pacifists, and who hated slavery, were on the right side of history in many ways. They’re in Marthasville where there are plantations, and they’re in the slave state, but they don’t have slaves. All this is true, yet they were no doubt segregationists and probably racist, despite being right on the slave question. This ambivalence is a huge part of the history and current reality of this school.

And the ambivalence lives in the churches. The German heritage churches in towns all around St. Louis include some very conservative communities. Racism has certainly abided in these towns, and the churches haven’t transformed that – just as the Seminary has not transformed the broader St. Louis area. We are caught in this web of sin, and even while we have some resources for naming and fighting it, we are also often unable to extricate ourselves from it.

One story in our history gets at this ambivalence on race in a powerful way. When I first joined the faculty at Eden in 1992 I remember learning that the Seminary was the first Euro-American institution of higher learning in Missouri to admit a person of color. That was in 1932. That fact was shared with me as a part of the heroic history of the school as an agent of social transformation, and I was proud of it. I have over the years pointed out to friends and colleagues at St Louis University and Washington University that their schools (in 1945 and 1958 respectively) began to integrate decades after Eden. In 1932 Eden admitted an AME pastor named Joseph Gomez to its STM program, the first Black student admitted to a White graduate school in the state of Missouri.

Since Ferguson, however, I have done some reading that has somewhat clouded this heroic history. Turns out that Rev. Gomez was admitted at Eden, but only after he had first been denied. According to Gomez’s biography written by his wife, Joseph and the local chapter of the NAACP identified the seminary as a good candidate for testing desegregation on the basis of its mission statement. At the time, Eden had a mission that read something like: “Eden Seminary…is a school open to students of all Christian denominations.” So Gomez, on the basis of that mission statement, applies, and he’s rejected. And I think he probably knew he would be because it’s a White segregated institution. So anyway, he was denied.

That little detail was left out when I first heard the story, but it is such an amazing part of it, because Gomez and the NAACP went on a letter writing campaign in the St. Louis Argus and church publications pressuring the school to admit him because the mission statement says “open to students of all Christian denominations” – and this is a student of Christian denomination. So what is preventing you? At that point, the faculty reconsiders and admits him. He graduates in 1934 with an STM.

Now this kind of strategic social pressure seems like a foreshadowing of the kinds of challenges to segregation that lead 20 years later up to Brown vs. Board of Education. It’s like a precursor to the landmark desegregation act in our nation’s history – and Eden is a part of that history. As it turns out we were a reluctant part in that history. It was our vocation, embodied in that mission statement that bore the seeds of our redemption – that paved the way for Gomez and others to call the seminary out of its sinfulness to join the human freedom movement. This has helped me see the ambivalence of the seminary towards its role in the human freedom movement. We are at once culturally reluctant and vocationally summoned beyond our acculturated horizon. That is who we are. It’s far from heroic, and it should always alert us to the need of God’s grace in the witness of our sisters and brothers who suffer and who are in the struggle.

Recently in a Board of Trustees strategic planning meeting I told the Gomez story. We were talking about our vision and mission. I proposed we state very openly that we are an anti-White supremacist, antiracist institution, because who knows what horizon of our acculturation we’re not seeing today.

If we claim that we are an anti-racist and anti-White supremacist school we will need to move from that old comfortable idea of “how can we be more welcoming and hospitable” to Black students and people of color. If we are called to be engaged in the human freedom movement, then what we’re doing is not just trying to be welcoming to African Americans. We’re working to engage all our students, faculty, and staff (White, Black, and Brown) as agents of transformation, as agents of anti-racism, as agents of human freedom in their leadership in church and society.

White supremacy is idolatry. Every part of the tradition of this school, from the Evangelical German and Reformed heritage to the faculty’s current liberation and postcolonial theological perspectives hates idolatry. So if we hate idolatry and if we want to create transformational leaders, what kinds of transformation are we talking about? Of this society? Of us, of the people? What needs to be transformed is our sinfulness and brokenness which is expressed socially, systemically, most pointedly, I think, in our context as White supremacy and structural racism. This is the summons of our vocation in our place and time—both as a school and as part of the church. Rather than a center that welcomes people in, the metaphor of a movement is helping me to see the seminary as an agent through which God’s purposes are flowing — if we can just have the faith to open up and join in.
The realization of God’s beloved community.

St. Louis feels these threats in a unique way. As we name the structural sin that is manifested in racism, poverty, violence, and crime. #Ferguson

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receiving healing support from the church.

This is what resistance looks like. This is what it means to live the truth that we all belong to one another. [END]

They know who lives on the street, and what abandonment looks like. So volunteers returned to the streets to keep our unhoused family safe and alive.

Several Additional Resources on forms of Christian presence in the social struggle in St. Louis:

Metropolitan Congregations United organizing against the “Great Divorce” of the city from the county…https://www.piconetwork.org/ferguson/Hands-Up-Sabbath-Toolkit.pdf.

deray McKesson@deray. Why protest? Because we can imagine an America that is better than this. Because blackness is not a weapon or a crime. #Ferguson, http://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/congregations-make-conversations-about-race-priority#stream/0.

Sojourners Commentary. https://sojo.net/articles/unrest-st-louis-it-was-built-be-way.


A Racial Justice Resource List, edited by Elizabeth McDonald-Zwoyer, member, Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-10

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-10.

ACREC supports this overture as it brings awareness to a misappropriate application of laws unjustly and unfairly applied to people of color who have been marginalized and oppressed by racism. Thus, people of color are suffering punitively, but not receiving healing support from the church.

“Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism.” (Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community Churchwide Antiracism Policy: https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/)

The recommendations support the core values of ACREC as it seeks racial and economic justice and equity, thus enabling the realization of God’s beloved community.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-10

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-10.

We commend ACSWP on the detailed call to action. Since the formation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1983, there is no historical moment where there has been a more acute threat to women’s rights, racial and ethnic rights, and LGBTQ+. St. Louis feels these threats in a unique way. As we name the structural sin that is manifested in racism, poverty, violence,
police brutality—to name a few—it is also important that we lift up and recognize the ongoing sin of patriarchy and misogyny. In particular, black women and children in St. Louis suffer more significant health disparities (including infant mortality and breast cancer) and are disproportionately affected by the overall economic conditions [http://www.flourishstlouis.org/flourish-commits-to-zero-racial-disparities-in-infant-mortality/].

ACWC advises approval and requests that issues of gender are lifted up and recognized as an ongoing social justice issue.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-10

Comment on Item 11-10—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Public Witness respectfully suggests that the policy recommendations be expanded to include a ban on the distribution of surplus military weapons and equipment to local police departments, enhanced data collection on use of force, and violence intervention programs in local municipalities.

Item 11-11

[The assembly approved Item 11-11 as amended. See pp. 55, 59]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation from the Presbyterian Intercultural Network (PIN), recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

1. “Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era.”

2. Declare the period from 2020 to 2030 as the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation” by focusing on transformative priorities and initiatives across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

3. Immediately denounce the persistent and demonic presence of racism and the misuse of power and privilege in our individual and institutional lives. Invest in training and identifying trained antiracism facilitators, who will provide a geographically accessible and affordable network for congregations and mid councils, and develop a process for connecting facilitators and congregations and mid councils who seek assistance.

4. Immediately after the 223rd General Assembly (2018), direct the Moderator to appoint a cross-sectional task force to develop and publish priorities and guidelines for congregations, mid councils, and General Assembly entities for the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation” and recommend appropriate resources to deepen understanding and skills for resisting [racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism] [discrimination based on race, class, gender, sex, or sexuality]. Promote awareness of resources currently available that deepen understanding of intersectionality and skills for resistance including those less frequently discussed, such as interfaith competencies so essential in these times.

5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP) to develop relevant intercultural programs, resources, events, and antiracism training to assist persons in recognizing intersectionality or how differences treated oppressively are experienced simultaneously in ways that amplify and complicate the consequences of each aspect of oppression.

6. Strongly encourage mid councils and congregations to hold white privilege recognition, cultural humility, and antiracism trainings throughout the church and commit themselves to disrupting racism and intersectional inequality, including intercultural and intracultural realities.

7. Strongly encourage the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the mid councils to promote integration of the Confession of Belhar into their study life and worship to celebrate its implementation.

8. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to equip congregations and mid councils to form intercultural coalitions, networks, new worshiping communities, and congregations across the church that worship, work, share meals, study, share communion, and advocate for racial and intercultural justice, with a respectful awareness and appreciation of each other’s ethnicities, cultures, socioeconomic status, able-bodiedness, gender and sexual identity and expression, and languages.

9. Urge the session of each congregation, as well as each mid council, seminary, Presbyterian Women’s groups, and other entities, to take action to be intercultural in their life, work, and worship.

10. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to encourage, assist, and support presbyteries’ committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry to
a. Urge candidates for ministry to engage in internship and/or field education experiences in intercultural settings; especially for “white” students to work in a racial and cultural context different from their own.

b. Provide opportunities for candidates for ministry to gain experience preaching and teaching about racial justice.

c. Include members of diverse intercultural backgrounds on committees on preparation for ministry, guiding candidates for ministry.

d. Encourage synods and presbyteries to institute dismantling racism programs and encourage all staff and clergy to take the training every three years in like manner of PC(USA) mandated sexual abuse policy.

d. Provide regular white privilege recognition, cultural humility, and antiracism trainings at presbytery gatherings.

e. Support seminarians in their study and learning from diverse readings and topics in seminary curriculum about the lived realities of people of color in the U.S. and the life experiences of immigrants to the United States.

11. a. Direct General Assembly to focus on planting new congregations, and raising indigenous leadership for all levels of the church from within communities of color, with special emphasis on the Latin, African American, Native American, and immigrant communities.

b. Remove barriers and create pathways to full inclusion in the PC(USA) for congregations and pastors coming from historically non-white traditions.

[If these directives require changes to the Book of Order, these changes should be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

12. Encourage all members, particularly “white” members, in the PC(USA) to work to end racism in our individual and institutional lives by working on the following eight steps:

- Recognition
- Repentance
- Resistance
- Resilience
- Reparations
- Reconciliation
- Recovery
- Resonance

[See Appendix A for a brief explanation of the steps.]

[Financial Implications: PMA Annual $16,500; Per Capita Annual $23,740. Total—$80,480]

**Rationale**

The Presbyterian Intercultural Network (PIN) affirms that we are living in an increasingly intercultural society that brings numerous challenges and opportunities for effective and relevant ministries.

Becoming a “Church of Intercultural Transformation” is embracing the fullness of God’s image in every person and community, and intentionally and decisively making room for all of God’s people by disrupting the status quo, working to end racism, and working to eliminate oppressive systems of power and privilege (see Appendix B for a Glossary of Terms).

A “Church of Intercultural Transformation” fairly represents the whole people of God, where confession, repentance, forgiveness, restitution, reconciliation, and redemption are made possible by following Christ’s path of self-emptying and sacrificial love for people of all races, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds, all of whom are created in God’s image. (cf. Phil 2:6–8 and Gen. 1:27).

A “Church of Intercultural Transformation” gathers in prayer, worship, and mission, and commits itself to practices of mutual recognition and understanding of difference through intentional self-examination, relationship building, and equitable access to power.
Becoming a “Church of Intercultural Transformation” is gathering with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural identities, interacting with one another, learning and growing together, building relationships and becoming transformed and shaped from each other’s experiences.

In the “Church of Intercultural Transformation,” no one is left unchanged. Some examine their own cultures more deeply, some are changed through their interaction with others, many learn more about what it means to be in intercultural community together.

A “Church of Intercultural Transformation” addresses racial and cultural power imbalances, and people are able to learn from each other through the power of the Holy Spirit, leading toward the transformation of all people.

The commitment to become a “Church of Intercultural Transformation” is expressed when the church begins to live its faith by:

- Celebrating and using God’s gifts of theological and liturgical richness that arise from all of God’s people’s racial, cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Intentionally seeking ways to engage the genuine racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of all members of the church in all church structures, councils, agencies, and organizations.
- Supporting the development and distribution of multilingual resources in the languages of members of the church.
- Engaging in effective prophetic advocacy and public policy development on the issues of race, class, gender, and sexual identity and expression, economic and environmental justice.
- Expanding curriculum to educate about different racial and cultural heritages, histories, and traditions in the church and society, as well as educating about racism, sexism, classism, power and privilege, cultural humility, and different ways of learning and practicing the Reformed faith.
- Assuring that writers of church publications are of different racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and that images used in denominational publications and promotions show Presbyterians of color as ministers, elders, and leaders in the denomination, rather than relying on portrayals of people of color as objects or recipients of mission.
- Encouraging ministers and leaders in the church to engage in white privilege recognition, cultural humility, and anti-racism training, and to participate in immersion experiences in other cultures and languages.
- Including people of different races and cultures on boards of trustees, finance and property committees, and in the planning and implementation of financial management and stewardship in the church; promoting faithful, equitable, and just stewardship; and sharing of financial and property resources by those in God’s intercultural community.
- Incorporating an ethic of mutual accountability in relationships with one another at all levels of church governance by reporting to one another regularly on progress and areas of difficulty and obstacles to equity.


Appendix A: Eight Steps to End Racism (See Recommendation 10)

1. RECOGNITION—As it happened in John 20:11–18, like Mary Magdalene, we hear our names called and recognize that we are captive to the power of race. We cease denying that race has power in our individual and communal lives.

2. REPENTANCE—We acknowledge to ourselves and to others that race has power in our lives and contributes to our white privilege.

3. RESISTANCE—We commit ourselves to combating the power of racism in ourselves, in others, in churches, and in institutional life. Because of its long reach in American history, at times we will feel like those who are battling principalities and powers in Ephesians 6:10–20.

4. RESILIENCE—We are called to affirm the traditional ways of combating racism while seeking new ways to engage a powerful force that continues to be present in American life and that continues to evolve.

5. REPARATIONS—We commit ourselves to doing our part to repair the breaches that have been made through racism, including psychological, spiritual, and economic damage.

6. RECONCILIATION—We recognize that we have long benefitted from racism and that in order for reconciliation to take place, we will need to work the first five steps listed above.

7. RECOVERY—We receive and commit ourselves to live by a new vision of a humanity created by God to live in love, equity, and justice rather than in the hierarchy and domination of the system of race.
8. RESONANCE—We understand and resonate with our own cultural background.

(Source: Steps 1–7 are from “Seven Steps for Those Classified as White to Use in Engaging Our Racism” by Nibs Stroupe, https://www.revnibsstroupe.com/).

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

**Antiracism:** An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional, and systemic racism, as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes. (Source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation’s Glossary of Terms)

**Class:** A category usually used to divide members of society into groups in terms of their economic status. The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as “a social stratum whose members share certain economic, social, or cultural characteristics.”

**Classism:** The cultural, institutional, and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign value to people according to their socioeconomic status, thereby resulting in differential treatment. (Source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation’s Glossary of Terms)

**Culture:** The mix of ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral and social norms, knowledge and traditions of a group of individuals who have historical, geographic, religious, racial, linguistic, ethnic, or social context, and who transmit, reinforce, and modify those ideas, values, and beliefs, passing them on from one generation to another. It results in a set of expectations for appropriate behavior in seemingly similar contexts. (Source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation’s Glossary of Terms)

**Cultural Identity:** Seeing oneself in relation to one’s own ethnic or cultural group. There are many different affiliations that we hold that come together to create a unique cultural identity for each of us. Our cultural identity is very complex with each group membership intersecting with the others. Because of this complexity, we cannot be judged, labeled, or categorized based on one aspect of our identity. (Source: D. Merrill-Sands, Holvino, and Cumming. Working with Diversity: Working Paper NO. 11, Center for Gender in Organizations, Simmons Graduate School of Management, MA, USA, 2000.)

**Cultural Humility:** The ability to understand, appreciate, communicate, and interact with persons from other cultures, races, genders, and belief systems different from one’s own in order to effectively engage with people in God’s intercultural community.

**Culturally Humble Organization:** The policies and practices of an organization, its values and mores, which enable that organization and individuals in the organization to interact effectively in an intercultural environment: assessing culture, valuing and managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to difference, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Cultural humility is a “way of being” that is reflected in the way an organization treats its members, its employees, its clients, and its community.

**Cultural Identity:** Seeing oneself in relation to one’s own ethnic or cultural group. There are many different affiliations that we hold that come together to create a unique cultural identity for each of us. Our cultural identity is very complex with each group membership intersecting with the others. Because of this complexity, we cannot be judged, labeled, or categorized based on one aspect of our identity. (Source: D. Merrill-Sands, Holvino, and Cumming. Working with Diversity: Working Paper NO. 11, Center for Gender in Organizations, Simmons Graduate School of Management, MA, USA, 2000.)

**Discrimination:** Treating members of a targeted group less favorably than those of the dominant group. This often occurs when the dominant group determines the accessibility of goods or services for, and/or the rights and privileges of, the targeted group. (Source: Association for Women’s Rights in Development.)

**Ethnic Group:** A group socially defined on the basis of cultural characteristics of diverse types such as language, religion, kinship organization, dress, and mannerism, or any other set of criteria deemed relevant to the actors concerned. (Source: Merrill-Sands, D., Holvino, and Cumming. Working with Diversity, Working Paper, No. 11, Center for Gender in Organizations, Simmons Graduate School of Management, MA, USA: 2000)

**Ethnicity:** A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base. (Source: Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A sourcebook. New York: Routledge, 2000)

**Gender Equality:** Women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social, and cultural development and to benefit equally from the results, not by becoming the same, but by correcting the systemic nature of inequality. (Source: Association of Women’s Rights in Development)

**Institutional Racism:** When the values, norms, beliefs, standards, and expectations of a dominant group become the basis for organizational policies, practices, arrangements, and appropriate behaviors, and result in unequal distribution of benefits and opportunities. The power to control resources, determine access, reward and punish behaviors, distribute benefits, and privilege is lodged in norms of the dominant group and access is denied to people of different identity groups. (Source: Merrill-Sands, D., Holvino and Cumming. Working with Diversity)

**Intercultural:** Respecting and embracing different cultures or cultural identities within a society or nation, holding each as equally valuable to and influential upon the members of society. An intercultural church treasures the different cultural contexts that God gives to different individuals and communities and values diverse expressions of practicing the faith. It offers a positive vision of the whole community, together in its difference. It encourages a healthy critique of each other’s points of view, and it values the give and take of respectful relationships. It also takes steps to become a multilingual community.

**Intercultural Church Movement:** Igniting the intercultural vision in the church is a radical transformation calling all of us to change. The movement inspires Presbyterians to: I- Interact and build deep relationships with people of different races and cultures, E- Educate in the areas of cultural humility and intercultural ministry, and I- Involve ourselves in intercultural coalitions to ignite the vision for intercultural ministries in the church in this new era.
**Intercultural Coalitions:** Individuals of different races and cultures who join together in groups as allies, advocates, and partners, learning from one another, strategizing and taking action to disrupt racism, actively resisting white privilege, challenging social and historical inequalities that permeate institutions, and joining together in the vision of becoming God’s intercultural community.

**Internalized Oppression:** External oppression becomes internalized oppression when the oppressed come to believe and act as if the oppressor’s belief system, values, and way of life are reality.

**Intersectionality:** The experience of the interconnected nature of race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc. (cultural and social), and the way they are imbedded within existing systems, such that they define how one is valued. The reality for people who suffer not only from one form of bias, but also experience a range of other forms of oppression. For instance, most women of color experience discrimination not only because of their race but also because of their gender; in other words, women of color live the intersection of gender and race discrimination.

**Prejudice:** A pre-judgment drawn in the absence of evidence and held in the face of evidence that contradicts it. (Source: Working Definitions prepared for antiracism training in the PC(USA))

**Privilege:** In organizational systems, large or small, privilege refers to the unearned benefits that come from having access to the tangible resources and social rewards of that system. Privilege also extends to the power to name and influence the functions of the system itself. Privilege in any organizational system includes the ability to have one’s voice heard and/or exercise power, to shape the norms and values of the system (group, organization, society).

**Race:** A socially constructed category—rather than an objective, scientifically, or biologically consistent characteristic of a person or group of persons—developed during the period of European colonial expansion that uses characteristics such as skin color, facial features, and body structure as a basis for classifying people.

**Racism:** (Power + Racial Prejudice = Racism) Racism in the United States is a social system in which some are advantaged and others are disadvantaged because of skin color. Racism is not primarily about individual prejudice or an individual’s beliefs and attitudes. It results from a merger of social power and racial prejudice to create systems that treat people differently whether intentionally or unintentionally. It shapes institutions and structures, so that they provide privileges for some while oppressing others. It involves inequality and unfair access to the distribution of such resources as money, education, information, and decision-making power between dominant and dominated groups.

**Sexism:** Refers to gender stereotyping of women and men as hierarchically ordered (men over women) and also as confined to limited cultural identities and roles as “masculine” and “feminine.” It is expressed in the exclusion of women from certain types of employment or leadership roles that are assumed to be the prerogatives of males. Sexism is expressed in personal, interpersonal, cultural, economic, legal, and political terms, and is part of a total social and cultural system. (Source: Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, Westminster/John Knox. Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson, 1996.)

**Stereotype:** A fixed notion or conception of a person, group, idea, etc., allowing for no individuality and no critical judgment of individual cases. Stereotypes are usually based on false generalizations about a particular category of people, and are often used to justify the actions taken against members of that group. (Source: Maurianne Adams, et. al.)

**White Privilege:** “White privilege” names the unearned advantages that come to whites in the system of racial preference. Whites tend to assume that they are “normal” and that others are “other.” This puts them in the powerful position of defining the world. The concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that whites receive, either consciously or unconsciously, by virtue of their skin color in a racist society where those who are considered to be white are the dominant group. Generally white people who enjoy such privilege do so without being conscious of it. The sense of whites as non-raced and others as being racialized perpetuates the assumed authority of whites to define, and with this assumed authority whites define everyone (themselves and others) in terms of themselves. Whites assume the right to make meaning, to describe, analyze, and define reality. This definition nearly always places whites and their/our definitions and understandings at the center; all others are hyphenated or labeled as other. (Source: “Working Definitions” prepared for antiracism training in the PC(USA))

### ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-11

**Advice & Counsel on Item 11-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.**

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-11 with amendment by adding a Recommendation 12. to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“12. [Declare the PC(USA) an Intercultural Church.]”

As a reformed and always reforming church we are about transformation. As followers of the incarnate Word, we are to incarnate the message of Christ to the world God so loved by building bridges that are strong and wide enough for all to cross safely. To do so, our name must say it all. It is not enough to say so “because we live in an increasingly intercultural world.” If we are serious about providing the Good News in a cup that people recognize, then an intercultural world needs an intercultural church.

In addition to all the rationale the overture listed above, one that is of most importance is the biblical mandate we have in both the Old and New Testaments. The biblical mandate of a multicultural/intercultural community of faith envisioned by God, (as “God created a world of every kind” (Gen. 1), promoted by prophets (Gen 12, Isa. 56, Isa. 66:18, Joel 2) who called for a
one “house of prayer for all people” made “of every nation, tribe, people and language” and disciples (Acts 2:1–2), (Acts 10), (1 Cor. 3:16), and (Rev. 7:9) who emphasized a unified gathering of multitude without partiality or discrimination, and of which Christ died for (Jn. 3:16, Mt. 28:18–20) and commissioned us to go to all nations and to gather all nations and tongues & to heal all nations (Rev. 22).

We recommend that the “Cross Sectional Task Force” work closely with the Presbyterian Intercultural Network and collaboratively with ACREC, seeking council from previous experiences and expertise and must have the power to evaluate the state of the church as it seeks to become truly intercultural church. This call of multicultural/intercultural church must not be assigned to or directed by a racial ethnic area. It must be made clear that it is a call made by the whole church to and for the whole church. Thus, the burden of achieving this must become the responsibility of the whole church as one community working on a shared goal.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-11.

We commend Presbyterian Intercultural Network (PIN) for their important analysis on racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism and call for the church to actively engage in resisting and repenting from these forms of structural sin. Since the formation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1983, there is no historical moment where there has been a more acute threat to women’s rights, racial and ethnic rights, and LGBTQ+. This is a critical moment in history that the church lives into a Presbyterian Heritage of resisting the Powers and Principalities and recognizing a Reformed theological commitment that attends to the cultural context and seeks to speak the prophetic word of God.

ACWC commends PIN for the thorough and intersectional analysis and advises approval of 11-11.

Item 11-12

[The assembly approved Item 11-12 as amended. See pp. 13, 60.]

On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve the following resolution:

Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities

Standing in the conviction that all people are created in the image of God and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for all people, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirms its commitment to the full welcome, acceptance, and inclusion of transgender people, people who identify as gender non-binary, and people of all gender identities within the full life of the church and the world. The assembly affirms the full dignity and the full humanity of transgender people, their full inclusion in all human rights, and their giftedness for service. The assembly affirms the church’s obligation to stand for the right of people of all gender identities to live free from discrimination, violence, and every form of injustice.

Making these affirmations, the assembly acknowledges that the church has fallen short of these commitments and obligations. In the world and in the church, transgender people too often experience and suffer discrimination and violence. The church has failed to understand fully and to celebrate adequately the full spectrum of gender embodied in God’s creation. As a result, we have participated in systemic and targeted discrimination against transgender people, and we have been complicit in violence against them. The assembly affirms the scriptural obligation to work for justice for all God’s children, and particularly here to work for justice for people of all gender identities. We have fallen short of this obligation, and—by the grace of God—commit ourselves to do better.

These affirmations and this commitment are rooted and grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in the breadth of Scripture, and in the Reformed Tradition. Scripture affirms that all people are created in the image of God. In God’s creation, we see and experience God’s image expressed across a broad and life-giving expression of gender. Honoring the breadth and variety of our gender identities and expressions is one of the ways we can come to an even deeper understanding of who we are created to be in relationship to God and each other. The Hebrew Scriptures, the Gospel, and the Reformed Tradition affirm the dignity and worth of all people and call on individuals and communities to work for the well-being and protection of all people. Because we recognize that people of all gender identities are created equally in the image of God, we also recognize that we share a mutual obligation to stand for the right of all people and
all gender identities and gender expressions to live free from discrimination and from violence. The image of God expansively and specifically includes people of all gender identities including transgender, cisgender, gender non-binary people, and people of all gender expressions.

Accordingly, the General Assembly empowers, authorizes, and directs the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the rights of transgender people and for legal protections to ensure and protect the full humanity and dignity of people of all gender identities. Specifically, the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Office of Public Witness) are authorized to support the right of transgender individuals to

- serve in the military, and every type of government and public service;
- full access to public accommodations, including gender-inclusive restrooms;
- full legal protection against discrimination, particularly with regard to employment, housing, education, and health care;
- title IX protections for transgender students against violence and bullying;
- other legal protections that guarantee and safeguard the full rights of transgender individuals.

The General Assembly also encourages congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to welcome transgender and gender non-binary people into the life of the church and to continue to grow in compassion and knowledge about the full expression of our individual and respective gender identities. To that end, the General Assembly directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consult with existing LGBTQIA+ focused advocacy organizations to develop and/or adopt educational resources to support congregational and denominational learning, and encourages synods, presbyteries, seminaries, and congregations to do the same.

Transgender inclusion is lived out in our congregations and Presbyterian institutions in the following ways:

- Welcoming statements that specifically name transgender and gender non-binary people as included within the life of the church.
- Policies that are inclusive of transgender and gender non-binary people.
- Available facilities such as bathrooms that are either designated as gender neutral, or allow for transgender and non-binary people to use the facility that matches their gender identity.
- Worship, liturgy, and hymns employ language inclusive of all gender identities.
- Transgender and gender non-binary people’s pronouns are respected and used appropriately.

Rationale

Our call as Christians is to welcome the diversity of all God’s creation.

- “For by God all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through God and for God. And God is before all things, and in God all things hold together” (Col. 1:16–17).
- “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3: 28).

The terms to describe and define sexual orientation, gender identity and expression evolve as individuals name the nuances of who they are created to be. While language is inadequate to keep up with the depth of human experience, the Directory for Worship also reminds us, the church is committed to using language in such a way that “all members of the community of faith [may] recognize themselves as equally included, addressed, and cherished by God” (Book of Order, W-1.0302). For the purpose of this overture, we use the following description of the terms to describe transgender and gender non-binary experiences:

- Transgender: an intentionally broad term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned when they were born.
- Gender Non-Binary: a term that is often used to describe people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify with no gender, with a gender other than male or female, or as more than one gender.

In the world and in the church, transgender people, and those who are gender non-binary, too often experience and suffer discrimination and violence. The findings of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, the largest survey examining the experiences
of transgender and gender non-binary people from all fifty states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and U.S. military bases overseas, “reveal disturbing patterns of mistreatment and discrimination and startling disparities between transgender people in the survey and the U.S. population when it comes to the most basic elements of life, such as finding a job, having a place to live, accessing medical care, and enjoying the support of family and community.”

• Of 28,000 respondents, just in the year prior to the survey (2014), 30 percent who had a job were fired, 46 percent of respondents were verbally harassed, and 9 percent were physically attacked because of being transgender. Nearly one-third (29 percent) of respondents were living in poverty, compared to 14 percent in the U.S. population. The majority of respondents who were out, or perceived as transgender while in school (K–12), experienced some form of mistreatment, including being verbally harassed (54 percent), physically attacked (24 percent), and sexually assaulted (13 percent) because they were transgender. Transgender people of color have some of the highest rates of discrimination, unemployment, and poverty compared to white transgender people, and to people who share the same race. While respondents in the U.S. Transgender Study (USTS) sample overall were more than twice as likely as the U.S. population to be living in poverty, people of color, including Latino/a (43 percent), American Indian (41 percent), multiracial (40 percent), and black (38 percent) respondents, were up to three times as likely as the U.S. population (14 percent) to be living in poverty. The unemployment rate among transgender people of color (20 percent) was four times higher than the U.S. unemployment rate (5 percent). The survey also notes that growing visibility of transgender issues has lifted up not only the voices of transgender men and women, but also people who are non-binary, “with non-binary people making up over one-third of the sample, the need for advocacy that is inclusive of all identities in the transgender community is clearer than ever.”

In confession, we recognize and name the places we fall short in our relationship with God and with one another. For the church, the Confession of 1967 acknowledges, “In each time and place there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations” (Book of Confessions, 9.43). In this particular time, the testimony of the harm and violence transgender and gender non-binary people face daily in this country calls upon the church to act. We confess that the violence impacting transgender people is not new, and that the church has not yet been outspoken to claim transgender and gender non-binary people as created in the image of God. In our own denomination, transgender and gender non-binary people have longed to use their gifts within our sanctuaries and within ordained ministry. Our silence as a church has meant that those who are transgender or gender non-binary seeking to serve the church have not received calls to ordained service, or have felt unwelcome to bring their full gifts into the life of the church.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has previously affirmed the need for the church to stand for the dignity and worth of “homosexual persons” (the term used at the time of passage). Given the disproportionate rates of discrimination and harassment faced by transgender and non-binary persons, the church is called to expand its affirmation of the dignity and worth to include transgender and non-binary people.

• The 117th General Assembly (1977) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) asserted “the need for the church to stand for just treatment of homosexual persons [sic] in our society in regard to their civil liberties, equal rights, and protection under the law from social and economic discrimination which is due all its citizens” (Minutes, PCUS, 1977, Part I, p. 174). The 1978 and 1979 General Assemblies of the PCUS reaffirmed this decision (Minutes, PCUS, 1978, Part I, p.190; Minutes, PCUS, 1979, p. 208).

• On Affirming Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination for All Persons, Regardless of Sexual Orientation.

That the 214th General Assembly (2002) direct the Stated Clerk to communicate the following action to all clergy, congregations, and seminaries:

The General Assembly reaffirms these resolutions adopted by the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the UPCUSA—

1. Calls upon Presbyterians to work for the passage of laws that prohibit discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations based on the sexual orientation of a person. (Minutes, 2002, Part I, p. 575)

In the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity in our Book of Order, the church is to be identified as “a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions” (F-2.01). To that end, this overture embraces two specific actions: advocacy and learning, for the denominational leadership and agencies, mid councils, congregations, and seminaries. It authorizes the office to engage in the issues of our day to advocate for the rights of transgender and non-binary people and for legal protections to ensure and protect the full humanity and dignity of people of all gender identities. At the same time, it encourages learning in order to grow in compassion for transgender and gender non-binary people. Resources to support this learning can be drawn from a number of sources including:


• The National Center for Trans Equality has compiled a number of resources for education on transgender and non-binary persons: https://transequality.org/about-transgender.
Transgender Law Center developed an action center focused on supporting laws to prohibit discrimination for transgender individuals: https://transgenderlawcenter.org/resources.

Teaching Transgender Toolkit offers a range of curricula to help individuals teach workshops on transgender education: http://www.teachingtransgender.org.

**Concurrences to Item 11-12 from the Presbyteries of Heartland and Mission.**

**ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-12**

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-12.

Item 11-12 asks the General Assembly to affirm and celebrate the full dignity and humanity of people of all gender identities.

As the rationale for Item 11-12 so eloquently explains, we live in a time when “language is inadequate to keep up with the depth of human experience.” Presbyterians are being asked to recognize and affirm language that best describes the deep feelings of identity that many people are experiencing. Gender and sexual identities are being described in new ways with new terminologies. As the rationale for 11-12 reminds us: the church has declared a commitment to using language in such a way that “all members of the community of faith [may] recognize themselves as equally included, addressed, and cherished by God.” Approval of this item will give evidence of that commitment.

ACSWP has submitted Item 11-14 to the assembly, in part because our committee is very concerned about the mistreatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons by others who use religion to demean and discriminate. We hope that Presbyterians will not only repudiate the mistreatment of any persons but will affirm the God-given humanity of people of all gender identities. Transgender and gender non-binary persons have amazing gifts to offer the church, and their calls to membership and leadership deserve both affirmation and celebration.

As a community of discipleship, seeking to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the PCUSA has an opportunity to declare that the love and justice of God is for all people. Making clear that “all people” includes transgender and gender non-binary persons will demonstrate that Presbyterians intend to be a “community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions.” Let us be seen as a denomination that continues to grow in compassion and knowledge about the full expression of our individual and respective gender identities.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-12**

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-12.

ACREC’s work and advocacy is for the full recognition of all people of color regardless of gender identity. Therefore, ACREC echoes the need for us as the PC(USA) to affirm and celebrate people of all gender identities.

**ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-12**

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-12.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns has expressed concern for the safety of transgender people in our statement published September 10, 2015, “In response to murders and violence against transgender people”:

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recognizes that the binaries of “men” and “women” do not fully reflect the gender identities of all God’s people. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has declared in the Book of Order that, “there is no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person.” (PC(USA) Book of Order, F-1.0403) Our advocacy for women includes all those who identify as women and those whose lives are affected by discrimination connected to their gender. The transgender community is one such community. (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/advocacy-committee-for-womens-concerns/#tab-2)

The transgender community and all non-binary gendered people face barriers, discrimination, and violence that most cisgender people will never face, yet they offer much to the church. We strongly recommend the approval of this beautiful statement of affirmation of inclusion of all within not only the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) but within our communities.

ACWC also recognizes that not only is education necessary, but also action supporting legislative and policy change, both in our nation and our denomination.
COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-12

Comment on Item 11-12—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to approve Item 11-12.

COGA affirms the theological, ecclesial, and biblical foundations of this overture. COGA invites the assembly to acknowledge the precedent set by past assemblies for this call to solidarity with those who are carrying the heaviest burdens of homophobia, racism, and economic injustice in our society. The assembly has spoken strongly in the past about the church’s responsibility to provoke justice for LGBTQ people and communities. COGA sees this overture as an important next step in the church taking responsibility for the active concern Jesus Christ calls us to have for those who are disadvantaged and harmed by unjust systems.

COGA also affirms the role the church has in looking at our own biases and practices that exclude, either intentionally or unintentionally, those who do not conform to gender binaries. This overture is more than a call to the powers and principalities for equity and justice; it is a call to the theological, biblical, and ecclesial integrity of the church.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk …” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 11-13

[The assembly approved Item 11-13 as amended. See pp. 13, 60.]

On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve the following resolution:

1. Celebrating the expansive embrace of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the breadth of our mission to serve a world in need, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirms the gifts of LGBTQIA+ people for ministry and celebrates their service in the church and in the world.”

2. The assembly celebrates that over the years, LGBTQIA+ people have faithfully, lovingly, and courageously served in every kind of service to which Christian disciples are called—notwithstanding the church’s efforts to exclude them from particular types of service.”

3. The assembly laments the ways that the policies and actions of the PC(USA) have caused gifted, faithful, LGBTQIA+ Christians to leave the Presbyterian church so that they could find a more welcoming place to serve, as they have been gifted and called by the Spirit.”

4. At the same time, the assembly gives thanks for the LGBTQIA+ pioneers of the faith who have persisted in relationship with the Presbyterian church, at great personal cost and sacrifice, together with the whole of the LGBTQIA+ community, moving the church toward a more generous, loving, and just understanding of God’s grace.”

5. The assembly also gives thanks for those who continue to seek deeper understanding, and more authentic welcome, even amid discomfort or uncertainty about how best to show hospitality, in the spirit of continuing Reformation.”

6. Today, openly LGBTQIA+ people are leading churches, preaching the gospel, serving those in need, and otherwise using their gifts for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

7. With an eye toward the future, the assembly affirms God’s presence and call in the lives of all God’s people and commits to seeking justice, equality, and inclusion for all in church and society.

8. The assembly calls on the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Office of Public Witness), and all who represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to actively work for the protection of human and civil rights, both in the United States and around the world, especially the rights of marginalized and oppressed groups, including people facing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

9. The assembly calls upon mission co-workers and ecumenical representatives to advocate for justice and equality for all God’s people in ways appropriate to their cultural and ecclesiastical context.

10. The assembly encourages all congregations and councils of the PCUSA continually to seek to expand their welcome so that all might know the Good News of Jesus Christ and encourages all other communions to do the same.
Rationale

The assembly celebrates that over the years, LGBTQ+ people have faithfully, lovingly, and courageously served in every kind of service to which Christian disciples are called—notwithstanding the church’s efforts to exclude them from particular types of service.

They have served as ministers of Word and Sacrament, proclaiming the inclusive good news of God’s love for all people in Jesus Christ, embodying Christ’s expansive welcome at the table, and reminding the church again and again what it means to live with integrity into our baptismal identity as beloved children of God.

They have served as ruling elders, leading congregations with wisdom; they have served as deacons, loving and caring for the church and its people. And, beyond ordination to particular service, they have served the church in worship, ministry, and mission, with countless acts of tender mercy.

Since 2011, councils have been permitted under the constitution to ordain people without regard to sexual orientation or any other matter not related to their calling, gifts, preparation, or suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. Today, openly LGBTQ+ people are leading churches, preaching the gospel, serving those in need, and otherwise using their gifts for ministry.

Still, the General Assembly has never explicitly affirmed the gifts and lives of LGBTQ+ people; some councils have elected not to ordain some LGBTQ+ candidates; and some inquirers, candidates, and already ordained deacons, elders, and ministers do not feel free to serve openly. Many churches with whom we are in ecumenical relationship still do not ordain LGBTQ+ people. This overture, therefore, will serve an important purpose expressing the assembly’s affirmation.

Concurrences to Item 11-13 from the Presbyteries of Heartland and Mission.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-12.

Item 11-13 asks the General Assembly to affirm and celebrate the full dignity and humanity of people of all gender identities.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-13.

Over the years, LGBTQ+ persons have experienced exclusion and hostile treatment by Christians, including Presbyterians. Nevertheless, many have been faithful members, frequently under pressure to hide their true identities. Some have been ordained to office as pastors, elders, and deacons. Others have been teachers, musicians, scholars, and the whole spectrum of employment and volunteer offerings. The legacy of their service to Jesus Christ and the church has been an unrecognized and unappreciated gift.

It is past time for giving thanks. Now the PC(USA) can claim this moment to acknowledge the pain and suffering of those who were denied their calling, some of whom left in order to serve elsewhere. Now the PC(USA) can approve the recommendations in Item 11-13 and give thanks for the perseverance and devotion of LGBTQ+ Presbyterians. Now is the time to celebrate with gratitude all of those whose faith in God, commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and hope in the power of the Holy Spirit have brought the PC(USA) to this moment.

With recent changes in the Book of Order, LGBTQ+ persons may now be ordained in the PC(USA). However, granting permission for ordination by means of a church-wide vote didn’t fully acknowledge the years of suffering and exclusion endured by the many who sought and were denied ordination. Now is the time to speak of the painful history and celebrate God’s grace and love that have made a genuine welcome of LGBTQ+ persons possible.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.


ACREC’s work and advocacy is for the full recognition of all people of color regardless of sexual orientation and gender identities. Therefore, ACREC echoes the need for us as the PC(USA) to affirm and celebrate the gifts of people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities in the life of the church.
Advice & Counsel on Item 11-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-13.

With passage of this overture, this General Assembly would clearly affirm the gifts and ministries of those of the LGBTQ+ community long silenced and excluded from the table. ACWC celebrates the hard work of the LGBTQ+ affirming organizations like More Light Presbyterians, Presbyterian Covenant Network, That All May Freely Serve, and PARITY (formally known as Presbyterian Welcome) who have functioned from outside the current structure of the PC(USA).

The PC(USA) via the action of this General Assembly can live into its commitment to be inclusive of all people by seriously considering the formation of a task force to study the need for a structural change within the church to give LGBTQ+ people a seat at the table and more importantly voice to be heard.

We conclude with a quote from 222nd General Assembly (2016) Co-Moderator, the Reverend Jan Edmiston:

“We deserve to belong because of who we are—not in spite of who we are. But it takes work and vulnerability to become who God made us to be.

“The best kind of church is a spiritual community that not only allows people to be the people God created us to be, but encourages people to be the people God created us to be. God created us to serve God by serving each other. God created us to honor God by honoring each other.

“I want to belong to that kind of church” (https://achurchforstarvingartists.wordpress.com, April 11, 2018).

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-13

Comment on Item 11-13—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to approve Item 11-13.

COGA acknowledges Item 11-13 as an important accompaniment to Item 11-12 (On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities). For the assembly’s statement of solidarity in Item 11-12 with LGBTQ people in civil society to have theological and spiritual integrity, the assembly is also called to acknowledge the harm the church has done and, in some contexts, continues to do to LGBTQ people in our structures, practices, and systems.

COGA acknowledges the painful past of the PC(USA) around questions of ordination, marriage, and the full embrace and participation of people of all gender and sexual identities. COGA urges the assembly to spend time for reflecting on that past together as God’s people who practice repentance and who trust in God’s promise to redeem and transform broken relationships.

COGA also acknowledges and affirms all the ways LGBTQ people have served and continue to serve the church with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk . . .” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 11-14

[The assembly approved Item 11-14 as amended. See pp. 56, 60.]

On Praying for a Movement of the Spirit to Engage Presbyterian Congregations in Nation-Wide Action to Prevent Gun Violence—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Confess that, in spite of fifty years of Presbyterian advocacy to reduce gun violence, we [have been paralyzed by fear of the gun and ammunition lobby and our church has] [have] not adequately applied the power of God’s love to the issue of gun violence, with more than 1,600,000 Americans dying from guns since 1968 and many millions more wounded, orphaned, and devastated by gun violence.

2. Commend:

   • All prior General Assemblies that have created church social witness policy for steps such as universal background checks, greater gun safety, and a ban on assault weapons.
• Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for their creation of the films, *Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence and Tapestry: Reweaving the Fabric of Community After Public Violence*, and the book, *Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters*, as well as for their faithful presence, on behalf of the PC(USA), with communities impacted by mass shootings.

• The Office of Public Witness, Office of the Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Peacemaking Program, Self-Development of People, Presbyterian News Service, Presbyterian Collegiate Ministry Network, and other agencies of the church for their witness during fifty years of Presbyterian policy for sensible steps to reduce gun violence.

• Those congregations, colleges, camps, and office facilities in the Presbyterian family that have voted to post signs on their buildings similar to the “No Guns in God’s House” signage called for by the 221st General Assembly (2014) as a witness against the proliferation of guns in our society, and all other congregations that have studied, prayed, and acted on this issue in other ways.

• All pastors who include the mission of reducing gun violence in creating liturgies and in their preaching, and all Christian educators who offer gun violence prevention resources for study groups and libraries.

• The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship for its creation of the Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit and other resources for local Presbyterian congregations on this issue.

[3. Call upon God to wake us up from seeing gun violence as normal and to grant divine courage to our more than 10,000 churches that we might foster a nationwide conversation on gun violence in every community; specifically, to stand in prayer during the 223rd General Assembly (2018), to share this overture and prayer with the presbyteries and synods, to share it in any other way possible, and to encourage every General Assembly commissioner and observer to continue to pray when they go home for a movement of the Spirit to engage our churches in study and action to prevent gun violence. May every congregation know that the whole church has prayed for them and for God’s intervention through them in the face of a gun violence epidemic. In love, may our churches help our country enact sensible steps to prevent gun violence from murders, suicides, accidents, family disputes, and mass shootings.

[3. This is the time for us to act and intervene in the gun violence epidemic. We will stand in prayer during the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to share this overture, to take action, and to pray with presbyteries and synods, to share it in any way possible, and for every General Assembly commissioner, and to encourage every General Assembly commissioner and observer to continue to pray when they go home for a movement of the Spirit to engage our churches in study and action to prevent gun violence. May every congregation know that the whole church has prayed for them and for us to take transformational action in this gun violence epidemic. In love, may our churches help our country and enact sensible steps to prevent gun violence from murders, suicides, accidents, family disputes, and mass shootings.

[4. Encourage congregational and presbytery leaders

[a. to work with teen and young adults especially in proposing local and state legislation prior to and in preparation for the 2018 and 2020 elections, to hold elected officials accountable, and to ensure accurate historical treatments of gun violence are included in high school curricula; and

[b. to create opportunities for study of this issue in the local churches and at the presbytery level with an emphasis on the use of resources from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Such studies should make every effort to incorporate the perspectives of communities of color which already bear the burdens of racialized policing and which struggle under education and economic oppression, two root causes of violence, which grow out of the long history of the continual and systematic reassertion of white supremacy.]

[c. to strategize with ecumenical partners based on the five elements on successful social movements cited in the General Assembly report, *Gun Violence, Gospel Values* (2010, p. 14), including use of the prayer below in public worship and protest events.]

[4.]

[Suggested Prayer:]

Gracious God, whose mercy never ends, whose Spirit brings the Kairos moment for change:

We confess our past willingness to abide the deaths of more than 1,600,000 souls lost to gun violence since 1968—the children, the parents, the distraught, as well as millions more injured, ruined, orphaned, widowed. Help us to comprehend this carnage and not become numb.

We commend and give thanks for the long witness of the General Assembly and all Presbyterians who are already engaged in preventing gun violence. We call upon you, Lord; we have nowhere else to turn. Galvanize all of us, every congregation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

223rd General Assembly (2018)
Wake us up in our pews and our lives; do not let Christ find us asleep on this watch. Rather, Lord, grant to our church members, both those of us who own guns and those of us who do not, a unity of purpose to change the national debate on gun violence. Show us the way to study, prayer, and action at the local community level.

At all the places where you are proclaimed, give us courage to stand against principalities and powers. Grant us the joy of using the gifts that you provide—energy, intelligence, imagination, and love—to help our communities and our nation heal from this sorrow and tragedy. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

Concurrences to Item 11-14 from the Presbyteries of Eastminster, Hudson River, and San Jose.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-14

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-14—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-14 calls upon God to assist the current movement to end gun violence and suggests a prayer to be disseminated.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval with amendment by adding a new Recommendation 4. and renumbering current Recommendations 4. through 10. as Recommendations 5. through 11.

“[4. Encourage congregational and presbytery leaders

“[a. To work with high school students especially in proposing local and state legislation prior to the 2018 and 2020 elections, to hold elected officials accountable, and to ensure accurate historical treatments of gun violence are included in high school curricula; and

“[b. To strategize with ecumenical partners based on the five elements on successful social movements cited in the General Assembly report, Gun Violence, Gospel Values (2010, p. 14), including use of the prayer below in public worship and protest events.”]

This overture reflects the growing hope that 2018 may be a “turning point” in the efforts against frequent gun violence, a “Kairos’ moment ignited partly by the leadership of Parkland, Florida, high school students. Major retailers of guns raised ages for purchase on their own and some also phased out sales of assault weapons, at least to those under 21. Overall there was a deep cynicism about politicians’ calls for “thoughts and prayers” after periodic, predictable, and hence preventable mass shootings, and about the reflexive blaming of mental illness in general for a particularly U.S. kind of mass homicide. Responsible gun owners were also being seen to step away from the increasingly ideological gun lobby.

The study task force formed in response to action by the 218th General Assembly (2008) included in its report an analysis of why previous efforts to change gun laws and culture had failed. Praying for a social movement or a revival is a good thing, as are research and organizing. Drawing on sociologist Doug McAdam, among others, the study team lifted up five elements, of which the fifth, “a sense of viability,” seemed key. In Christian terms, the five components are:

• a critical understanding of the problem, or high sense of grievance;

• a living connection to the commitments from our tradition for moral action, or a strong moral imperative;

• an informed perspective on the shifts in political, cultural, and social realities that open up new opportunities for collective action;

• an appreciation of the abundance of resources we bring to our effort;


Hence ACSWP’s amendment is designed to build upon past General Assembly policy and address the particular strategic possibilities of the current moment. Youth advisory delegates: does this sound right to you?

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-14

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-14—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

ACREC supports this overture as it calls congregations to take proactive action to prevent gun violence. No longer will Presbyterian congregations be paralyzed and threatened by gun and ammunition lobbies. ACREC supports congregations working to realize peace and safety of all God’s creation. ACREC believes this overture will save lives by creating a safe community and restoring peace.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-14

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-14—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-14 with comment.

Item 11-14 calls for the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to (1) confess, (2) commend, and (3) to pray together, asking that God “wake us up from seeing gun violence as normal and to grant divine courage to our more than 10,000 churches that we might foster a nationwide conversation on gun violence in every community” (Item 11-14, Recommendation). It even provides a suggested prayer for us all. While the ACWC advocates for the approval of Item 11-14, we hold strongly to the notion that, because of the impact that gun violence has upon women, children, men, and families, so much more can be done during this General Assembly of the PC(USA) than offer prayer.

The American Psychological Association has published at piece titled “Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy” (“Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy,” American Psychological Association, http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/gun-violence-prevention.aspx.), which calls for evidence-based, multifaceted solutions to the urgent and complex problem of gun violence in this country. The 58-page report includes conclusions and recommendations, such as “what works” (evidenced-based data) at both the individual level and the community level. Recommendations for policies to reduce gun violence are also included in this report, as well as the role of mental health and mental illness. Family influences are highlighted, stating, “Families can play a role in establishing and maintaining normative beliefs about violence and gun usage. Youth from families that encourage the use of guns for solving problems also may be exposed to such attitudes in other contexts, e.g., in communities and with peers, and may perceive firearms to be an appropriate means to solve problems and protect themselves” (p. 9).

With regard to how gun violence affects women, this same report from the APA’s report states, “Specifically, men are most likely to be killed in a public place by an acquaintance, whereas women are most likely to be killed in the home by a current or former spouse or dating partner (i.e. ‘intimate partner’). Women compared with men are especially likely to be killed by a firearm used by an intimate partner” (Sorenson, 2006). “Women are killed by current or former intimate partners four to five times more often than men” (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007), including by firearm. With this knowledge, then, the ACWC is called to advocate for more to be done on the issue of gun violence.

To consider action items at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the ACWC refers Assembly Committee 11 to resources previously prepared by the PC(USA), including but not limited to:

1. “Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit,” published by Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, and accessible at: http://presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/resources#WueKuliwY2w. This toolkit includes seventy pages of educational resources, pastoral responses, action tools, case studies, small group study programs, worship/biblical, and pastoral care resources, sample signage for “No Guns in God’s House,” and more than 160 links to educational resources and action ideas, including gun violence prevention national groups and local contacts in all fifty states.


Included in the webinar is a theological framework for understanding our culture’s relationship to guns, as well as providing for congregations’ tangible examples of action items, resources, and education. Thanks to the generosity of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Presbyterian Outlook is able to offer this webinar at the reduced rate of $9.99.

While the ACWC strongly advocates for the approval of Item 11-14, we urge Assembly Committee 11 to take up this important issue of gun violence, bringing forth further recommendations for action steps for synods, presbyteries, and congregations to engage in conversation, education, and prevention of gun violence in our communities and our nation.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-14

Comment on Item 11-14—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

This overture commends those engaged in the development of liturgical resources around the reduction of gun violence. The Presbyterian Mission Agency notes that the latest edition of the Book of Common Worship (WJKP, 2018) affirms and shares this concern, as it includes “Prayers After a Violent Event” (BCW 593–4), a “Service After a Violent Event” (BCW 595–8), a “Service for Justice and Peace” (BCW 599–601), suggested biblical readings and hymns for communities affected by
violence \((BCW\, 602–3)\), and guidelines for interreligious gatherings in times of conflict and crisis \((BCW\, 639)\), as well as numerous specific intercessions for “an end to violence in our neighborhood and in our world” \((BCW\, 106)\).

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**Item 11-15**


*A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)*

In keeping with its Historic Principles of Church Order \((1788)\), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 223rd General Assembly \((2018)\) of the Presbyterian Church \((U.S.A.)\) approve the following affirmation and action steps:

**Affirmation**

Presbyterians have enjoyed the benefits of First Amendment protection to exercise their religious freedom since the Bill of Rights became part of the U.S. Constitution in 1791. Our Historic Principles of Church Order of 1788 state clearly: “We do not (…) wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power … \((F-3.0101b)\).” The principle of religious freedom should not mean the right to discriminate against or impose one’s views upon others. In our commitment to be disciples of Jesus Christ, the Presbyterian Church \((U.S.A.)\) is called to stand against oppression and in support of human dignity for all people. Because religious freedom must be “equal and common to all,” as our Historic Principles further state, it cannot be maintained as a matter of privileged exemption for powerful individuals or groups.

The Synod of New York and Philadelphia considered “the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable,” and that every religious body “is entitled to declare the terms of admission to its communion” and other internal matters. We believe it weakens religious freedom when it is invoked in ways that deprive people of their civil and human rights to equal protection under the law, or seek to justify exclusion and discrimination. In the civil rights era, United States civil courts rightly rejected the claims of those who said racial integration would violate their religion.

Initially in 1978, our denomination concluded that the denial of human rights to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons on the basis of religious belief was inconsistent with our Christian faith, as well as with our commitment to the principles of equality under the law as Americans. The 199th General Assembly \((1987)\) of the Presbyterian Church \((U.S.A.)\) called for “the elimination … of laws governing the private sexual behavior between consenting adults [and the passage] of laws forbidding discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodations.” In affirming these principles at this time, the General Assembly thus states its understanding of the Christian faith to be opposed to discrimination on matters of gender orientation and identity, and in support of freedom of the conscience in matters of reproductive rights. As a church faithful to Jesus Christ, we cannot let discrimination in the public sphere be tolerated or excused on the basis of “religious freedom.”

**Action Steps**

In order to effectuate the above principles, based upon legal and theological understandings of the First Amendment and free exercise of religion consistent with those of the Reformed tradition in the United States, the General Assembly:

1. Resolves to stand against any invocation of ‘religious freedom’ \[(in the public sphere)\] that deprives people of their civil and human rights to equal protection under the law, or that uses ‘religious freedom’ to justify exclusion and discrimination;

2. Encourages the Stated Clerk to file or co-file amicus curiae \(\text{(Friend of Court)}\) briefs opposing efforts to promote exclusion and/or discrimination in the name of “religious freedom”;

3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness \((\text{OPW})\), to oppose legislative and judicial efforts to use “religious freedom” as a justification for discrimination and denial of equal rights and/or equal provision of services or benefits by any legally-chartered entity;

4. Affirms the 214th General Assembly \((2002)\) statement “Guiding Principles for Ethical Decisions Concerning Religious Freedom Around the World” \(\text{(*see note)}\);
5. Directs the Office of the Stated Clerk to send this resolution[with the rationale] to every congregation and presbytery, encouraging Presbyterians to distinguish between the historical understanding of religious freedom to practice one’s faith and current efforts to discriminate against, exclude, and marginalize vulnerable people in the name of “religious freedom.”

*NOTE: In its work with church partners and other religious bodies overseas, the boundaries between church and state are not always along the same lines as in the United States. Often the right to retain specifically Christian or religiously based social services needs to be respected by both U.S. and local governments and foreign donors, including the U.S. and international agencies, with protection of both church-related sites and personnel. The underlying Reformed principle is that the church should be independent of the civil power and also of service to the common good.

Rationale

Current challenges

The federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) (1993) was initially intended to protect minority religions, especially Native American religious practice. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) initially supported RFRA, consistent with our respect for its original intent: to allow persons and religious groups to practice their faith without constraint of the government. With the passage of twenty-one state RFRA and expansive interpretation by the courts, however, “religious freedom” has become a weapon aimed at excluding, marginalizing, and discriminating against vulnerable populations. Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, pending (as of early 2018) before the United States Supreme Court, brings an intensified threat of harm as the plaintiff seeks to justify discrimination by cloaking it in constitutionally protected “religious freedom.” If this baker’s religious freedom argument prevails, any business which claimed that its product or service involved religious creativity or expression could attempt to deny service to gay people based on a claim of religious freedom. This “religious freedom” case relies on the First Amendment’s protection for freedom of speech. The baker contends that his cakes are works of art and expressions of speech; therefore, he argues that he has the right to refuse to sell them to anyone whom he deems to be outside of his moral boundaries.

Numerous other claims of “religious freedom” have sprung up in the courts, most frequently involving women’s reproductive rights and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Two examples where religious reasons are given for the denial of legal services are:

- In 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an employer can deny birth control coverage for religious reasons (Burrell v. Hobby Lobby), even though no-copay birth control is guaranteed under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and business entities, whatever their governance or ownership, should not impose particular faith claims on their employees.

- In a 2016 Texas ruling, U.S. District Judge Reed O’Connor held that doctors could refuse to treat transgender persons as well as women who had previously had abortions. He accepted the argument of self-described Christian medical associations and insurance companies that treating these patients constituted “material cooperation with evil.” This judgment implies that the government cannot require doctors and insurance companies to treat or cover anything they believe to be “evil,” in exception to generally understood professional standards and public licensing obligations.

See additional examples of “religious freedom” claims used to deny essential services and discriminate in the areas of reproductive health and LGBTQ rights in the Appendix to this rationale.

Christian Theological Bases

The fundamental principle of universal human dignity rests on the biblical foundation that humankind is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). From this imago Dei, we conclude that no form of discrimination is defensible on religious grounds. When Presbyterians confess our faith in A Brief Statement of Faith (Book of Confessions), we affirm our calling to “hear the voices of people long silenced and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace” (lines 70–71). Additionally, The Confession of Belhar, added to the Book of Confessions by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), calls us to resist all behavior that is dehumanizing. There can be no religious freedom without equal respect for the dignity of all persons, a dignity that is denied when services are denied. When claims of “religious freedom” become public efforts to exclude and discriminate, we are called to speak up for justice and stand with the oppressed.

Presbyterians have historically valued religious liberty and continue to support the freedom to act according to one’s religious beliefs. However, in cases involving the refusal of goods and services, false claims of “religious freedom” cause direct harm to those who are denied access. Legislating such claims as cases of protected religious freedom would undermine years of progress in state and federal civil rights and anti-discrimination law. The key distinction lies in whose choice is being limited or protected. Personally choosing not to have an abortion or use birth control, for example, is religious freedom. Making that choice for someone else, on the basis of one’s own religious principles, is religious oppression—as is done when an insurance company denies health care coverage for birth control or a doctor refuses to prescribe contraceptives. Using one’s own idea of
religious freedom” to limit the lawful choices of others through your own economic leverage creates a dense pattern of religiously sanctioned discrimination. In this way, some religious groups believe they can have politically what they failed to accomplish through persuasion in the “culture wars” of the 1980s and 1990s.

The 200th General Assembly (1988) approved the social witness policy, “God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience” (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-god-alone-is-lord-1988.pdf). The first principle espoused in the study is that “each worshipping community has the right to govern itself and order its life and activity free of government intervention” (p. 12). The First Amendment’s Free Exercise Clause protects the ability of church members to live out their faith, in the community’s life as well as privately. Since 1988, there has been much debate about what the “exercise of religion entails,” such as whether it could include refusing to bake a cake for a gay couple’s wedding or refusing to provide emergency contraception based on an opposition to abortion. These examples are mentioned, not because they push the limits of the Free Exercise Clause, but because they have become the recent test cases that seek to change the legal understanding of religious freedom in the United States.

Historically, religious freedom has meant protection from oppression, rather than economically imposing one’s religious convictions on others. People committed to nonviolence claim “conscientious objection” to fighting in wars on the basis of religious beliefs; however, these individual stands involve the refusal to harm others and are in no way the same as refusal to provide services to others.

The 211th General Assembly (1999) approved the study, “Building Community Among Strangers,” which stressed the tension between building community across religious lines while maintaining the commitment to our own faith beliefs. (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/4-building-community-among-strangers-1999.pdf) This tension asks Presbyterians to remain committed to their own faith beliefs while recognizing the complicated nature of living in community with those who do not share the same faith. Being a good neighbor means being a good listener, particularly with those who do not agree with us. It also requires us to ensure that our neighbors can practice their own faith without fear of reprisal or interference from government or those who wish to harm them.

Religious Freedom and Human Rights

The 214th General Assembly (2002) utilized a human rights framework with its statement “Guiding Principles for Ethical Decisions Concerning Religious Freedom Around the World.” This movement towards a human rights framework allows the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to advocate internationally and domestically for the protection of everyone’s rights. Within the statement, the church calls on governments to “to promote and protect religious freedom” and writes:

Governments have responsibility to promote and protect religious freedom and should:

a. give specific protections concerning religious freedom in their official policies, constitution and practices; and should not:

b. co-opt, manipulate or constrain religious practice by any persons, groups or religious bodies except as may properly be necessary for the protection of human rights for all;

c. limit or deny religious participation in public life; or

d. discriminate either for or against any religious tradition or organization.

Current examples show that some state laws and interpretations of federal laws have enabled discrimination against certain groups—often marginalized minorities—with the goal of privileging a specific interpretation of Christianity—an interpretation which our denomination has rejected (an interpretation of Christianity that makes heterosexual orientation a matter of faith). This resolution calls on individual churches, presbyteries, and synods to stand against religious oppression and for religious freedom for all in their local contexts.

The human rights framework was introduced with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The freedom of religion and belief was codified in Article 18 of the declaration, which stated that all persons have the freedom to hold their own beliefs in regard to religious and nonreligious matters, to change their beliefs, and to practice their beliefs. This was further developed in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The ICCPR expands on UDHR Article 18 to include a freedom from coercion in either practice or belief. While the Article 18 does allow governments to put limits on this freedom in the name of public health and safety, the ICCPR calls on governments to tread lightly in limiting religious freedom. The United States has signed onto both of these documents. One implication is that the United States agrees to implement these agreements in both practice and law within the United States. Presbyterians must distinguish between the UN’s intended protection, which is in accord with our historical understanding of our religious freedom to practice our faith, and current efforts to discriminate, exclude, and marginalize vulnerable people in the name of “religious freedom.”

The United Nations expanded further on the concept of religious freedom with the 1985 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, which the United States did not sign. As pertains to our current discussion, Articles 3 and 4 of the declaration discuss the elimination of discrimination on the basis of religion.
or belief. Article 4 calls on governments to remove any forms of religious discrimination, including current examples where religion is used as an excuse to refuse to serve customers who hold different beliefs than the business owner.

If accepted, the expansive interpretation of religious freedom opposed here could, through ever-expanding exemptions granted to more and more persons and entities—pastors, priests, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, florists, restaurant workers, hotel wonders, rental car companies, travel agents, and county clerks who issue and sign marriage licenses—effectively authorize a parallel legal order with re-inscribed discrimination against women (and men), LGBTQ persons, and marginalized others. Rather than protecting the freedom of religious practice, following these precedents would place courts in danger of blurring the separation of church and state by sanctioning religiously motivated discrimination. The initial intent of “religious freedom” was to be like a defensive shield protecting the diverse practices of religious faith. It was not intended to be used as a hostile sword to discriminate against people seeking legal services and equitable resources. Such practices of inequality perpetuate second-class citizenship in the name of religion, a violation of the First Amendment’s prohibition of government establishment of religion.

APPENDIX: Case Examples

Some additional cases involving a “religious freedom” defense for refusing services and discriminating against particular categories of persons:

Reproductive Health Care

Since Roe v. Wade became the law of the land, the idea of “religious freedom” has been used to deny safe, legal abortions to women and endanger women’s health. In this way, laws have been enacted to override medical standards of care that are in the best interests of patients.

- In Kansas, a patient can’t sue her doctor for withholding accurate information about her pregnancy if the doctor believes that the patient would have an abortion after receiving the information.
- In South Dakota, a pharmacist can refuse to provide contraceptives even when a patient has a prescription from a health care provider.
- In Maryland, a hospital can refuse to provide permanent birth control services to women who have decided that this type of contraception is right for them.
- A U.S. District Judge in Texas ruled in 2016 that doctors could refuse to treat women who had previously had abortions. Judge Reed O’Connor contended that the nondiscrimination rule in the ACA violated the “religious freedom” of doctors and insurance companies that consider abortion to be “evil.” (These citations are adapted from Planned Parenthood Action Fund Report, “Religious Refusal and Reproductive Health;” and January 3, 2017, article by Mark Joseph Stern in Slate, “Judge: Doctors Have ‘Religious Freedom’ to Refuse to Treat Trans Patients, Women Who’ve Had Abortions.”)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights

The rights of LGBT persons are being challenged on many fronts under the banner of “religious freedom.”

- In October 2017, the Justice Department released a sweeping “license to discriminate allowing federal agencies, government contractors, government grantees, and even private businesses to engage in illegal discrimination, as long as they can cite religious reasons for doing so.
- The Supreme Court will soon hear the case of Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission. The bakery owner refused to sell wedding cakes to same-sex couples, claiming that Colorado’s Anti-Discrimination laws violated his freedom of speech and exercise of religion.
- In Washington state, a gay couple approached Arlene’s Florist to purchase flower arrangements for their wedding in 2013. They were denied on the basis of the owner’s religious beliefs.
- A New Mexico case in 2006 involved a refusal by the co-owner of Elaine Photography to film a lesbian commitment ceremony, claiming that doing so violated her Christian beliefs.
- Innkeepers at the Wildflower Inn in Vermont in 2012 refused to host the reception of a lesbian couple due to their personal feelings and a no-gay receptions policy.
- An Illinois couple were denied by two facilities in 2011 to host their civil commitment ceremony, and in one case were subjected to a biblical lecture on homosexuality.
- Catholic Charities in Illinois excludes unmarried couples, especially same-sex couples, who were qualified to act as foster or adoptive parents.
- Currently there are thirty-two states that have marriage equality laws regarding same-sex couples. Even in some of those states, and elsewhere, government officials refuse service to gay couples based on their religious beliefs.
- A graduate student in a university counseling program in Michigan refused to work with a gay client on the grounds that it violated her religious beliefs.
- In 2016, North Carolina passed a law requiring transgender people to use bathrooms corresponding to the sex on their birth certificate. In Mississippi an even broader law allows people and institutions to deny services to gay people on the basis of their religious beliefs.
ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-15

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-15—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.


ACREC appreciates the resolution brought forward by ACSWP. As people of color, we have long faced injustice in the name of “religious freedom” and calls the church to acknowledge the misuse of this freedom in the history of this country and the church’s complicity in the inhumane and unjust ways people of color have been treated in the past and continue to be treated today.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-15

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-15—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-15.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns agrees that ‘religious freedom’ is not a license to discriminate against God’s people. ACWC feels that such language is distorted and misused for oppressive and marginalizing purposes. Additionally, so called religious freedom has been used to interfere with women’s rights to safe and affordable medical care and for the purposing of controlling women’s bodies by way of limiting reproductive healthcare options. As people of faith, committed to justice, we should all be troubled by the continued assaults on the reproductive wellbeing and healthcare for women. We affirm that God alone is Lord of Conscience and that women, with their healthcare providers, are the only persons informed and equipped to make the best decisions about their bodies, their health and wellbeing, as well as that of their families. [For more on the specifics of PC(USA) policy, see When You Need Wisdom, Problem Pregnancy Resource produced by the Office of Gender and Racial Justice, Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women, 2010. (pp. 7–10). Available free here: http://store.pcusa.org/2752610004?sc=10&category=16403]

Item 11-16

[The assembly approved Item 11-16. See pp. 13, 62.]

A Resolution on Honest Patriotism—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Faced with an unprecedented crisis of public dishonesty and chauvinistic nationalism, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approves the following affirmations and directions for its mission and witness:

Affirmations

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) acts to lift up our church’s long commitments to active civic engagement, responsible citizenship, and prophetic witness; believing these commitments to be rooted in our faithful response to God’s call for Christians to be stewards of creation; and witnessing the corrosion of democratic institutions.

The phrase “honest patriotism,” popularized in Donald W. Shriver’s 2005 book, Honest Patriots, means “loving a country enough to remember its misdeeds.” Such misdeeds are usually those times and places where particular groups were denied “equal protection under the law.” Just as the ancient Hebrew prophets stood up to kings and queens, so have Christians understood the prophetic calling to entail a moral freedom to challenge the misuses of power, even within the church or state themselves, “in season and out of season.” Honest Patriotism is thus a check on the exclusivist nationalism that otherwise denies equal respect to other peoples, conceals injustices committed by one’s own side in any conflict, and makes reconciliation and common action harder to achieve both in the United States and abroad.

Drawing on our Reformed Christian reading of scripture and our church’s Preliminary Principles, which influenced democratic revolutions in Britain and the United States, this resolution addresses the vital freedoms of the First and Fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution and their application to changes in the nature of communications, media, and the public square. We make this statement out of concern for both the God-given rights of persons and for the cultural commons that allows for the open transmission of our values and convictions.

1. We affirm and honor the work of citizens of the United States who have chosen public service as part of their vocation. This includes, but is not limited to, civil service employees, members of the judiciary, and our elected representatives in the Legislative and Executive branches of our national government. Public employees of local and state governments also serve the common good. We further affirm, as part of our Reformed tradition, that their work is part of God’s design for the governance of creation.
2. We affirm the imperative for honesty in the public statements, proceedings, publications, and theological witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), recognizing that our faith is based, at its core, on a commitment to truth. In like manner, we call upon all citizens, as well as governments, to recognize commitment to truth as a core value and to be vigilant in demanding honesty in our public and private interactions. Christians must scrutinize news sources and reject those that oversimplify or sensationalize conflicts and demonize other human beings and peoples.

3. We affirm the protection of the freedom of speech, as enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America. We recognize that meaningful civic engagement is dependent upon the protection of this freedom, which keeps our engagement lively, meaningful, and prophetic. As this freedom involves clashing ideas of what is true and false, the United States’ legal tradition makes it the responsibility of citizens and their elected representatives to develop measures of public accountability for truthfulness in the public square in all its forms: over public airwaves, through cyberspace, and through proactive requirements of public disclosure by government agencies and publicly chartered profit and nonprofit entities.

4. We affirm the widest possible public access to information and to the products of cultural activity. We recognize that such freedom to listen is vital to the free exchange of ideas and to the practical application of freedom of speech. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) opposes any attempt to limit this free exchange, including but not limited to, monopoly ownership of media outlets and the dismantling of net neutrality. This excludes only the production and promotion of hate speech, designed to exclude others from such access or endanger their persons and property.

5. We affirm the rights of all citizens to freedom of assembly. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) opposes any attempts to abrogate this freedom, including, but not limited to, attempts to criminalize, manipulate by false information, or in other ways delegitimize peaceful protest. New forms of surveillance by drone and electronic means, as well as increased use of military equipment by police forces, require increased public accountability of all policing and security agencies. Similarly, data gathered from electronic devices about personal communications and purchasing history should be governed by privacy protections and not used commercially or otherwise without permission.

6. We affirm the freedom of the press, guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) opposes any attempts to abrogate this freedom, including, but not limited to, threats, intimidation, and the denial of access to certain members or organs of the press for partisan reasons.

7. We affirm the rule of law as inseparable from our Reformed commitment to truth. Recognizing that human law is a human creation and therefore subject to error, we nonetheless affirm the democratic principle of equal protection under the law, as enshrined in the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Institutionally, this equal protection is guaranteed by an independent judiciary, the maintenance of which must continue to be a national priority. This has customarily meant laws to insulate judges from partisan politics as well as the use of objective qualifications in their selection, both of which approaches this assembly would endorse.

8. We affirm the need for free critical inquiry that is unhampered by censorship. Commitment to integrity and to the truth must also extend to those whose vocation it is to seek out the truth and to add to the store of human knowledge. We therefore oppose any governmental, educational, or other institutional restrictions on the initiation, maintenance, or publication of research.

9. We affirm the right of citizens to participate in the democratic process. Fundamental to that process is the right to vote. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in affirming its commitment to honest patriotism and responsible citizenship, therefore opposes any efforts to restrict participation in elections, including, but not limited to, voter suppression initiatives and racially based and/or partisan gerrymandering.

Directions for Its Mission and Witness

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) further approves the following measures for consideration by its members and congregations and action by its agencies.

1. In order to faithfully model civic responsibility and engagement, the members and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are encouraged to be active in civic life, engaging in critical and constructive discourse and prayerfully considering the import of the Gospel message to our body politic.

2. In order to faithfully model honest and open governance, all councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), from local to national, are encouraged to be open and transparent in their decision-making processes. At the same time, church procedures and expectations of staff and volunteers should not infringe upon the privacy and autonomy that support freedom of Christian conscience.

3. In order to faithfully model freedom of expression, all councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), from local to national, are encouraged to seek out and learn from diverse perspectives, and to examine their current practices so as to ensure no voice is silenced, however unintentionally.
4. In order to faithfully model full participation in governance, all councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), from local to national, are encouraged to make whatever accommodations necessary to ensure the full and active participation of members in the decision-making process of the church. These accommodations may involve, but are not limited to, the dissemination of relevant materials, the translation of said materials into appropriate languages, and the scheduling of meeting times for deliberation. All councils should consider part of their leadership to include a convening function designed to bring together leading thinkers in public conversation and constructive debate to engage members across the larger church in discerning what mission and discipleship entail.

5. In order to faithfully model critical inquiry, colleges and universities historically related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are encouraged to continue to honor the role of the humanities, including the teaching of religion and ethics, in their curricula, so that the complex values of culture and society can be better understood.

6. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, and other ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are directed to advocate and witness for policies consistent with the affirmations above.

7. Presbyterian elected officials and other civil servants are invited to respond to the affirmations and background statement and to participate in briefings, seminars, and adult education programs that may educate and engage our members.

Grounding and Charge:

These affirmations draw on a long tradition of Reformed involvement in the political arena. We are cognizant that we live in a time and place where it is incumbent upon us to speak boldly. We also know that we speak along with a great cloud of witnesses who have come before us. Nothing that we affirm here is wholly new, in the sense that our tradition has always viewed the faithful guardianship and exercise of our rights as citizens to be central to our mission.

The issues we address here have been the subject of the social witness policy of our denomination for generations. The 195th General Assembly (1983) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted the report, Reformed Faith in Politics. Claiming that we are “inevitably political and religious,” that report outlines the theological and biblical rationale for our commitment to good government and “affirm[s] responsible participation in politics as an indispensable part of the calling of all Christians.”

The 200th General Assembly (1988) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted the policy statement, God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience. A comprehensive examination of religious liberty in both historical and contemporary contexts, this statement likewise endorses a robust Presbyterian voice in our political system, and calls us as a denomination to safeguard such participation. The report asserts:

… it is a limitation and denial of faith not to seek its expression in both a personal and a public manner, in such ways as will not only influence but transform the social order. Faith demands engagement in the secular order and involvement in the political realm.

More recently, the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved a policy statement on voting rights and campaign finance reform, Lift Every Voice, which was updated in 2016 to include recent Supreme Court cases. The assembly spoke forthrightly to recent decisions that allow virtually unlimited and undisclosed sums to be spent in elections, and to decisions that weaken protections for minority voters.

It is in such a spirit and with such a faith that the above affirmations are offered. They are congruent with the long tradition of Reformed theology regarding the political order, and they both build upon and are dependent upon the stated policies of the denomination. Yet, in offering them now, we recognize an urgency of time and place. We believe that in moments such as these, when core values of robust democratic participation in the life of the commonwealth are under threat, we are called to claim our heritage and to offer our witness.

Rationale

PART I: HONESTY AS A REFORMED CHRISTIAN VALUE

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. (Eph. 4:25)

Honesty is a paramount biblical virtue. Of the advice and guidance given to the various early Christian communities in the epistles, the exhortation to be truthful to each other resounds in its repetition (see, e.g. 2 Tim. 2:15; Col. 3:9; 1 Pet. 3:10–12). This theme is echoed in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Book of Order states:

That truth is in order to goodness. ... [N]o opinion can either be more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a [person’s] opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. ... (Book of Order 2017–2019, F-3.0104)
Why must Christians be committed to the truth? First, we are so committed because we are commanded to be. In the foundational moral law of the Decalogue, we are commanded not to bear false witness (Ex. 20:16). In his commentary on the ninth commandment, John Calvin makes it clear that we should not construe this commandment narrowly simply because its wording appears to apply to judicial proceedings. Calvin writes, “The purport of this commandment is, since God, who is truth, abhors falsehood, we must cultivate unfeigned truth towards each other.”

The command for honesty is not arbitrary. Calvin taught that the law has a threefold purpose: to convict us of sin, to restrain social evil, and to help us to grow in righteousness and in gratitude for grace. It is this third purpose of the law, that it makes us better Christians, which Calvin claims as the principle purpose. Biblically this understanding of honesty, that it is central to our moral growth and character, is perhaps best represented in the book of Proverbs, a collection of advice on moral behavior. The rewards of honesty and the perils of dishonesty are a constant presence throughout Proverbs. A brief sampling includes:

“There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that hurry to run to evil, a lying witness who testifies falsely, and one who sows discord in a family.” (Prov. 6:16–19)

“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever follows perverse ways will be found out.” (Prov. 10:9)

“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.” (Prov. 11:3)

“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.” (Prov. 12:22)

Christians are committed to the truth, secondly, because dishonesty displays a fundamental lack of respect for other persons. Dishonesty is a means to control, to master, to gain at another’s expense. As such, it violates the command to respect the dignity all of God’s creation. When we lie to another person, we treat them as a means to an end, rather than as an end in themselves. We deny the truth that all persons are created in the image of God. From Calvin again, we read, “…we must not by calumnies and false accusations injure our neighbor’s name, or by falsehood impair his fortunes; in fine, that we must not injure any one from petulance, or a love of evil speaking.”

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly for a discussion of honesty and civic responsibility, dishonesty corrodes trust—a crucial ingredient to a functioning community. Robert Bellah, et.al. note, in the beginning of The Good Society, “Democracy requires a degree of trust that we often take for granted.” Drawing on H. Richard Niebuhr’s work in The Responsible Self, Bellah and his colleagues note that distrust weakens our ability to participate responsibly in the world around us, leading us to “rupture, not strengthen, the solidarity of the community or communities we live in.”

This worry about the breakdown of our communities also animates the pronouncements of the Hebrew prophets when they warn about the dangers of cultures where truth is not valued. From the prophet Jeremiah:

Beware of your neighbors, and put no trust in any of your kin; for all your kin are supplacers, and every neighbor goes around like a slanderer. They all deceive their neighbors, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent. Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the Lord. (Jer. 9:4–6)

Finally, when we speak of honesty as a Christian virtue, we must speak with humility about the human capacity to know the truth. Our social location, our cultural assumptions, our traditions all color the way in which we apprehend what is true. These same conditioning factors can lead us into error with regard to truth. Our historical “truths” have at supported practices and beliefs that clearly run counter to our call as Christians. We have endorsed human bondage, disenfranchisement, and oppression. So we must own that we do not know the truth as God knows the truth. Our own reformation is a continual process.

To be clear then, we can be honest and at the same time be in error. The ethical mandate for honesty recognizes the limitations of our intellects. The command, therefore, is to sincerity, to not deliberately mislead, to correct errors when we are made aware of them, and to allow others to do so as well. Honesty admits of error, but does not tolerate deceit.

PART II: PATRIOTISM AS A REFORMED CHRISTIAN VALUE

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. (Rom. 13:1)

The opening verses of Chapter 13 of Paul’s letter to the Romans give us the most extensive reflection on the role of government to be found in Christian scriptures. Although Paul’s words have been used at various times to demand unquestioned obedience to the state, the Reformed tradition has used Paul’s reflections as a base for a different reading of civil society—one that respects the state as ordained by God but also demands that citizens participate in the ordering and maintenance of the earthly community.

If honesty is a virtue common to Christian theology generally, civic participation is especially, if not uniquely, a mandate for Reformed Christians. Again, Calvin is instructive here. He devotes the final chapter of the Institutes to civil government and makes it clear from the outset that its institutions are ordained by God for the good of humanity, writing:
Calvin explicitly rejected the competing and contemporary Anabaptist vision of the state as diseased and worth avoiding. He clearly stood opposed to the vision that “civil government is a polluted thing with which Christians should have nothing to do.”15 This claim has contemporary relevance as well. As Reformed Christians we stand in support of a theological tradition which honors government as a good, and stand in opposition to those who see government as a necessary evil, or worse.16 The casual denigration of government, the reflexive rhetorical impulse to understand government as an alien force that stands against us, must be resisted in the strongest terms if we are to be faithful to our theology.

Neither, of course, does the Reformed tradition embrace an uncritical endorsement of government in all its actions. We do not stand for the Divine Right of Kings (or Presidents). The State “can assume the face and character of Pilate.”17 The church, then, has a duty to the state: to maintain a prophetic voice, with which to constantly remind the state of its calling.18 The confessions we have embraced are explicit reminders of our duty in this regard.19

So we, in the Reformed tradition, understand the institution of government to be ordained by God, and therefore sanctified; but we also understand its propensity, as a human institution, to sin. One of the most grievous sins to which government is prone is the usurpation of power to which it is not entitled, particularly in the form of subjugation. The history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States has been a history of the embracing of democratic institutions and forms of government as the most effective ways of maintaining a government which resists this temptation and is faithful to its calling. We have relied on the principle, enumerated by John Locke and others, that we are all, first and foremost, created by God. As such, we believe there is a certain dignity within ourselves that cannot be violated.20

Reformed Christians have been instrumental in demanding that, whatever form of government we establish, the proper role of government is its service to the people. To this end, it must respect the rights of its citizenry. Karl Barth writes:

As disciples of Christ, the members of His Church do not rule: they serve. In the political community, therefore, the Church can only regard all ruling that is not primarily a form of service as a diseased and never as a normal condition.21

Since before we were a nation, Presbyterians on this continent have been vigilant in securing the active voice of the citizenry in their own governance. Since Rev. Francis Makemie’s struggles against the royal governor of New York, this church has been clear that the vocation of our government is best served by the free participation of the people whom it serves. We stand committed to the rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights of our Constitution and referenced in the affirmations above.

If we are honest in assessing our history, both as a nation and a church, we must also repent of our own complicity in denying such free participation to entire groups of our population, both through law and through practice. This is precisely the test presented in Donald Shriver’s Honest Patriots, which describes our history with Native and African Americans and compares our country’s efforts at honest memory with those of Germany and South Africa.22 We have been a country, and we have been a church, which has paid scant attention to the voices of people of color. We have been a country, and we have been a church, which has paid scant attention to the voices of women. We have been a country, and we have been a church which has paid scant attention to the voices of LGBTQ persons. In the words of Letty Russell, we have operated in a “patriarchal paradigm of reality” that “accept[s] the marginalization of the powerless as a given.”23

When we see such marginalization of voices in our congregations, we must correct it. When we see such marginalization of voices in our civic life, we must combat it. Our “Brief Statement of Faith,” found in the Book of Confessions, calls us “to hear the voices of peoples long silenced.”24 Only active listening to voices from oppressed communities, undertaken in a spirit of repentance, will lead us forward. Without the collective knowledge and wisdom found in these communities, our responses will always be inadequate. As James Cone notes, “The grounding of Christian ethics in the oppressed community means that the oppressor cannot decide what is Christian behavior.”25

Committing ourselves to honest patriotism means an uncompromising attention to full democracy. It means that our government must protect the full participation of all of its citizens. And the most direct means that democracy gives us of making all voices heard—the vote—must be protected without qualification. This is a bare minimum of what we must expect from our government.

As Reformed Christians we believe that our government has responsibilities to its citizens, that honest patriotism must be a virtue of those whom we call to positions of leadership. What responsibilities do we as the church, then, have to our government? In addition to the respect owed to the institution of government as established by God, we owe the government our intercession, our active participation, and our prophetic critique.

So first, we must pray for our government. Because we profess to believe in the power of intercessory prayer, because we profess to believe that God hears the prayers of God’s children, our prayers for those institutions and those people to whom we entrust our governance are vital. Karl Barth writes, “The Christian community prays for the civil community. It does so all the more since the civil community as such is not in the habit of praying.”26
But intercession through prayer, in and of itself, is not enough. Barth goes on to remind us that in making our civil community the object of our prayers, we assume responsibility for that community. We would not be taking our responsibility seriously, says Barth, if we did no more than pray. For the Reformed Christian, active participation in civil society is not a luxury. It is not a right we can choose to exercise or not as our whims may drive us. It is part of our calling as Christians to be active participants in God’s ordering of the earthly commonwealth. Robert McAfee Brown, in his book *Spirituality and Liberation*, gives us a powerful statement of the connection of prayer to civic participation. He writes:

A prayer of intercession may be a trip to the city jail to provide bail for someone wrongly arrested because of having the wrong skin color; and act of praise of God may be the affirmation of a Laotian child’s success in the English as a Second Language program…a blessing may be the gift of time and money that enables a woman victimized by sexual harassment to secure legal help; a prayer of adoration may be the formation of a political coalition to fight a specific injustice at city hall.

Bearing our civic responsibilities as Christians in mind, we must also at times, in our role as active Christian members of a civil community, take seriously our prophetic role. Because we understand the state as ordained by God we must, in all humility and acknowledging our own propensity for error, call the state to task when it fails in its obligations. Calvin, as deferential as he at times was to governing authorities, minced no words in challenging them when they violated their obligations. He writes:

… even magistrates ought to do their utmost to prevent the liberty, of which they are appointed guardians, from being impaired, far less violated. If in this they are sluggish or little careful, they are perfidious traitors to their office and to their country.

At times, this prophetic role may take the form of both conscientious objection and civil disobedience. Because no state acts consistently with the demands of justice at all times, because we acknowledge the power of sin not just in our individual lives, but also in our institutions, there will be times when we cannot, in good conscience, participate in or endorse an action or a policy of our government. At such moments, with full knowledge of the civil consequences of our actions, we may be called to resistance. Our prophetic critiques may lead us to moments of discomfort and even danger.

We offer the affirmations above in the spirit of these obligations—intercession, active engagement, and prophetic critique—that the church holds towards the government.

Finally, we acknowledge that the church, if it is to call itself honest, must model in its own practices and institutions the same virtues to which it calls the government and broader society. As a human institution, we acknowledge our own participation in sin and the need for corporate confession. Where we demand honesty in our governmental institutions, we must be honest in our own work. Where we demand the protection of freedom of conscience, speech, and assembly in our civic life, we must be careful not to abridge such freedoms ourselves. Where we champion the full participation of all members, we must not create structures in our own corporate life which violate that principle. Where we demand social justice in our broader culture, we must not be timid in our critique of our own shortcomings. Returning to Karl Barth for a valediction:

Perhaps the most important contribution the Church can make is to bear in mind in the shaping of its own life that, gathered as it is directly and consciously around the common centre, it has to represent the inner within the outer circle. The real Church must be the model and the prototype of the real State. The Church must set an example so that by its very existence it may be a source of renewal for the State and the power by which the State is preserved.

### Endnotes

3. Ibid, 16.
12. The term patriotism carries with it a great deal of baggage including its etymological root in the word *patria* (fatherland). Aware of the problematic gendered nature of this term and the patriarchal heritage it may embody, we nonetheless hope to reclaim a type of love of country that has traditionally been denoted by this term. As will become clear, we see such love of country manifest particularly through civic
engagement and active citizenship, which includes prophetic critique. We also note that such patriotism must always be constrained by our obedience to God.


19. In particular, see The Theological Declaration of Barmen and the Confession of Belhar in _The Book of Confessions_.


22. Ibid., at note 1.


26. Ibid, 159.

27. Ibid.


29. Calvin, _Institutes_, Book IV, Chapter XX, 657.

30. For a full treatment of PC(USA) policy on conscientious objection and civil disobedience, see _God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience: Policy Statement and Recommendations Regarding Religious Liberty_ (Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), especially 20ff and 90ff.

31. With regard to the contemporary “carriers” of the four freedoms of the First Amendment, this resolution cannot do justice to the complexities of intellectual property law or the ways that “culture war” issues have been increasingly revived in political debate. A creative synthesis of political and cultural thinking on the “cultural commons,” however, can be found in Lewis Hyde’s, _Common as Air: Revolution, Art, and Ownership_ (2010), which devotes much of its attention to updating the concerns of the U.S. founders in today’s cultural and media environment. There have also been proposals that an analogue to a nonpartisan “consumers’ union” be developed to rate the truthfulness of media outlets. Others favor returning to an updated version of the “fairness doctrine,” which required public broadcasters to present at least two sides of contentious issues.

32. Barth, 186.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-16**

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**Advice & Counsel on Item 11-16—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.**

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-16.

This is a timely and well-written resolution. It reminds Presbyterians of their call to speak truth when speaking truth may be costly. It also reminds us to be humble in recognizing that while at times when we feel we are speaking truth, we may be in error. As noted within the report, such a time is:

> We have been a country, and we have been a church, which has paid scant attention to the voices of people of color. We have been a country, and we have been a church, which has paid scant attention to the voices of women. We have been a country, and we have been a church, which has paid scant attention to the voices of LGBTQ persons.

**Item 11-17**

[The assembly approved Item 11-17 as amended. See pp. 13, 62.]

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**Declaration on Where We Stand Regarding Concerns About Direction Towards Autocracy That This Country Is Taking—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.**

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to affirm the following declaration [and offers it as a resource to congregations]:

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1070 223rd General Assembly (2018)
As confessing Christians,
we trust God, whom we know through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray as others pray in other names
We are obligated to declare our concerns about the direction towards autocracy that our country is taking.
We say Yes to God’s power of love and justice for the neighbor as well as the self; and we say No to demonic power that urges hate of the other, scatters blame, and creates civic discord.
We say Yes to our imperfect democracy with one person, one vote, and No to any corruption of our elections.
We say Yes to universal health care and No to care based on the ability to pay.
We say Yes to safe schools, houses of worship, and public gathering places; and No to civilian access to assault [and/or military-style] weapons.
We say Yes to core human values and No to dividing our humanity by ideology and partisanship.
We say Yes to bridges and [preservation of families and] No to walls.
[We say Yes to affirming and celebrating the full spectra of human identity and No to discrimination and bigotry.]
We say: “In life, and in death we belong to God.”

Rationale

Our Reformed tradition has, from its inception, claimed a vigorous role for the church in public life. Our tradition affirms that government is a good, created by God for the right ordering of the earthly realm. We also acknowledge that government, as it exists on earth, is a human institution, and thus subject to the debilitating effects of human sinfulness. At those times when our government acts to violate norms central to what we believe, we claim the right to raise our voices prophetically against those policies that do so.

John Calvin, in The Institutes of the Christian Religion, speaks with clarity about the authority of the state, but also of its limits. He writes:

But in that obedience which we hold to be due to the commands of rulers, we must always make the exception, nay, must be particularly careful that it is not incompatible with obedience to Him [sic] to whose will the wishes of all kings should be subject, to whose decrees their commands must yield, to whose majesty their sceptres must bow.”

If Calvin’s language is difficult for 21st century Christians to parse, existing as it does in a vocabulary of absolute monarchy, Karl Barth extends Calvin’s claim to a 20th century context, and places on the church an obligation. Barth writes:

If the State has perverted its God-given authority, it cannot be honoured better than by this criticism which is due to it in all circumstances. For this power that has been perverted, what greater service can we render than that of intercession.”

The Book of Confessions of the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.) contains two documents from the church’s history in the 20th century that took the prophetic role of the church seriously and dared to speak truth to power. The Theological Declaration of Barmen, written in response to the dehumanizing policies of the National Socialist Party in Germany, and the Confession of Belhar, written to stand against the apartheid policies of the government of the Union of South Africa, are both vibrant and living witnesses to the power of our theological tradition and the weight of the responsibilities we claim as Christians living in the body politic.

Drawing specifically from the work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor bodies, these words from The Confession of 1967 resonate particularly:

The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of man [sic] in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God’s purpose rather than man’s [sic] schemes will finally prevail.

We also claim our prophetic vocation as the people of God in these words from A Brief Statement of Faith:

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.”

Our theology calls us, as Presbyterians, to be active participants in the political life of the world and to speak when fundamental tenets of our faith are being violated. At such a time as this, the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John guide us:

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept God’s commandments and abide in God’s love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (Jn. 15:10–12)

Endnotes

Item 11-18

[The assembly approved Item 11-18 as amended. See pp. 55, 62–63.]

Responding to Racist Nationalism—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to respond to expressions of racist nationalism in the statements and actions of politicians and government officials by taking the following actions:

1. Approve the following resolution:

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) strongly condemns the unjust, racist disparagement of people and entire nations [lately], promoted by politicians and government officials at all levels in the mistaken effort to place “America First.” As Christians, our call is to bring to “all nations” (Mt. 28:19) the good news that God loves all people equally. [Historically, America has been “first” in espousing human equality as the principle on which nations are founded.] We call upon our national leaders to lead by that principle. We pray that God may open the minds and hearts of the American people to understand that the real problems they face result from real causes and not from the presence of demonized “others.” We commit to working with people of good will, regardless of political or religious affiliation, in a collective effort to solve the real problems facing our nation and the world. We ask forgiveness from those who have been hurt by hateful rhetoric and harmed by unjust government policies. We acknowledge our responsibility and urge our elected officials to speak out against hate and “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly” with God (Mic. 6:8).

2. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to send this resolution to the president of the United States and to each United States senator and representative.

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Presbyterian World Mission, to send this resolution to world mission partners.

4. Encourage PC(USA) pastors and congregations to publicize this resolution in their communities and with officials of local and state government.

Rationale

Valued members of PC(USA) congregations and mission partners abroad are from countries that have been disparaged in the recent debate over immigration. Our friends deserve to hear from us a renewed commitment to stand with them in a relationship of equality and genuine Christian love. Seeking cooperation among “people of good will, regardless of political or religious affiliation,” this statement is nonpartisan and does not focus on remarks by any one individual. The problem is bigger than one comment by one man. It is a problem in which, under a democratic form of government, all citizens share some measure of responsibility. Acknowledging our share and asking forgiveness may serve as an example for others.

Concurrences to Item 11-18 from the Presbyteries of Albany and de Cristo.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-18

Advice & Counsel on Item 11-18—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.


ACREC supports this overture as it brings awareness to unnecessary suffering of people of color who have been marginalized and oppressed by racism perpetuated by nationalism based on white racial superiority. The current reality is that people of color communities suffer from this false spirit sustained by nationalism fueled by racism. There is no room or tolerance in the body of Christ or in the PC(USA) for evil powers that exclude and divides the church.
The recommendations support the core values of ACREC as it seeks racial and economic justice and equity thus enabling the realization of God’s beloved community.

When we realize the exclusion and suffering of God’s people, Jesus calls us to pray for the movement of the Spirit to provide the courage to support action to prevent gun violence.

Valued members of PC(USA) congregations and mission partners abroad are from countries that have been disparaged in the recent debate over immigration. Our friends deserve to hear from us a renewed commitment to stand with them in a relationship of equality and genuine Christian love. Seeking cooperation among “people of good will, regardless of political or religious affiliation,” this statement is nonpartisan and does not focus on remarks by any one individual. The problem is bigger than one comment by one man. It is a problem in which, under a democratic form of government, all citizens share some measure of responsibility. Acknowledging our share and asking forgiveness may serve as an example for others.

Item 11-19

[The assembly approved Item 11-19. See pp. 13, 63.]

A Self-Study Report—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

In fulfillment of its mission to serve the prophetic calling of individual Presbyterians, congregations, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and in accountability to the review process mandated by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy requests that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following directions from ACSWP’s self-study, and receive the background report and appendices, so that insofar as possible:

1. ACSWP shall continue to find ways to communicate with young adults on emerging challenges to Christian conscience and new social movements, bringing to bear policies and resources of the General Assembly and inviting committed and passionate activists to participate in the theological and ethical development of social witness for the church.

2. ACSWP shall increase the numbers of writers, readers, and subscribers of Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice.

3. ACSWP shall strengthen its relationships with the PMA’s Theology, Evangelism, and Formation ministries, with the Westminster/John Knox Press, and with Christian educators to assist in the dissemination of General Assembly policies and development of curricula and educational strategies related to the policies.

4. ACSWP shall work collaboratively with mid councils both to obtain feedback regarding work in progress and to disseminate General Assembly policies, working (as with pastors and presbytery leaders in Detroit and St Louis) also to help the voices and learnings from their local and regional prophetic engagement be shared with the larger church and society.

5. ACSWP shall offer assistance to General Assembly Moderators and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board leaders in the framing, resourcing, and convening of churchwide conversations on theological-ethical challenges and justice movements, thereby helping also with the ongoing reformation of the church’s own institutional life.

6. ACSWP shall work with the General Assembly Nominating Committee to ensure the representation of racial ethnic and age diversity of ACSWP membership.

7. ACSWP shall deepen its ecumenical connections and cooperation within conciliar and Reformed bodies in the development of social teaching and witness, drawing upon the Social Ethics Network of Presbyterian professors of religion and ethics in the creation of new vehicles for Christian discipleship and solidarity.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) serves the prophetic calling of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by providing the General Assembly with careful studies of pressing moral challenges, media for discussion and discernment of Christian responsibilities, and policy recommendations for faithful action.

I. Introduction

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) presents the following report as a measurement of performance for the multiyear review period of January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2017. Previous examinations of the church’s social witness structures have occurred in 1936, 1949, 1977, 1993, and 2010.
The ACSWP welcomes the task of self-assessment as such data collection and reflection provide time and energy to consider how best to achieve our mission. Congruent with the review standards, this self-study seeks to demonstrate that over the 2010–2017 review period, ACSWP has demonstrated “fidelity to mission and partnership” and “effectiveness of services.”

In submitting this report, ACSWP invites General Assembly commissioners to think about how important it is that the church not be silent in the face of tragedy, injustice, and the denial of responsibility. The church is asked to address these situations with wisdom, hope, and courage, even when its membership is not entirely of one mind.

The information in this report is compiled from documents that describe the normative work of ACSWP and data sources that provide evidence for most recent actions of and opinions about the ACSWP’s work during the review period. Resources and data for this self-study are:

- Texts of the church’s confessions;
- Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Manual of Operations;
- ACSWP meeting minutes and written agency summaries submitted to General Assemblies;
- Minutes of the 2010 (219th), 2012 (220th), 2014 (221st), and 2016 (222nd) General Assemblies;
- Quantitative 2010 and 2017 survey findings of church leaders and the May 2017 Presbyterian Panel Survey, Volume 2; and,
- Qualitative findings from two focus group discussions and survey respondent comments related to the value of social witness policy and the readership of *Unbound*, ACSWP’s online journal focused on Christian social justice and policy.

In the spring of 2017 Presbyterian Research Services surveyed church leader constituencies (PMA staff and board members, synod and presbytery staff, and General Assembly commissioners) and summarized responses regarding general levels of awareness of and agreement with ACSWP’s work. Survey respondent comments also were made available to the self-study writing team and selected information from the comments has been incorporated into this assessment. In a special effort to include perceptions of leaders in presbyteries that have been critical of ACSWP’s work, Presbyterian Research Services also conducted two focus groups at the Big Tent 2017. Big Tent participants from presbyteries that have voiced some criticism of ACSWP were invited to be focus group participants.

Using both qualitative text and quantitative data, this report is organized into seven sections:

1. Introduction;
2. ACSWP Organizational Location, Functions and Policy Development Process;
3. 2010 General Assembly Review Committee Recommendations and ACSWP Response;
5. Leadership in Social Witness;
6. ACSWP Challenges and Limitations; and
7. ACSWP Future Objectives.

The fundamental denominational structure as defined in the Design for Mission was organized around the concept of mission embodied in The Confession of 1967. That confession’s most explicit ethical section lifts up four concerns: peace, economic justice, racial justice, and “chaos in family life.” The adoption of the *Book of Confessions* in 1967 also brought forward much explicit moral teaching in The Second Helvetic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, and The Scots Confession. The most recent confession to be included in the *Book of Confessions*, the Confession of Belhar, specifically affirms seeking truth in the face of cultural ideology or doctrines that would legitimate forms of injustice. Overall, these confessions strengthen the connection between theology and ethics in the church and affirmed a place for the church’s moral voice in society.

Congruent with the confessional affirmation of the importance of social witness in the Reformed Tradition, Presbyterian Research Services surveys report large majorities of Presbyterians today affirm the value of social witness in our denomination (Table 1). While this affirmation varies by constituency, significant majorities report social witness as “very important” or “important” for the PC(USA).
Our denomination’s structure promotes this social witness mandate in the church confessions and the affirmation of its importance among surveyed Presbyterians in multiple ways. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is the organizational mechanism to develop, interpret, and monitor policies that encourage and challenge the church and society to reflect and act in faithful response to God’s call to do justice. It is ACSWP’s mission to help the church’s representative bodies speak with wisdom and forethought on challenges to Christian conscience as is formally expressed in the ACSWP Mission Statement:

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) serves the prophetic calling of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by providing the General Assembly with careful studies of pressing moral challenges, media for discussion and discernment of Christian responsibilities, and policy recommendations for faithful action.

The charter for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is the document *Vision for Social Policy and Social Witness: Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness*, approved by the General Assembly in 1993. That report updates previous approaches to social policymaking in the church in light of *A Brief Statement of Faith* (1991). The approach described in this document has been designed to provide the best possible discernment, reflection, and analysis to the General Assembly and its agencies and hence to the whole church. The intent of ACSWP staff and committee members is to do this work on a reasonably timely, cost-effective and participatory basis.

II. ACSWP Organizational Location, Functions, and Policy Development Process

An accurate assessment of ACSWP’s fidelity to its mission during this review period requires an understanding of ACSWP’s organizational location, mandated functions, and normal processes of performing these functions.

A. Organizational Location

Fidelity to its mission requires the ACSWP to support the prophetic voice of the church. Guided by the Holy Spirit, ACSWP offers its recommendations to the shared conscience of the church as it seeks the mind of Christ. The Hebrew prophets and much of Jesus’ teaching are the basis for Christian concern for justice. Fundamental, too, to the Jewish and Christian faiths is the pattern of having prophets play a role separate from that of kings. To apply this fundamental pattern today within the church, a prophetic function requires autonomy in relation to the central power of the organization. Within the church, ACSWP’s separate General Assembly-elected committee structure allows ACSWP self-direction, while the administrative structure places its staff under the authority of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Framed by the prophetic PC(USA) role, ACSWP functions as a General Assembly standing committee with direct access to the General Assembly and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). The ACSWP is constituted to have twelve members who are elected by the General Assembly for four-year terms, renewable once. Its members are chosen for their experience in and commitment to social witness, professional expertise in social ethics and fields frequently involved in social questions, and for their diversity of background and viewpoint, including theological diversity. Currently all committee members hold masters, doctoral, or legal degrees. Usually several members have served or are serving in the pastorate.

The ACSWP strives to cooperate and collaborate with the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and with the Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns (ACWC). While the mandates of ACREC and ACWC include assisting ACSWP in policy development, the functions of ACSWP and these two “advocacy” committees are primarily complementary. ACREC and ACWC focus on advocacy and monitoring social policy for their respective constituencies. Liaison members from the ACREC and ACWC committees attend ACSWP meetings and ACSWP members attend, as liaisons, the meetings of the advocacy committees. Members of the three committees also often consult with each other as they write advice and counsel memoranda regarding General Assembly overtures.

According to the PMA Manual of Operations, three members of the PMAB are also elected to the ACSWP. The intention is to have a membership overlap for strong coordination and communication with the church’s central direction-setting body. For most of 2017, there remained only one ACSWP member who had also been a member of the PMAB. The PMAB has not nominated current members to replace those whose terms were expiring while it deliberated ways to reduce its size and restructure internally. Thus, ACSWP has functioned with ten of its mandated twelve members. In September 2017, the PMAB approved a new governance structure that halves its own number to twenty and includes only one shared ACSWP/PMAB member.
The relationships of ACSWP, the PMA Board, and General Assembly have been maintained, as required, by regular ACSWP reports submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and a narrative report, plus meeting minutes, submitted to every General Assembly. Also, as stated in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations, ACSWP representatives meet annually with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee for strategic reflection and anticipation of social witness policy concerns.

The current ACSWP coordinator is the Reverend Chris Iosso, PhD. At the time of the 2010 review, the ACSWP coordinator position was located in the PMA Executive Director’s office. Currently the position is located in the area of Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries where much policy interpretation occurs.

B. **ACSWP Mandated Functions**

To assist the church in its role of promoting social witness, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations assigns the following specific functions to ACSWP:

1. “Prepare policy statements, resolutions study papers, social involvement reports, or Advice and Counsel Memoranda on the church’s social witness for study and recommendation to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative; seek concurrence of the Board relative to financial implications on plans for studies.

2. Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of social witness policy or strategy, including interim statements concerning pressing social issues, the Board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly. Facilitate two-way communication with all parties throughout policy development and advisory processes.

3. Prepare special studies at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or its Ministries on matters of social witness.

4. Work cooperatively with the Ministries and all councils in coordinating the interdependent process of social policy formation, implementation, and monitoring.

5. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its representative committees on overtures, commissioner resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that recommend policy direction or action on social witness.

6. Maintain an up-to-date and accurate Social Policy Compilation of General Assembly social witness policy and provide information to the church as requested.

7. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret the social witness policies of the General Assembly.

8. Identify facets of the church’s social witness that enable or obstruct effective action. Analyze, in cooperation with the General Assembly Ministries, the effectiveness of social witness in councils, institutions, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. After consulting entities that have primary ministry responsibility and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, report to the General Assembly on the advisory committee’s findings, together with recommendations for improving social witness.

9. Report directly to the General Assembly because of the need to maintain and advance a prophetic witness of the church.”

In these ways ACSWP counsels the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on the use of the church’s corporate voice as an advocate for justice, peace, and environmental sustainability. The *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)* complements *The Vision for Social Policy and Social Witness: Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness*. In its description of the church’s organization, this document reaffirms ACSWP’s location in the policymaking rather than program implementation areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

C. **ACSWP Social Witness Policy Development Process**

The essential process of policymaking is the development of documents that are submitted to the General Assembly for approval/revision/disapproval, interpretation and dissemination. “Forming Social Policy” in the General Assembly Manual lists the following five types of documents to be developed by ACSWP:

- **Policy Statements.** Developed in response to General Assembly action, position statements can take the form of longer proposed “policies” that develop principles based on biblical and confessional resources, review history and data, and provide a theological and ethical framework for church strategies on major questions.

- **Resolutions.** These policy documents, usually shorter than full policy statements, apply previously approved policies to particular matters, such as applying church human rights policy to a particular national or regional crisis.

- **Study Papers.** The General Assembly can request that an issue be studied or ACSWP can determine that an emerging issue is important enough to stimulate church-wide study of a social concern. Sometimes studies are conducted as part of a multi-year process leading to recommendations in light of church-wide or more focused feedback. Each policy statement and most resolutions also include a rationale section as a reasoned and grounded basis for GA positions. Study papers provide such foundation for policy statements and resolutions.

- **Social Involvement and Monitoring Reports.** These documents address issues of urgency and importance, and may analyze ACSWP’s own role in addressing a given subject. Monitoring reports examine how the church is applying its social policies in its program work. Monitoring of program work is often not put into formal reports, however, but is shared in on-going consultation and cooperation with program areas.

- **Advice and Counsel Memoranda.** These statements provide informed comment that applies existing policies of the General Assembly to new decisions. Of practical help to the commissioners, the memoranda often suggest ways to combine overtures so that the assembly does not need to vote repeatedly on similar matters. The memorandum assemble relevant data, descriptions of past and present church practice, and theoretically informed
comment on possible consequences and public policy implications. Such memoranda usually recommend concurrence or non-concurrence, based on the relevant policy, analysis, or consequences. Advice and Counsel memoranda may also be addressed to PMA members as it deliberates and prepares policy recommendations for the General Assembly.

Study teams of church member experts volunteer their time to develop these position statements that provide the basis for recommendations that the General Assembly may approve with or without amendment, receive for study, or disapprove. Subject specialist consultants are also employed to draft documents, in consultation with the study groups. The ACSWP, as a whole, reviews the study teams’ reports and determines their readiness for submission to the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

While review of proposed policy statements by church and congregational leaders is not always possible prior to General Assembly deliberation, there has been particular effort during this review period to encourage church-wide deliberation and dialogue regarding critical social witness matters, specifically regarding the issue of the church’s policy on war and peace and most recently regarding the critical problem of drug use, criminalization, and prison incarceration as a result of the “war on drugs.” Both social witness issues required discernment by as many Presbyterians as possible and were written as study papers to be considered, discussed, and critiqued prior to being finalized as submissions to General Assembly. These dialogue and feedback processes still had limitations with regard to getting the attention and time of leaders to provide feedback, but they provided some significant input into development of the policy statements.

Prior to assessing the accomplishments that resulted from this policy development from 2010 to 2017, however, an initial review task is to describe if, and how, ACSWP responded to the recommendations made to ACSWP by the 2010 General Assembly review committee. If regular review is to have utility for both the church and the standing committee, it is necessary to learn the potential outcomes of the previous review committee recommendations. How and to what extent did ACSWP respond to the 219th General Assembly (2010) review committee’s report?

III. 2010 General Assembly Review Committee Recommendations and ACSWP Response

In addition to commending ACSWP for its work, the 219th General Assembly (2010) Committee on Review of General Assembly Permanent Committees reported the following three recommendations for ACSWP:

1. Recommends training for ACSWP’s committee members and staff as they work with the public and the media to ensure appropriate and accurate communications.

2. Recommends that ACSWP work with the Office of Communication of the General Assembly Mission Council to improve communication with the whole church, especially younger people, utilizing emerging technological tools.

3. Although we recognize that it is not the mandate of ACSWP to disseminate information, we recommend that ACSWP work with Research Services to better understand why certain members of the church have a better understanding of ACSWP’s work and use that (knowledge) as a basis for better communication with congregational leaders.

ACSWP had suggested communication improvements in its 2010 self-study and all three recommendations were related to this problematic aspect of ACSWP’s work. ACSWP responded to the first recommendation regarding public and media relations by arranging a public relations firm conduct a training at the October 2011 meeting in Denver.

In response to the Review Committee’s Recommendations 2 and 3, ACSWP began developing an online communication tool—an online journal. In September 2011, the General Assembly Mission Council (now the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board) designated the developing journal to be the successor to hard copy journal Church & Society. In October 2011, ACSWP launched, with the support of the Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries area, Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice (www.justiceunbound). Not only designed to strengthen the social witness of the whole church through dissemination of approved General Assembly social policies, this tool is also intended to be an open forum on areas where new witness is needed. It allows for and encourages dialogue about the social policies that either are under consideration or have been approved by the General Assembly. Furthermore, Unbound can include recent updates or examples of how the policy may be applied. The name, “Unbound,” refers not only to the lack of binding, but to Jesus’ words at the resurrection of Lazarus, “unbind him,” and to images of prisoners freed. Currently, the Reverend Chris Iosso is the general editor of this online journal and Henry Koenig Stone is the managing editor.

Thirty-three issues of Unbound have been published since its 2011 launch. The journal has won awards from the Associated Church Press for articles in 2012 (4 awards), 2013 (3 awards), 2014 (7 awards), 2015 (5 awards), and 2016 (8 awards), across several categories, including two articles chosen from 2016 for the anthology, Best Religious Journalism. Most recent examples of the types of awards won by Unbound and its contributors are listed below. These examples are the eight awards for work produced in 2016 and presented to Unbound in April 2017.

- Award of Excellence, Laura Cheifetz—Personal Experience/1st Person Account
- Award of Excellence, Chris Iosso—Editorial or Opinion Piece
- Award of Excellence, Alonzo Johnson—Personal Experience/1st Person Account
Publication was interrupted in the first half of 2017 due to scheduling of staff turnover, although General Assembly action and generous donations kept the journal authorized. Two issues were published in the latter half of 2017, along with seven topical stories on matters such as the “#MeToo” movement.

In an effort to learn the extent of readership, a recent Presbyterian Panel survey found that 20 percent of ministers and only 6 percent of congregants have read an Unbound article. While readership in the general population of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is very low, there is substantially more readership among leaders in the denomination (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMA Staff and Board Members</th>
<th>60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synod and Presbytery Staff</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/2016 GA Commissioners</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unbound links to the ACSWP Facebook page and Twitter accounts and there is effort to increase readership especially among young adults through these social media links. Occasionally an Unbound article will go “viral” on social media. For example, one article by Rev. Iosso, entitled “Resisting the Creed of Greed: Are Economic Traitors Betraying Our Country?,” had a wide “reach” at the time Congress was debating changes in the U.S. tax code. Because the article was shared through Facebook accounts, more than 10,000 people received notification of the article and 851 individuals indicated through “clicks” on the link that they took a look at it. Such “reach” of our denominational social justice witness likely goes beyond PC(USA) ministers and congregants who initially “share” a link of an Unbound article. Most important, 286 people recorded a comment or shared the article with friends on Facebook.

PC(USA) leaders, including current and former ACSWP members and subscribers to the ACSWP newsletter “Salt and Light,” were asked to select adjectives that describe the journal. A very small percentage of survey respondents judged the journal to be “too narrow in focus” (6 percent), “superfluous” (5 percent), and/or “too secular” (5 percent). On average and most important, the majority of survey respondents describe the journal in positive terms (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unbound Attribute</th>
<th>% of Respondents Selecting Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought-provoking</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful to PC(USA) principles</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-written</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relevant to the specific 2010 review recommendation that ACSWP improve communication with “especially younger people,” some survey respondents (16 percent) chose to describe Unbound as “young adult oriented.” In these early years, while this online journal has begun to gather some momentum in readership and has had much positive response in this review period, Unbound should be perceived as a successful start-up in response to the 2010 committee review. Overall, while challenges persist and will be addressed in Section V of this self-study report, ACSWP’s responsiveness to the 2010 committee review recommendations reflects very good effort to exhibit “a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).”


The ACSWP has developed and submitted to General Assembly all five types of documents described above during the 2010 to 2017 review period. Policy statements, resolutions, study papers, and social involvement/monitoring reports are listed in Tables 4–6. In addition to listing the submitted documents, the data include the General Assembly action regarding each document. Most all the submitted papers in Tables 4–6 were “approved” or “approved with amendments” by the General Assembly with the result that most of the documents have become statements approved by the PC(USA). Because the numbers
of advice and counsel (A&C) items are large in each General Assembly year, the lists of A&Cs submitted by ACSWP to each General Assembly are included as Appendices A to D. The purpose of these statements and A&Cs is to strengthen the social witness of the PC(USA) and, thus, demonstrate ACSWP’s fidelity to its mission.

A. Policy Statements

Five policy statements developed by ACSWP were approved by the General Assembly during the review period (Table 4). Four policies focused on the systemic political and economic issues that impact individuals and families and recommend how our church should respond to the needs of these groups. A fifth policy statement, “Risking Peace in a Violent World” was the final statement from the multiyear peace discernment process and adopts five new peace-making affirmations. A sixth proposed policy statement, “Putting Healing Before Punishment,” which addresses drug use and addiction and the war on drugs, has been submitted to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GA Year</th>
<th>Referral Year</th>
<th>GA Action</th>
<th>Policy Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>GA 2008</td>
<td>Approved as Amended</td>
<td>Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>GA 2012</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Tax Justice: Christian Response to a New Gilded Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>GA 2014</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Resolutions

Much of ACSWP’s work in the past eight years has been the development of resolutions—statements that apply previously approved social policy to specific situations. All but one of the fifteen submitted resolutions were either General Assembly “approved” or “approved with amendments.” See Table 5 for the list of resolutions developed and submitted to the General Assemblies.

C. Social Involvement Reports and Study Papers

Five study/social involvement reports were submitted to the General Assemblies (Table 6). When there are issues of urgency, ACSWP has the mandate to provide the General Assembly with direction regarding a current issue or “crisis.” An example is the 2010 report “Living Through Economic Crisis,” which responded to the 2008 recession and the resulting credit crunch and massive foreclosures. Also, study papers, such as “Putting Healing Before Punishment” submitted in 2016, are a mechanism to seek discernment by congregations and denominational leaders regarding the content of a developing policy statement. The discernment regarding new peacemaking affirmations also used this study paper process over a period of six years.

D. Advice and Counsel Memoranda

To inform the General Assembly decision-making process, ACSWP provides policy interpretation for considering overtures from presbyteries, commissioners’ resolutions, proposals by agencies and corresponding bodies through Advice and Counsel (A&C) memoranda. In applying the church’s accumulated social witness policy decisions, many A&C memoranda suggest both wording changes to reflect previous policy and program recommendations. A&C content is often written in consultation with presbytery representatives, agency staff, and ACREC and ACWC members.

Table 5. Resolutions (2010–2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GA Year</th>
<th>Referral Year</th>
<th>GA Action</th>
<th>Resolutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>GA 2008</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Gun Violence: Gospel Values – Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GA 2008</td>
<td>Approved as amended with comments</td>
<td>Loving Our Neighbors: For Equity and Quality in Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GA 2008</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Study Paper/Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Initiated by ACSWP</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>For Human Rights and Civic Freedom: Movements for Democratic Change in the Arab World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Initiated by ACSWP</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Human Rights Update: 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Initiated by ACSWP and Adv. Comm. on Women’s Concerns</td>
<td>Approved as Amended</td>
<td>A Resolution on Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Initiated by ACSWP</td>
<td>Approved as Amended</td>
<td>Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Western Sahara: Occupied, Non-Self-Governing Territory, and Test Case for International Law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Approved as Amended</td>
<td>Fairness in Ministerial Compensation: Incentives and Solidarity, a Response to Two Referrals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Initiated by ACSWP</td>
<td>Approved as Amended</td>
<td>Resolution on Equal Rights for All Inhabitants of Israel and Palestine and on Conversations with Prophetic Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Initiated by ACSWP</td>
<td>Referral with Comments</td>
<td>The Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>GA 2014</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>GA 2014</td>
<td>Approved as Amended</td>
<td>Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>GA 2014</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Recommendations Regarding “Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision” - City Churches: Convictions, Conversations and Call to Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>GA 2014</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The goal of the A&C documents is to show how a recommendation may or may not work, to show policy precedents, to raise and address objections, or to outline implications. This ACSWP function is intended to help the commissioners make informed decisions. When the A&C opposes a given course of action, it often proposes an alternative that might represent something of a “win-win” compromise.

In assessing the fidelity to its mission and the effectiveness of its service, ACSWP looks to how the General Assembly responds to these memoranda offerings. Table 7 reports the number of A&C memoranda submitted to business in each General Assembly year as well as reporting the proportion of overtures on which the General Assembly action was congruent with the A&C recommendation. The data to support this table are included as Appendix E which lists the A&C memoranda.
submitted in each General Assembly (GA) year of the review period and notes the GA decision in relation to the advice given in each A&C.

Table 7: Advice and Counsel Memoranda Submitted to General Assembly Business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GA Year</th>
<th>Number of Overtures with ACSWP A&amp;Cs</th>
<th>Number of Committees that received ACSWP A&amp;Cs</th>
<th>Percentage of GA Action Congruent with ACSWP A&amp;Cs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GA 2010</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10 of 19 committees</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA2012</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16 of 21 committees</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA2014</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9 of 15 committees</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA2016</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6 of 14 committees</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the General Assemblies, ACSWP submitted between forty and eighty A&Cs in response to overtures, agency, and special committee reports. Equally important to this large amount of work is the scope of the A&C work, as evidenced by the number of different GA committees to which A&Cs were submitted. In this role, ACSWP has responded to social justice issues across the business of the GA rather than limiting this task to committees that focus only on identified social justice-oriented overtures.

Most important is the finding that indicates the General Assembly has concurred with the majority of the advice and council memoranda provided to GA commissioners at these most recent General Assemblies. The majority of ACSWP advice is congruent with GA action (Table 7). In some cases, the GA may not have taken all the advice and counsel of a particular A&C. Congruency is defined broadly as GA approving or disapproving an overture in accordance with a ACSWP recommendation to approve or disapprove. Actions of answering an overture by approving an alternate overture have been analyzed on the basis of the ACSWP recommendation and the approved alternate action.

This pattern of congruence between the A&C advice and GA action is, of course, co-relational, not causal. Recent survey data, on the other hand, indicate that the A&Cs contributed to the GA committee decisions and the final GA plenary votes. The 2017 survey completed by commissioners to the 221st and 222nd General Assemblies (2014 and 2016) indicate that the A&Cs were judged to be helpful to these decision-makers. The great majority of the GA commissioner respondents (79 percent) reported the A&Cs to be very helpful or helpful in their work. This positive perception of the ACSWP’s A&C work indicates this work has essential utility and is an effective means of strengthening social witness in the PC(USA).

These survey findings also allowed ACSWP to learn the recent commissioners’ perceptions of ACSWP work compared to perceptions obtained for the 2010 committee review. Fifty-four percent of the commissioners who responded to the 2010 survey reported the A&C work was “very helpful” or “helpful” to their work as commissioners at GA2006 and GA2008 compared to the almost 80 percent who were so positive about the A&C work almost a decade later (GA2014 and GA2016).

The causes of the large increase in positive responses from 2010 to 2017 are not found in the survey data. Clearly, there are likely a number of reasons for the increased positive findings in 2017. Such factors may be fewer commissioners from presbyteries that might be negative of ACSWP work, different political and economic circumstances of congregants and congregations, different socio-demographic characteristics of the commissioners and different types of overture issues. Regardless of the contributions of these potential external factors to the increased satisfaction with ACSWP, the work of ACSWP seems to be more widely acknowledged as helpful during this current review period than in the decade of the last committee review. The important ACSWP advice and counsel role to the deliberation of the General Assembly is evident at the end of this review period and seemingly, as indicated by survey findings, is more salient to commissioners than a decade ago. Such survey results provide robust evidence that ACSWP demonstrates effectiveness in its mission.

These policymaking document data indicate that during the review period there have been numerous accomplishments in the form of General Assembly approved social witness policy and resolutions generated or advised by ACSWP. Such findings provide evidence that ACSWP is effective in contributing to the enhancement of social witness of our denomination. Still there remains the important question of ACSWP’s leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work of social witness policy development and application/implementation of approved General Assembly policies. ACSWP assumes a leadership role in the promotion of social witness and justice

V. Leadership in Social Witness

In addition to fulfilling its mandate by developing social policy and providing advice and counsel to the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, ACSWP has exhibited important leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources of social witness. This leadership is evidenced in five types of activities presented below:

1. **Leadership in Applying Policies to Emergent Issues**

The ACSWP exhibits leadership in its efforts to keep the church current with topics addressed in the past. For example, ACSWP staff has helped both Stated Clerks and Moderators during the review period with public statements addressing human
rights issues and other issues of social justice. ACSWP and/or its staff drafted or contributed to statements on gun violence, Middle East issues, criminal justice, US-Cuban relations, energy, and campaign finance reform. In such efforts, ACSWP is proactive and able to bring to the attention of General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board potential areas where social witness will be required of the church.

2. **ACSWP Leadership with PMA and OGA Staff and Elected Members**

   a. Using the General Assembly approved policies that have been developed by ACSWP, the Washington Office of Public Witness (OPW) is guided in its efforts to support congressional legislation or testify against proposed legislation that is contrary to PC(USA) social policy. The OPW has recently used tax policy, Israel-Palestine statements, and environmental policies in advocacy arguments toward pending congressional legislation.

   b. The ACSWP coordinator attends Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) meetings. He provides updates on projects to keep the elected members aware of social witness opportunities and challenges. The committee has written Advice & Counsel memoranda to the PMAB as a whole and letters to the board’s Governance Task Force, the Way Forward Commission, and the Vision 2020 Committee, relating structure to mission and arguing for more vision by the leadership.

   c. The ACSWP coordinator sits at “tables” with program staff, providing policy bases for projects and helping develop applications of General Assembly actions. Currently, the ACSWP coordinator is co-convener of the Middle East staff team and a member of the “Green Team.” The Unbound managing editor, as ACSWP staff, has been a member of the trafficking staff table and social media work group.

   d. The ACSWP works with PC(USA) mission networks to contribute knowledge about General Assembly policy and to gain knowledge from them to update policy. For example, a recommendation to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) by ACSWP, in cooperation with the Cuba Partners Network, called for the PC(USA) to celebrate and strengthen the ecclesial relationship and partnership between the PC(USA) and La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC). It asked the assembly to update the partnership agreement “in light of new hopes and realities as we assess together new opportunities for mutual mission.” Another example is the membership of two current ACSWP members in the Israel-Palestine Mission Network, with which the ACSWP coordinator also works. In addition, the ACSWP coordinator has met with the Syria Lebanon Partnership Network.

3. **Leadership in Policy Interpretation Using Presentations and Trainings**

   During the review period, the members and staff of ACSWP have made many presentations, workshops, and sermons to classes, church groups, and conferences. In 2010, the ACSWP coordinator developed a colloquium on the Accra and Belhar Confessions. In 2011, at Big Tent, the co-chairs of the Economic Crisis study team presented a workshop and invited response from the conference participants. Workshops and discussion groups were also led by ACSWP members and staff at the 2015 and 2017 Big Tents. Also, each year ACSWP elected and staff members offer workshops at the CPJ Training Day in Washington, D.C., which directly precedes the Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

4. **Leadership Provided to Educators**

   The ACSWP staff and elected members meet regularly with theological and ethical educators to strengthen the connection of educators with the work of the General Assembly and the social witness of the church more broadly. This leadership includes working with the Social Ethics Network (SEN, formerly the Theological Educators for Presbyterian Social Witness [TEPSW]). This group is composed primarily of Christian ethicists currently or formerly serving in seminaries and other educational institutions related to and/or in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

   The Social Ethics Network meets annually on matters of social witness policy where it reviews papers and provides a testing ground for Christian social-ethical analysis of many issues. The ACSWP coordinator assists this group informally and its members provide a willing pool of academically proven volunteers and consultants on ACSWP study projects. In the fall of 2011, the Social Ethics Network (SEN) led a Planning Consultation on Peace Teaching and Discernment in Presbyterian Seminaries, Colleges, and Universities at the San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS), San Anselmo, California. Another example was the discussion of the resolution, “Honest Patriotism,” in gatherings before the American Academy of Religion in 2017 and Society of Christian Ethics in early 2018. These college and seminary professors are also encouraged to use PC(USA) social policies in their classes.

5. **Leadership in Ecumenical and Evangelical Connections**

   The ACSWP reaches out to other mainline Protestant, African American, and Orthodox churches through its coordinator’s service on the Peace and Justice Committee of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC). Also, ACSWP meets at least every third year in Washington, D.C., and includes sessions with the NCCC president and leaders of such organizations as Sojourners (“Evangelical”), Faith and Public Life, and Creation Justice Ministries.
a. The coordinator no longer serves on the staff team of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations, but continues to advise the group primarily on areas of ecumenical social thought. The coordinator served in that capacity for the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), staffing and advising the “Message” committee at its June, 2017, General Council in Leipzig. The coordinator has also presented a paper on environmental policy convergence with Methodist and Lutheran colleagues in the Society of Christian Ethics.

b. The ACSWP has also taken a lead to engage in mission conversations with self-described Evangelical Christians in the areas of human rights and human trafficking, areas where other mainline churches and women’s organizations (notably Presbyterian Women) have initiated advocacy efforts. The ACSWP staff and elected members have sought to learn from Evangelical Christian efforts of rescue and rehabilitation with sex trafficking victims and have engaged in dialogue about the place of justice in evangelism overseas.

While ACSWP provides leadership in social witness in the national PC(USA) bodies and ecumenical groups, Presbyterian congregants are not often aware of how ACSWP provides such leadership both in the development of policy and in its interaction with other groups. Comments reported in the recent survey indicate there are congregants who expressed a lack of awareness of ACSWP work or were confused about its role. Some know the policy positions but do not know how they were reached. Some other respondents stated that the work of the committee should, but did not reach to the congregations. Such qualitative findings lead to a discussion of ACSWP challenges and limitations.

VI. ACSWP Challenges and Limitations

The ACSWP has confronted persistent challenges and limitations in this review period very similar to the challenges of the previous decade. Three significant challenges and limitations are described in this section: (1) dissemination of PC(USA) social witness documents; (2) ACSWP as a “Lightening Rod”; and (3) engaging youth and young adults in social witness policy.

A. Dissemination of PC(USA) Social Witness

A continuing challenge is dissemination and interpretation of General Assembly approved social witness papers and recommendations to other councils (synod, presbytery, and session), local congregational leaders, and congregants. Even with the additional communication tool of Unbound, social witness policy is often unknown. A good vehicle is the book, Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace by Christian Iosso, the ACSWP coordinator, based on the peace discernment report approved by the General Assembly in 2016. Westminster/JohnKnox Press judged this report to be readily convertible into marketable form.

This dissemination task has not been a mandated primary or sole responsibility of ACSWP. Rather the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations states that ACSWP should assist others in their responsibility to disseminate social policy. The ASCWP is assigned the responsibility to “Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret the social witness policies of the General Assembly.” The ACSWP staff works with the General Assembly (GA), Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) leaders whose responsibility it is to communicate and interpret social witness policy.

Still, ACSWP is mandated, as stated in the PMA Manual of Operations, to “Maintain an up-to-date and accurate Social Policy Compilation of General Assembly social witness policy and provide information to the churches requested.” Church leaders also perceive that it is ACSWP’s responsibility to broadly communicate and interpret PC(USA) documents. ACSWP is challenged to meet this expectation because of limited staff resources. While the elected ACSWP members very much appreciate the excellent work of the 2.5 FTE ACSWP staff, their concern has been that the ACSWP mandated functions, especially the compilation and dissemination function, require more staff time to accomplish well than is currently available.

B. ACSWP as a “Lightening Rod”

The General Assembly Manual recognizes that ACSWP can be a “lightning rod” at times, and that this can be the case precisely when ACSWP is doing its job. This situation is a persistent challenge. On issues of social witness with a potential to spark conflict and public criticism, ACSWP strives for discretion while maintaining commitment to its mandate.

In this review period, as in the previous review period, ACSWP has worked in a milieu where many Presbyterians value its work, but some leaders and members are critical of what work is done or how it is accomplished. In the most recent survey, the overwhelming majority of written comments about ACSWP were positive and supported the mission, the value, and the effectiveness of ACSWP. There were negative comments about ACSWP, however, as some respondents stated that the work of the committee is biased and/or too political. Several respondents commented that “the church had NO business addressing social justice issues.” The Research Services summary of survey findings reported:

Some survey and focus group participants believe the committee (ACSWP) should limit its activities to what they see as its core mandate: advising the General Assembly. It should discontinue other activities. Others believe the committee itself should be disbanded, because its core mandate is to advise the national church leaders considering making pronouncements on issues. These Presbyterians believe it would be wise for denominational leaders to stop making pronouncements, in which case ACSWP would no longer have a purpose.
Recent statements by the PC(USA) Stated Clerk, however, indicate that denominational leadership continues to make pronouncements based upon approved General Assembly social witness policy. For example, in November 2017, the Stated Clerk wrote to Congress urging legislators to pass a “clean” DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) ACT “that offers hope for young migrants by providing a pathway to citizenship” [http://www.pcusa.org/news/2017/11/stated-clerk-urges-fast-action-clean-dream-act/]. Given the more prominent positive attitudinal survey findings presented in Table 1 and continued public statements regarding social witness made by PC(USA) leadership, it can be argued that ACSWP, even at the risk of being a “lightening rod,” should steadfastly continue to work to fulfill its mission.

Some similar criticism has come as well in the form of General Assembly overtures. The most organized critique of ACSWP along these lines came at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in a set of nine overtures from the Presbytery of Foothills in South Carolina. An effect of these overtures would be to instruct ACSWP to be primarily an educational body. Although the General Assembly disapproved all of the overtures from the Presbytery of Foothills, ACSWP leadership met with Presbytery of Foothills leaders in an extensive visit with follow-up. Such dialogue with individuals who are critical of ACSWP’s work has been one way ACSWP has tried to learn how to improve the process of social witness policy development and, thus, to achieve its mission more effectively.

While certain areas may question the role of corporate social witness more than others, the committee has continued to build relationships in locations where it meets, consulting with local and regional mission leaders, and helping bring engaged voices in General Assembly cities like Detroit and St Louis into dialogue with the larger church on issues of race and class.

C. Engaging Youth and Young Adults in Social Witness Policy

A major challenge before ACSWP is shared broadly with the Presbyterian Mission Agency social witness programs, including the Presbyterian United Nations and Washington Offices. This challenge is how to serve new generations of the church in faithful yet more innovative ways, not only with new technology, but with new ways of engaging young people. As examples, the ACSWP coordinator assisted interns in the Office of Public Witness and in Collegiate Ministries in adapting policy statements into educational materials for younger adults on voting rights (2016) and gun violence (2017). Especially as younger evangelicals have come to share many views of justice, particularly racial and environment justice, they welcome the Gospel that contains a social conscience.

The ACSWP recognizes the need of the church to develop new ways to witness to a younger generation. Many of these young people may have limited knowledge of the Bible and Christian faith, but they thirst for a deeper understanding of justice and love. The challenge is to communicate and sustain a church-wide conversation when relationships and programs have been weakened and memories and traditions lost. Fortunately, the General Assembly’s social witness agenda has been on target in many areas including environmental issues and green energy, peace affirmations, racial justice and greater economic equality. In each of these areas, the church has done its homework and ACSWP stands ready to help the church strengthen its voice and credibility among youth and young adults.

In addition to establishing the online journal which might be more widely read than a paper journal by young adults, a part-time staff position within ACSWP focuses on engaging youth and young adults in social witness policy. In addition to being the managing editor of Unbound, Henry Stone is the associate for young adult social witness. In this role he strives to strengthen the voice of congregants and ministers under forty years. Some of this work includes employing social media to link Unbound articles to electronic communications platforms used by younger individuals. Specifically, he uses Twitter and Facebook to make such linkages and he is an active participant in the Facebook support group, “Young PCUSA Leaders.”

A related challenge is to engage more fully with youth and young adults in the development of policy because of the unpaid time required to attend ACSWP meetings. Employment and family duties compete for volunteer time and energy. It has been easier to engage persons whose careers and families are at later stages and can allow the travel and meeting time necessary to fully participate in ACSWP meetings. While the engagement of a good number of youth and young adults in policy development remains an unmet challenge, it is one that will receive explicit attention in the new decade. The current youngest member of ACSWP will be one of the two ACSWP co-chairs beginning her term after the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and, as a visible young adult leader, she and the committee intend to further address this challenge.

VII. ACSWP Future Objectives

The ACSWP proposes to address the challenges described in Section VI by putting extra attention and energy toward achieving its full mandated mission. In a spirit of collegiality, the ACSWP has put its future objectives before the General Assembly as directions open to debate and, we hope, affirmation.

Endnotes


A. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership

1. Each committee or commission was created by the church and exists to serve and support the church’s mission in a particular area. Each committee or commission is expected to exhibit a constant faithfulness to and in fulfillment of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).
2. The basic process of the committee or commission should demonstrate fidelity to the mission and accountability procedures set forth in its establishing deliverance, charter, or mandate from the assembly. The committee or commission should exhibit leadership in guiding the church in engagement with the work and resources in which the committee or commission acts.

3. The committee or commission should exhibit practical cooperation with the other agencies or committees of the church in areas of overlapping responsibility and opportunity.

4. The committee or commission should provide timely responses to directives and requests from the General Assembly.

B. Effectiveness of Services

The services of the committee or commission are consistent with its assembly or constitutional mandate.

1. The committee or commission has a defined and consistent process for completing its work.
2. The committee or commission has a regular process of self-evaluation of its services.
3. The committee or commission employs a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large.
4. The committee or commission utilizes current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.

5. The committee or commission has developed a vision and plans for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and context of the PC(USA).

2. Chang, Perry, Report: Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Self-Study and Committee Review Research, PC(USA) Research Services, September 2017. This is the source for the survey data (both quantitative and qualitative) reported in this self-study document.


5. See Footnote 1, Review Standards—A. Fidelity to Mission and Partnership, #1.


APPENDIX A

ACSWP Advice and Counsel Work at 219th General Assembly (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overtures with ACSWP Advice &amp; Counsel Memoranda</th>
<th>ACSWP Recommendation</th>
<th>GA Action</th>
<th>Partial or Full Advice Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06 Church Orders and Ministry Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-02 On calling for a moratorium on requests to</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change the standards of ordination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-03 Taking no action on standards of ordination</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for 2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-04 On issuing an authoritative interpretation of</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-6.0106</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-05 On Homosexual Practice and the Church: an</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-06 Regarding requirements for ordination</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-07 On deleting G6.0106b</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-08 On replacing G6.0106b with New Text</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-09 On amending G6.0106b</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-10 On replacing G6.0106b with New Text</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-11 Giving G6.0106b Broader but Specific Scope</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-12 On replacing G6.0106b with New Text</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-13 On amending G6.0106b</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-14 On replacing G6.0106b with New Text</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-15 On amending G6.0106b in the Book of Order</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-16 On amending G6.0106b</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-17 On deleting G6.0106b</td>
<td>Answered with 06-09</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtures with ACSWP Advice &amp; Counsel Memoranda</td>
<td>ACSWP Recommendation</td>
<td>GA Action</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-18 On Behavioral Standards for Ordained Office</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered with action on another resolution 06-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Mission Coordination Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-03 On amending the process for forming social witness policy</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-06 On Re-establishing an Office of Collegiate Ministries as a Vital Part of Ministry and Mission</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-07 On affirming the Presbyterian Health, Education &amp; Welfare Association</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-09 On reinstating &quot;Criminal Justice Sunday on calendar, and establishing an Office of Criminal Justice Issues</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-15 On a Task Force to review Mission Funding</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Social Justice Issues Committee A: The Promotion of Social Righteousness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-01 On Protesting the blatant disregard for use of our Lord’s name in broadcasting</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-03 On urging the U.S. Congress to cap interest rates on credit card lending</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Social Justice Issues Committee B: The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-01 On lifting up the &quot;Call to Restore the Creation&quot;</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-02 On endorsing &quot;The Charter for Compassion&quot;</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-03 On making resources available regarding destruction and loss of coastal wetlands</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-08 On a national moratorium on the imposition of the death penalty</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-11 Regarding a call to stand with immigrant Presbyterians in their hour of need</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-01 On affirming the Biblical Teaching on the topic of marriage</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-02, 12-03, 12-04, 12-07, 12-10 Amending W-4.9000</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 12-12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-05 On marriage</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-06 On issuing an authoritative interpretation of W-4.9000</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-08, 12-09 Interpretations on marriage</td>
<td>Approve, Prefer language of 12-06</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 12-12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-11 Reaffirm historic teaching on marriage</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Peacemaking and International Issues Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-01 On the war in Afghanistan</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-02</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-02 On the war in Afghanistan</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved with amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-03 On the war in Afghanistan</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-02</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-04 On partnering for peace in Sudan</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved with amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-05 On protecting Christians in the Muslim world</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved with amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-06 On a 6-year term of discernment on the church's reaction to war</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-11</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-07 Twenty-first century peacemaking</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-11</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-08 On assisting with a peace accord in Columbia</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved with amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtures with ACSWP Advice &amp; Counsel Memoranda</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-09 On the war in Afghanistan</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution 13-11</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 13-02</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-11 On strengthening the peacemaking program</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-12 On the restoration of sustainable agriculture in Haiti.</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14 On restoration of democracy in Madagascar and Honduras</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Middle East Peacemaking Issues Committee</td>
<td>14-01 On divestment from Caterpillar</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution 14-03</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 14-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-02 On divestment from Caterpillar</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution 14-03</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 14-03</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-03 MRTI report of its engagements with corporations involved in Mid-East</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-04 On recognition that Israel's laws, policies and practices constitute apartheid against the Palestine people.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved by approving alternate resolution 14-08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-05 On commending &quot;A Moment of Truth…” as an advocacy tool</td>
<td>Approve with minor changes</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 14-08</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-06 On Middle East peacemaking</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 14-08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-07 On Iraq</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-08 &quot;Breaking Down the Walls&quot;</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-09 On seeking compliance to U.S. government policy in Military Aid to the Middle East</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Theological Issues and Institutions Committee</td>
<td>16-01 Commending confessions -- that uphold the oneness of all believers and discontinuing efforts to include Belhar Confession</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved by approving alternate resolution 16-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-03 On amending baptism of children</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing Committee</td>
<td>18-01 On extending benefits to same-gender spouses and partners</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-06 On extending benefits to same-gender spouses and partners</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution with comment</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-07 On approving the medical benefits plan</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-12 On discontinuing payments for abortions on medical benefits plan</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Health Issues Committee</td>
<td>19-02 On encouraging all Presbyterians to know their HIV status</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution 19-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-03 On making a statement regarding violence towards women</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-04 On taking a stand against forced and coerced abortions</td>
<td>Answer with 19-03</td>
<td>Approve as amended</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX B
ACSWP Advice and Counsel Work at 220th General Assembly (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</th>
<th>ACSWP Recommendation</th>
<th>GA Action</th>
<th>Partial or Full Advice Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03 General Assembly Procedures Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>03-14 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Establishing a Code of Ethics for Elected Commissioners and Elected/Appointed Advisory Delegates to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)</td>
<td>Approve with addition to rationale</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 Review of Biennial Assemblies Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-01 Committee to Review Biennial Assemblies Report to the 220th General Assembly (2012). [Recommendation 1-8]</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05 Mid Councils Review Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-12 Mid Council Report to the 220th General Assembly Commission on Mid Councils.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved Recs. 1-4, 6 Approved Rec. 5, 7, 8 as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 Church Polity Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-08 On Amending F-1.0403, Unity in Diversity.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-13 On Amending F-1.0403 and G-2.0401 to Eliminate the List of Those Whom We Refuse to Discriminate Against.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved--Answered by action on 06-08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-17 On Amending F-1.0403 “Unity in Diversity” and G-2.0401 “Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons” to Ensure Participation.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved--Answered by action on 06-08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 Church Orders and Ministry Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-01 On Amending G-2.0104b to Make it Consistent with the Constitutional Questions in W-4.4003.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-02 On Amending G-2.0104b to Clarify Standards for Ordination.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-03 On Amending G-2.0104a to Include Standards Regarding Sexual Behavior.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered by 07-02 (disapproved)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-06 On Replacing G-2.0104b. with the Language of G-6.0106b in the Former Form of Government.</td>
<td>Answered by 07-02 (disapproved)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-08 On Adding G-2.0104c Allowing Operational Manuals to Require Adherence to Certain Theological and/or Behavioral Expectations.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-09 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of G-2.0402 and G-3.0306 to Clarify the Appropriateness of Questions to Officers-elect.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Dis approve</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-10 On Adding New Section G-2.0106 Regarding Freedom of Conscience Pertaining to Ordinations.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved with comments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-11 On Adding G-2.0106, Freedom of Conscience for Councils.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved with comments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-12 On Amending G-2.0104b to Clearly State the Authority of Scripture as the Most Important Basis for the Ordination of an Office of the Church.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-13 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of G-2.0402 and G-3.0306 to Clarify the Appropriateness of Questions to Officers-elect.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved Answered by 07-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-16 On Affirming Statements in the Book of Order to Guide Councils in Examining Candidates for Ordination or Installation.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved Answered by 07-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-17 On Honoring Christ in our Relationship with One Another.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Approved as amended with comments</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-18 On Committing Ourselves to Respectful Dialogue with Those Who Hold Differing Convictions.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered by 07-17</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-08 Commissioners’ Resolution. On a Green Church Ecumenical Network</td>
<td>Approve with considerations</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</td>
<td>ACSWP Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10 Mission Coordination Committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-01 On Recognizing Bloomfield College as a Racial Ethnic College.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved with comment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-05 On Maintaining the Integrity of the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering.</td>
<td>Approve with amendment to Rec. 2</td>
<td>Approved Answered by 10-14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-06 On Retaining the Peacemaking Offering as an Independent Offering Appropriate to World Communion Sunday.</td>
<td>Approve with considerations</td>
<td>Disapproved Answered by 10-14</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11 Social Justice Issues Committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-01 On Economic Justice in These Troubled Times.</td>
<td>Approve with amended language in #4</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-02 On Calling for an End to Poverty Zone Development and for the Advocacy of Fair Development.</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved, as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-03 On Endorsing “A Fifty Year Farm Bill”.</td>
<td>Approve with addition of #3</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP #3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-05 On Calling for an End to the Practice of Corporal Punishment in Homes, Schools, and Child Care Facilities. [Recommendations 1 &amp; 2]</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-06 On Instructing MRTI to Report to GAMC on the Corporate Practices of Publicly Traded Corporations that Operate for Profit Prisons.</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved, with ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-07 On Support of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved, with ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-19 On Advocating for Trade Reform and Accountability.</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved w/ACSWP amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 A Statement on the Housing and the Mortgage Crisis.</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Referred to MRTI</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-22 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Alternate giving options for Union members.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-23 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Prolonged Solitary Confinement in U.S. Prisons.</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12 Immigration Issues Committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-01 On Rescinding the 219th General Assembly Action Regarding a Call to Stand with Immigrant Presbyterians (Item 11-11)</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-02 On Taking Action Concerning the Place and Plight of Immigrant People in Our Neighborhoods and Communities of Faith.</td>
<td>Answer with action on 12-02</td>
<td>Answered with action on 12-02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-03 On Taking Action Concerning the Place, Plight, and Contributions of Immigrant People in Our Country, Neighborhoods, and Communities of Faith.</td>
<td>Approve w/amendment</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-04 On Advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform.</td>
<td>Approve with amended language</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amended language</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-05 On the Plight of Indonesian Christian Immigrants and the Passage of the Indonesian Family Refugee Protection Act.</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved w/amendment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-06 On Adopting a Statement and Call to Action Regarding Immigration.</td>
<td>Answer with action on 12-04</td>
<td>Answered with action on 12-04</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-07 On Beginning Active Exploration in Communities to Seek Answers on How to be Church Together in Immigrant Communities.</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</td>
<td>ACSWP Recommendation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-10 Commissioners’ Resolution Re Safe Communities for Everyone.</td>
<td>Approve and refer to Office of Immigration Issues with action on 12-4&amp;6</td>
<td>Approved, as amended.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-11 Commissioners’ Resolution. On the Plight of Immigrant People in Our Neighborhoods and Communities of Faith.</td>
<td>Refer to Office of Immigration Issues w/action on 12-4&amp;6</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee</td>
<td>Advice with considerations</td>
<td>Answer with 13 NB (New Business resolution asking all congregations to study the issue of the church’s definition of marriage.)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-01 On Amending W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility for the Covenant of Marriage.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-02 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Ensure Pastoral Discretion.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13-03 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-04 On Amending W-4.9000, Marriage.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-05 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Ensure Pastoral Discretion.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-06 On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-07 On an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9001, Christian Marriage.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13-08 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation W-4.9000.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-09 On Approving an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-10 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation W-4.9000.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-11 On Amending W-4.9000 Regarding Marriage.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-12 On Confirming the Current Definition of Marriage and Any Current Authoritative Interpretations of Marriage in W-4.9000-9.001.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13-13 On Amending W-4.9001 Regarding Marriage and G-4.0208 Regarding Exceptions.</td>
<td>Advice w/considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Peacemaking and International Issues Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-01 On Supporting the United Nations.</td>
<td>Approve, with amendments</td>
<td>Approved, with ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-02 On Support for the People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Middle East and Peacemaking Issues Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-01 On recognizing that Israel’s Law and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against Palestinian People – From Presbyterian of Muskingum Valley.</td>
<td>Approve with an alternate resolution.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-02 On Boycotting Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories and Hadiklaim (and Israel Date Growers Cooperative).</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-03 On Divestment from Caterpillar.</td>
<td>Approve 15-03 and 08 with amendment #5</td>
<td>Approved Answered by 15-11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-04 On Supporting a Peaceful, Diplomatic Solution to the U.S. – Iran Issues.</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with some of ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-05 On Ethical Investment and Divestment.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved Answered by 15-11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-07 On Rejecting the Use of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction Policies in Peacemaking Efforts between Israelis and Palestinians.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved Answered by 15-11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 15 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

#### 04 Middle East Issues Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</th>
<th>ACSWP Recommendation</th>
<th>GA Action</th>
<th>Partial or Full Advice Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-08 On Approving the GAMC’s recommendations on selective divestment made by MRTI.</td>
<td>Approve 15-03 and 08 with amendment to #5</td>
<td>Approved Answered by 15-11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-09 On Human Rights and Religious Freedom of Arab Christians and Other Palestinian Citizens.</td>
<td>Approved, as amended</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-10 On Pursuing a Creative Course of Action Regarding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered by action on 15-11 which approved alternate resolution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Church Growth and PILP Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-07 Report of the Special Committee on the Nature of the Church in the 21st Century. [Recommendation 01]</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Confessions of the Church Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-01 On Amending the Book of Confessions to include the Confession of Belhar.</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Board of Pensions, Foundation, Presbyterian Publishing Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-02 On Directing the Board of Pensions to Provide a Medical Benefits Plan That Will Not Pay for Abortions Except to Save the Life of the Woman.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-03 On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Consider the Possibility of Adding to the Disability Benefits the Option of Partial Disability Benefits.</td>
<td>Approve w/amendments</td>
<td>Approved w/ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-12 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Shared Benefits Plan.</td>
<td>Counsels w/considerations</td>
<td>Approved.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Health Issues Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-01 On Instructing MRTI to Study and Report Corporate Practices of Health Insurance Companies and Possible Divestment of Same.</td>
<td>Approve w/amendments</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-02 On Instructing the General Assembly to Take Action to Implement the PC(USA)’s Policy on Inclusion of People with Disabilities.</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-03 On Providing Just Access to Reproductive Health Care.</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended with comments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-04 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Compassionate Treatment of Veterans Suffering from PTSD, TBI, and/or Other Mental Afflictions Rising from Military Service.</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with ACSWP amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-05 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Funding for Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) for AIDS Competency Training</td>
<td>Approve with suggestion</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-06 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Calling the Church to a New Way Forward on the Issue of Pregnancies and Abortion</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapprove with comment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### APPENDIX C

**ACSWP Advice and Counsel Work at 221st General Assembly (2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</th>
<th>ACSWP Recommendation</th>
<th>GA Action</th>
<th>Partial or Full Advice Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04-01 On Reviewing General Assembly Policy Regarding the Two-State Solution in Israel Palestine</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>ACSWP Recommendation</td>
<td>GA Action</td>
<td>Partial or Full Advice Accepted</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-02 On Divestment from Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard and Motorola Solutions</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-03 On Engaging Presbyterian to Witness for Palestinian Human Rights and for Ending the Occupation of Palestine</td>
<td>Approve as amended</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-04 On Supporting Middle East Peacemaking</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Approved—Amended to overturn initial intent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-05 On Calling for a Boycott of All Hewlett-Packard Products</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-06 On Affirming Occupation-Free Investment in Palestine</td>
<td>Approval with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-10 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Declaring That Zionism Unsettled Does Not Represent Views of PC(USA)</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-11 Commissioners’ Resolution. On the Tragedy at Tent of Nations</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-12 Commissioners’ Resolution. On Reaffirming the Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-13 Commissioners’ Resolution. On a Commitment to Prayer for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-14 Commissioners’ Resolution. Support for a Just and Peaceful Compromise of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>07-01 On distinguishing between Biblical terms for Israel and those applied for the modern state of Israel</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Disapproved with comment</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08 Mission Coordination Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-06 A resolution to develop a church-wide antiracism policy</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-07 Fairness in ministerial compensation</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Social Justice Issues Committee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-01 On taking Meaningful Action to Reduce Gun Violence</td>
<td>Answer with action on 09-07</td>
<td>Answered by another resolution 09-07</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-02 On entering a 2-yr Season of Reflection on the Plight of Unwanted Children/Clip for abortion review</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-04 Regarding a National Moratorium on the Imposition of the Death Penalty</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-06 On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-07 On Gun Violence Prevention</td>
<td>Approve as amended</td>
<td>Approved as amended with comments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-09 On Food Sovereignty for All</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10 On a Study of End-of-Life Issues</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended with comments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-11 Affirm the importance of child nutrition over 1000 days</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-12 On Providing a Trauma Crisis Counseling to train…in caring for Survivors of Homicide Victims</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-13 Cultural proficiency and climate for change</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>09-15 A Resolution to Educate against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-01 Separating the legal and Christian/religious aspects of marriage</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</td>
<td>ACSWP Recommendation</td>
<td>GA Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-02 On Amending W-4.9000, Marriage</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-03 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Peacemaking and International Issues Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-02 On Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church that is Suffering….due to violence in other Parts of the World</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-03 On Removing Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-04 On the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones)</td>
<td>Answer with action on 11-10</td>
<td>Answered with action on 11-10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-05 On Lifting All Travel Restrictions on all US Citizens traveling to Cuba</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-06 On authorizing a Consultative Process to Provide guidance for the Church's response to the Dramatic Changes in Cuba</td>
<td>Approve with amendments to Referrals 1-3</td>
<td>Referral (back to ACSWP) with comment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-07 On Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide</td>
<td>Approve as amended</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-08 Western Sahara and International Law</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-10 Drones, War and Surveillance</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-11 Risking Peace in a Violent World</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>12-12 Response to tragic conditions in the Congo</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>12-13 Develop comprehensive trafficking policy</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-14 Sexual violence in the US military</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-15 Code of Conduct to Protect children from sexual exploitation</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Theological Issues and Institutions and CE Committee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-01 Approve Belhar Confession addition to Book of Confessions</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-08 On celebrating 500th Birthday of John Knox</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Congregational Vitality Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14-02 Initiative to contribute to education for many children, primarily overseas</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Immigration and Environmental Issues Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-01 Divest of 200 largest fossil fuel companies (by reserves)</td>
<td>Approve with amendment to refer to MRTI</td>
<td>Plenary approved with MRTI comment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-02 Affirm &quot;pre-cautionary principle&quot; for sustainable development</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-03 Affirm review and regulation of coal and oil transport and exports in NW US</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-04 Recognize a Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX D
ACSWP Advice and Counsel Work at 222nd General Assembly (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</th>
<th>ACSWP Recommendation</th>
<th>GA Action</th>
<th>Partial or Full Advice Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04 The Way Forward Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-01 On Amending G-3.0503 and G-6.04 Regarding Meetings of the General Assembly and Amending the Constitution</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtures with ACSWP Advice and Counsel Memoranda</td>
<td>ACSWP Recommendation</td>
<td>GA Action</td>
<td>Partial or Full Advice Accepted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04-07 On Merging the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a Single Entity</strong></td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered by Alternate Resolution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04-08 On Authorizing the Hiring of a Consultant to Assess the Relationship of OGA and PMA and the Need for Their Continued Existence as Two Separate Entities</strong></td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered by Another Resolution to 04-07</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04-11 Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency</strong></td>
<td>Disapprove Recommendations 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Answered by Alternate Resolution 04-07</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>08 Middle East Issues Committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-01 On Boycott of All HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise Products</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-02 On Advocating for the Safety and Well-being of Children of Palestine and Israel</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approve as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-03 On Upholding Peoples and Partners in the Middle East and in the United States</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-04 On Calling for the RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-07 On Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-08 Commissioners' Resolution. Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition.</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Action on another resolution 08-07</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>09 Immigration &amp; Environmental Issues Committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-01 On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution</td>
<td>Approved alternate resolution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-02 On an Alternative to Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution 09-01</td>
<td>Answered by 09-01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-03 On Faithful Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution 09-01</td>
<td>Answered by 09-01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-04 On Faithful Response to Climate Change</td>
<td>Approve alternate resolution 09-01</td>
<td>Answered by 09-01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-05 On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si”</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-06 On Responding to our sisters and brothers who are refugees or internally displaced</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-08 On Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-11 On Amending G-1.0304, “The Ministry of Members,” by Adding “Caring for God’s Creation”</td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Approved with amendments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-12 On Advocacy Against Factory Farming</td>
<td>Approve with amendments</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10 Mission Coordination Committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10-01 On Seeking to Eradicate Slavery from the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses That the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business</td>
<td>Approve with amendment</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-03 On Taking Specific Action to Address the Worsening Plight of the African American Male</td>
<td>Approve with advice</td>
<td>Approved as amended with comments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-13 On Achieving a 5:1 Ratio Between the Highest-Paid and Lowest-Paid Employees of PMA</td>
<td>Approve with advice</td>
<td>Approved as amended</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11 Social Justice Issues Committee</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11-01 On Adding a New Standing Rule F.5.c. Regarding Social Witness Policy Statements or Resolutions at the General Assembly</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>Answered by 11-03</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 11-20

[The assembly approved Item 11-20 as amended. See pp. 13, 63.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Church Support in Response to Support of Suicide Prevention Efforts.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) recommends that PC(USA) congregations take action as follows to engage in the work of suicide prevention:

1. Encourage the leadership of each congregation to acknowledge the challenges caused by suicide deaths by addressing them in prayers, sermons, educational events, and conversations.
2. Provide support for those who are suicidal or have attempted suicide.

3. Engage families of those who have lost loved ones to suicide, responding faithfully to the impact of grief, loss, stigma, and isolation, all of which burden suicide survivors (those who have lost family, friends, or other loved ones to suicide).

4. Acknowledge the church’s role in contributing to the stigma and silence that envelops the topic of suicide.

5. Recognize and share the Gospel message of life, hope, and resurrection [as an antidote to] [in relation to] suicide, [in coordination with professional and medical assistance].

6. Learn how to recognize signs of suicidal intention and know local treatment and prevention services as well as how to make a referral.

7. Participate in events like National Suicide Prevention Month in September,1 the International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day in November,2 and the Faith Communities events of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.3

8. Encourage church members to participate in training such as Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), and Soul Shop training for faith leaders.

9. Create partnerships with government agencies, legislators, law enforcement, schools, funeral homes, and national and local suicide prevention organizations to provide practical and spiritual help for individuals and families coping with mental health disorders and with loss to suicide.

10. Host Suicide Survivors groups, suicide prevention trainings, and participating in community awareness of suicide loss and prevention.

[11. Direct the General Assembly to publish the list of resources found in the rationale in all online denominational resources to congregations.]

Rationale

Recent well-publicized celebrity deaths by suicide have focused national attention on the alarming increase in suicide rates in the United States.4 Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. Each year nearly 45,000 Americans die by suicide, and for every death, twenty-five attempts are made.5

It is estimated that 90 percent of suicides are related to undiagnosed and/or untreated mental illness, such as depression and bipolar disorder.6 Many individuals suffering from such illness do not seek treatment, either because they or their loved ones do not recognize the symptoms, do not know where to seek help, or are deterred from seeking help by the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide.7

Suicide, as a life-and-death matter which on its face contradicts the natural human instinct for self-preservation and seems to violate the biblical injunction to “choose life!”8 is a natural topic for the church to address. For hundreds of years, and often still today, believers have understood the church’s teaching to be that suicide was a sin and that those who died by suicide would face eternity in hell.9 It has not been unusual for families of those who have died by suicide to be refused church funerals or gravesites. However, “faith communities are a natural setting for suicide prevention. Spiritual beliefs and practices tend to help people experience greater hope and meaning in their lives. Faith communities can also provide opportunities for developing positive relationships with others and can be an important source of support during difficult times.”10

As a significant presence in the community, and one to which people turn for guidance in matters of life and death, the church bears a responsibility to contribute to initiate open and frank discussion and education about suicide prevention. It is imperative that we become knowledgeable and at ease in discussing this challenging topic that brings devastation to so many individuals and families.

Endnotes

Advice and Council on Item 11-20—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-20.

Deaths by suicide have dramatically increased in our society and all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations are affected directly or indirectly. Item 11-20 requests that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) encourage the leadership of all congregations to openly and compassionately acknowledge the challenges caused by deaths by suicide.

Furthermore, it stipulates that congregations take action by engaging in the work of suicide prevention (e.g. education, individual and family support, training, referrals, etc.). This faith-based work is to be done both at the congregational level and in partnership with others in the community.

It is important to note that Item 11-20 is in tandem with Item 10-11, which requests that the General Assembly revisit and update “Comfort My People: A Policy on Serious Mental Illness,” approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Advice and Council on Item 11-20—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-20.

The ACWC strongly advocates for the work of suicide prevention, mental illness awareness and healthcare, suicide ideation education, as well as grief and guilt support for family members who have lost loved ones due to death by suicide completion.

Completed suicide is a significant cause of death in the United States for men/boys and women/girls. When considered through the lens of women’s concerns, however, it is important to look at the rising statistics of suicide-related deaths among women:

National Public Radio recently reported that over the past two decades, “the number of people dying by suicide in the U.S. has risen by about 30 percent. And, while the majority of suicide-related deaths are among boys and men, a study published June 14, 2018, by the National Center for Health Statistics finds that the number of girls and women taking their own lives is rising.” Dr. Holly Hedegaard, a medical epidemiologist at the NCHS noted, “From 2000 to 2016 death by suicide increased by 21% for boys and men, compared with 50% for girls and women. The biggest change is among women in late middle age, with an increase of 60%.” Middle age women are often caught in the “sandwich generation”—both caring for children at home, as well as their aged parents. [Likewise for] women leading single-parent households. Women may not have time to take care of themselves, be kind to themselves, or get the social support they need. These can be factors in stress, and stress is a known cause of anxiety and depression, which both are known factors of suicide ideation, as well as death by completed suicide. But, as Jill Harkavy-Friedman, vice president of research at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention articulates, “Suicide is a public health concern. The statistics published 6/14/18 underscore the need for a national prevention effort.”

Understanding the increase in suicide-related deaths among women, as well as understanding how women and families are affected when a loved one dies from completed suicide, clearly brings into view the need the PC(USA) to engage in the work of suicide prevention.

Therefore, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-20.

Endnotes

i. [https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/06/14/619338703/u-s-suicides-rates-are-rising-faster-among-women-than-men](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/06/14/619338703/u-s-suicides-rates-are-rising-faster-among-women-than-men)

ii. Ibid.
Item 11-21

[The assembly approved Item 11-21 as amended. See pp. 13, 63.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. Responding to People Impacted by Opioids and Other Addictive Substances.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) recommends that PC(USA) congregations take [action as follows] [the following actions, as appropriate] to address the impact the opioid crisis and other substance use disorders have on our churches and communities:

1. Encourage the leadership of each congregation to acknowledge the challenges caused by the opioid epidemic and other substance use disorders by addressing it in prayers, sermons, educational events, and conversations.

2. Engage people with substance use disorders in ways that hold them accountable with compassion and grace.

3. Engage families of those with substance use disorders, responding faithfully to the impact of grief, loss, financial strain, and other factors that addiction has on families.

4. Recognize and share the Gospel message that is inherent in stories of recovery.

5. Engage in practices that reflect the radical hospitality of Christ in the spirit of the Good Samaritan parable, including offering space for healing for recovery groups, transportation to services, and connections to people in the community.

6. [Learn how to recognize signs of addiction and knowing local treatment and prevention services as well as how to make a referral] [Partner with local treatment and prevention services for ongoing referral and training on how to recognize signs of addiction.]

7. Celebrate hope in Christ and affirm that recovery is possible.

8. Participating in events like National Prevention Week in May and National Recovery Month in September.

9. Train on the use of Naloxone (Narcan) and make it available in the church building for emergencies.

10. Create partnerships with nonprofits, government agencies, law enforcement, and funeral homes to provide practical and spiritual help for individuals and families coping with substance use disorders.

11. Host NA, AA, or [Nar-Anon Al-Anon, or other faith-based recovery groups] [other spiritual recovery programs].

12. Host Nar-Anon or Al-Anon spiritual recovery programs for those affected by the disease of addiction for families and friends.

13. Partner with local jails and recovery home operators to offer opportunities for spiritual and social connection after release for people recovering from a substance use disorder.

Rationale

“On average, 115 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose. In 2016, over 11 million Americans misused prescription opioids, nearly one million used heroin, and 2.1 million had an opioid-use disorder due to prescription opioids or heroin.”—Opioid Epidemic Practical Toolkit, Dept. of Health and Human Services

Individuals and families with substance use disorders often live in fear and shame. They are afraid to confess that they or their loved ones are suffering because, as one PC(USA) pastor in recovery said, “Silence is the price we pay for admission to church.”

As the church and followers of Jesus Christ we are called to have a prophetic voice in our communities and speak out with authority and boldness to the tragedies around us, including opioid abuse and other substance use disorders.

The problems aren’t limited to just the drug user; families are impacted as well. Jobs are lost when crisis after crisis with a child or spouse prevents work. Savings are depleted getting a loved one rehabilitative help, often multiple times. Wallets are emptied of their cash, checks are forged, and valuable household items are sold as those with a substance use disorder steal to feed their addiction.
The good news is that churches offer the key elements that are vital in preventing, dealing with, and recovering from a substance use disorder. Churches offer a connection to God, a supportive community, and opportunity for strong personal relationships. We believe Christ calls us to offer healing for those suffering from substance use disorders.

Opioid and other substance use disorders are present where we are:

The top ten states with highest overdose deaths in 2016: Florida, California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Texas, Illinois, Michigan, Maine, New Jersey.iii

Top ten states with the most Presbyterians (current): Pennsylvania, North Carolina, California New York, Virginia, Texas, Florida, Ohio, New Jersey, Illinois.iv

Additionally, in 2016, the five states with the highest rates of death due to drug overdose were West Virginia (52.0 per 100,000), Ohio (39.1 per 100,000), New Hampshire (39.0 per 100,000), Pennsylvania (37.9 per 100,000), and Kentucky (33.5 per 100,000).v Some of these states have high rates of PC(USA) membership.

Note: This resolution seeks to address people-centered actions of the church rather than policies as set forth in Item 11-08, A Report with Recommendations on Drug Policy: Putting Healing Before Punishment—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

This is available online at: http://bit.ly/GA2018Opioids

Endnotes


ii. A revelation at the 2017 Synod of the Trinity Regional Gathering in West Virginia.


iv. As provided by PC(USA) Research Services


Susan Washburn, Presbytery of Redstone
Mark Eldred, Presbytery of the Western Reserve

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-21

Advice and Council on Item 11-21—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-21.

Item 11-21 proposes increased congregational attention and primarily “recovery” (or 12-step program)-related actions to respond to opioid abuse and other substance use disorders.

As the proponents note, Item 11-21 complements the proposed Item 11-08, From Punishment to Healing, developed to address drug issues in terms of public health, harm reduction, criminal justice system reform, and matters of de-criminalization or legal regulation. That report does include practical and personal actions, including the recommendation that each presbytery to have facilitators “visit congregations in their presbyteries to support their deeper reflection, learning, and engagement” through education, community service, advocacy, etc. Item 11-21 adds several elements not in Item 11-08, such as encouraging congregations themselves to purchase Naloxone to treat overdose victims, ideally by members trained to administer emergency injections.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-21

Advice and Council on Item 11-21—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).


This resolution is online with the core values of ACREC including

1. advocating for the healing and the protection of the most vulnerable;
2. People take drugs and fall into gambling and other forms of addiction as they try to escape forms of social ills such as injustices and oppression that affect mostly people of colors; and

3. Our commitment to ministries of healing and restoration.

**ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-21**

*Advice and Council on Item 11-21—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-21.

While Item 11-08 addresses drug policies, this overture addresses actions that can be done at the congregational level to inform, educate, and talk about the opioid crisis in the country that is affecting the lives of most every person, as the degree of separation between the person suffering with this terrible addiction and ourselves is minimal for each one of us.

From the perspective of the concerns of women, it is noted that, according to the American Medical Association, “Women bear greater burden of opioid epidemic. According to the Center for Disease Control, between 1990 and 2000, overdose death from prescription pain killers (opioids) increased 265% in men, and 400% in women. The American Journal of Public Health cited in a 2010 study that ‘women can become dependent when using smaller amounts of drugs for a shorter period of time.’ Dr. Melinda Campopiano, medical officer with the Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration said, ‘The importance of gender with regard to substance-use disorders has gained increasing attention as evidence highlights significant gender differences in prevalence rates, health service utilization, treatment outcome, and physiological consequences of alcohol and drug consumption. In general, the data suggest that women progress from use to dependence more quickly than men, suffer more severe emotional and physical consequences of drug use as compared to men, yet underutilized treatment. Furthermore, significant gender differences in psychiatric comorbidity were revealed with women in the study more likely to have reported past or current psychiatric disorders, including significantly higher rates of depression and anxiety.’

With these known factors, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advocates for all aspects of this overture, and advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 11-21.

Endnotes


1 Ibid.

**Item 11-22**

[The assembly approved Item 11-22 as amended. See pp. 55, 63.]

*Commissioners’ Resolution. On Advocating for the Citizens of Puerto Rico.*

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directs that the PC(USA):

1. Engage in direct advocacy with the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. Government against the unjustified additional tax burden imposed to the U.S. citizen residents of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico by Public Law No. 115-971 (Tax Bill) of December 22, 2017.

2. Develop, publish, promote, and distribute among the denomination a series of Bible studies, sermon series, and any additional educational material to promote an educated discussion of the causes and effects of modern colonialism and the systematic economic and financial genocide.


[4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the U.S. Government to repeal the provisions in the Jones Act that limit Puerto Rico’s imports to using U.S.-owned shipping companies, a requirement that has substantially hindered its recovery from the 2017 hurricanes and its economic growth more generally.]

[5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the U.S. Government to conduct another rescheduling of Puerto Rico’s debt obligations, given the way that, since the previous rescheduling, the hurricanes (and the insufficient support for recovery) have greatly reduced the island’s fiscal capacity to service its debt.]

[Financial Implications: PMA $4,500]
The Island of Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory in 1898. The residents of Puerto Rico received U.S. citizenship in the year 1917. However, after 100 years of citizenship, those that reside in the island are treated as second-class citizens by the U.S. Government. In some cases, the law gives equal rights and responsibilities to the U.S. residents of Puerto Rico, while in other cases, such as U.S. Public Law 115-97, the law creates additional impositions, tax burdens, and disadvantages.

The elimination of the U.S. Tax Code Section 936, which promoted manufacturing employment during the 1980s, forced several manufacturing and service companies to relocate from Puerto Rico. This change to the U.S. Tax Code reduced drastically the employment availability and, therefore, the governments operational income. The U.S. Congress allowed Puerto Rico to issue municipal bonds to replace the lost taxes under the new IRS Code guidance.

The issue of municipal bonds was basically the only available source of operational income for the local government as the same U.S. Tax Code limited access to new business endeavors and new jobs, leaving Puerto Rico with a $76 billion bond debt, more than twenty years of economic depression, and a decreasing population.

Starting in 2016, the Government of Puerto Rico and all public service corporations have been operating under Public Law No. 114-187, named Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA). PROMESA imposes a congregational oversight control board over the Puerto Rico democratically elected and appointed officials. The oversight board has the inherent power given by Congress to amend the local budget and to influence the operations of all branches and agencies of the government, thereby limiting the fiscal power of the governor and legislature of the Government of Puerto Rico financially. The board answers only and directly to the U.S. Congress.

In September 2017, Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated Puerto Rico. The already fragile infrastructure was destroyed. The supplies chain from the U.S. to Puerto Rico, which by the Jones Act of 1920 prohibits foreign vessels to transport goods and supplies into Puerto Rico, became nonoperational, limiting the few recovery efforts taking place. Today, Puerto Rico is still recovering from the devastation left by the hurricanes. More than 10 percent of the residents are still without electric power or running water. More than 60 percent of traffic lights are nonoperational or do not exist any longer. The supply chain is not fully functional, limiting the availability of food, supplies, and goods.

The Base Erosion provision of Public Law No. 115-97 adds an additional tax burden to the residents of Puerto Rico. The law declares that all products, goods, or services manufactured or developed in Puerto Rico are to be considered as from foreign sources. Therefore, an additional 20 percent tax is imposed on those goods when transferred in the economy. This additional tax burden imposed by the second-class-citizen treatment of the residents of Puerto Rico directly affects the recovery efforts, promotes additional departures of manufacturing companies, and motivates the residents to continue the migration to the fifty states.

We are called by God to preach with a prophetic voice, to announce and denounce against injustice and oppression. The Scots Confession declares that “The Works Which Are Counted Good Before God includes: “To honor father, mother, princes, rulers, and superior powers; to love them, to support them, to obey their orders if they are not contrary to the commands of God, to save the lives of the innocent, to repress tyranny, to defend the oppressed, to keep our bodies clean and holy, to live in soberness and temperance, to deal justly with all men in word and deed, and, finally, to repress any desire to harm our neighbor, are the good works of the second kind, and these are most pleasing and acceptable to God as he has commanded him himself. ...”

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: “He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.” Puerto Rico has been oppressed for more than 120 years under a text book example of modern colonialism oppression directed by the U.S. Government. We, faithful servants of the Lord, are called to stop such oppression.

Therefore, the PC(USA) is called to raise a prophetic voice against the systematic economic genocide, oppression, and colonialism of the U.S. Government against Puerto Rico and its residents; and to educate its members in the causes and actions that create the devastating effects of a systemic economic genocide and colonialism of the oppressed.

Endnotes

2. https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2328?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22PROMESA%22%5D%7D&r=5.
7. Luke 4:18b ESV.

Raul F. Santiago Rivera, Presbytery of San Juan
Héctor Torres Betancourt, Presbytery of San Juan
Eliana Maxim, Presbytery of Seattle
ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-22

Advice and Council on Item 11-22—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval of Item 11-22 with amendment as follows:

“4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the U.S. Government to repeal the provisions in the Jones Act that limit Puerto Rico’s imports to using U.S.-owned shipping companies, a requirement that has substantially hindered its recovery from the 2017 hurricanes and its economic growth more generally.

“5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the U.S. Government to conduct another rescheduling of Puerto Rico’s debt obligations, given the way that, since the previous rescheduling, the hurricanes (and the insufficient support for recovery) have greatly reduced the island’s fiscal capacity to service its debt.”

The rationale section of Item 11-22 already discusses the problem with the Jones Act.

The fact that Puerto Rico is not a state means that its debt is not sovereign, like that of states. States can use the possibility of default to improve their bargaining position with creditors, which Puerto Rico cannot.

Since the 222nd General Assembly (2016), when we last addressed the matter of Puerto Rico’s debt, the danger of a fiscal death spiral has greatly increased, as the added taxes to service debt discourage investment and increase out migration to the mainland U.S.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-22

Advice and Council on Item 11-22—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).


The United States of America continues to keep colonialism alive, specifically in relation to the Island of Puerto Rico, even though its inhabitants are U.S. citizens.

We agree that the treatment of Puerto Rico by the U.S. Government after Hurricanes Irma and Maria, borders on intentional systemic racism or even genocide.

Many in the island still lack basic necessities such as electricity and potable water. The death toll has risen dramatically in the aftermath of the hurricanes.

Puerto Rico and its citizens should be treated fairly.

Item 11-23

[The assembly disapproved Item 11-23. See pp. 56, 64]


That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Direct the Co-Moderators of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk and the General Assembly Committee on Representation, to appoint a PC(USA) Emerging Technologies Commission (ETC) of no less than eight and no more than twelve elders and ministers to review the current issues surrounding the potential forthcoming international automation crisis and other pertinent disruptive technologies that have the potential to radically impact society, the church universal, and the PC(USA), specifically in the next fifteen years. The ETC will accomplish this by identifying the adaptive and technical challenges surrounding mass automation and pertinent potential disruptive technologies in consultation with companies, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions dealing specifically with issues of automation and emerging technology. The ETC will work toward receiving feedback/input from the leadership of churches, presbyteries, synods, and the Office of the General Assembly in order to develop recommendations for appropriate future action.

2. Direct the ETC to make a final report of their work, along with recommendations and suggestions for action, to the 224th General Assembly (2020). If the work requires more time, the team is directed to report to 225th General Assembly (2022), with an interim report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).
Present Situation

In 2013, an Oxford Study indicated that up to one-half of all jobs in the United States are at risk of being fully automated in the next twenty years. More recently, the McKinsey Global Institute posited a lesser number; that up to one-fifth of the global workforce will be affected by 2030. That study suggests that up to one-third of the workforce in richer nations like the United States and Germany will be replaced.

The Church & Society Is Ill Prepared

Even if the percentage only ends up being 12 percent to 22 percent in the U.S., as the McKinsey report suggests, such unemployment rates would be the greatest percentage of job loss in the United States since the Great Depression. In those years, 25 percent of all Americans were out of work. The Great Depression lasted a decade and the unemployment rate in America didn’t drop below 10 percent until after the U.S. entered the Second World War and began mass military production, reinvigorating the economy.

A modern loss of jobs of this magnitude would likely shake the foundations of society creating new levels of unimagined poverty, increased income inequality between the rich and the poor, and heightened racial and ethnic divisions. Other emerging technologies in development, such as biomedical enhancement technologies, advanced Artificial Intelligence, mixed reality platforms, and emerging digital technologies, also have the potential to have quickly developing repercussions on humanity and the cosmos in next decade.

The Opportunity

Technology is exponentially developing at rates faster than ever before in history. The PC(USA) has a unique opportunity to consider the advancing technological situation in order to preemptively develop ministry plans in preparation for the coming challenges of automation and other disruptive technologies. Developing effective contextual ministry plans to address such issues has the potential to avoid catastrophic social suffering and unrest, maintain peace, and create greater levels of social unity & equity while simultaneously helping the church to garner unprecedented social relevance.

Christopher Benek, Presbytery of Tropical Florida
M. David Schaefers, Presbytery of Grace

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-23

Advice and Council on Item 11-23—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval of Item 11-23 as amended below: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

1. Direct the [Co-Moderators of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Office of the Stated Clerk and the General Assembly Committee on Representation, to appoint a PC(USA) Emerging Technologies Commission (ETC) of no less than eight and no more than twelve elders and ministers] [Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to consult with the resolution proponents, with the Presbyterian Association on Science, Technology, and the Christian Faith, and with the Social Ethics Network of Presbyterian ethicists and theologians, on a prospectus and potential consultant researchers] to review the current issues surrounding the potential forthcoming international automation crisis and other pertinent disruptive technologies that have the potential to radically impact society, the church universal, and the PC(USA), specifically in the next fifteen years. [The ETC] [The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), with appropriate technical volunteers and consultants,] will accomplish this by identifying the adaptive and technical challenges surrounding mass automation and pertinent potential disruptive technologies in consultation with companies, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions dealing specifically with issues of automation and emerging technology. The [ETC] [Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)] will work toward receiving feedback/input from the leadership of churches, presbyteries, synods, and the Office of the General Assembly in order to [develop recommendations for appropriate future action.]

2. Direct the ETC to] make a final report of their work, along with recommendations and suggestions for action, to the 224th General Assembly (2020). If the work requires more time, the team is directed to report to 225th General Assembly (2022), with an interim report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).”

Item 11-23 raises important concerns that the church must address. However, having just completed a report on the Precautionary Principle (Item 08-07) that originated in a similarly broad overture, it recommends that the General Assembly should direct that these concerns be addressed through existing church structures and organizations instead of appointing a new and separate “commission” (properly a “committee”). We recognize that the 1993 guidelines for social witness policy require those
proposing social policy development to consult with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and thus may appear self-serving, but our advice is in fact to gauge interest in this project and to respect current resource limitations.

The automation of work raises important questions about the meaning and place of work in human life, inequality, and the character of the social contract. We only need to consider the disruption and violence caused by the first industrial revolution to imagine the disruption that further automation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning may bring. Within the United States the first industrial revolution displaced workers, generated divisions between capital and labor, contributed to inequality, inspired some sabotage, stirred labor and political movements, remade city, congregational, and family life, and led to a renegotiation of the social contract (much of which happened during the New Deal). We do not yet see the transformation what current technological advances will mean, yet it is important for the church to think theologically and practically to anticipate possible changes and clarify what doctrines such as vocation, covenant sin, etc., may mean in the developing context. These changes were addressed in a regular set of church reports and statements, notably in the original 1908 “Social Creed of the Churches,” and including major reports on labor and work in 1944 and 1996.

Technically the General Assembly would not appoint a “commission” (which would have special authority to act on behalf of the assembly), but a committee or task force. In this case, we are aware of networks of Presbyterians with scientific, technological backgrounds and interests in this area. The possible costs of consultants and researchers would be considerably less than the proposed commission, though forming a reference group of volunteers would still require some funds.

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**Item 11-24**

[The assembly approved Item 11-24 as amended. See pp. 13, 64.]

*Commissioners’ Resolution. On the Degradation of Civil Discourse.*

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. Expresses to the world its dismay and concern at the degradation of civil discourse, the system of checks and balances, and other practices typical of a representative democracy.

2. Urges sessions to lead their congregations in regular prayer, study, and discernment as to God’s will.

3. Directs the Stated Clerk to collaborate with ecumenical and interfaith partners to communicate directly and individually via the appropriate media our dismay and concern to the President and Vice-President of the United States of America, each member of the United States Congress currently in session, and each member to serve in the Congress that will convene in January 2019, governors of states, leaders of state legislative bodies from at least two political parties, and local government executives, and urge them to speak out about similar concerns regarding the function of representative democracies in the United States of America; and urge them to protect the freedoms inherent to representative democracies.

4. Directs the Stated Clerk to notify leaders of other branches of the church and other faiths, and to communicate directly and individually via the appropriate media our dismay and concern to the President and Vice-President of the United States of America, each member of the United States Congress currently in session, and each member to serve in the Congress that will convene in January 2019, governors of states, leaders of state legislative bodies from at least two political parties, and local government executives, and urge them to speak out about similar concerns regarding the function of representative democracies in the United States of America; and urge them to protect the freedoms inherent to representative democracies.

**Rationale**

We as Presbyterians share a common heritage with the social contract known as representative democracy.

We as Presbyterians value that heritage as a gift and calling of God to a form of service and abundant life in our society, following teachings of John Calvin and John Knox, among others.

We value the gift of civil discourse as part of that heritage and of our belief that we are created as children of God.

A sentiment that does not adequately value that heritage and distorts the gifts and values of civil discourse in a representative democracy appears to be growing in the United States of America.

Remembering the writings of Martin Niemöller, it is the time to speak up.
Advice and Council on Item 11-24—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 11-24.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) supports this resolution endorsing civil discourse and the checks and balances in our governments at all levels.

The title and text could use some editing to clarify the distinctions between “discourse” and “discord.”

Item 11-24 would reinforce our Resolution for Honest Patriotism (Item 11-16).

Advice and Council on Item 11-24—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).


This resolution affirms the prophetic foundation of the PC(USA) of speaking truth to power and is aligned with the core values of our Christian beliefs.

This resolution supports the work of ACREC as it advocates for the church to speak out and act on issues negatively affecting people in church and society. Nonviolent civil discourse has long been a method of oppressed and marginalized people to achieve civil rights, racial justice, economic justice, environmental justice, housing, and education disparities.

ACREC believes a lack of action by the PC(USA) will directly and negatively impact the ability of the church to realize living in a beloved community.

Item 11-25

[The assembly approved Item 11-25. See pp. 55, 64.]

Reconstituting the Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission—From T. Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and Byron Wade, Vice-Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008).

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve reconstituting the Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission as the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation and

- that the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation be composed of fourteen members;
- that no less than four members of the special committee be persons of color; and
- that the special committee hold its first meeting no later than September 30, 2018, bring a progress report to the 224th General Assembly (2020), and a final report and recommendations to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2016 Referral: Item 11-12. On the PC(USA) Continuing Its Efforts to Dismantle Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society—From the Presbytery of Baltimore (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 46, 56, 719).

The Co-Moderators, working in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, appointed former General Assembly Vice Moderator Byron Wade as the chair and sought to fill out the membership of the commission as directed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). After months of work, the Co-Moderators, along with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and Commission Chair Byron Wade, came to the conclusion that the assembly might be better served if the composition of the commission was changed.

Since the commission’s sole responsibilities were to conduct a listening campaign and submit recommendations to the assembly, we feel it does not need to be a commission as it has no charge to make any structural changes. We feel that having this be a committee with fewer people would not only be a more appropriate form for this group, but would also be easier to appoint since it does not have the same ruling elder/teaching elder ratio requirements.
The original requirement that 75 percent of the commission be comprised of people of color, while commendable, is inordinately cumbersome to people of color and places the burden of this important work on them. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) Co-Moderators and the Vice Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2014) ran into numerous issues appointing this commission. Gifted and willing candidates of color were already serving elsewhere, the pool is relatively small in a nearly 90 percent white denomination, and others were simply unwilling because they are tired of being expected to do the antiracism work of the church. Out of respect for the energies of those who may be called to serve in this capacity, we ask that the burden be shifted.

Item 11-A

Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Approved. [See p. 64.]

Item 11-Info

A. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary

The committee is composed of twelve regular members representing African Americans, Native Americans, Latina/o Americans, Asian Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, and European Americans.

The 2016–18 membership of the committee is as follows:

Buddy Monahan, chairperson; Native American Consulting Committee representative, corresponding member to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly;

Tom Priest, vice-chair, National Black Presbyterian Caucus representative;

Nahida Halaby Gordon, chair of Resource and Referral Subcommittee, Middle Eastern American, at-large, liaison to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP);

Victor Adventius Hamel, chair of Study and Comment Subcommittee, National Asian Presbyterian Caucus representative;

Tony Aja, National Hispanic/Latino/a Presbyterian Caucus representative;

Holly Haile Davis, Native American, at-large;

James Ephraim, dual-member from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board;

Raafat Girgis, National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus representative;

Michelle Hwang, Asian American, at-large;

Gwendolyn Magby, African American at-large, liaison to the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC);

Jessica Vazquez Torres, Hispanic/Latino/a, at-large;

Vacancy, at-large representative;

Jose Luis Casal served a partial term as the National Hispanic/Latino/a Presbyterian Caucus representative;

Gloria Tuma, liaison from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP);

Joyce Rarumangkay, liaison from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC);

Ruben Ortiz Rodriguez, liaison from the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

The committee was staffed by Courtney Hoekstra, associate for advocacy committee support, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Sherri Pettway, administrative assistant, Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Assigned Functions

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) works to fulfill its General Assembly mandate to provide advocacy and monitoring on issues affecting people of color in both church and society. The committee evaluates social trends in church and society and provides advice and counsel to the General Assembly (GA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). The committee addresses issues, including civil rights, racial justice, environmental justice, economic justice, public education, law enforcement, health care, employment, and housing as they directly impact communities of color and thereby the entire body of Christ. The committee also monitors the implementation of programs and policies approved by the church that impact the participation and quality of life for people of color within the church. The ACREC works in close
cooperation with other agencies and entities within the church, including the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to fulfill its responsibilities. The ACREC’s assigned functions, as stated in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations include:

- a. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on racial ethnic concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.
- b. Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of racial ethnic concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- c. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of racial ethnic concern.
- d. Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on racial ethnic concerns and provide information to the church as requested.
- e. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on racial ethnic concerns.
- f. Monitor the implementation of racial justice policies and programs relative to racial ethnic concerns.
- g. Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of racial ethnic concern.

The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and its chair has corresponding member status with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and with the General Assembly.

**Officers for 2016–2018**

The 2016–2018 Executive Committee of ACREC consists of Buddy Monahan, chair; Tom Priest, vice-chair; Jose Luis Casal, secretary (partial term; then became a vacant position); Nahida Gordon, chair of Resource and Referral Subcommittee; Victor Hamel, chair of Study and Comment Subcommittee.

**Accomplishments**

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns used its regularly scheduled meetings to explore a wide range of topics of special interest to the committee and its work. The ACREC is committed to and has participated in anti-racism and cultural proficiency training at each of its meetings. The committee also hears and responds to reports at each meeting from all of the caucus/council/coordinate committee representatives and liaisons to and from other groups. At most meetings in Louisville, ACREC connects with various staff people in the building to connect with the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), in particular.

In 2016, following the 221st General Assembly (2016), the committee met as follows:

- September 22–23, 2016—Louisville, Kentucky: ACREC’s first meeting after General Assembly focused heavily on actions taken at the General Assembly that were focused on racial justice. Based on this review and current racial justice issues in the church, country, and world, ACREC set some priorities for their work during this two-year cycle. The committee connected with Molly Casteel, staff to the General Assembly Committee on Representation. They also elected and installed their new executive committee.

In 2017, the committee continued its work with the following schedule of meetings and content summaries:

- January 22–23, 2017—Tucson, Arizona: The ACREC visited with partners in Agua Prieta, Mexico, and learned more about the deportation process and the impacts of the border wall. They also viewed the documentary, *Locked in a Box*. The ACREC also met with the Reverend Alison Harrington from Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson. The cultural proficiency team of ACREC worked with staff from the Presbyterian Mission Agency on the PMA’s revision of their six-year cultural proficiency plan.

- May 19–21, 2017—Louisville, Kentucky: The committee was led by ACREC member, Jessica Vazquez Torres, in a half-day training on Racism, Power, & Dominance in the U.S. and the Church. The Stated Clerk, J. Herbert Nelson, II, and Cora Brown, manager of administration (OGA) met with ACREC. The committee discussed concerns with the PMA Board and the Governance Task Force proposals. After extensive discussion on the training held the first day of the meeting, ACREC voted to change their name to the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).
October 19–20, 2017—Chicago: The ACREC discussed highlights from the September Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting, including the approved report of the Governance Task Force, which grants the advocacy and advisory committees a seat with full voice and vote on the new twenty-member board. The committee heard an update from Holly Haile Thompson and Buddy Monahan on the important work of the Doctrine of Discovery team. The ACREC had lunch and discussion with two associate pastors at Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago: Vicky Curtiss and Nanette Sawyer, who jointly staff their First Presbyterian Chicago’s Racial Equity Committee. The ACREC had a Go-To-Meeting conversation with Samuel Son, manager for diversity and reconciliation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency about race audits. The ACREC also had a Go-To-Meeting conversation with Tom Hay, Associate Stated Clerk and director of assembly operations in the Office of the General Assembly about the implications of holding the PC(USA) General Assembly in St. Louis, a city fraught with racial tensions and issues. General Assembly Nominating Committee liaison to ACREC, Lindsey Anderson, and Valerie Small, Assistant Stated Clerk and manager of GA nominations, met with ACREC to discuss the need for ACREC’s participation in recruitment to ACREC.

In 2018, the committee had its final full-committee meeting prior to General Assembly:

January 18–20—Louisville, Kentucky: The ACREC worked to complete all of its reports for the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The committee discussed concerns about some of the preliminary proposals of the Way Forward Commission. The greater portion of the meeting was spent discussing, drafting, reviewing, and editing resolutions to be submitted to the General Assembly.

Items of Business for the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

The following items were sent to the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen

A Resolution on the Status of Jerusalem

A Resolution on Prioritizing Translation and Accessibility in the PC(USA)

A Resolution to Require Race Audits of the Six PC(USA) Agencies


### B. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) Agency Summary 2016–2018

“The [Holy One] is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Ps. 9:9).

“The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us” (Acts 11:12).

“... [Be] doers of the word, and not merely hearers ...” (Jas. 1:22).

Introduction

The context of women’s advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in God who liberated the people of Israel from oppression, covenanted with Israel that they might do justice, and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) explicitly articulated in the Articles of Agreement its commitment to work against gender-based discrimination. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) is a contemporary fulfillment of this promise. The new Book of Order continues to uphold this commitment: “In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person” (Book of Order, F-1.0403). Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, G-4.0403 ... monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church ... and advocate[ing] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society [as a whole]. (Minutes, 1994, Part I, p. 262)

Assigned Responsibilities

The ACWC’s assigned functions are delineated in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (September 2016) (Appendix 1F, p. 38–39). They include:

- Preparing policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on women’s concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,
or on its own initiative;

- Advising the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of women’s concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly;
- Providing advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women’s concerns;
- Assisting the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women’s concerns and provide information to the church as requested;
- Providing the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women’s concerns;
- Monitoring the implementation of women’s policies and programs relative to women’s concerns; and,
- Through advocacy maintaining a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women’s concerns.

The ACWC is housed in the Office of the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). The ACWC has organized itself with a leadership team of three co-chairs: two serve as corresponding members to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board respectively. One member of ACWC is a voting member of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). There are twelve voting members of the committee; ten members are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. One member is the current moderator for justice and peace of Presbyterian Women and one member is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, chosen and sent by that body.

Members who were elected to the committee in July 2016 were Jeanne Choy Tate (filling a two-year partial term from a vacancy), Terry Alexander (liaison to ACSWP), Jon Forbes, and Destini Hodges (resigned in 2017). Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Susan Carter Wiggins (corresponding member to the 223rd General Assembly [2018]) were reelected for their second terms. Regina Meester continued as a member sent by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and Wanda Beauman continued as Presbyterian Women Moderator for Justice and Peace member of ACWC. Voting members who continued from the previous term were Kerri Allen (dual MRTI member), Joyce Rarumangkay (liaison to ACREC), Floretta Watkins (corresponding member to the PMAB), and Joann Haejong Lee.

The committee also welcomed liaison members from partner groups: Gwendolyn Magby, from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC); Joanne Sharp from the National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen (NAPC); and Sylvia Thorson-Smith from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Gatherings and Foci

At each of ACWC’s meetings, the committee reviews and evaluates its work. The ACWC has also committed to checking in on having an intersectional approach to gender justice, taking into account the various intersections of women’s identities, including but not limited to considering race, physical and mental ability, class, etc. Each meeting includes reports from all liaison and dual members on the work of the groups to whom they are connected.

This cycle, ACWC divided their work priorities into four working groups:

1. Gender-Based Violence
2. Women of Color
3. Gender and Leadership
4. Family Leave & Contract Workers

Each group met both at each face-to-face meeting, as well as electronically between meetings, in order to complete their work. The full committee had the benefit of learning from the work of each of the groups at each meeting. Ultimately, these groups set the priorities for ACWC heading into the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

During 2016–2018, ACWC had five regular meetings:

*October 29–30, 2016, in Louisville, Kentucky:*

- The committee spent a significant amount of time on introductions and orientation, as this was the first meeting for those elected at the 222nd General Assembly (2016).
The committee reviewed their work at General Assembly and discussed best practices and places for improvement in the next cycle. They also looked ahead to what items approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) they would need to monitor in the coming years.

The ACWC determined a focus for their work in the next two-year cycle, including making assignments for their four working groups and splitting up to meet in those groups to set priorities.

February 2–4, 2017, in El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico:

- The ACWC discussed current events and the particular need to respond to sexism in U.S. culture at this time.
- The committee heard a report from ACWC member, Jeanne Choy Tate, on Cameron House and the history of abuse that occurred there as well as the healing work of that community.
- The committee spent the day in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, connecting with partners in ministry there and learning about gender justice work amidst the particulars of the culture there. They also visited a portion of the border wall and learned of the impact of this barrier on all living in the area.
- The ACWC continued work in their assigned working groups, incorporating any relevant learnings from Mexico into their focus areas.

July 8–10, 2017, in St. Louis, Missouri:

- The ACWC had the opportunity to participate in worship at Big Tent (which some members attended prior to the meeting).
- The committee spent a day learning about the domestic violence prevention and assistance organization, Lydia’s House, and then volunteered by cleaning there. Their hope was to begin to connect in a more meaningful way with the city in which the 223rd General Assembly (2018) will be held in conjunction with the Stated Clerk’s Hands and Feet initiative.
- The ACWC met with PMA Interim Executive Director, Tony De La Rosa, and discussed concerns with the PMA’s Family Leave policy.
- The committee met with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, J. Herbert Nelson, II, and discussed concerns about clergy abuse, reporting abuse, and collection of data surrounding cases of abuse.
- The ACWC heard extensive reports from each of the ACWC working groups.

November 9–11, 2017, in Washington, D.C.:

- The ACWC met with Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Denise Anderson, and discussed her sense of gender justice concerns around the PC(USA).
- The committee heard personal reports on immigration struggles from ACWC member, Joyce Rarumangkay (re. obtaining her green card), and the Reverend Lisa Hamel (re. international adoption).
- Valerie Small, manager of GA Nominations, and Mary Lynn Walters, General Assembly Nominating Committee member, met with ACWC to give updates on the nominations process and what is needed from ACWC.
- The committee began to discussion of resolutions to General Assembly.
- Dr. Barbara Fears, from Howard Divinity School, presented to ACWC in conjunction with their focus on black women and girls.

January 11–13, 2017, in Louisville, Kentucky:

- The ACWC received, reviewed, and approved drafts of resolutions to be submitted to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).
- The committee received and approved joint statement with Presbyterian Women addressing #MeToo/#ChurchToo.
- The ACWC participated in a community-building exercise to strengthen the internal teamwork of ACWC.
- Rhashell Hunter, Director of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, met with ACWC to discuss work being done in connection to the Status of Women project.

1110
The committee discussed the work and proposals of the Way Forward Commission.

The ACWC renewed its commitment to undergird work with a reformed theological framework.

Actions of the committee for consideration of the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

- **A Resolution to Respond to Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls**
- **A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies**
- **A Resolution on Determining the Need for an LGBTQ+ Advocacy Committee in the PC(USA)**
- **A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)**
- **A Resolution to Amend Book of Order, D-11.0403a**

C. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Agency Summary.

**Assigned Responsibilities: Strengthening Presbyterian Social Witness**

Social witness is part of what it means for the church to be “salt” and “light” in the world today. Coming from Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:13–14, the images of Salt & Light also give name to the ACSWP on-line newsletter. They undergird the committee’s faithfulness to its mission statement:

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) serves the prophetic calling of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by providing the General Assembly with careful studies of pressing moral challenges, media for discussion and discernment of Christian responsibilities, and policy recommendations for faithful action.

This brief narrative summarizes the committee’s responsibilities, its procedures and personnel, its accomplishments and activities. The committee’s minutes for the past two years are also submitted to the assembly and are reviewed by designated members of the Social Justice Committee. And because this year is ACSWP’s time for its periodic review, the committee has submitted an extensive self-study, done by a sociologist member who worked in assembly data with Presbyterian Research Services.

The term, social witness, is a shorthand way to combine evangelism and social justice. Witness is bigger than advocacy, but it has the moral purpose of pointing to God’s intention for some part of the world, and often drawing attention to people in need or who are suffering. The key point of the mission statement is that everybody has a conscience where the Holy Spirit speaks, what John Calvin called, the “inner forum.” Yet the sense of moral concern is not just our individual “social righteousness,” to use the name of one of the six “Great Ends” of the church. The Confession of 1967 makes clear that just as individuals and congregations have prophetic responsibilities, so does the whole church, to demonstrate the “kingdom of God” to the world. As expressed notably by Martin Luther King Jr., the church is to be a “moral conscience” to the nation.

Jesus asks whether his disciples can discern “the signs of the times” of their particular time and place. The work of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is to help the church discern what it means to proclaim and embody the Gospel in relation to contemporary society. In this work, the ACSWP and its task forces are directed to draw upon a wealth of resources:

- the voices of the biblical text;
- the wisdom of theological discourse;
- the guidance of the Reformed confessions;
- the tradition of past policy statements;
- the insights of sociopolitical disciplines;
- the advice of members and all governing bodies of the church;
- the insights of people who are poor, victims of existing policies, and those who have not had a voice in councils of the church; and

Social witness can occur at many different points: in a church session, in a presbytery, in an advocacy group, in the participation of Christians in mission, in a meeting of the ecumenical church, in an individual Christian’s brave refusal to “go along” with injustice. At this General Assembly, one of the resolutions, “Honest Patriotism,” is partly about being able to admit that injustices have happened.
For Presbyterians, decisions about the church’s social witness are made by persons elected to serve in mid councils (session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly). As councils of the church meet, the elected persons are commissioned “... not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (Book of Order, F-3.0204). The advisory committee’s structure and function go back to 1936 when “consecrated” and justice-oriented persons from the Boards of Christian Education and National Missions were elected to a Social Education and Action Committee. A similar process was occurring in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

In providing service and resources to meet the needs of congregations, mid councils, and the General Assembly, ACSWP members find guidance in the mission statement quoted above. Theologically grounded ethical reflection is part of the salt and light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The ACSWP engages with the “grassroots” in assisting the General Assembly to discern what it means to proclaim and embody the Gospel in a world that remains too grim for too many. Experience counts. At the same time, the committee’s membership contains persons with expertise in theology, social ethics, and various other disciplines, most of whom hold advanced degrees.

Making a personal social witness begins with very individual ways of growing and developing as a Christian—prayerfully studying the Scriptures, being inspired by Jesus, the prophets, and courageous stands of the church, gaining insight from past ethical witness, connecting one’s faith with others in the Christian community, and then being faithful in the world beyond the church. The ACSWP seeks to be a partner in the ministry of reconciliation, for “each member [who] is the church in the world …” (Book of Confessions, The Confession of 1967, 9.38).

The church-wide work of the ACSWP is based on ethical guidance from the Scriptures, the Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order. The 1993 General Assembly policy statement, Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness (OGA-93-019), provides extensive documentation of key biblical passages and is a useful document in congregational interpretation of the ACSWP and its mission.

All of those biblical texts have a common theme. The Gospel says that to confess Jesus Christ as Lord is to believe that God can and has overcome the powers of sin in the world. Christians do not work alone, but join that Christ Jesus who is already at work in our world. John Calvin taught that social concern, expressed by action on behalf of our neighbors, is a central part of the faith. Our historic confessions, the work of the theologians, and the actions of 222 General Assemblies have reaffirmed that message. Our faithfulness as Reformed Christians is embodied in love and justice.

Communications Developments

The traditional way of transmitting the church’s social witness was print. In addition to the Minutes of the General Assembly, since 1908 there were print journals that provided analysis and “how to” for congregations and individuals, agencies, and councils of the church. ACSWP has migrated partly to the online world where many of our members live, as do many others we have not yet reached. We will say a word about our online journal and mention one new digital resource.

In 2011, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy launched an internet justice journal, with the support of the Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries area and the larger General Assembly Mission Council, now Presbyterian Mission Agency. The new journal, Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice, was designed to strengthen the social witness of the whole church and to be an open forum on areas where new witness is needed. The url (internet address) is http://justiceunbound.org/; the name, “unbound,” refers not only to the lack of binding, but to Jesus’ words at the resurrection of Lazarus, “unbind him,” and to images of prisoners freed. The journal was launched in a meeting in Denver with members of the Presbytery of Denver.

In September 2011, the then General Assembly Mission Council designated the journal to be the successor to Church & Society magazine, which itself continued the work of print journals going back to 1908 (The Amethyst, Moral Welfare, and Social Progress). Back issues of all of these journals have been made available through the American Theological Library Association.

A key goal of Unbound has been to connect twenty- and thirty-something readers with the social witness policies of the church, using an intergenerational editorial staff. The current managing editor is Henry Koenig Stone, a recent Masters of Public Policy graduate of the University of Chicago. Previously, the Reverend Gina Bairby served as editor; she is now a pastor in Taos, New Mexico. Her predecessor was the Reverend Patrick Heery, who became editor of Presbyterians Today before being called to the pastorate in Auburn, New York.

Unbound seeks to improve its methods for sharing stories and building allies for social justice and social teaching. We know from sales of print policy booklets—down to about $2,500 last year (2017) from about $4,000 in previous years—that accessing the policies is mainly by download (free), for both individual and adult study use.

In addition to the internet journal, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy maintains a website and distributes an e-newsletter, “Salt & Light.” Unbound links to these and to the various sites of other Compassion, Peace and Justice ministries.
A new resource is a thumbdrive loaded with social witness policy statements on the range of topics that the church has addressed in the relatively recent past. This clearly saves space for those who do not want to use paper but it also shows the changing history of how the church has addressed issues of sexuality, war and peace, labor rights, and many others. It is meant to help pastors and scholars (and scholar pastors!), and presbyteries, and seminary and college libraries, and seminarians writing papers, and so on.

Meetings of the Full Committee


In Baltimore, hosted by the First & Franklin St Presbyterian Church, the committee heard from its theologian-pastor on the uses of historical symbols, the associate executive presbyter on conversations about race and organizing for jobs for residents, a professor at Johns Hopkins University Medical School who researches psilocybin, and two other drug policy researchers, working on a study assigned by the 221st General Assembly (2014).

In Louisville later that year, the committee met extensively with staff of various programs and saw the new area across the 3rd floor where the committee’s new offices (and resource room/library) reside.

In Tucson, Arizona, the committee was hosted by St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church and met with Borderlinks at Southside Presbyterian Church, discussing sanctuary movement history and current immigration matters with former Moderator John Fife and his successor, Alison Harrington. Members Sylvia Thorson-Smith and Rachael Eggebeen helped host as well.

In Washington, D.C., the committee held a consultation with several experts in national security and global order, met with new Office of Public Witness staff, with the Reverend Jennifer Butler of Faith in Public Life on witnessing in the media and in politics, with Dr. Jaydeee Hanson on the precautionary principle, and with the Reverend Al Sharp of Clergy for a New Drug Policy.

In Chicago, the committee met partly at the offices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and with Dr. Roger Willer, theological advisor on social ethics. The committee also met with Dr. Donna Riley of Purdue University’s Engineering School, and with several officials of the PC(USA): Co-Moderator, Jan Edmiston; Melinda Sanders, Esq., and Conrad Rocha, Esq., of the Governance Task Force of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; Valerie Small of the General Assembly Nominations Committee. The committee also welcomed Pamela Brug, MD, and the Reverend Sara Dorrien-Christians, as consultants.

In Florissant, a part of the St Louis set of municipalities, the committee was hosted by the Florissant Presbyterian Church and heard from Presbyterians from the Cote Brilliant Church, the Oak Hill Church, Eden Seminary, and a street feeding ministry. The committee also reviewed reports going to the General Assembly.

Procedures and Personnel

In support of the work of the assembly, the ACSWP is given direct access to the assembly as it meets biennially. Between sessions of the assembly, the ACSWP also assists the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and other agencies of the church as their work involves the development and interpretation of social witness policy.

The committee carries out its responsibilities in five major ways. They are the

1. development and recommendation of new social witness and policy for approval by the General Assembly;

2. interpretation and communication of the General Assembly’s social witness and policy, both to the church and the world at large;

3. provision of advice and counsel to the entities and mid councils of the church on matters of social witness policy when developments merit social-ethical attention;

4. provision of advice and counsel to the General Assembly when it meets as a governing body (in oral and memoranda form); and

5. monitoring of peace and justice concerns per mandates from the General Assembly.

The ACSWP develops and recommends new social witness policy primarily in response to referrals from the General Assembly (GA) and its entities, and in a manner consistent with the Manual of the General Assembly, “On Forming Social Policy.” This section is based on the 1993 “Why and How” document cited at the beginning of this narrative. Both the more extensive policies and shorter resolutions require depth of theological reflection, breadth of input, and diversity of participation.
In most cases, the presbyteries originating the General Assembly assignments remain connected to the work of the study teams, although teams are more representative and seek to meet in and receive input from people in other parts of the country.

The committee’s Advice and Counsel group carries out the task of providing advice and counsel at the meeting of the General Assembly (GA). This group of elected committee members, together with other staff and resource persons from several Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and Office of the General Assembly (OGA) entities, advises commissioners in assembly committees and other entities about social policies applicable to issues before the assembly. It may also comment on the need or direction for future social policy. Such analysis and recommendations are provided through “Advice and Counsel Memoranda,” by oral testimony by resource people before assembly committees, and informally. The ACSWP chair or a co-chairperson is a corresponding member to both the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, with voice but not vote, and can offer advice and counsel in those meetings.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) consists of twelve members, nine of whom have been at-large members elected by the General Assembly from the whole church and three who have been Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) members confirmed by the assembly. In the last two years the PMAB has only designated one former member, Dr. Jean Demmler, of Denver, Colorado. Other members are: Beverly Brewster, Sleepy Hollow, California; Linda Eastwood, Chicago, Illinois; Rachael Eggebeen, Tucson, Arizona; Kevin R. Johnson, Detroit, Michigan; Raymond R. Roberts, Westfield, New Jersey/Richmond, Virginia (co-chair); Steven Webb, Fairfax, Virginia (co-chair); Rob Trawick, New City, New York; Sylvia Thorson-Smith, Tucson, Arizona; Gloria Tuma, Portland, Oregon. Staffing for the committee includes Christian T. Iosso, coordinator; Henry K. Stone, managing editor, Unbound journal; and Lacey Gilliam, part-time senior administrative assistant.

Accomplishments

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) members and staff make themselves available for interpretive events and preaching as requested and as time allows. Such events included presentations in presbyteries and congregations and consultations with a number more.

Of particular interest, several members of the committee met with members of the Presbytery of Foothills in Spartanburg and Greenville, S.C., in October of 2016, to follow up on that presbytery’s suite of overtures designed to revise much of the PC(USA) national structures and change ACSWP largely into an educational program. While these measures were all roundly defeated, the presbytery’s viewpoint is important to understand, especially at a time of partial reorganization of the denominational agencies.

In September of 2017, the committee was pleased to note the publication of a book based on the six-year peace discernment process, Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace, by Westminster/JohnKnox Press. As primary author, the ACSWP coordinator spoke in several churches in the Fall on the book.

The committee welcomes inquiries through its office in Louisville. All mid councils, churches, and members are encouraged to use the "Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation," which contains the core of the assemblies’ social policy statements since 1946. It is revised regularly to meet the needs of the church and can be downloaded from the worldwide web at (http://index.pcusa.org/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates$fn=default.htm).

The ACSWP holds a stated meeting following each General Assembly to discern and prioritize its work; periodically between the assemblies, to review progress on papers and projects; and in January before an assembly, to edit and approve final drafts for submission to the assembly. This year the committee has prepared the following reports to strengthen current social witness policies:

- **Honest Patriotism.** This is a resolution that addresses the importance of truth in politics and counters chauvinistic nationalism.

- **Healing Before Punishment:** In the place of the punitive strategies and violence that have led to mass imprisonment, narco-state corruption, and an underground drug economy, this report advocates a partial shift in how Christians should approach a drug-abundant society and its addictive appetites.

- **Religious Freedom without Discrimination.** This resolution affirms the historic position of the Reformed tradition in the U.S. against those who would abuse claims of religious freedom to deny equal treatment or access to others.

- **Global Order and National Purpose.** This is partly a proposal for an ecumenical study/consultation process on the need for maintaining international law-based agreements with allies and affirming human rights and diplomacy.

- **Precautionary Progress.** This is a report reviewing ways of reducing and managing risks of new technologies, requested by the 221st General Assembly (2014).

- **Self-Study of the Committee.** This is part of the General Assembly standard cycle of reviews of standing committees and includes recommended directions for the future.
• **A Gospel from St Louis:** The 221st General Assembly (2014) approved “The Gospel from Detroit,” which led to an “urban ministry roundtable” that reported to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in Portland. This report contains accounts of five congregations seeking racial justice in the St Louis area, building on organized conversations at the Big Tent in 2017 (also held in St Louis).

From 2016, following their approval by the General Assembly, the committee assisted the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) in the publication of the following reports: *Abiding Presence (on end-of-life issues), Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, A Study Guide for Israel-Palestine ..., Human Trafficking and Human Rights, New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A New Moment (Ingles/Espanol).* These resources are online: [http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/resources.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/resources.htm).

The ACSWP works collaboratively with the four mission and ministry areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), other General Assembly agencies, and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). The ACSWP has liaisons from the Compassion Peace and Justice ministry area, and from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC). When possible, the committee spends time with local church members, with relevant presbytery committees, and with ecumenical contacts during its stated meetings. ACSWP members and staff have spoken at and distributed policy resources at several presbytery meetings and gave workshops at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days co-sponsored by the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C.

As invited, the committee assists in programming an annual gathering of the Social Ethics Network (SEN) (formerly known as the Theological Educators for Presbyterian Social Witness (TEPSW)). This group is composed primarily of Christian ethicists currently or formerly serving in seminaries and other educational institutions related to and/or in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Since the last General Assembly, the committee assisted with three such gatherings. In January of 2017, the SEN met in New Orleans prior to the Society of Christian Ethics meeting there. In the Fall of 2017, a small SEN group met in Boston prior to the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature meeting. In January of 2018, SEN met prior to the Portland, Oregon, meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics.
Item 12-01

[The assembly approved Item 12-01 as amended. See pp. 13, 75.]

On Opposition to Congressional and State Anti-BDS Legislation—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Confirm PC(USA) support for the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the instrumentalities of the United Nations and the international justice system developed since then to make those rights realities in all countries.

2. Defend and advocate for the constitutional protection under the First Amendment for all United States citizens, religious and civic organizations, companies and corporations that exercise their freedoms of speech, association, and other civil rights to support measures of economic witness (boycott, divestment, sanctions, or BDS policies and strategies) designed to bring those freedoms and rights to Palestinians and other persons living without full citizenship and under occupation.

3. Oppose specific U.S. legislation (and efforts by agents of foreign governments) to suppress measures of economic witness (boycott, divestment, sanctions, or BDS policies and strategies) such as “The Israel Anti-Boycott Act,” Senate Bill (S) 720 and House Resolution (H.R.) 1697, which seek to impose civil and criminal penalties for nonviolent BDS resistance against human rights violations in Israel and Palestine.

4. Advocate for the repeal of statutes of various states that seek to impose civil penalties or unconstitutional restrictions upon individuals and companies that support BDS policies and strategies and thereby violate the letter and spirit of the First Amendment.

5. In cases where litigation may be brought challenging state anti-BDS statutes on the First Amendment, due process, and other constitutional grounds, instruct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to provide support by filing amicus curiae briefs in appropriate situations, in coalition with other justice, religious liberty, and human rights groups whenever possible.

6. Direct the Stated Clerk and appropriate Presbyterian Mission Agency program staff to develop resources and implement strategies for member education, interreligious dialogue, and public witness concerning the importance of the First Amendment freedoms of speech, association, press, and exercise of religion for all Americans, including the right to protest through boycott and divestment, and other nonviolent means.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2019) $1,000 (2020) $2,000. Total—$3,000]

Rationale

The First Amendment grants all of us free speech, association, and pursuit of our religious beliefs. It states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof; or abridge the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peacefully assemble, and to petition the Government for redress of grievances.” The First Amendment also applies to state governments by the Due Process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Neither Congress nor the states may infringe upon these First Amendment guarantees.

The United States Supreme Court has held in NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co., 458 U.S. 886 (1982) that peaceful boycotts fall within the protection of the First Amendment, even when, the purpose of the boycott is “… concededly to advise customers and prospective customers ... not to patronize a certain employer” In the case, blacks boycotted white merchants to achieve equality and racial justice. The Court approved that such a boycott is a lawful exercise of the First Amendment even if the purpose is to bring about political, social, or economic change.

This overture is thus a needed application and extension of prior General Assembly action for justice:
(3) The General Assembly affirms the traditional freedom of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other religious, civic, and private organizations in the United States to determine their own practices of investment or divestment, boycott or selective purchasing, in advocacy for peace and human rights, and therefore opposes efforts in state legislatures and elsewhere to limit or punish these exercises of freedom and nonviolent solidarity. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 476 of the electronic version)

This statement is found in the recommendations section of Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, a careful report approved by a strong majority of commissioners to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). See: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/israel-palestine-human-values-absence-just-peace/.

Senate Bill 720 would levy civil and criminal penalties upon United States’ citizens and companies that participate in BDS policies and strategies, including fines of $250,000 up to $1,000,000 and a maximum of twenty years in prison for those who engage in BDS against Israel. The Senate Bill 720 has the support of more than forty-two senators and the H.R. 1697 has the support of 247 house members. (It takes 218 house members to pass the bill in the house).

Senator Gillibrand of New York was a cosponsor of the Senate Bill, but withdrew her support upon learning of the civil and criminal penalties solely because it violated freedom of speech.

If the bills pass the House of Representatives and the Senate, the penalties would discourage United States citizens, churches, colleges and universities, companies, corporations, and organizations from participating in BDS policies and strategies and give up their First Amendment rights. If passed, the law would apply to any BDS activity in the United States or in Israel or its “territories”, i.e. the West Bank. The Attorney General of the United States would have the authority to prosecute potential violations of the law against individuals or companies who boycott the products of Israel or settlements in the West Bank.

In the case of PC(USA) policy established by the 220th General Assembly (2012) and 221st General Assembly (2014), actions taken by our church to boycott products manufactured in illegal Israeli settlements (according to international law) in the West Bank (2012), and the divestment of PC(USA) holdings in Caterpillar, Inc., Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions (2014) for profiting from nonpeaceful pursuits in the West Bank and Gaza would be considered illegal according the United States law. This not only violates free speech in the United States, it also violates the right of religious organizations to not participate in, or divest from activities that violate the religious conscience of Americans engaging in the practice of their religious faith.

At least twenty state legislatures have passed anti-BDS statutes barring each such state from entering into state contracts with any individual or company that participates in BDS policies or strategies. The state statutes reject and denounce the international BDS movement and impose a civil penalty, which infringes upon First Amendment rights.

On October 11, 2017, the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the State of Kansas challenging its anti-BDS law as violating the First Amendment.

To target BDS policies and strategies with congressional and state anti-BDS laws that carry civil and criminal penalties in order to ban freedom of speech in the United States on one issue, namely the violation of human rights towards Palestinians in Israel/Palestine, is unconstitutional.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and recognized in international human rights law in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, supports freedom of speech. Article 19 of the UDHR states that “everyone shall have the right of freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of (his/her) choice.”

Concurrences to Item 12-01 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Huntingdon, Missouri River Valley, New Brunswick, Santa Fe, and Upper Ohio Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).
The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-01.

Item 12-01 calls for opposition to legislation that seeks to impose civil and criminal penalties for support of, and participation in, BDS policies and strategies directed at ending the illegal occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. This resolution is consistent both with past General Assembly actions regarding nonviolent protest against the occupation, and with the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding the protection of free speech, as noted in the rationale above.

Commissioners are aware that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a robust history of engaging in boycotts of particular products for various reasons, divesting from companies whose actions are in conflict with the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and supporting governmental sanctions based upon human rights violations and other actions.

Past General Assemblies have taken actions with regard to boycotting settlement products and with regard to divesting from certain companies profiting from the occupation that could become actionable under some of these statutes, in the broadest reading of some of the proposed legislation. The proposed legislation, which this overture opposes, is inconsistent with existing positions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with regard to the situation in Israel / Palestine.

Even more importantly, for the purposes of this overture, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in both policy and practice, has championed freedom of speech and the inviolability of conscience as important pieces of our theological tradition. Regardless of whether the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ever chooses to endorse or to reject the BDS movement to end the occupation of Palestine, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a stake in affirming the right of any organization or individual to engage in nonviolent protest.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-01.

This overture seeks to safeguard first amendment rights that are under attack by groups working in favor of a foreign country. Specifically, the overture seeks to safeguard the first amendment rights of United States citizens, churches, colleges and universities, companies, corporations, and organizations who choose to advocate for BDS. (See https://bdsmovement.net/.)

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) is a Palestinian-led movement for freedom, justice, and equality. BDS upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity.

Israel is occupying and colonizing Palestinian land, discriminating against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and denying Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes. Inspired by the South African antiapartheid movement, the BDS call urges action to pressure Israel to comply with international law.

BDS is now a vibrant global movement made up of unions, academic associations, churches, and grassroots movements across the world.

There are three simple requests by this movement: These nonviolent measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the wall.

2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.

3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.
Item 12-02

On Advocating for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Israel—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:


2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, through its Stated Clerk, to write to the United States president and secretary of state urging them to [seek United States government suspension of all economic and military aid to Israel until the latter is in| use diplomatic tools to bring Israel into| full compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (of which Israel is a signatory) by changing its laws, policies, and practices that favor its Jewish citizens and discriminate against its Christian and Muslim citizens and other ethnic minorities.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk to write to the U.S. president and secretary of state, urging them to advocate with their Israeli counterparts to cease all actions that block equal access of all citizens in Israel’s
   a. legal system;
   b. citizenship privileges;
   c. income and employment;
   d. distribution of resources and social welfare;
   e. accessibility to land;
   f. educational resources;
   g. availability of health resources; and
   h. political participation.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to advocate for and witness to the human rights of all Israeli citizens regardless of their religious or ethnic minority status until Israel is in compliance with international humanitarian laws, specifically the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular, these offices should advocate for equal access for all people in Israel’s
   a. legal system;
   b. citizenship privileges;
   c. income and employment;
   d. distribution of resources and social safety welfare;
   e. accessibility to land;
   f. educational resources;
   g. availability of health resources; and
   h. political participation.

5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its program units, to study, and inform all Presbyterians regarding the discriminatory practices in Israel today and to advocate for equal rights for all citizens who live in Israel, regardless of their religious and ethnic identity.

[6. To call on the United States government to rejoin and re-engage with the United Nations Human Rights Council.]
How did events develop so that Christians and Muslim citizens of Israel are experiencing discrimination as outlined in this overture? In answer to this question, consider a brief historical background.

Historically, Palestine was part of a larger geographic region known as the land of the ancient Canaanites, which comprised the area now known as modern Palestine/Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, coastal Syria, and southern inland Syria. Careful examination of the archaeological evidence demonstrates that "there was population continuity through successive millennia" in the land of Canaan. Archaeological evidence of human habitation dates from the twelfth millennium BC to the present, constituting fourteen millennia. The estimated existence of the geographic entities of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah constitutes a but a small sliver of time—less than five hundred years.

Israeli government accounts frequently assert that Palestinians are desert people who recently came in from the East (Arabia). There is no reason to doubt that Palestinians are descendants of the original inhabitants of Canaan as there is no archaeological evidence whatsoever for a complete disappearance of a people from Palestine and their replacement by outsiders. The one exception is the attempt (though only partially successful) by the government of Israel to transplant a European Jewish population into Palestine in an attempt to replace its indigenous people and their culture.

During most of the first two decades of the twentieth century, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire, which had controlled Palestine for 400 years, beginning in 1516. After the First World War, when the Ottoman Empire was dismantled, England and France divided the Middle East into separate mandates, and on June 22, 1922, Great Britain became the mandatory for Palestine. At this time, the census of Palestine showed that Jews constituted 7.9 percent of the population.

Ignoring the human rights of the Palestinian people, Great Britain facilitated the mass immigration of Jews from Europe into Palestine and by 1946, the population consisted of 32.96 percent Jews and 67.04 percent Christians and Muslims. Therefore, in spite of the great influx of European Jews into Palestine, the Jewish population continued to be a minority population.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 181) voted to recommend partition of Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Palestinian. The territories designated to the Jewish and Palestinian states would be 56 percent and 43 percent of Palestine, respectively. Jerusalem and Bethlehem were to become an international zone. At the end of 1946, Jews had acquired by purchase 6 to 8 percent of the total land area of Palestine and comprised approximately one third of its population. In other words, the recommended plan in effect would take land owned by Palestinians and proposed to give it to a new Jewish state. Israel uses UN GA resolution 181 as a justification for the right of Israel to exist as a country when in fact the United Nations does not have the legal right to partition a country. Israel, as a state, was won at the point of a gun, and its recognition by the Truman Administration gave it instant "legitimacy.”

The Zionist leadership wanted to have the land of Palestine without a people—free of all non-Jewish Palestinians whether Christian or Muslim. This wish has been expressed in various forms early from the founding of Zionism to this day. Nur Masalha, in his book The Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem, describes in detail the theme of "population transfer" or "ethnic cleansing" in the thinking and action of the Zionist movement in Palestine-Israel. His work is largely based on Hebrew and Israeli archival sources; it represents some of the most original work in this area and is frequently cited by later authors.

As early as 1891, a leading liberal Russian Jewish thinker, Ahad Ha’Am (Asher Zvi Ginsberg) observed that the Zionist “pioneers” believed that:

"... the only language that the Arabs understand is that of force. ... [The Zionist ‘pioneers’] behave towards the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, trespass unjustly upon their boundaries, beat them shamefully without reason and even brag about it, and nobody stands to check this contemptible and dangerous tendency.”

Masalha documents with meticulous detail the Zionist leaders’ early plans that the “transfer” of the Palestinian people was a necessary prelude to the founding of the state of Israel. Tactics for such a transfer evolved with time. In the beginning, there was hope through negotiations with colonial powers such as Italy, England, and Turkey that these powers would cooperate with the voluntary or forced transfer of the Palestinian population. When these tactics failed, purchase of land was the attempted device. However, by late 1947, the Jewish National Fund and others had acquired by purchase only 6 to 8 percent of the land. Clearly other tactics were necessary if the Zionist leaders were to achieve their goal of taking possession of the land. After the United Nations General Assembly voted to recommend partition of Palestine in 1947, civil war erupted. The Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) armed forces, the Hagana, Irgun Tzavi Leumi, and Lehi groups, were fully armed, largely provided by the British, and on the offensive against largely unarmed (who were systematically disarmed by the British mandatory administration), disorganized, and powerless Palestinian groups. Both force and psychological intimidation were tactics used to initiate and implement the mass exodus of 750,000 to 800,000 Palestinians. After the cessation of hostilities, the massacre of villagers was used as a successful device of intimidation that resulted in the mass exodus. This relentless campaign of terror and expulsion continues unabated but in muted form to this day.
Palestinians who remained in Israel but driven from their villages became “internally displaced persons.” Indeed, rather than allowing these displaced Palestinians to return to their lands and villages, the Israeli government declared them to be “present absentees” under the Absentee Property Law and denied them return to their homes and communities.

Americans hold dear Thomas Jefferson’s assertion in the United States Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable; that all men are created equal and independent, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent and inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

And the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) voted to “Request pastors and sessions to find ways within the life of congregations to participate in the commemoration of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through worship, Bible study, intercessory prayer, and utilization of the annual General Assembly Human Rights Update, which calls special attention to Human Rights Day each year on December 10; and in making available for every member a copy of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” for study and understanding. (paragraph 25.0409, p. 478). Encourage middle governing bodies, sessions, and individual members to pray for all victims of human rights abuse and for those who persecute them, also seeking ways to act on behalf of these victims (paragraph 25.0433, p. 481).”

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has thirty articles. Of these articles, this overture focuses on the ten articles listed below that the Israeli government, even though it has ratified this declaration, has particularly violated in the case of its minority Palestinian citizens:

- Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
- Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.
- Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
- Article 13. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.
- Article 15. Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.
- Article 17. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.
- Article 21. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- Article 23. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

According to Adalah, an independent human rights organization and legal center staffed by Jewish and non-Jewish Israelis and based in Israel, there exists, in Israel laws and practices, a structural system of inequalities for Israeli citizens of minority ethnicities and faiths. The following demonstrate how each of these articles are violated in some or all of the eight areas of discrimination covered by this overture.

1. Legal system. According to Adalah, “the definition of the State of Israel as a Jewish state makes inequality and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel a reality ... and impedes the realization of full equality. Direct and indirect discrimination against Arab (Israel uses the term ‘Arab’ to denote those Christians and Muslims of Palestinian heritage) citizens of Israel is ingrained in the legal system and in governmental practice” and has existed since the creation of the State of Israel. This discrimination occurs “on the basis of both their national belonging as Arabs/Palestinians and their membership in one or more other distinct subgroups, such as women. ... More than 50 main laws discriminate, directly or indirectly, against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the current government coalition has proposed a flood of new racist and discriminatory bills, which are at various stages in the legislative process.” This legal framework of inequality is in violation of the UDHR articles 1 and 7.

2. Citizenship privileges. The “Law of Return (1950) and the Citizenship Law (1952) privilege Jews and Jewish immigration.” These laws grant citizenship to any Jew living anywhere in the world who wishes to live in Israel. However, Palestinians who were born in Israel/Palestine, who trace their ancestry for millennia in Palestine, and were forced into exile by Israel and its Jewish predecessors in 1948 and after are not allowed to return to their stolen homes and lands in Palestine/Israel even though this is a personal right guaranteed under international law. Furthermore, “a new law makes it possible to strip Israeli citizenship for various reasons related to alleged ‘disloyalty’ to the state or ‘breach of trust’, indirectly targeting the citizenship rights of Palestinian citizens.” These citizenship laws are in violation of UDHR Articles 13 and 15.
3. Income and employment. “Gaps in income and poverty rates are directly related to institutional discrimination against Arab (Palestinian) citizens in Israel. ... Palestinian citizens of Israel often face discrimination in work opportunities, pay, and conditions, both because of the inadequate implementation of equal-opportunity legislation and because of entrenched structural barriers, which particularly affect women, and include poor or non-existent public transportation, a lack of industrial zones, and a shortage of state-run daycare centers. Palestinian citizens are also excluded from the labor force by the use of the (Israeli) military-service criterion (which excludes Christian and Muslim Palestinian citizens) as a condition for acceptance for employment, often when there is no connection between the nature of the work and military experience.”

4. Distribution of resources and social welfare. “Although the right to equality demands that states take positive steps to bridge the gaps between the various population groups, the State of Israel actively seeks to promote and direct resources to Jewish citizens as a privileged majority within the ‘Jewish State.’” Furthermore, through “the use of the military-service criterion to allocate resources, the state actively preserves and perpetuates inequalities between Arab (Palestinian) and Jewish citizens of Israel. Direct state policy measures to reduce poverty disproportionately target Jewish citizens.”

5. Accessibility to land. “Land is the most valuable economic asset in the State of Israel, and also one of the most significant indicators and sources of inequality. Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel have unequal access to land resources, land rights, and the ability to use the resource of land to develop their communities. Since 1948, the State of Israel has enacted a series of laws that have allowed it to systematically confiscate and transfer Palestinian-owned land to the state and Zionist institutions, including the World Zionist Organization (WZO), the Jewish Agency, and the Jewish National Fund (JNF).”

“A new land reform law, passed in August 2009, allows for the privatization of state-held land, including land in destroyed and evacuated Palestinian villages belonging to internally-displaced persons (IDPs) as well as to Palestinian refugees living abroad. The process of legalizing the confiscation of Palestinian land continues today.”

“Today Palestinian citizens of Israel are, in practice, blocked from purchasing or leasing land on around 80 percent of the land in Israel on the basis of their national belonging.” As a result, the vast majority of state land consists of segregated, Jewish-only areas. Two of the main mechanisms used to exclude Palestinian citizens from ownership and use of the land are admissions committees, and the discriminatory policies pursued by the JNF and state authorities.”

Admissions committees operate in around 700 agricultural and community towns and filter out Arab (Palestinian) applicants, on the basis of their ‘social unsuitability,’ from future residency in these towns. The operation of admissions committees contributes to the institutionalization of racially segregated towns and villages throughout the state and perpetuates unequal access to the land. Admissions committees are bodies that select applicants for housing units and plots of land in ‘agricultural and community towns’ in Israel. They are used in part to filter out Arab (Palestinian) applicants from future residency in these locations, as well as to exclude other marginalized groups in Israel, such as Mizrahi (Eastern) Jews and LGBT people.”

Case Study: The Zubeidat family—“socially unsuitable” to live in Rakefet

Ms. Fatina and Mr. Ahmed Zubeidat are a married Arab (Palestinian) couple. They graduated from the College of Architecture at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem with distinction, and they are both pursuing careers as architects. After marrying in 2006, the couple applied to live in the community town of Rakefet, located in Misgav in northern Israel. The Zubeidats were looking for a small town with a high level of services in which to raise their future children. An admissions committee operates in Misgav, which required the couple to take an acceptance test. The committee included a representative from the Jewish Agency. Following an interview with the couple, the committee rejected their application on the humiliating grounds of their “social unsuitability.”

These are examples of unequal accessibility to land, which is in violation of UDHR Article 7.

6. Educational resources. “The Ministry of Education retains centralized control over the form and substance of the curriculum for Arab (Palestinian) schools, with few Arab (Palestinian) educators wielding decision-making authority. The State Education Law sets educational objectives for state schools that emphasize Jewish history and culture. ... State funding to Arab (Palestinian) schools in Israel falls far behind that provided to Jewish schools. According to official state data published in 2004, the state provides three times as much funding to Jewish students as to Arab pupils. This underfunding is reflected in many areas, including relatively large class sizes and poor infrastructure and facilities. The current under-investment in Arab schools in Israel threatens to sustain the gaps between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority in the future.”

“There are few elementary schools in the unrecognized Arab Bedouin villages in the Naqab, severely overcrowded and poorly-equipped, and not a single high school.” Inequity in educational access violates UDHR Article 21.

Discrimination against Palestinian Arab children colors every aspect of the two systems. Education Ministry authorities have acknowledged that the ministry spends less per student in the Arab system than in the Jewish school system. The majority's schools also receive additional state and state-sponsored private funding for school construction and special programs through other government agencies. The gap is enormous—on every criterion measured by Israeli authorities.\(^2^6\)

In an article appearing in Haaretz (an Israeli newspaper), titled, “For Jews and Arabs, Israel’s School System Remains Separate and Unequal,”\(^2^7\) Or Kashti states “from elementary school up, Jewish students receive more state funding than their Arab peers. In high school, per-student funding in 2013–14 was 35 percent to 68 percent higher for Jews than for Arabs at the same socioeconomic level. That statistic comes from the Education Ministry itself.”

8. Availability of health resources. “While Israeli law provides that equitable, high-quality health services should be provided to all residents of Israel, various barriers—including the lack of clinics and hospitals in Arab towns and villages and limitations on mobility—mean that Palestinian citizens are frequently unable to exercise their right to the highest sustainable standard of health.”

“The health situation is most critical in the unrecognized Arab Bedouin villages in the Naqab, where health services are either limited or nonexistent. The inadequate provision of health services in the unrecognized villages is a deliberate policy of neglect on the part of the state, which is seeing to evacuate them and relocate their residents.”\(^2^8\) Inequality in health resources is a violation of UDHR Article 21.

9. Blocks to equal political participation. The criminal justice system is frequently used to block equal political participation in violation of UDHR Articles 3, 5, 9, and 13. “The criminal justice system is regularly used as a means of delegitimizing political acts and expression by Palestinian citizens of Israel, including their elected political leadership. Several Arab Knesset Members (MKs) have been indicted or had parliamentary privileges revoked for legitimate political activities and speech that falls within the scope of their work as elected representatives.” (Violation of Article 13.)

“A series of Israeli laws institute a range of restrictions on freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and access to the political system, including ideological limitations on the platforms of political parties and severe restrictions on travel by MKs to Arab states classified as ‘enemy states.’ Such laws are used predominantly to curb the political freedoms of Palestinian citizens and their elected representatives and are steadily shrinking the space for political action available to them.’ (Violation of Article 13.)

“The police routinely use force and arrest against Arab demonstrators as a deterrent in order to silence voices of protest. Anti-war protesters against the Israeli military operation ‘Cast Lead’ in Gaza—mainly Arab citizens, including many minors—were subjected to serious police violence. They further encountered disproportionate and systematic mass arrests, primarily on the pretext of their mere presence at the scene. (Violation of Articles 5 and 9)

“No police officer, commander or political leader has been held accountable for the killings of 13 unarmed Palestinian citizens of Israel in October 2000 during demonstrations staged against Israel’s brutal policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.” (Violation of Articles 5, 7, and 9.)

“Years of deliberate discrimination, unequal citizenship and a limited voice in the political system have left Palestinian citizens of Israel with a sense of vulnerability, marginalization, insecurity, and distrust of and alienation from the state. (Violation of Article 3.)

Furthermore, under Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights\(^2^9\), Israel is bound to protect the “the rights of members of this minority (Palestinian), together with their fellow members, to culture, religion and language.” However, “In practice, the status of Arabic is vastly inferior to that of Hebrew in terms of the resources dedicated to its use, despite Israel’s duty ... to protect the language rights of the Arab national minority in Israel.”\(^3^0\)

Finally, we quote from the executive summary of the 2016 United States Department of State Human Rights report on Israel.\(^3^1\)

The most significant human rights problems were terrorist attacks targeting civilians and politically and religiously motivated societal violence; institutional and societal discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel, many of whom self-identify as Palestinian, in particular in access to equal education, housing, and employment opportunities; and institutional and societal discrimination against Ethiopian Israelis and women. Other human rights problems included administrative detention, often extraterritorial in Israel, of Palestinians from the occupied territories; stigmatizing of human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); the treatment of asylum seekers and irregular migrants; institutional and societal discrimination against non-Orthodox Jews and intermarried families; and labor rights abuses against Arab and foreign workers.

Endnotes
2. Ibid. 14.


7. Ibid.


10. Ibid. 17.

11. Ibid. 17–41.


15. The concept of “national belonging” or “nationality” as defined by Israel is complex, but essentially means that Jews are both Israeli nationals and citizens, while Arabs (Palestinian) are citizens but not Israeli nationals (i.e. do not belong to the nation of Jews). For a more complete explanation, see Columbia Law School, The Open University Project at http://www.law.columbia.edu/open-university-project/curricula/citizenshipnationalityisrael-palestine.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. See Footnote 15.


23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. The website of Human Rights Watch can be accessed at www.hrw.org.


27. Kashti, Or. The cutting of funding for Arab teachers’ colleges is only the latest sign. Haaretz, July 7, 2016. This article can be accessed at: https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.729404.

28. Ibid.


30. Ibid.

Concurrences to Item 12-02 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, New Brunswick, Santa Fe, and Upper Ohio Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-02.

This overture is consistent with the most recent actions of the General Assembly regarding the human rights of all citizens of the nation of Israel. The ACSWP calls the attention of commissioners to the report approved with comment by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace. Grounded in both principles of the Reformed faith and in The Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UN, 1948), that report notes:

The God who has created all human beings, male and female, in the divine image (Gen 1:27) and commanded us to love them (Mark 12:28-21) is the same God who invites us into his great mission of reconciliation (Matt 28:18-20). We begin to participate in that mission as we recognize that all persons carry the peculiar, unquantifiable, and indelible dignity that comes in human existence before God. All categories that divide persons must dissolve in the face of recognition of this dignity—no matter how functional or useless they are to us; no matter how benign or malignant they become for us; no matter how taught or innate they are. Regardless of our tendencies to choose sides, submit to tribal loyalties, or resist complexities in dealing with seemingly entrenched and intransigent conflicts, our first obligation is to honor the dignity of all persons with whom we are engaged, especially where that dignity is threatened, demeaned, or denied. The Christian mission of reconciliation will take us to difficult places; it will not allow us, however, to simplify those contexts, our neighbors, or ourselves, lest in doing so we lose sight of their dignity or surrender our own. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 477)

Equal protection under the law is the minimum standard for addressing this set of theological principles. As this overture amply documents, such equal protection is sadly lacking in the administration of Israeli law with regard to its Palestinian citizens.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-02.

The denial of human rights by the Government of Israel to citizens of the Palestinian territories, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, have been presented to this General Assembly in the past. Such past examples are:


This overture; however, brings to light the status of human rights of citizens of Israel who may be Christian, Muslim, Misrahi (Eastern) Jew, Ethiopian Israeli, woman, and LGBT person.

There are more than fifty laws—and more are being proposed—that discriminate against certain minorities. Discrimination in housing, employment, and education are just some of the areas that are highlighted by this overture where discrimination occurs.

Item 12-03

[The assembly approved Item 12-03 as amended. See pp. 13, 76.]

On Creating a Task Force to Examine NCCOP’s Call to Ecumenical Solidarity for Justice for Palestinians—From the Presbytery of Grace.

The Presbytery of Grace overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Formally receive and acknowledge the letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP).

2. Create a task force of twelve representatives from all relevant, appropriate, official PC(USA) staff, committees, task forces, and mission networks to examine the NCCOP’s nine-part call to ecumenical solidarity for justice for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, in Israel, throughout refugee camps and the diaspora. The task force will be informed by existing policy statements of previous General Assemblies.
3. Instruct the task force to make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) and to bring a full report of its meetings and activity.

4. Invite further ecumenical dialogue, most especially with the World Council of Churches, in that regard.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been a leader among its ecumenical peers in responding to the many calls for justice that have come from the Palestinian community for over a decade.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) endorsed the “Amman Call” regarding Arab-Israeli peace, issued by the World Council of Churches’ conference, “Churches Together for Peace and Justice in the Middle East,” at Amman, Jordan, June 18–20, 2007, including its affirmation of the UN resolutions that are the basis of a projected “two-state” solution, a shared Jerusalem, and the human rights of refugees and occupied peoples, its call to resist extremism and push for reconciliation, and its commitment to imperatives of ecumenical solidarity in action for Just Peace, directing that the Amman Call be printed in the Minutes of the General Assembly and considered in any study processes of the church (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 1137ff, electronic version).

The 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the report of the Middle East Study Committee entitled: “Breaking Down the Walls,” which to date was the most extensive examination of the injustices suffered as a result of the ongoing occupation of Palestine by the Israeli military (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 1021ff). In addition, the report made numerous recommendations that the church believed would help lead to justice and peace for both Palestine and Israel.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) called for the boycott of all Israeli products coming from the occupied Palestinian territories and called upon individual PC(USA) congregations to consider how they will respond to the call issued by the 2009 ecumenical Palestine Christian call for economic solidarity towards a just peace in Israel and Palestine that came through the Kairos Palestine Document, which was unanimously accepted by the heads of the leaders of all Christian traditions in Palestine (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 1366ff, electronic version).

The 221st General Assembly (2014) voted to divest from Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions for profiting from non-peaceful pursuits in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It also called for a full review of the longstanding and largely unexamined PC(USA) policy supporting a “two state solution” in Israel and Palestine (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 260ff, electronic version).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acted in the following ways:


2. Called for the Prayerful Study of the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS).

3. Advocated for the safety and well-being of the children of Palestine and Israel.

4. Affirmed Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression—which is an affirmation of the economic strategies of Presbyterians for over a century seeking to effect justice for oppressed peoples in many different situations in the United States and throughout the world.

There can be no denying, historically speaking, that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has established a consistent record of supporting the Palestinian people in their pursuit of a just peace in Palestine and Israel and throughout the world.

The National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine call is the latest in a long tradition of Palestinian Christians calling for justice in their homeland. As the writers of this document make abundantly clear: “Things are beyond urgent.” We are on the verge of a catastrophic collapse. The current status-quo is unsustainable. This could be our last chance to achieve a just peace.”

We recognize that discussion of this document will engender much debate within our denomination and throughout the ecumenical Christian community. But once again, since 2008 we have received formal calls from our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters to take their plight seriously. We have also taken seriously the burden shared by both Palestinian Christians and Muslims by responding to the 2005 Palestinian Civil Society Call for boycott, divestment and sanctions. What we are hearing from this latest call is that nothing is getting better, in fact it is getting worse, as occupation becomes entrenched and injustice persists.

At the very least, as a church that has partnered with Palestinian Christians and Muslims for the cause of nonviolent peacemaking for well over a decade, it is our obligation to take this latest call seriously and the way Presbyterians do that is to study and dialogue and respond. This overture calls for us to continue our solidarity in this way. This is especially critical in a
time when our Palestinian Christian partners are open about sharing their struggles and questions about how long their witness as followers of Jesus Christ can last under a brutal occupation that does not respect the faiths of any of the occupied.

The following is the open letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine:

Open letter from The National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) to the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement

*Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.* (Isaiah 1:17)

As we meet this month in Bethlehem in occupied Palestine, we are still suffering from 100 years of injustice and oppression that were inflicted on the Palestinian people beginning with the unjust and unlawful Balfour declaration, intensified through the Nakba and the influx of refugees, followed by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza and the fragmentation of our people and our land through policies of isolation and confiscation of land, and the building of Jewish-only settlements and the Apartheid Wall.

We are still suffering because of one political declaration from a Western Empire, based on a twisted theological premise. Even some churches and few Christian leaders supported the establishment of the colonial state in our land, and totally ignored—even dehumanized—the nation, our people that had already existed here for centuries and paid the price for atrocities committed in Europe.

Hundred years later with thousands of lives lost, towns and villages razed from the face of the earth—though not our memory—millions of refugees, thousands of homes demolished and continued incarceration of prisoners, our Nakba goes on.

Hundred years later and there is still no justice in our land! Discrimination and inequality, military occupation and systematic oppression are the rule. Today, we stand in front of an impasse and we have reached a deadlock. Despite all the promises, endless summits, UN resolutions, religious and lay leader’s callings—Palestinians are still yearning for their freedom and independence, and seeking justice and equality. Humanly speaking—we have reached the “moment of impossible”, as Emeritus Latin Patriarch Sabbah said recently.

Could it be that we have reached this “impossible moment” because things were built from the very beginning—a hundred years ago—on an unjust premise? Should we expect that such an unjust declaration will create anything but strife and destruction?

Today is also an opportunity to remember the Amman Call which was proclaimed ten years ago. We are thankful to those who stood with us back then in costly solidarity; those who stood for truth and justice. We are also concerned that ten years later the situation has been worsening on the ground and still deteriorating. Like other initiatives advocating end of occupation, the Amman Call did not achieve its goals in building and achieving just peace and we must ask ourselves today—why?

We are also concerned by Israel’s systemic assault on Palestinian creative resistance, and on our partners worldwide who use this method to pressure Israel to end the occupation. Many new laws were issued in Israel and around the world to oppose this creative non-violent resistance unlawfully, and to stop all effort towards peace. Not only is this an attack on the freedom of conscience and speech but it is also an assault on our right and duty to resist evil with good. Israel is even now trying to prevent pilgrims from visiting Bethlehem—the city of Emmanuel!

While we are grateful for the ‘costly solidarity’ articulated in the Amman Call and exercised by many churches around the world, we are concerned that some churches have weakened their positions in the last ten years as a result of this manipulating pressure. Many still hide behind the cover of political neutrality, not wishing to offend their religious dialogue partners.

Finally, we meet in an environment of religious wars and persecution in our region. Religious extremism is on the rise, and religious minorities have paid a heavy and painful price. We thank you for your efforts towards the refugees and towards ending the conflicts in our region. We also thank you for your support of persecuted Christians in places like Iraq and Syria.

Our Call:

“God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6)

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness (Justice), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me”. (Matthew 5:10-11)

As we stand in front of this “impossible moment”, it gives us no pleasure to say that “we told you so” eight years ago when we declared the moment as a Kairos moment! We stand facing the impossible, but we have not lost hope, since as followers of the Risen One, we are the people of hope. However, we need you and we need you now more than ever. We need your costly solidarity. We need brave women and men who are willing to stand in the forefront. This is no time for shallow diplomacy Christians. We urge you to hear our call and adopt the following:

1. That you call things as they are: recognize Israel as an apartheid state in terms of international law and in agreement of what a person like Desmond Tutu said and as the UN ESCWA report said: “Israel is guilty of imposing an apartheid regime on the Palestinian people”. We are disturbed by the fact that States and churches are dealing with Israel as if the situation were normal, ignoring the reality of occupation, discrimination and daily death in the land. Just as churches united to end apartheid in South Africa and whereby the WCC played a courageous and pivotal prophetic and leadership role, we expect you to do the same!
2. That you unequivocally condemn the Balfour declaration as unjust, and that you demand from the UK that it asks forgiveness from the Palestinian people and compensates for the losses. We ask that churches and Christians to support the Palestinians in their request for justice. It was his infamous declaration, after all that laid the ground for the concept of an ethno-religious state—the very same thing our region is suffering today.

3. That you take a clear and the strongest theological stand against any theology or Christian group that justifies the occupation and privileges one nation over the other based on ethnicity or a covenant. We ask that you adopt and live the theology suggested by Kairos Palestine and that you organize conferences to bring awareness towards this end.

4. That you take a stand against religious extremism and against any attempt to create a religious state in our land or region. We ask that you support us in combating the foundations of extremism and that you seek our council when acting against religious extremism so that you do not jeopardize and harm our standing here.

5. That you revisit and challenge your religious dialogue partners, and that you are willing to even withdraw from the partnership if needed—if the occupation and injustices in Palestine and Israel are not challenged.

6. That you lead campaigns for church leaders and pilgrims to visit Bethlehem and other Palestinian cities on this side of the wall in cooperation with Palestinian tourist and pilgrimage agencies, in response to recent attempts by Israel. We ask that you publicly challenge any attempt by Israel or other Christians that discourage pilgrims from visiting Palestinian places.

7. That you defend our right and duty to resist the occupation creatively and nonviolently. We ask that you speak in support of economic measures that pressure Israel to stop the occupation and go further to support sport, cultural and academic measures against Israel until it complies with international law and UN resolutions urging the ending of its occupation, Apartheid and discriminations, and accepts refugees to return to their home land and properties.

This is our last peaceful resort. In response to Israel’s war on BDS, we ask that you intensify those measures.

8. That you create lobby groups in defense of Palestinian Christians. We ask that you publicly and legally challenge Christian organizations that discredit our work and legitimacy.

9. We therefore propose as a matter of the greatest urgency that you create a strategic program within WCC similar to the Program “To Combat Racism” to lead efforts to lobby, advocate and develop active programs towards justice and peace in Palestine and Israel and work on maintaining the presence of the Palestinian Christians through supporting their organizations, church work and peaceful efforts.

As faithful witnesses, we acknowledge, affirm and continue the long standing prophetic tradition, especially the one started by the Amman Call and articulated in the Kairos Palestine document. We fully grasp the pressure church leaders are facing here and abroad not to speak the truth, and it is because of this that we are raising this call.

Things are beyond urgent. We are on the verge of a catastrophic collapse. The current status-quo is unsustainable. This could be our last chance to achieve a just peace. As a Palestinian Christian community, this could be our last opportunity to save the Christian presence in this land. Our only hope as Christians comes from the fact that in Jerusalem, the city of God, and our city, there is an empty tomb, and Jesus Christ who triumphed over death and sin, brought to us and to all humanity, new life.

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Cor. 4:8-9)

12 June 2017


Concurrences to Item 12-03 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Denver, Grand Canyon, Santa Fe, and Upper Ohio Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 12-03 requests that the General Assembly create a task force to respond to a nine-point letter from Christian organizations in Palestine and Israel.
The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-03, with amendment to Recommendations 2. and 3. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

2. [Create a task force of twelve representatives from all relevant, appropriate, official PC(USA) staff, committees, task forces, and mission networks [are directed to continue to respond affirmatively] to examine the NCCOP’s nine-part call to ecumenical solidarity for justice for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, in Israel, throughout refugee camps and the diaspora. [The task force will be as informed by existing policy statements of previous General Assemblies.]

3. Instruct the [task force] bodies named above, coordinated by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, to make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) as necessary in continuing to act in solidarity with our partners in Palestine and Israel, and to bring a full report of its meetings and activity.

Congruent with our current missiology, this overture recognizes the primacy of faith actors in Israel/Palestine for determining their own needs and agenda. It calls on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to listen to the words of Palestinian Christians, represented by the National Coalition of Christians Organizations in Palestine. It correctly assumes that the voices of the people of Palestine are the most important voices in assessing and understanding the crisis and the current needs.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is already responding, however, to the heartfelt and incisive letter from the Palestinian Christians and does not want any of its already affirmative responses slowed by the task force proposed, given that current policy supports action on the nine points. The most controversial point, using the term apartheid, is being done now by Jewish as well as Arab Israelis and Palestinians. Commissioners may determine that it should be formally considered but, in light of the Gaza killings especially, apartheid seems an indisputable term for the separation wall and other enforcements of second-class status and lack of human rights.

To the extent that a study is required of new conditions, in consultation with World Mission we believe that our Palestinian partners can help guide the more focused study of Jerusalem that we believe is warranted. Thus, this item and Item 12-04 are partly answered by support for Item 12-08.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-03

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-03. The National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine’s (NCCOP) Call to Ecumenical Solidarity is a heartfelt and urgent call from the beleaguered Christian community in Palestine. Years of military occupation preceded by the dismantling of their country under a hostile United Nations mandate that basically handed over their country to immigrants who sought to create a country of their own devoid of as many Palestinians as possible has led to severe hardships for the Christian community in Palestine. These events have subjected the Christian community to dangers that, if not corrected, may lead to the extinction of the Christian presence in the land of Jesus.

In the words of the Amman Call, which was endorsed by the 218th General Assembly (2008), “Enough is enough. No more words without deeds. It is time for action” (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 1145). Creating a task force to examine the NCCOP’s nine-part call to ecumenical solidarity for justice for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, in Israel, throughout refugee camps and the diaspora is a necessary first step to action in support of peace with justice for all who suffer injustice in Palestine.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-03

Comment on Item 12-03—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency feels that the recommendation to create a task force may be unnecessary to fulfill the intent of this overture because we have already responded to NCCOP’s call issued in June 2017. As part of a solidarity visit to Palestinian Christians in Advent 2017, a delegation from the PC(USA), led by the Stated Clerk, met with representatives of the NCCOP to discuss this June call, and in line with existing policy statements and actions of General Assembly reaffirmed our support for the Palestinian Christian community. By the same token, when events earlier in the year suggested that the WCC’s commitment to the Palestinian community was wavering (events that led to the NCCOP’s open letter), the Stated Clerk wrote to the WCC expressing our resolve to stand firm alongside our Palestinian sisters and brothers, and encouraged them to do the same, and we remain in partnership with them to that end.

Item 12-04

The assembly answered Item 12-04 by the action taken on Item 12-03. See pp. 13, 76.

On Responding to the Open Letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) to the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Movement—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Formally receive and acknowledge the letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP).
2. Create a task force with representatives from all relevant, appropriate, official PC(USA) staff, committees, task forces, and mission networks to examine the NCCOP’s nine-part call to ecumenical solidarity for justice for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, in Israel, throughout refugee camps and the diaspora.

3. Following this recommendation, instruct the task force to determine the PC(USA) response and invite further ecumenical dialogue, most especially with the World Council of Churches, in that regard.

4. Instruct the Stated Clerk to invite and encourage further ecumenical dialogue with our partner denominations, most especially with the World Council of Churches, in that regard.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been a leader among its ecumenical peers in responding to the many calls for justice that have come from the Palestinian community for over a decade.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) endorsed “the ‘Amman Call’ regarding Arab-Israeli peace, issued by the World Council of Churches’ conference, ‘Churches Together for Peace and Justice in the Middle East,’ at Amman, Jordan, June 18–20, 2007, including its affirmation of the UN resolutions that are the basis of a projected ‘two-state’ solution, a shared Jerusalem, and the human rights of refugees and occupied peoples, its call to resist extremism and push for reconciliation, and its commitment to imperatives of ecumenical solidarity in action for Just Peace, directing that the Amman Call be printed in the Minutes of the General Assembly and considered in any study processes of the church” (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 1137).

The 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the report of the Middle East Study Committee entitled: “Breaking Down the Walls,” which to date was the most extensive examination of the injustices suffered as a result of the ongoing occupation of Palestine by the Israeli military (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 1021ff). In addition, the report made numerous recommendations that the church believed would help lead to justice and peace for both Palestine and Israel.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) called for the boycott of all Israeli products coming from the occupied Palestinian territories and called upon individual PC(USA) congregations to consider how they would respond to the call issued by the 2009 ecumenical Palestine Christian call for economic solidarity towards a just peace in Israel and Palestine that came through the Kairos Palestine Document, which was unanimously accepted by the heads of the leaders of all Christian traditions in Palestine (Minutes, 2012, Part I p. 1366).

The 221st General Assembly (2014) voted to divest from Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions for profiting from nonpeaceful pursuits in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 264). It also called for a full review of the longstanding and largely unexamined PC(USA) policy supporting a “two-state solution” in Israel and Palestine (Ibid).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acted in the following ways:

1. Approved the two-state study commissioned by the 221st General Assembly entitled: “Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace” written by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 469ff).

2. Called for the Prayerful Study of the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS).

3. Advocated for the safety and well-being of the children of Palestine and Israel.

4. Affirmed Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression—which is an affirmation of the economic strategies of Presbyterians for over a century seeking to effect justice for oppressed peoples in many different situations in the United States and throughout the world.

There can be no denying, historically speaking, that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has established a consistent record of supporting the Palestinian people in their pursuit of a just peace in Palestine and Israel and throughout the world.

The National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine call is the latest in a long tradition of Palestinian Christians calling for justice in their homeland. As the writers of this document make abundantly clear: “Things are beyond urgent. We are on the verge of a catastrophic collapse. The current status-quo is unsustainable. This could be our last chance to achieve a just peace.”

We recognize that discussion of this document will engender much debate within our denomination and throughout the ecumenical Christian community. But once again, since 2008 we have received formal calls from our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters to take their plight seriously. We have also taken seriously the burden shared by both Palestinian Christians and Muslims by responding to the 2005 Palestinian Civil Society Call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions. What we are hearing from this latest call is that nothing is getting better, in fact it is getting worse, as occupation becomes entrenched and injustice persists.
At the very least, as a church that has partnered with Palestinian Christians and Muslims for the cause of nonviolent peacemaking for well over a decade, it is our obligation to take this latest call seriously and the way Presbyterians do that is to study and dialogue and respond. This overture calls for us to continue our solidarity in this way. This is especially critical in a time when our Palestinian Christian partners are open about sharing their struggles and questions about how long their witness as followers of Jesus Christ can last under a brutal occupation that does not respect the faiths of any of the occupied.

The following is the open letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine:

NCCOP
National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine

Open letter from The National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP) to the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. (Isa. 1:17)

Background

As we meet this month in Bethlehem in occupied Palestine, we are still suffering from 100 years of injustice and oppression that were inflicted on the Palestinian people beginning with the unjust and unlawful Balfour declaration, intensified through the Nakba and the influx of refugees, followed by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza and the fragmentation of our people and our land through policies of isolation and confiscation of land, and the building of Jewish-only settlements and the Apartheid Wall.

We are still suffering because of one political declaration from a Western Empire, based on a twisted theological premise. Even some churches and few Christian leaders supported the establishment of the colonial state in our land, and totally ignored—even dehumanized—the nation, our people that had already existed here for centuries and paid the price for atrocities committed in Europe.

Hundred years later with thousands of lives lost, towns and villages razed from the face of the earth—though not our memory—millions of refugees, thousands of homes demolished and continued incarceration of prisoners, our Nakba goes on.

Hundred years later and there is still no justice in our land! Discrimination and inequality, military occupation and systematic oppression are the rule. Today, we stand in front of an impasse and we have reached a deadlock. Despite all the promises, endless summits, UN resolutions, religious and lay leader’s callings—Palestinians are still yearning for their freedom and independence, and seeking justice and equality. Humanly speaking—we have reached the “moment of impossible”, as Emeritus Latin Patriarch Sabbah said recently.

Could it be that we have reached this “impossible moment” because things were built from the very beginning—a hundred years ago—on an unjust premise? Should we expect that such an unjust declaration will create anything but strife and destruction?

Today is also an opportunity to remember the Amman Call which was proclaimed ten years ago. We are thankful to those who stood with us back then in costly solidarity; those who stood for truth and justice. We are also concerned that ten years later the situation has been worsening on the ground and still deteriorating. Like other initiatives advocating end of occupation, the Amman Call did not achieve its goals in building and achieving just peace and we must ask ourselves today—why?

We are also concerned by Israel’s systemic assault on Palestinian creative resistance, and on our partners worldwide who use this method to pressure Israel to end the occupation. Many new laws were issued in Israel and around the world to oppose this creative non-violent resistance unlawfully, and to stop all effort towards peace. Not only is this an attack on the freedom of conscience and speech but it is also an assault on our right and duty to resist evil with good. Israel is even now trying to prevent pilgrims from visiting Bethlehem—the city of Emmanuel!

While we are grateful for the ‘costly solidarity’ articulated in the Amman Call and exercised by many churches around the world, we are concerned that some churches have weakened their positions in the last ten years as a result of this manipulating pressure. Many still hide behind the cover of political neutrality, not wishing to offend their religious dialogue partners.

Finally, we meet in an environment of religious wars and persecution in our region. Religious extremism is on the rise, and religious minorities have paid a heavy and painful price. We thank you for your efforts towards the refugees and towards ending the conflicts in our region. We also thank you for your support of persecuted Christians in places like Iraq and Syria.

Our Call

“God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6)

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness (Justice), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me”. (Matthew 5:10–11)

As we stand in front of this “impossible moment”, it gives us no pleasure to say that “we told you so” eight years ago when we declared the moment as a Kairos moment! We stand facing the impossible, but we have not lost hope, since as followers of the Risen One, we are the people of hope. However, we need you and we need you now more than ever. We need your costly solidarity. We need
brave women and men who are willing to stand in the forefront. This is no time for shallow diplomacy Christians. We urge you to hear our call and adopt the following:

1. That you call things as they are: recognize Israel as an apartheid state in terms of international law and in agreement of what a person like Desmond Tutu said and as the UN ESCWA report said: “Israel is guilty of imposing an apartheid regime on the Palestinian people”. We are disturbed by the fact that States and churches are dealing with Israel as if the situation were normal, ignoring the reality of occupation, discrimination and daily death in the land. Just as churches united to end apartheid in South Africa and whereby the WCC played a courageous and pivotal prophetic and leadership role, we expect you to do the same!

2. That you unequivocally condemn the Balfour declaration as unjust, and that you demand from the UK that it asks forgiveness from the Palestinian people and compensates for the losses. We ask that churches and Christians to support the Palestinians in their request for justice. It was his infamous declaration, after all that laid the ground for the concept of an ethno-religious state – the very same thing our region is suffering today.

3. That you take a clear and the strongest theological stand against any theology or Christian group that justifies the occupation and privileges one nation over the other based on ethnicity or a covenant. We ask that you adopt and live the theology suggested by Kairos Palestine and that you organize conferences to bring awareness towards this end.

4. That you take a stand against religious extremism and against any attempt to create a religious state in our land or region. We ask that you support us in combating the foundations of extremism and that you seek our council when acting against religious extremism so that you do not jeopardize and harm our standing here.

5. That you revisit and challenge your religious dialogue partners, and that you are willing to even withdraw from the partnership if needed – if the occupation and injustices in Palestine and Israel are not challenged.

6. That you lead campaigns for church leaders and pilgrims to visit Bethlehem and other Palestinian cities on this side of the wall in cooperation with Palestinian tourist and pilgrimage agencies, in response to recent attempts by Israel. We ask that you publicly challenge any attempt by Israel or other Christians that discourage pilgrims from visiting Palestinian places.

7. That you defend our right and duty to resist the occupation creatively and nonviolently. We ask that you speak in support of economic measures that pressure Israel to stop the occupation and go further to support sport, cultural and academic measures against Israel until it complies with international law and UN resolutions urging the ending of its occupation, Apartheid and discriminations, and accepts refugees to return to their home land and properties. This is our last peaceful resort. In response to Israel’s war on BDS, we ask that you intensify that measures.

8. That you create lobby groups in defense of Palestinian Christians. We ask that you publicly and legally challenge Christian organizations that discredit our work and legitimacy.

9. We therefore propose as a matter of the greatest urgency that you create a strategic program within WCC similar to the Program “To Combat Racism” to lead efforts to lobby, advocate and develop active programs towards justice and peace in Palestine and Israel and work on maintaining the presence of the Palestinian Christians through supporting their organizations, church work and peaceful efforts.

As faithful witnesses, we acknowledge, affirm and continue the long standing prophetic tradition, especially the one started by the Amman Call and articulated in the Kairos Palestine document. We fully grasp the pressure church leaders are facing here and abroad not to speak the truth, and it is because of this that we are raising this call.

Things are beyond urgent. We are on the verge of a catastrophic collapse. The current status-quo is unsustainable. This could be our last chance to achieve a just peace. As a Palestinian Christian community, this could be our last opportunity to save the Christian presence in this land. Our only hope as Christians comes from the fact that in Jerusalem, the city of God, and our city, there is an empty tomb, and Jesus Christ who triumphed over death and sin, brought to us and to all humanity, new life.

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. (2 Cor. 4:8–9)

12 June 2017

Jerusalem
Arab Catholic Scouts Group
Arab Orthodox Society – Jerusalem
Caritas- Jerusalem
Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees- Middle East Council of Churches
Greek Catholic Sayedat AlBishara Association
International Christian Committee
Laity Committee in the Holy Land
National Christian Association
Pontifical Mission Palestine
SABEEL – Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
Seeds of Better life
Union of Arab Orthodox Club – Jerusalem

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Young Men’s Christian Association – YMCA
Young Women’s Christian Association – YWCA

Gaza
NECC office
Bethlehem (NCOB)
Network of Christian Organizations in Bethlehem
The East Jerusalem YMCA / Beit Sahour Branch
The Arab Educational Institute,
Holy Land Trust, Bethlehem
Wi’am Center, Bethlehem
Saint Afram Assyrian Society,
Holy Land Christians Ecumenical Foundation, Bethlehem
Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI)
Arab Orthodox Club, Beit Sahour
Arab Orthodox Club, Beit Jala
Arab Orthodox Club, Bethlehem
The Arab Orthodox Charitable Society, Beit Sahour
Bethlehem Bible College
Siraj Center for Holy Land Studies
Alternative Tourism Group, ATG, Beit Sahour
Senior Citizen Charitable Society
Environmental educational Center, Beit Jala
Saint Vincent Charitable Society, Beit Jala
Shepherds’ Children Society, Beit Sahour

KAIROS PALESTINE

Concurrences to Item 12-04 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Grand Canyon.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-04.

This is a well-written and reasoned overture that seeks to open an honest dialogue with Jewish colleagues regarding the behavior of the Government of Israel towards its Palestinian citizens whether in Israel or the occupied territories. For too long, the fear of being labeled “anti-Semitic” has muzzled true, open, and meaningful dialogue concerning the denial of justice for Palestinians. As this overture states, “our relationship with Jesus Christ, his call to justice and peace, surpasses all others, including our interfaith relationships.”

Courage to speak the truth can be costly, but it is liberating.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-04

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 12-04 requests that the General Assembly create a task force to respond to a nine-point letter from Christian organizations in Palestine and Israel.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) answer Item 12-04 with our recommended action on Item 12-03, as amended.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-04

Comment on Item 12-04—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency feels that the recommendation to create a task force may be unnecessary to fulfill the intent of this overture because we have already responded to NCCOP’s call issued in June 2017. As part of a solidarity visit to Palestinian Christians in Advent 2017, a delegation from the PC(USA), led by the Stated Clerk, met with representatives of the NCCOP to discuss this June call, and in line with existing policy statements and actions of General Assembly reaffirmed our support for the Palestinian Christian community. By the same token, when events earlier in the year suggested that the WCC’s commitment to the Palestinian community was wavering (events that led to the NCCOP’s open letter), the Stated Clerk wrote
to the WCC expressing our resolve to stand firm alongside our Palestinian sisters and brothers, and encouraged them to do the same, and we remain in partnership with them to that end.

Item 12-05

[In response to Item 12-05, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 75, 76.]

Alternate Resolution:
The 223rd General Assembly (2018)

1. Urges its members, congregations, presbyteries, and national staff units, to reach out in open, truthful dialogue with our Jewish colleagues, engaging the issue of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

2. Challenges dialogue partners to build on common values for justice and peace in Israel/Palestine.

3. Facilitates the above dialogue by directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consider preparing study resources and urge presbyteries to provide opportunities for study to further educate church members about truthful, open interfaith dialogue.

On Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Israeli Occupation of Palestine—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco directs the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Urge its members, congregations, presbyteries, and national staff units, to reach out in open, truthful dialogue with our Jewish colleagues, engaging the issue of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

2. Encourage freedom and boldness to criticize practices and policies of Israel, as we do any other global political entity, without fear of being labelled anti-Semitic.

3. Insist that boundaries for acceptable discourse on Israel not be set unilaterally, but mutually agreed upon by all responsible partners in the discourse.

4. Listen to and acknowledge Christian voices suffering under occupation, which may counter the voices of those who live in comfort with full equal rights, thousands of miles from that same occupation.

5. Articulate our Reformed faith with confidence, humility, and integrity, and anticipate respect for our own faith convictions, as we also would respect others.

6. Assure confidentiality to Jewish colleagues who share perspectives that are critical of Israel, and which may compromise their congregational or organizational standing.

7. Challenge dialogue partners to build on common values for justice and peace in Israel/Palestine. If persistence dialogue fails to transform, withdrawing from that partnership may be necessary.

8. Facilitate the above dialogue by directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consider preparing study resources and urge presbyteries to provide opportunities for study to further educate church members about truthful, open interfaith dialogue.

Rationale

Collegiality of relations between Presbyterians and our Jewish colleagues in the decades following the Holocaust, has included healthy and necessary self-examination regarding Christian anti-Semitism in our scriptures and our theology, as well as partnership in a wide range of social justice issues. Yet the issue of Israel is uncharacteristically fraught with tension in recent years. This overture seeks to open a more honest, searching, and respectful season of dialogue that breaks new ground in these relationships.

Jews and Christians share the same Abrahamic tradition, the same God, values, holy text, and the Holy Land, where Abraham, Moses, and Jesus walked. Much of our interfaith conversations center on safe programs and issues, and while meaningful, we tend to avoid the single-most consequential issue of our day for Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

For too long the foundation of dialogue rests upon ongoing Christian repentance for anti-Jewishness, acceptance of Israel as central for Jewish identity, and unencumbered by any substantive criticism of Israel.
When there is resistance to dialogue from others, we relinquish our resolve and therefore are complicit to injustice by our silence.

Our relationship with Jesus Christ, his call to justice and peace, surpasses all others, including our interfaith relationships. We must “stand by people in any form of suffering and need, ... [to] stand where the Lord stands, ... against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ, the church must witness against ... the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others” (Book of Confessions, Belhar Confession, 10.7).

It may be that there is no other hope than through our united Jewish and Christian efforts that the occupation might end and peace be attainable.

Jewish leadership, in the U.S., Israel, and abroad, privately acknowledge that the occupation is apartheid, systematic ethnic cleansing, unsustainable as colonization, and that a Jewish state is incompatible with democracy. They acknowledge that Zionism is based on racism, is not equivalent to Judaism, and does not reflect basic Jewish values. Rabbis who avoid criticizing Israel for fear of dividing their congregations or losing donors, are in a difficult position. While stifling themselves, they desire this conversation.

While being sympathetic to the state of Israel as a response to the atrocities of the holocaust, it is not exempt from moral responsibility or accountability within the framework of international law and behavior demanded of any other nation. The United States Department of State has declared: “Criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic.”

Our U.S. special relationship with Israel provides it with more than one-third of all U.S. foreign aid. We have a special responsibility to make sure that aid is used to promote peace, not perpetuate social injustice. Our complicity with Israel obligates us to address this concern.

“As much as we can, we should meet friendship with friendship, hostility with kindness, generosity with gratitude, persecution with forbearance, truth with agreement, and error with truth” http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/principles_interfaith_dialogue.pdf.

Responding to People Who Say Criticizing Israel’s Occupation of Palestine is “Anti-Israel”

Many Jews and Christians in Israel and the United States who strongly support the State of Israel are also deeply troubled by Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza. It is with pain and sorrow that friends of Israel witness Israel’s oppressive policies and actions in the West Bank. It is with great sadness the promise of human rights for all peoples in the Holy Land for which we hoped, is unrealized, replaced instead by policies that promote the interests and rights of Israeli Jewish citizens, and that deny human rights and a nationality to Palestinians.

It is hard for many Americans and Christians to openly criticize Israeli actions. We may fear disturbing our relationships with some of our Jewish or Christian brothers and sisters. It is difficult for many Christians to publicly criticize the policies of Israel’s government for fear that legitimate criticism may be seen as anti-Israel or anti-Semitic. Some Christians believe they must silence their criticism of Israel’s polices because of the history of the Holocaust and the failure of many Christians to speak out at the time.

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the infrastructure of the illegal Israeli settlements, by-pass roads, checkpoints, and separation wall/barrier that constitute the oppression of the Palestinian people are in plain view for all to see. But when confronted with criticism, those who defend the military occupation often use the following tactics:

- Ignore irrefutable facts on the ground: illegal settlements, checkpoints, separation wall, bypass roads, and denial of Palestinian human rights.
- Deflect, confuse, and conflate issues to divert attention from the facts on the ground.
- Intimidate those who oppose Israel’s laws, practices, and policies that suppress Palestinian human rights with accusations that they are anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, and/or support terrorism.
- Never call the Palestinian people “Palestinians.” Call them “Arabs” and then cite anti-Israel actions by Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and other Arab states to justify Israel’s occupation of Palestine.
- Claim Israel is the victim, not the oppressor.
- Ask why critics of Israel’s practices focus on Israel instead of other world problem areas.

Responses to false claims that critics of Israel’s occupation practices and policies in the West Bank and Gaza are “anti-Israel”:

Is criticism of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza “anti-Israel”? No. Such criticism intentionally focuses on Israel’s laws, practices, and policies that promote the occupation of Palestinian territories and not Israel’s right to exist. Most critics of Israel’s occupation of Palestine also strongly support the right of Israel
Many Israeli and American Jews oppose settlement colonies on Palestinian land, all of which are illegal under international law. Within the Israeli and U.S. Jewish communities there is a growing, active, and passionate debate about whether Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is in the best interest of Israel. Each side in this debate is pro-Israel, trying to discern how to assure a secure, viable, and sustainable state. Christians must support the pro-Israel positions that advocate for human rights and justice for the Palestinian people, and reject the positions that promote the systematic oppression of the Palestinian people. When patriotic Americans spoke out against slavery, racial segregation, or the Vietnam and Iraqi wars, some Americans falsely accused them of being anti-American. Critics of Israel’s occupation of Palestine may also be falsely accused of being anti-Israel, but they are not. They are pro-human rights.

Is criticism of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza anti-Semitic?

No. Anti-Semitism is discrimination against or prejudice or hostility toward Jews. Criticism of Israeli government actions is not criticism of Jews as people or of Jewish religion or culture. Many Jewish individuals and human rights organizations oppose Israel’s continued occupation of Palestine. Christians must, with confidence, reject any politically motivated charges of anti-Semitism that are made to silence legitimate criticism of Israel’s apartheid practices. This kind of hyperbolic language is untrue, harms civil discourse and serves to hamper efforts to monitor and prevent Israeli human rights violations.

Why must Christians speak out against the Israeli occupation of Palestine?

After World War II when the horror of the Holocaust was revealed, Jews around the world said “never again.” Many Christians around the world were shamed by their silence during the 1930s as Jews in Germany were given special cards identifying their religion, had their businesses shut down, had their land expropriated, and were confined to live in separated enclaves or ghettos. Christians vowed that never again would they be silent if a government passed laws establishing and maintaining the domination by one ethnic group over another ethnic group through systematic separation, oppression, and denial of basic human rights. Silence in the face of evil was wrong then, and it is wrong now. Christians spoke out in the 1950s against segregation in the United States and in the 1970s against apartheid in South Africa. They must again raise their voices and speak out against Israel’s violation of human rights and international law in Palestine.

How may criticism of Israel’s occupation policies affect interfaith relations between Jews and Christians?

Building strong interfaith relationships with our Jewish brothers and sisters is important. They are built on mutual interest, honesty, and integrity. Interfaith conversations encompass social justice issues such as hunger, homelessness, discrimination, human rights, war, and peace. Israel’s policies in occupied Palestine are but one issue. The Jewish community itself is divided on it. Honest dialog ultimately builds stronger relationships, while silence erodes them. Through honest dialog we may find Jewish people who support the occupation and others who agree it must end. We must have confidence that our interfaith relationships, built on many social justice issues, are strong enough to sustain a disagreement on the wisdom of Israel’s continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

Is Israel’s militarily occupation of Palestine needed for security reasons?

No. At any time since 1967 Israel could have allowed the United Nations to occupy the West Bank and provide security. U.N. peacekeeping missions have been successful in dozens of countries. However, if the U.N. had occupied Palestine to provide security in 1967 or anytime thereafter, it would have preserved the land for residents of a Palestinian state and not allowed Israel to expropriate Palestinian land to build Jewish settlement colonies. Israel does not need to occupy the West Bank for security reasons. It chooses to occupy the West Bank so it can expand its borders and dominate the Palestinian people.

Why single out Israel when social injustices occur in many middle eastern countries?

Since Israel receives more than one-third of all U.S. foreign aid, we are responsible and accountable for its use to prevent social injustice, not to perpetuate it. Israel is the world’s 16th richest country, has the 4th largest army, is the 3rd largest arms producer, the 6th largest arms dealer, the 4th largest nuclear power (refusing to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty), and has defied seventy United Nations Security Council resolutions seeking peaceful reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinian. U.S. complicity with Israel obligates us to address this.

Do Israel’s laws, policies, and practices towards Palestinians constitute apartheid?

Under the 1973 United Nations convention, “apartheid” means acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group over any other racial group and systematically oppressing them. Practices constituting apartheid include:

- Denying basic human freedoms, including the freedom of movement, residence, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment.

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Denying basic human rights, including the right to a nationality, to education, to leave and to return to one’s country, to work and to form recognized trade unions.

- Expropriating landed property belonging to a racial group or groups or to members thereof.
- Legislative measures, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group or groups.

In May 1967, Palestinian residents of the West Bank, as Jordanian citizens, enjoyed most of the basic human rights and freedoms of a modern nation. But since June 1967, these residents have been stripped of most of these rights by an Israeli military occupation that systematically distinguishes, excludes, dominates, and oppresses Palestinians on grounds of ethnicity. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the infrastructure of the illegal Israeli settlements, bypass roads, checkpoints, and separation wall/barrier that constitute the oppression of the Palestinian people, constitutes apartheid as defined by the United Nations.

Concurrences to Item 12-05 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, and New Hope.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-05

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-05.

This overture astutely identifies areas of particular contention in discussions about Israel/Palestine. Understanding that interfaith dialogue can too often eschew particularly difficult questions, for the sake of a surface collegiality, this overture seeks to find ways to converse both collegially and meaningfully about the human rights crisis in the occupied territories.

The ACSWP would suggest that along with seeking new ways to create dialogue, the overture might also consider ways to create shared worship. As both Jews and Christians ultimately draw their ethical convictions from faith perspectives, sharing worship space can often create the trust necessary to engage in hard discussion.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-05

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-05.

Seventy years after the destruction of the State of Palestine, an honest and truthful acknowledgement of the injustice inflicted upon all Palestinian citizens is much overdue—as is an honest and truthful discussion with our Jewish colleagues. It is also much overdue to hold the government of Israel accountable to international law and moral behavior as we do any other global entity.

This is an ambitious and courageous overture that deserves the full support of the PC(USA). True and honest dialogue with our Jewish colleagues while safeguarding confidentiality will surely be a positive step in fostering partnership for peace with justice for all in Israel and Palestine.

The rationale of the overture discusses the concept of the crime of apartheid as defined by the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. “Apartheid” is a label that many Presbyterians are loath to use even after acknowledging that the government of Israel is guilty of this crime. The term “apartheid” is immediately comprehensible and is useful in communicating the realities of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Item 12-06

[The assembly disapproved Item 12-06. See pp. 13, 76.]

For the Protection of the Children of Israel and Palestine—From the Presbytery of Philadelphia

The Presbytery of Philadelphia overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to protect the children of Israel and Palestine by:

1. Continuing to urge the State of Israel to continue its work to implement changes in its military courts according to the report offered by UNICEF in March of 2013.
2. Condemning the militarization of children in Palestine who are forced to dig tunnels, indoctrinated into the military contrary to international law, used as messengers for terrorist organizations, and armed and encouraged to attack innocent civilians.

3. Condemning the production of educational literature and curriculum that dehumanizes either Israeli or Palestinian children or attempts to “cleanse” the historical narrative of the Palestinian and the Jewish people.

4. Ceasing support for those entities that continue to put children in harms way through such activities as listed above.

5. Supporting efforts to bridge divides through the creation and implementation of coexistence and engagement programs that bring Israeli and Palestinian children to study and grow together.

Rationale

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 08-02. On Advocating for the Safety and Well-Being of Children of Palestine and Israel1—From the Synod of the Covenant.

That overture was originally written with a focus on the practices of the Israeli military forces in the Occupied Territories, as they pertained to the treatment of Palestinian children. It detailed many practices, which were detrimental to children, both physically and emotionally.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 08-02 with one added recommendation, which stated: “Call on the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and the government of Israel to denounce and cease the incitement of violence against children or at the hands of children” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 458).

The added recommendation was an attempt to recognize that there is responsibility on both sides for the ways children of both sides are treated. The majority of the 2016 Item 08-02 and the detail provided as the basis of that overture, however, were based on practices of the Israeli military.2

For the Protection of the Children of Israel and Palestine is a balancing effort, detailing some of the ways in which Hamas has used and is using children to prosecute its military goals.3 While the PC(USA) has condemned the State of Israel for their failings in these areas, the PC(USA) has not held Palestinians accountable for their own actions that place their children in harm’s way, with the same rigor.

We do not view this new overture as breaking any particular new ground. Rather, it intends to keep the fact of violence against children in the public discourse (a laudable goal), this time using the practices of Hamas as the example.4

For years, Hamas has sponsored summer camps to train children as young as thirteen years old in which they are shown how to use military weapons. Hamas has also used children to build tunnels under the border between Gaza and Israel, behavior that mirrors the use of children to dig in the mines of the Victorian era in the UK. Countless lives have been lost digging these tunnels of war.5

Books found in more than four hundred UNRWA schools in the West Bank and Gaza incite children between first and ninth grades to kill Israelis and sacrifice themselves as martyrs.6

It is illegal under international law to use children younger than eighteen as soldiers.7 The use of children for military purposes is outlawed by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the UN, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.8

Endnotes

Concurrence to Item 12-06 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler and de Cristo.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 12-06.

While the stated goal of this overture, to protect the children of Israel and Palestine, is laudable and indeed consistent with past General Assembly actions, and while the mistreatment of children by actors on both sides of the Israel/Palestine conflict merits our attention and our condemnation, this is not the overture to further such actions.

Besides a conflation of Hamas and the Palestinian authority, creating disjunction between some of the recommendations and the rationale, there are two significant problems with the overture as written.

The first problem concerns sourcing. This overture is overwhelmingly sourced by popular news articles. These articles have their place, but data from primary sources should be prioritized. Where primary data is noted in this article it is at times used misleadingly or inaccurately. For example, Footnote 4 suggests that the UNICEF report noted deals significantly with the practices of Hamas. It does not, detailing instead the treatment of children in Israeli military detention, as its title suggests.

The second problem concerns the issue of balance. This overture is identified as “a balancing effort” with the implication that such balance is a good of itself. However, one of the significant issues in the Israel / Palestine conflict is precisely the lack of balance, or to speak more precisely, the asymmetrical access to power. To present a narrative that suggests the welfare of children is equally threatened by both sides in this conflict is an inaccurate narrative, inconsistent with the findings of the UNICEF report cited in this overture, with the latest report on Israel / Palestine from Human Rights Watch, and with the conclusions of the report Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 12-06.

The protection of children—both Israeli and Palestinian—is moral and necessary. It is with some difficulty and hesitation, therefore, to disapprove the overture. This decision is based not upon the intent of the title of the overture, but rather on the overture’s basis upon questionable resources and upon the lack of a comprehensive discussion of issues.

The rationale of this overture states its intent to balance the presentation about detrimental practices against children. Experiences of children under occupation differ somewhat depending upon the geographic area. In the West Bank, Palestinian children are treated under an oppressive military law while Israeli children living in the illegal colonies/settlements are treated under Israeli civil law. These two laws differ greatly in their treatment of children. The condition of children in the West Bank was considered by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), which overwhelmingly passed an overture detailing the violation of the human rights of Palestinian children in the West Bank.

This overture opens up the question of conditions in the Gaza Strip and fails to detail in its entirety the condition of children there. As an example, the issue of children digging tunnels is considered. It is true that Israeli children need not dig tunnels for their sustenance; however Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip have done so in the past. These tunnels were necessitated by a more than ten-year blockade of the Gaza Strip by the government of Israel. Tunnels were dug so that food, medical supplies, and other necessities for life could be brought into the Gaza Strip. And there is no evidence that children were forced to dig other than by a need to earn money for life’s necessities for themselves and their families. Another issue considered is schoolbooks that incite violence. The overture claims that schoolbooks in United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools incite violence against Israelis. UNRWA denies these claims. Sources for this assertion are questionable and almost an equal number of sources cite Israeli schoolbooks that incite racism and hatred of Palestinians. These practices are, when they exist, regrettable whether in Israeli or Palestinian schoolbooks.

Here are just a few issues within the Gaza Strip that are not considered by this overture:

- Malnutrition leading to high rates of stunting of children below the age of five. Malnutrition and stunting have many bad health sequelae in later life for these children. (Gordon, Nahida H, Halileh, Samia. An Analysis of Cross Sectional Survey Data of Stunting Among Palestinian Children Less Than Five Years of Age. Maternal and Child Health Journal, ISSN 1092-
In Khan Younis governorate, one of the worst affected areas, the consumption of water with high concentration of nitrates (due to lack of electricity to maintain the sanitation infrastructure—caused by the Israeli blockade) compromises the transmission of oxygen in the blood and could cause an increase of the potentially lethal “blue-baby syndrome” among infants in the Gaza Strip.” (See UNITED NATIONS Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory SPECIAL FOCUS August 2009. See also Abu Naser, A, et al., “Relation of nitrate contamination of groundwater with methemoglobin level among infants in Gaza,” Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal, Volume 13, No.5, [September–October 2007].) Blue-baby syndrome can lead to coma and death. And conditions have worsened further.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-Occupied Palestinian Territories posted on June 23, 2015, the following casualty statistics due to the 2014 Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip:

- 551 children were killed; and
- more than 1,500 Palestinian children were orphaned (https://www.ochaopt.org/content/key-figures-2014-hostilities).

In summary, even though this overture considers some important issues concerning the welfare of children, it is poorly researched and is not comprehensive.

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**PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-06**

Comment on Item 12-06—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency finds this to be a problematic overture on two counts:


2. The intent of this overture as indicated in the rationale is to criticize the practices of Hamas, yet in its recommendation there is no mention of this. Rather it speaks of “the militarization of children in Palestine” as if this were the policy and practice of the Palestinian Authority, yet offers no evidence for this. This conflation of Hamas with Palestine is misleading, and wrong.

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**Item 12-07**

[The assembly approved Item 12-07. See pp. 75, 76.]

On Urging RE/MAX to Stop Facilitating the Sale of Property in Israeli Settlement Colonies—From the Presbytery of Redwoods.

The Presbytery of the Redwoods overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Call for RE/MAX, LLC to
   a. Do everything within its legal and moral power to stop facilitating the sale and rental of property in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.
   b. Exclude settlement property listings from its global database.
   c. Publicly urge that RE/MAX Europe stop its franchises from selling or renting property in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

2. Urge members of the RE/MAX network in the United States to not refer clients to agents and brokers who are involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to all other PC(USA) councils and entities and to communicate this action to RE/MAX, LLC.
Rationale

**RE/MAX Supports and Profits from Israel’s Military Occupation of Palestinian Territories**

RE/MAX, LLC, is an American company headquartered in Denver, Colorado. It has grown into a global real estate network of franchisee-owned-and-operated offices with more than 100,000 sales associates. RE/MAX Holdings, Inc., is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange as RMAX.

RE/MAX, LLC, owns the right to the RE/MAX brand and sells franchise and franchising rights. Regional franchise owners have the right to sell brokerage franchises in a specified region. RE/MAX Europe is a regional franchise that has rights to sell brokerage franchises in European countries and Israel. RE/MAX Israel is a franchise under RE/MAX Europe.

RE/MAX has been active in the Israeli market since 1995. It sells and rents houses and apartments in colonies reserved exclusively for Jews in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. This is facilitating the distribution of illegally seized property in occupied Palestinian territory and assisting the Israeli government in its strategy of building settlements. RE/MAX takes advantage of the many financial incentives provided by Israel to increase the population of settlement colonies. These incentives include income tax deductions for Israeli citizens working in or investing in the illegal settlement colonies. In this way RE/MAX is supporting the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the human rights injustices suffered by Palestinians. In addition, RE/MAX is participating in housing discrimination because Israeli Christians, Muslims, and other non-Jews are restricted from purchasing settlement property.

**The U.N. and the World Court Say Israeli Settlements Are Illegal and a Major Roadblock to Peace**

There have been many United Nations Security Council resolutions and World Court rulings stating that Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal under international law. On December 23, 2016, the U.N. passed Resolution 2334 that reaffirms ten resolutions passed between 1967 and 2008 stating that Israel must withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This resolution further states that the Security Council:

- Expresses grave concern that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution based on the 1967 boundary lines.

- Reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace.

- Reiterates its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard.

- Underlines that it will not recognize any changes to the June 4, 1967, lines, including changes with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed to by the parties through negotiations.

- Stresses that the cessation of all Israeli settlement activities is essential for salvaging the two-state solution, and calls for affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse the negative trends on the ground that are imperiling the two-state solution.

The International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion in 2004 declaring these settlements to be illegal. In 2012, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, in response to moves by Israel to legalize Israeli outposts, reiterated that all settlement activity is illegal. Similar criticism was advanced by the European Union and the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Arab countries, and of course Palestinians themselves.

**U.S. Presidents Have Declared Israeli Settlement Colonies Are Illegal and a Major Roadblock to Peace**

**President Barack Obama:** “The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop.”

**President George W. Bush:** “Consistent with the Mitchell plan, Israeli settlement activity in occupied territories must stop, and the occupation must end through withdrawal to secure and recognize boundaries, consistent with United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338.”

**President Bill Clinton:** “The Israeli people also must understand that ... the settlement enterprise and building bypass roads in the heart of what they already know will one day be part of a Palestinian state is inconsistent with the Oslo commitment that both sides negotiate a compromise.”

**President George H. W. Bush:** “Secretary Baker was speaking for this administration, and I strongly support what he said. ... It would make a big contribution to peace if these settlements would stop. That’s what the secretary was trying to say ... and I’m 100 percent for him.” President Bush was referring to the following statement by Secretary of State James Baker:
Every time I have gone to Israel in connection with the peace process on each of my trips I have been met with the announcement of new settlement activity. This does violate United States policy. It is the first thing that Arabs—Arab governments—the first thing that Palestinians in the territories—whose situation is really quite desperate—the first thing they raise when we talk to them. I don’t think there is any greater obstacle to peace than settlement activity that continues not only unabated but at an advanced pace.

President Ronald Reagan: “The Reagan Plan states that ‘the United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transition period (5 years after Palestinian election for a self-governing authority).’ Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlements freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in these talks. Further settlement activity is in no way necessary for the security of Israel and only diminishes the confidence of the Arabs that a final outcome can be freely and fairly negotiated.”

President Jimmy Carter: “Our position on the settlements is very clear. We do not think they [settlements] are legal.”

PC (USA) General Assemblies Have Declared Israeli Settlements Are Illegal and a Roadblock to Peace

The 219th General Assembly (2010) reaffirmed many of the historical positions of the PC(USA) regarding Israel and Palestine, including:

- A call for the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories;
- An immediate freeze on both the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank; and
- An immediate end to Israeli expropriation of Palestinian land and buildings in East Jerusalem.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) called for the boycott of all Israeli products coming from Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territories.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) took action to divest from three American companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) called for the RE/MAX Corporation to cease selling property in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and in East Jerusalem. This action called encourage Presbyterians to continue to be in dialogue with RE/MAX, LLC, to explore ways that it can stop facilitating the sale and rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.

RE/MAX LLC Has Ceased Its Dialog with Presbyterians on the Issue of Selling Settlement Property

At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), there was an overture asking that RE/MAX cease selling property in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. One week prior to the General Assembly, the overture advocates received a letter from David Liniger, CEO of RE/MAX LLC, stating that the company had taken action to ensure that RE/MAX, LLC, will no longer receive any income from the sale of Jewish settlement properties in the West Bank. The letter also encouraged the overture advocates to be in continued dialog with RE/MAX on how the company could respond to concerns about the sale and rental of settlement property. The General Assembly therefore called for this dialog to continue.

On September 28, 2016, the overture advocates wrote a letter to the RE/MAX General Council with questions regarding steps that could be taken to cease its involvement in the sale and rental of property in Israeli settlement colonies. Despite monthly calls or emails asking for a response to this letter, RE/MAX has failed to respond as of June 2017. It therefore does not appear that RE/MAX LLC is interested in continued dialog.

RE/MAX Is Selling and Renting Settlement Properties to Which There Is No Clear Title

The most significant question posed to RE/MAX in the September 28, 2016, letter was “Has RE/MAX, LLC considered the problem that the title to a settlement property may be legally questionable because an occupying power does not have the right to create, modify, or destroy property rights in a territory that they occupy?”

This question is important because occupying powers, including the State of Israel, do not possess the sovereign power to create, modify or destroy property rights in territories they have occupied in the course of an international armed conflict. The purported property rights in Israeli settlements that are currently being marketed for sale or lease to consumers by RE/MAX affiliates have been created by acts of Israeli authorities—the ministry of finance for East Jerusalem properties, or the military commander for West Bank properties—who lack the authority to create them and who transfer possession over properties in the occupied territories to Israeli civilian nationals in flagrant violation of international law.

Background on Illegal Israeli Settlement Colonies in Palestine

There are 125 government-sanctioned Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank of Palestine. In addition, there were approximately 100 “settlement outposts” located throughout the West Bank. There is a massive infrastructure of “Israeli-only”
roads that connect the settlements and allow unrestricted settler movement but limited or no access for Palestinians. These roads and the walls and fences that border them, combined with Israeli land use restrictions, confines Palestinians to within sixty-four isolated enclaves. Palestinians must go through Israeli checkpoints to get from one enclave to another.

Reference Map

The construction of Israeli settlements colonies in the occupied West Bank and the Israeli only roads connecting settlements confine Palestinians to live within isolated and ever shrinking enclaves. To visualize the impact of the settlements and roads that connect them please refer to the reference map below.

Map of Israeli Settlement Colonies and Israeli-Only Bypass Roads in the West Bank of Palestine

- The triangles are major Israeli settlement colonies.
- The “Israeli-Only” roads connecting the linking settlement colonies allow unrestricted movement for settlers but allow limited or no access to Palestinians.
- Israeli land use restrictions and the road matrix divide the West Bank and confine Palestinians within sixty-four isolated enclaves.
- Palestinians must go through Israeli checkpoints to get from one enclave to another.

Concurrence to Item 12-07 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-07.

Item 12-07 calls for RE/MAX, LLC, an American company headquartered in Denver, Colorado, to cut its ties with real estate franchises that sell and rent Jewish-only housing in Israeli settlement colonies in the occupied West Bank of Palestine. This is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring its citizens to the occupied territories. It also violates RE/MAX’s International’s code of ethics, which states that its affiliates “shall undertake to eliminate any practice by real estate professionals in their community which could be damaging to the
The item urges members of the RE/MAX network in the United States to not refer clients to agents and brokers who are involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank. The ACSWP recognizes that Presbyterians may be among the realty franchises within the RE/MAX network, yet notes the twofold nature of the concern. RE/MAX, LLC profits from franchises that support the Israeli colonization of Palestinian territories—illegal under international law and opposed by PC(USA), and participates in housing discrimination, because non-Jews are restricted from purchasing housing in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The ACSWP also notes that since the passing of a similar overture in 2016 (Item 08-04), and despite attempts to further dialogue with RE/MAX about ceasing to profit from illegal settlement activity, RE/MAX has remained silent, necessitating a continued focus on the practice, in line with the actions passed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

The PC(USA) affiliated investment funds—the Pension Fund and Presbyterian Foundation—do not currently hold stock in RE/MAX, so MRTI is not in a position to advocate with them as a shareholder.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-07**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 12-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-07.

Clearly the Israeli colonies in the occupied Palestinian territories are exclusively for Israeli citizens and are illegal under international law. Moreover, the United States government, along with many other countries including the United Kingdom, France, and the European Union, has long held that these colonies/settlements are an impediment to peace. These colonies are built on land belonging to Palestinians and therefore when RE/MAX is involved in the sale of what is essentially stolen properties, it violates a basic moral code.

**PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-07**

*Comment on Item 12-07—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).*

Because the Board of Pensions and Foundation of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. do not hold stock in RE/MAX, LLC; the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has not engaged with representatives from RE/MAX, LLC. In mid-2017, the Office of Faith-Based and Corporate Engagement drafted and sent the official response from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to the CEO of RE/MAX, LLC, commending the company’s commitment in 2016, ahead of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), to take action to ensure RE/MAX, LLC, will no longer receive income from the sale of Jewish-settlement properties in the West Bank or East Jerusalem. The correspondence from the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement also reiterated the request of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for RE/MAX, LLC, and its franchisees to continue to do everything in its legal and moral power to stop facilitating the sale or rental of properties in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and to continue to be in conversation with the proponent of the overture from the Presbytery of the Redwoods.

**Item 12-08**

*The assembly approved Item 12-08. See pp. 13, 77.*

*A Resolution on the Status of Jerusalem—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in consultation with the Office of the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to prepare a report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) that reviews and describes comprehensively:

   a. The United Nations’ (UN) intentions for the status of Jerusalem and its hinterland (including the City of Bethlehem) to be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime as described in detail in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (II), *Future Government of Palestine, A/RES/181(II)*, 29 November 1947.

on the situation of human rights in Palestine; the World Council of Churches; and human rights organizations that document aspects of:

1. The illegal annexation of Jerusalem by Israel and the building of Israeli settlements in Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem exclusively for Jews;
2. The continued destruction of Palestinian housing in the greater Jerusalem area;
3. The denial of human rights and equal treatment under the present Israeli law for Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem, both Christian and Muslim;
4. The impediments to housing, employment, taxation, and representation.
5. The denial of equal, adequate municipal infrastructure and services to Christian and Muslim sections of the city;
6. The denial of equal resources for education to Christian and Muslim citizens; and
7. The right of freedom of movement including the right to leave and return to Jerusalem.

2. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in consultation with the Office of the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to make policy recommendations—being mindful of the unique spiritual and religious significance of Jerusalem to Christians, Jews, and Muslims and of the need for free unfettered access to Jerusalem’s holy sites—for the creation (using UN guidelines for the Status of Jerusalem as described in the UN General Assembly resolution 181) of administration of the Cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem independent from Israeli or Palestinian control so that these cities have:

a. Free and open access to all religious pilgrims, including Palestinians irrespective of their ethnicity, age, citizenship, or place of residence;
b. Equal treatment under the law of the city for citizens of Jerusalem and Bethlehem;
c. Equal exercise of their human rights;
d. Equal responsibilities for taxation and participation in municipal governance;
e. Equal privileges for health care and education;
f. The right to leave and return to Jerusalem or Bethlehem;
g. The right for family reunification; and
h. Unrestricted trade/commerce.

Rationale

Brief History of Jerusalem Area

The site on which Jerusalem exists today has a long history, beginning, according to archeological evidence, at about 4,500 BCE. Over the span of years to today, Jerusalem has been attacked, destroyed, rebuilt, and renamed many times. Since recorded time, beginning at about 2,000 BCE, approximately half the time it was controlled by groups not affiliated with any of the three monotheistic religions. Up to the Byzantine era (Christian), it was under the control of groups associated with biblical Israel or Judah for a relatively brief period, probably less than 300 years. Jerusalem was under Muslim control beginning at the time of its conquest by the Muslims in the seventh century ACE until the end of its control by the Ottomans in 1917. This span of almost 1,300 years was interrupted by brief control by Christian groups such as the Crusaders and the British Mandate period that began in 1917 and ended in 1948. Between 1948 and 1967, Jerusalem was divided into East and West Jerusalem and controlled by Jordan and Israel, respectively. From 1967 to today, Jerusalem is under Israeli control.

This brief history of the City of Jerusalem is presented not to justify the claim of any of the groups associated with Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. Rather, it is to show that it perhaps belongs to all, irrespective of religious affiliation.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Policy Regarding Jerusalem

According to policy passed by the 219th General Assembly (2010) on the status of Jerusalem, “Jerusalem must be an open, accessible, inclusive, and shared city for the two peoples and three religions.”

United Nations Partition Resolution 181 (II) (1947)

In order “to protect and to preserve the unique spiritual and religious interests located in the city of the three great monotheistic faiths throughout the world, Christian, Jewish and Moslem,” and “to ensure that order and peace, and especially religious peace, reign in Jerusalem,” the UN Resolution 181 proposed several requisites for the creation and organization of
Jerusalem among which it was to be a separate entity from the proposed Israeli and Palestinian states. “The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations.” The City of Jerusalem shall include the present municipality of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which shall be Abu Dis; the most southern, Bethlehem; the most western, Ein Karin (including also the built-up area of Motsa); and the most northern Shu‘fat.

Today’s Realities on the Ground

Jerusalem remains a contentious issue for maintaining peace between Palestinians and Israelis. Grievances and desires from both sides complicate issues. The Israeli government is in control and governs the lives of Christian and Muslim citizens of Jerusalem.

B’Tselem, the Israeli information Center for Human Rights (http://www.btselem.org) published a brief report on a few aspects of the status of East Jerusalem. Included here are brief excerpts from this report:

Israel unlawfully annexed East Jerusalem to its territory. Since then it has treated the Palestinian residents of the city as unwanted immigrants and worked systematically to drive them out of the area.

Israel’s attempts to shape the demographic reality of East Jerusalem are concentrated in several spheres:

- Land expropriation and building restrictions;
- Cutting East Jerusalem off from the rest of the West Bank; and
- Discrimination in budget allocation and municipal services.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for the occupied Palestinian Territories, many Palestinians in East Jerusalem are subject to a coercive environment with the risk of forcible transfer due to Israeli policies such as home demolitions, forced evictions and revocation of residency status. Restrictive and discriminatory planning regime makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain the requisite Israeli building permits: only 13 per cent of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction and much of this is already built-up.

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Al-Aqsa mosque are revered holy sites to Christians and Muslims, respectively. Palestinians frequently experience restrictions to entry to Jerusalem making it very difficult for Christians from the West Bank to pray at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Muslims to pray at the Al-Aqsa mosque. These restrictions are particularly strict for men aged fifty or less.

It is sad to see the daily reality of the occupation in Jerusalem. For Palestinians, both Christians and Muslims, life contains uncertainties and fear—the fear of having one’s house demolished; fear of deportation; fear of the inability to have sufficient food to feed one’s family; fear of not being able to reach a hospital in case of an emergency; fear of arrest; and fear of sudden death due to violence. The people of Israel, understandably, have their own fears, partly from tragic and sad memories of their past and partly from the inflated fear of retaliatory actions from Palestinians in response to the daily trials, humiliations, and repressions of living under occupation.

Let us try and stop these tragic cycles of fear and violence in the holiest of cities!

Endnotes

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-08

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-08.
The PC(USA), like many churches around the world, has made a major commitment to assist in the achievement of a just peace in Palestine and Israel, with the goal of ensuring the continuing witness of Christianity as well as Judaism and Islam in Jerusalem. This is a long-term challenge, given the one-sidedness of U.S. financial and military support for increasingly conservative and discriminatory Israeli governments. ACSWP advises support for this focused study based on the steady deterioration of the legal status of Palestinians in general in Jerusalem, and the extreme pressure put on Christians and Christian institutions by changes in tax law and other aspects of annexation.

This is not to ignore the violent Israeli military response to primarily nonviolent Palestinian protests in Gaza, where the United Nations has documented collective punishment of the population for years. Yet there are substantial reasons to focus attention on Jerusalem and the boundary changes that have brought that city to the edges of Bethlehem.

The status of Jerusalem has become a flashpoint of active conflict due particularly to the expressed plans of the current administration to relocate the American embassy to Jerusalem. Current United Nations and European Union policy has advised against member states acknowledging Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in this manner, as a barrier to any conceivable peace process. The announcement of the embassy move, after a set of inconsequential talks between the Palestinian Authority and the Trump Administration in early 2017, has in fact led to a Palestinian withdrawal from further negotiations involving the United States.

In Breaking Down the Walls, approved by the 219th General Assembly (2012), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) declared its commitment “to the concept that Jerusalem, like ‘the land’ as a whole, does not belong to any one people alone, but is rather to be shared by two peoples (Israelis and Palestinians) and three religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).”

The most recent report approved by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on the state of the conflict in Israel/Palestine, Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, [222nd General Assembly (2016)], notes that in recent years, the situation in Jerusalem has moved decidedly away from the vision of the United Nations. That report notes “Compared with 1993, Jerusalem is farther than ever from being a shared capital of two states, as envisioned at Oslo.”

Given that the rights of Palestinians in East Jerusalem was significantly deteriorating before the recent change in the policy of the United States government, and given that many observers believe that the decision of the United States to relocate its embassy will further destabilize the city and dispossess the residents of East Jerusalem, the need for the church to undertake a serious examination of the status of Jerusalem is timely and crucial to our witness in Israel/Palestine.

The primary costs of such a focused study are the travel of two to three persons to Jerusalem, as current staff and mission personnel would be tapped as primary contributors. Ecumenical and official diplomatic contacts will also be made in developing recommendations for next steps.

Item 12-09

[The assembly approved Item 12-09 as amended and with comment. See pp. 13, 77.]

[Comment: The amendments from committee were included at the request of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.]

On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.

The Presbytery of the Cascades overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to respond to the crisis in Syria focused on four principal goals: stop the killing; work for reconciliation; alleviate the suffering; and deepen PC(USA) partnership with Syrian Christians.

1. Stop the Killing

Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to send a message to the President of the United States, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and to each United States Senator and Representative to use all diplomatic means, in cooperation with [the United Nations’ Security Council and] other major parties in the Syrian crisis, to bring about a durable ceasefire, in tandem with a cessation of military support to any participant in the conflict [to bear witness to the world to the call for peace as a way of encouraging world-wide pressure for peace in Syria].

2. Work for Reconciliation

As a part of the necessary work of Syrian reconciliation, direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to communicate to the United States government and other parties involved the need to contribute fully to the humanitarian, human rights, and peace-building work of the United Nations. Encourage the United Nations to cooperate fully with these efforts, to involve civil society wherever possible, and to advocate measures to stabilize a more just world order in this region, encouraging nonviolent coexistence among religious and ethnic groups. Direct the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations to support this witness in their work.
3. **Alleviate the Suffering**

   a. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), Presbyterian World Mission, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to call on congregations and presbyteries, nonprofit organizations, the United States government, and agencies of the United Nations, to provide robust financial support for organizations engaged in alleviating the suffering of Syrians, especially those displaced inside Syria and those now living as refugees in neighboring countries.

   b. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to call on the United States government to reopen Syrian refugees’ entry into the United States and substantially expand the number of refugees admitted. Encourage the United States to maintain a more generous policy toward refugees based on our identity as a pluralistic nation.

   c. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to call on the United States Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, to review and revise the current program of economic sanctions on Syria so as to reduce their painful impact on ordinary Syrian families and on [religious,] civic, educational, and medical bodies [involved in peaceful pursuits for reconstruction and humanitarian relief] unassociated with any form of terrorism.

4. **Deepen our Partnership with Syrian Christians**

   a. Direct Presbyterian World Mission to provide an annotated list of media sources about events in Syria and the situation of PC(USA)’s Christian partners.

   b. Encourage PC(USA) pastors and congregations to build personal contacts and partnerships with Syrians: covenant to pray regularly for congregations in Syria, make visits to Syria, and develop relationships with Syrians in the United States. Encourage congregations to work with Syrian refugees now in the United States, to help and encourage them in ways that express Christian love.

   [Financial Implications: PMA $15,000]

   [Financial Implications: PMA $15,000]

**Rationale**

The situation in Syria continues to be one of the worst humanitarian crises of the present time. Since the conflict erupted in 2011, more than 470,000 Syrians have been killed, many more than 5.1 million documented refugees have fled the country in addition to thousands of undocumented refugees, and 6.3 million have been displaced internally [2016 data]. More than half the population of Syria have been killed or displaced from their homes and 13.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

The Christian community in Syria has roots stretching back to the first century. With the second largest number of Christians in the Middle East, this vibrant community, widely dispersed across the country, can play a significant role in the future of the country and the region. Over the past forty years, Christians, along with other religious minorities, have been protected from persecution by the secular policies of the Syrian government. In areas where the Syrian government is not in control, moderate Muslims, Christians from various traditions, and other minorities have often had their places of worship damaged or destroyed and their followers persecuted and forced to flee.

Today, that Christian community is significantly threatened by possible outcomes of the conflict in which control of the country could pass to Islamists intent on establishing a government that imposes a highly restrictive interpretation of Islam. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of PC(USA) affirmed the need to support Christians in the Middle East. Similar concerns for an end to violence and work for community reconciliation underlie the Good Friday Agreement (Northern Ireland) and the Ta’if Accords (Lebanon).

Recognizing the real dangers of an Islamist state and the scale of violence and suffering already experienced by the Syrian people does not excuse the widely reported human rights abuses of the Syrian government. While the violent reaction of the Syrian government to peaceful protestors during the 2011 Arab Spring shocked the world, the swift militarization and escalation of the conflict thereafter has spawned a conflict where all sides have committed or condoned crimes against humanity. Restorative justice, rather than retributive justice, may be possible in post-conflict Syria. Faith in God’s justice remains unshakable.

**Stop the Killing**

The first steps in the long process of reconciliation on all levels must involve shifting the focus away from efforts to gain an overwhelming military victory, dividing the country into separate states or other governmental outcomes that result in a weakened Syrian state. Concentrating on achieving a durable ceasefire would enable diplomatic discussions and negotiations, without pre-conditions, in which Syrians from all sides can play the central role in shaping their future and achieving their human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Syria is a signatory nation. The examples of Libya, Yemen, and Iraq show the dangers of losing a functional central government.
needs of Syrian civilians so they can rebuild their economic livelihood. The current system of sanctions must be reviewed to make it more supportive of the difficulties in operating businesses. Syria’s economic destruction has aided the recruitment of young men to fight for extremist groups in order to support their families. The licencing framework and export control requirements are complex, often requiring costly legal analysis, and acting as an impediment to international financing and trade.

The U.S. has an important role in bringing about a ceasefire and the demilitarization of the Syrian conflict. Christian understanding of the roles of faith and forgiveness has much to contribute to the process of reconciliation. In binding up the social and psychological wounds of war, reconciliation will have to address the long-standing grievances and aspirations of the Syrian people, in addition to the alienating consequences of war borne by individuals and communities.

“… in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us” (2 Cor. 5:19).

Alleviate the Suffering

With an estimated 11.5 million people displaced from their homes and with economic systems and social networks disrupted, the need for immediate assistance is immense. Refugees in neighboring countries, those farther afield, and those internally displaced within Syria, require urgent assistance. The World Bank estimates that more than a quarter of the housing and over half of the country’s medical and educational facilities have been damaged or destroyed. It also observes that the breakdown of social and economic systems, and the destruction of trust among citizens, continues to have a greater economic impact than the destruction of physical infrastructure. Long-term help is needed for the reconstruction and rebuilding of the country’s infrastructure. The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, PC(USA)’s partner denomination in the area, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, require financial support for their effective programs, which respond to needs of people of all faiths impacted by this crisis.

The requirements for the tasks of rebuilding are so immense that a major international effort will be required. The U.S. government must increase its level of humanitarian and economic support for Syria and encourage international organizations such as the United Nations to do the same. All nations—including the United States—need to meet their financial obligations to the UN. Due to unmet pledges and obligations, the UN has been forced to cut back on its support of refugees and internally displaced persons. The continuing fighting makes immediate assistance more difficult, and sometimes renders it impossible. The longer-term task of rebuilding can begin in earnest only when some form of negotiated settlement is in place.

The United States has a moral obligation to participate in the worldwide response to the desperate flight of people seeking to escape the brutal situation in Syria. In response to such desperation, the U.S. government should reopen its doors to a significant increase in the number of Syrian refugees. All refugees admitted currently face rigorous screening and exhaustive vetting by five of the nation’s top security organizations, following years of screening and vetting by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The number of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States to date—only 18,007, between October 2011 and December 2016—is far too low in terms of the numbers in need; the current freeze is unacceptable. The U.S. should accept its fair share of refugees looking for permanent resettlement. It is essential to continue to support the efforts of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and others engaged in working with congregations to facilitate resettling Syrian refugees in the U.S., as noted by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

For those Syrians who have remained in their own country, internally displaced or living in their own homes, the sharp downward spiral of the economy has had an immense impact on their standard of living. A key factor contributing to this downturn has been the sanctions imposed by the United States. Those sanctions, enacted in order to punish the Syrian government for its support of terrorism, violence, and human rights abuses, have had a major impact on the welfare of all Syrian citizens. PC(USA) Syrian partners have reported that, as a result of the sanctions, it has been very difficult for them to get permission to undertake international financial transactions or to import materials and supplies needed to establish or operate businesses, or for foreigners to provide assistance to support such activities. The licensing framework and export control requirements are complex, often requiring costly legal analysis, and acting as an impediment to international financing and trade.

The downward economic spiral has led to scarcities and price increases of everyday commodities while exacerbating difficulties in operating businesses. Syria’s economic destruction has aided the recruitment of young men to fight for extremist groups in order to support their families. The current system of sanctions must be reviewed to make it more supportive of the needs of Syrian civilians so they can rebuild their economic livelihood.

“The crisis has been made immensely more lethal and complicated as the numerous combatants have each found outside supporters ready to send in fighters, weapons, and money to bolster partisan efforts. The arrival of Islamic extremists with foreign backing has further complicated the violence that is taking place throughout Syria. As long as the supply of military resources continues to flow into Syria, the prospects for diplomatic progress remain severely limited. A diplomatic approach to achieve a durable ceasefire must be accompanied by an end to the flow of military support from all outside sources. “Blessed are the peacemakers …” (Mt. 5:9).
Deepen PC(USA) Partnership with Syrian Christians

PC(USA)’s Syrian Christian partners caution that U.S. perceptions of reality are misinformed by the fragmented, inaccurate, and often subjective reporting of Western media. Relying on more diverse information sources is crucial to a clearer understanding of the Syrian crisis.

Beyond accessing more balanced news sources about Syria, American Presbyterians can deepen their personal spiritual formation as they build contacts and partnerships with Syrian Christians, who are Christianity’s elder sisters and brothers in the faith. Such opportunities are made possible through visits to Syria sponsored by Presbyterian World Mission’s Syria Lebanon Partnership Network, and other denominational and ecumenical agencies such as the Outreach Foundation. PC(USA) partners on the ground can assist those seeking to understand the complexity of the conflict. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance materials offered to PC(USA) congregations working with Syrian refugees now in the United States greatly enhance community building. These relationships enable U.S. citizens to learn from Syrian refugees and also help ease the difficult transition that many of them face.

Prayer must undergird personal engagement with the Syrian conflict: prayer for Syrian people who suffer from the crisis, prayer for decision makers responsible for crafting and implementing just and compassionate policies, and personal prayer by each person as they seek the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit in search of ways forward in this complex situation.

... ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself’” (Lk. 10:27b).

... Pray without ceasing ... for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:17–18).

Concurrences to Item 12-09 from the Presbyteries of Cayuga-Syracuse, Chicago, Covenant, de Cristo, Huntingdon, Mission, Missouri River Valley, National Capital, New Castle, New York City, San Gabriel, Upper Ohio Valley, and Wabash Valley.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-09

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-09. This overture seeks to actively involve our church—through its Stated Clerk, its various programs of our Presbyterian Mission Agency, pastors, and congregants—in working for a consistent program to stop the killing, to work for reconciliation, to alleviate the suffering, and to deepen the PC(USA) partnership with Syrian Christians.

The United States has had a major role in the war in Syria and thus has a moral obligation to participate in the worldwide response to the suffering of Syrians and their desperate flight to escape the brutal situation in Syria. The Christian community is particularly under increasing risk from violence. In 2016, the General Assembly of the PC(USA) affirmed the need to support Christians in the Middle East. To this end, this overture encourages the deepening of PC(USA) partnerships with Syrian Christians.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-09

Comment on Item 12-09—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency, recognizing that there are many internal and external players in the Syrian Crisis and that the United Nations is the only one seeking to act impartially, suggests following the United Nations lead on the Syrian peace process, as the UN Special Envoy for Syria is engaged in multilateral peace talks with all sides.

Our partner, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria (NESSL) and Lebanon, welcomes this overture that speaks very succinctly and helpfully to this complex and rapidly changing situation.

In the overture’s call to deepen partnership with Syrian Christians, it invites us to deepen our understanding, and asks the Presbyterian Mission Agency to provide “an annotated list of media sources about events in Syria.” This is a highly contested subject, with much debate over the various narratives and sources. Any annotated list can only at best capture these disagreements and leave it to the reader to draw their own conclusions.
The overture also encourages people to visit Syria, which, with the right preparation working with our partner, NESSL, and with our Regional Liaison Elmarie Parker, has proved possible, safe, and secure. However, at the time of writing, recent attempts by U.S. Presbyterians to secure visas to visit Syria have failed. This does not mean that we should stop trying, for these visits are an important source of encouragement to our Syrian sisters and brothers, including even making the effort by applying for the visa, when making the trip may not ultimately be possible. Our understanding is that this situation has arisen in direct response to the U.S. Administration’s ban on visas for Syrians visiting the U.S.A.

Compassion Peace and Justice’s office of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance supports PC(USA) congregations and faith-based organizations in the U.S. who are actively engaged in the resettlement of refugees. We are deeply saddened by the profound impact that the U.S. government restrictions have had on the number of refugees admitted to the U.S., particularly for refugees from countries such as Syria. A series of Executive Orders, new operational requirements, delayed travel by U.S. personnel to conduct interviews, and the expiration of clearances all add up to slowing down the U.S. resettlement processes. As a result, less than 20,000 refugees of all nationalities combined are expected to be resettled during this federal fiscal year. World Refugee Day on June 20th offers PC(USA) congregations an opportunity to both recognize the wonderful blessing that refugees are to the U.S. and to challenge our U.S. elected officials to reinvest in resettlement as a viable response to refugees in need.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has been strongly supporting humanitarian response to the conflict in Syria since the war’s inception in 2012, working through our partners in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the ACT Alliance, and the Middle East Council of Churches, and will continue this work.

Item 12-10

[The assembly approved Item 12-10 as amended. See pp. 75, 77.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Gaza Violence.

Acting out of historic PC(USA) positions for human rights in the world, and presently out of concern for the human rights of all inhabitants of Gaza, the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Expresses its profound grief and sorrow for the families of all Palestinians killed in the Great March of Return protests at the Gaza border. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), from March 30–June 7, 2018, that number has reached 131 Palestinians (see OCHA Humanitarian Snapshot link), which includes fourteen children. [The names of those who were killed shall be included in the minutes of this proceeding, as available.] [See 12-10 Attachment for Item 12-10 List of those killed.pdf, p. 1160.]

2. Prays for the well-being and recovery of all who have been wounded and injured in violent confrontation. According to OCHA (see above) those numbers include 13,900 Palestinians and 4 Israelis.

3. Deplores the [targeting] [killing] of more than twenty clearly marked Palestinian medics serving the wounded, which includes Razan al-Najjar, a twenty-one-year old woman, and supports specific inquiry into the violation of international humanitarian law regarding this practice by the Israeli military. [As well, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) does not condone inciteful discourse [by Hamas] that inserts acts of violence into a massive peaceful demonstration.]

4. Renews the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s call for an end to the blockade of Gaza by Israel, which is assisted by Egypt in keeping its borders closed to those seeking safety and refuge.

5. Urges both U.S. and international support for basic human values for all Palestinians and Israelis despite the lack of a peace process or viable “two-state” solution, as was strongly affirmed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in “Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace” (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/israel-palestine-human-values-absence-just-peace/).

Rationale

The Great March of Return on March 30th was conceived with a positive spirit and framing, despite its purpose to underline the dire situation of Palestinian refugees, deprived for seventy years from any form of “right of return,” which is a right enshrined in the Declaration of Human Rights. Israeli author Amira Hass notes that Hamas was not the organizer of the Great March of Return, and the participants were unarmed civilians of all ages, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news.premium-gaza-s-march-of-return-reflects-a-desire-for-new-palestinian-politics-1.5963725.

The beginning date of the Great March of Return marked what Palestinians call Land Day, which began as a 1976 protest of Israel’s taking of Palestinian lands. On that day, six Palestinian citizens of Israel, who were protesting the land grab, were
shot and killed by Israeli border patrol. Since then, March 30th is commemorated by Palestinians as Land Day annually as a
continuing effort to keep hope alive for their land.

The 2018 planned six-week nonviolent protest began on Land Day and took place every Friday until the week of May 14th
when Israel cracked down on the protestors in the week that Israel celebrated seventy years as a state and Palestinians
commemorated seventy years of The Nakba, their “catastrophe” in Arabic.

This year’s Great March of Return coincided with the dedication of the new U.S. embassy in Jerusalem, which sparked
outrage across the Arab World and beyond. The embassy move was a unilateral action of the U.S. government emulated by
no major power or ally, given international agreements that Jerusalem’s “unique status should be negotiated by the affected parties.
The violent Israeli response to the protests reinforced the perception that the Israeli government has no plans for serious
negotiation with the Palestinians over rights or land, much less a functional state.

Conditions in Gaza are summarized briefly on pages 6, 9, and 27–31 of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) report:
https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/israel-palestine-human-values-absence-just-peace/. Living conditions have
only worsened with aggressive measures by Israel to reinforce the blockade by restricting access to aquifer water, destroying
tunnels (used primarily for sustenance, given above-ground surveillance), restricting fishing areas, limiting electricity and
internet capacity, limiting and restricting medical aid and supplies, and enforcing isolation in what the Norwegian Refugee
Council has called, “the world’s largest open-air prison.” See their full description of the dire situation here:

At the same time as the increasingly right-wing Israeli government squeezes human rights in Gaza, it appears to have no
constructive plan to deal with the humanitarian crisis it is creating. Thus, the possibility of a further tragedy for Palestinians on
an even larger scale cannot be ruled out.

The situation in Gaza today for 1.9 million people is a terrible example of collective punishment, which is a violation of
Geneva Conventions. In short, even before the events that have occurred as a result of the Great March of Return, the
humanitarian crisis in Gaza has been devastating and will only get worse. The fact that unarmed civilians are willing to brave
Israeli snipers in peaceful protest is a clear indication of their desperation. The violence by the Israeli military towards Gaza’s
citizens has been condemned by Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, as well as Amnesty International and Human Rights
Watch. Ten nations on the United Nations Security Council (nine votes are needed) voted for a halt to the use of “excessive,
disproportionate, and indiscriminate force” by the Israeli military on the Gaza border, and for the “consideration of measures
to guarantee the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.” The resolution did not go forward because the United
States chose to exercise its veto on the Security Council.

Following is the latest documentation of the recent Israeli violence by United Nations’ OCHA:
https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-snapshot-casualties-context-demonstrations-and-hostilities-gaza-30-march-7-
june.

Jeffrey DeYoe, Presbytery of Peace River
Sue Dravis, Presbytery of John Knox

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-10

Advice and Council on Item 12-10—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve
Item 12-10

This resolution is a timely call to prayer and action regarding the ongoing violence in the border area between Israel and
the Gaza strip. The outbreak of violence around the Great March of Return, well documented by this resolution and falling
almost exclusively upon Palestinians, is a further grim reminder of the consequences of unequal access to power. While certain
narratives about the recent violence have attempted to create a false equivalency, or in more extreme cases to blame the violence
directed at Palestinians upon Palestinians themselves, the PC(USA) in Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a
Just Peace (2016) explicitly rebuked any such spurious notions of implied balance of blame, noting: “We reject any false
equivalence between the capacity of a prosperous nuclear-armed state and that of a poor, divided, and occupied set of cantons”

That same document reminded the church of its mission to those who suffer, stating:

Following the commandments and example of its Lord, the church is called to attend to, care, and stand in solidarity with those who
suffer. God’s great self-revelations—at Sinai, to the prophets, in the incarnation—begin with “I have observed the misery of my people. ...
Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them ...” (Ex. 3:7–8). And God has enabled and commanded the church to
participate in that divine work as a central part of its ministry of reconciliation. So the church is called to both stand with and offer its resources
to those who suffer. It stands with those who suffer in order to understand the conditions in which they find themselves, to recognize its own
location in those conditions, and to see God at work there, transforming the world. It offers its resources to those who suffer as a demonstration
of its commitment to the mission to which it has been charged and as a sign of its belief in the abundance of a God who is the giver of all

223rd General Assembly (2018) 1153
Item 12-11

[In response to Item 12-11, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 75, 77–78.]

Alternate Resolution:

Recognizing that hope and love in the Israel and Palestine crisis must come from within, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. Celebrates whenever and wherever Palestinian and Israelis come together in building honest understanding and peace, working together to address inequality to pave the way to reconciliation.

2. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to identify grassroots organizations and ministries (especially for youth) in Palestine or Israel working for radical, systemic change.

3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to make these ministries and organizations known to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations for support and encouragement.

4. Where there are obstacles to this grassroots engagement in Israel/Palestine, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will advocate for freedom of engagement.

Commissioners’ Resolution. Resolution on Reconciliation Ministries in Israel and Palestine.

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA)

1. Call on more PC(USA) congregations to support grassroots organizations who are having success bringing together Israelis and Palestinians to build understanding and peace.

2. Instruct the staff and agencies of the denomination to develop resources to help congregations find and work with these grassroots organizations.

3. Encourage all to avoid describing grassroots peacemaking efforts as “normalization of an unjust situation.”

Rationale

The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls on us to be forces of reconciliation, not division; in forgiveness, not vengeance; affirmation, not harsh judgement. There is no more consistent theme in the New Testament than that of reconciliation. We learn of God’s reconciling act with humanity through Jesus Christ. We also learn of God’s command that we be agents of reconciliation in the world. The Confession of 1967 of the PC(USA) is explicitly committed to the notion of the church being a reconciling force in the world. Reconciliation isn’t “normalization of oppression;” it is the work of God and God’s people.

Gratefully, there are numerous congregations who have chosen to ignore polarizing strategies and sought their own way, a way they find more consistent with the Way of Jesus Christ. These congregations support God’s work of reconciliation through organizations in Israel and Palestine that do everything from bringing together Israeli and Palestinian youth to discuss and work for peace to people making sure that Palestinians with serious health issues can get the more advanced medical care available in many Israeli hospitals.

Why not turn our resources to support them? There are thousands of grassroots groups consisting of Israelis and Palestinians who are seeking to build understanding and, ultimately, peace from the bottom up through ancient strategies known to create reconciliations between bitter foes. Numerous PC(USA) congregations support some of these grassroots groups. Incredibly, at the General Assembly level, the staff and agencies have not been interested in supporting grassroots reconciliation efforts, labeling it as “normalization” of an unjust situation.

This overture recommends a major change in strategy by the PC(USA), moving from a policy-oriented to a grassroots peacemaking strategy. Let us work every month of every year supporting and nurturing grassroots organizations in Israel and Palestine to build peace from the from the bottom-up at the grassroots.

Wendy L. Keys, Presbytery of Redstone
Edwin G. Hurley, Presbytery of Sheppards & Lapsley
The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 12-11.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to actions that lead to reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. However, such actions must be consistent with the demands of justice and human rights.

This resolution makes numerous assertions without any documentary support, including some that are demonstrably false. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports numerous grassroots organizations that work for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. The most current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy statement, Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, makes these priorities explicit, stating:

Presbyterians support ecumenical and interfaith educational programs that bring Israeli and Palestinian children into contact with each other, such as Hand-in-Hand and Face-to-Face/Faith-to-Faith. Congregations need to educate themselves about all sides of the history of the conflict and about the structures of the occupation that prevent free movement within the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and into and out of Gaza. During mission trips they should witness and experience the restrictions on movement faced by Palestinians. (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/israel-palestine-human-values-absence-just-peace/, p. 9)

This resolution had the opportunity to be helpful, by naming further organizations working for reconciliation that may deserve the support of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Instead, it sets up a false dichotomy between policy and grassroots action (which can, and indeed should, reinforce each other) and casts unmerited aspersions upon the staff and agencies of the General Assembly.

It should also be noted that, by encouraging prescriptive limitations of speech, this resolution could have a chilling effect on the free exchange of ideas, including legitimate critique of strategies and tactics that may lead to violations of the values the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirmed in the actions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), especially the approval of Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-11

Comment on Item 12-11—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

It is not clear from the Rationale who these grassroots organizations that we are supposed to be supporting are, as no examples are given. The resolution is also misleading in suggesting that “at the General Assembly level, the staff and agencies have not been interested in supporting grassroots reconciliation efforts” as that is very much at the heart of our work. This is demonstrated by our partnership with such bodies as the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Mar Elias Educational Institutions, the Wi’am Conflict Transformation Center, the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations, and The Inter-Religious Coordinating Council, all of which are involved in facilitating grassroots encounters, better understanding, and reconciliation. Unfortunately, there are other organizations at work that purport to be promoting “reconciliation,” but in fact they are actually seeking to normalize or provide a gloss on what is a very unjust situation, and for that reason we would not work with them.

Item 12-12

[The assembly disapproved Item 12-12. See pp. 14, 78.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Ending the Classification of Israel as a Colonial Project.

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA)

1. Reject the notion that Israel is “a colonial project.”

2. Instruct the appropriate agencies and staff within the PC(USA) to stop distributing and instruct all staff and official agencies of the PC(USA) to avoid language that can be interpreted as advocacy for the idea that Israel is “a colonial project.” Specifically, the PC(USA) should stop distributing Why Palestine Matters: The Struggle to End Colonialism because it describes Israel as a “colonial project.”

Rationale

The PC(USA) is committed to being a reconciling force for peace in the Middle East. The 221st General Assembly (2014) explicitly divorced itself from the Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions (BDS) movement with the following language: “This action on divestment is not to be construed or represented by any organization of the PC(USA) as divestment from the State of Israel, or an alignment with or endorsement of the global BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanctions) movement” (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 261).

The 221st General Assembly (2014) also explicitly stated that Zionism Unsettled, a document created and distributed by the Israel Palestine Mission Network (IPMN) should not be viewed as representing the opinions of the PC(USA) in any way with the following language: “The 221st General Assembly (2014) declares that Zionism Unsettled does not represent the views
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and directs all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entities to express this statement in all future catalogs, print or online resources” (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 296). (The GA vote was a consensus vote without dissent.)

Two years later, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) explicitly divorced itself from the BDS movement’s desire to end Israel’s existence as a Jewish state by modifying an Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) paper that would have changed the PC(USA)’s long-standing support of and implied that the PC(USA) no longer favored a two-state solution by favoring no particular peace plan. The General Assembly’s clear reaffirmation of the two-state solution reads: “As disciples of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, of the people of Abraham and the lineage of David, we stand with the people of Israel, affirming their right to exist as a sovereign nation, and we stand with the Palestinian people, affirming their right to exist as a sovereign nation. Therefore, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms Footnote 8, which emphasizes a preference for a two-state solution. The assembly also affirms our desire to stay in conversation with our partners in Israel who work for peace. Finally, the assembly expresses its opposition to any efforts to deny or undermine the rights of the Palestinian people or the Jewish people to self-determination” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 61–62, 469).

The IPMN recently published a paper entitled Why Palestine Matters: The Struggle to End Colonialism that continues the themes in Zionism Unsettled that were rejected by the 221st General Assembly (2014) and advocates the one-state solution advocated by the BDS movement (and rejected by the 2014 and 2016 General Assemblies). Why Palestine Matters: The Struggle to End Colonialism goes beyond the rejected themes of Zionism Unsettled to argue that Israel is a colonial project in which European Jews, supposedly with no relation to the land historically known as Israel, created a colonialist state, ignoring the historical fact that Israel is a state recognized by the United Nations and the United States. Distributing Why Palestine Matters: The Struggle to End Colonialism not only creates the impression that the PC(USA) supports the extreme BDS positions advocated in the document, it makes the PC(USA) party to the advocacy of these secular BDS positions, even though the General Assembly has disassociated itself from such BDS positions.

While General Assemblies of the PC(USA) have been highly critical of some of Israel’s actions in the recent past and took a divestment action to protest the actions of three multinational corporations, General Assemblies have repeatedly reaffirmed the right of Israel to exist. They did so as recently as 2016 when the General Assembly added to an ASWSP report not once, but twice, language explicitly stating that the PC(USA) opposes any effort to deny the right of the Jewish people to self-determination just as it opposes efforts to deny that right for Palestinians. The General Assemblies have also repeatedly distanced themselves from the most radical opponents of Israel, especially the BDS movement that seeks to replace a Jewish state of Israel with a single, non-Jewish state of Palestine.

Given the PC(USA)’s support of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state as well as the right of Palestinians to live in a sovereign nation of their own, the inflammatory language of Why Palestine Matters: The Struggle to End Colonialism needs to be rejected explicitly by the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The document was created by a PC(USA) sanctioned mission network. An example of the inflammatory rhetoric can be found on page 68, “Indeed, the ongoing Zionist colonization of Palestine, combined with Israel’s influence over US policy toward Arab states, reminds most Arabs that the colonial period of the late-nineteenth century never truly ended. Israeli settlements in occupied Arab lands continue a tradition of foreign colonization of our countries that has been unbroken since nineteenth-century Palestine.”

Does the PC(USA) really want to be associated with an attempt to smear the state of Israel with the label of “a colonial project?” There is only one way to avoid that happening. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) must explicitly say that the IPMN produced paper in no way speaks for the PC(USA). The paper speaks for its authors. The General Assembly must also say that it rejects the assertion that Israel is “a colonial project.”

The action proposed by this overture should in no way be construed as censorship. It is not censorship to promote the positions of the PC(USA), which support both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. The PC(USA) has repeatedly affirmed the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to have autonomous nations (the two-state solution). Why would the PC(USA) circulate literature that directly attacks its own position? Anyone who wants to read about the one-state solution can simply Google it or visit the IPMN website. Indeed, it seems totally counterproductive to go through a divisive, expensive process, as the PC(USA) did in 2016 regarding two states or one state, and then publicize the positions that were soundly defeated by a General Assembly vote. This overture isn’t promoting censorship. It promotes supporting the positions agreed upon by duly elected commissioners to General Assemblies.

Donald J. Baker Jr., Presbytery of Shenandoah
Wendy L. Keys, Presbytery of Redstone

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-12

Advice and Council Item 12-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 12-12.

While this paper asserts that the use of the adjective “colonial” is an inaccurate description of the creation of the modern state of Israel, it gives no support for a counter interpretation. The rhetorical question “Does the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
really want to be associated with an attempt to smear the state of Israel with the label of ‘a colonial project?’” in no way constitutes an argument against that interpretation.

In contrast, *Why Palestine Matters: The Struggle to End Colonialism* gives a detailed interpretation of the colonial narrative and presents a valid, if contested, argument. In the absence of any attempt to rebut the colonial argument factually and historically, this commissioners’ resolution reads like a narrow attempt to stifle discussion and academic inquiry.

Further, as the rationale for Item 12-12 states, during the debate over a previous publication, *Zionism Unsettled*, the 221st General Assembly (2014) instructed that a statement be affixed to all future copies of the document declaring that it does not represent the views of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The current document in question has the same language: “IPMN speaks TO the church, not FOR the church. This book does not represent the views of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

The Presbyterian bookstore currently sells numerous documents that do not represent Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy with no such disclaimers affixed. The authors of this text clearly presented this study in a way that should cause no confusion about its status. This being the case, Item 12-12 is asking for unnecessary restrictions on the free exchange of ideas among Presbyterians of good conscience, and should be rejected.

**ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-12**

*Advice and Council on Item 12-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 12-12.

ACREC urges the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to vote against this commissioners’ resolution because censoring or censuring a mission network of World Mission faithfully carrying out their General Assembly mandate is counterproductive.

The denomination’s Israel/Palestine Mission Network, IPMN, is one of 40+ mission networks within World Mission of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is unique because it is the only such network with a General Assembly mandate (2004), which empowers the network to advocate for Palestinian human rights.

The book in question, *Why Palestine Matters, the Struggle to End Colonialism*, includes a disclaimer on its back cover stating that the network speaks TO the Church, not FOR the Church” and that “This book does not represent the policies of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.”

The Presbyterian bookstore is not in the business of discriminating what is sold based on political positions and sells many items along the entire spectrum of opinions without concern for what a contentious book might reflect on church policy.

Finally, our committee agrees with the 216th General Assembly (2004) that Presbyterians need to educate themselves about the facts on the ground in Israel/Palestine and arm themselves with as much information as possible in order to help advocate for equal rights for all those affected by the decades-long hostilities in the region. In academia, it is widely regarded that Israel meets the description of a settler-colonial state.

For examples, see:

**Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native**, by Patrick Wolfe [Patrick Wolfe is an Australian writer and historian. He has held appointments at various universities, including La Trobe University, Harvard University, Stanford University, and the Universities of Melbourne and New Orleans. His publications include *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (Cassell 1999). He has written extensively on race, colonialism, sovereignty, genocide, and the history of anthropology. He has been active in the Australian Aboriginal Land Rights movement and in Australians for Palestine.]

**The Colonial Present**, by Derek Gregory, distinguished scholar and Professor of Geography at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

**Viewing Israel-Palestine Through the Lens of Settler-Colonialism**, Ilan Pappe, University of Exeter, UK.


**PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-12**

*Comment on Item 12-12—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).*

The lengthy rationale for this commissioners’ resolution fails to speak to the statement that we “Reject the notion that Israel is ‘a colonial project.’” This would be a new position for the PC(USA) and so needs to be substantiated. For example, how is the continued expansion of settlements on Palestinian land not a form of colonialism? Or, how is shooting at thousands...
of unarmed civilians trying to return to their homes and lands that were taken from them seventy years ago not a form of colonialism. Or, returning to modern day Israel’s origins in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, a statement made by the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, at the height of the British Empire, expressing how Britain would exercise its mandate in Palestine not “a colonial project”? These are the questions we will be asked if we approve this position.

Despite the commissioners’ protestations, the second part of the resolution looks very much like censorship. Besides the publication contains a very clear statement on its cover that it does not represent the views of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), so this proposal looks very much like an attempt to stifle debate on this issue.

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Item 12-13


Commissioners’ Resolution. On Opposing and Disengagement from Iran.

To support the hard work required for peacemaking and nuclear disarmament, the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Encourages all parties to the “Iran Nuclear Deal,” the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to continue to comply with the terms of that agreement.

2. Urges the government of the United States to reconsider its unilateral withdrawal from the agreement, particularly in light of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s reporting that Iran was in full compliance with its provisions and the way the “Deal” was seen to be helping open that society to further positive change.

3. Affirms the value of respectful understanding and reducing tensions with the government and 82 million people of Iran of whom two-thirds are Persian and one-third a variety of ethnicities and non-Shiite Muslim religious traditions, including Christians—some of whom will suffer from association with unwise actions by Western nations.

4. Opposes punitive sanctions on U.S. and European-based non-military companies and nongovernmental organizations as ultimately ineffective, if not counterproductive.

5. Opposes efforts to increase hostilities with Iran, which do not seem to serve U.S. interests.

6. Urges the U.S. Congress to fulfill its responsibility to hold hearings and otherwise hold the Administration accountable for faithful execution of the laws related to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, and to effective diplomacy and statecraft in general, so that the U.S. may be a reliable partner to its allies and an upholder of international law.

7. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations), the Office of the General Assembly, and other Presbyterian agencies to include this resolution in their witness, and urges members, congregations, and presbyteries to continue to support peace and reconciliation efforts, and to include the people of Iran, as well as our mission partners, in their prayer, study, and witness.

Rationale

Without claiming perfection for any multiparty agreement, the Iran Nuclear Deal provides a strong inspection program to verify that Iran would not enrich uranium sufficient for a single weapon before 2030, and promises no nuclear weapons development after, in exchange for an end to economic sanctions and increased trade and free movement. The Stated Clerk, the Reverend J. Herbert Nelson, II, spoke promptly to the issues at stake: http://www.pcusa.org/news/2018/5/9/stated-clerk-issues-statement-response-iran/.

An article in Unbound also assesses the matter: http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/standing-up-for-the-iran-nuclear-agreement/.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as part of the worldwide communion of Reformed Churches, shares a commitment to seek peace and reconciliation among peoples and to support the work of governments to these ends. In order to be effective servants and prophets when called upon, we draw upon and respect the expertise of diplomats and others who build positive relationships and nurture human rights. There is enough distrust, hostility, and genuine environmental danger in the world without adding to it; better to rejoin and, if possible, improve the Iran nuclear deal rather than observe a further deterioration of relations and weakening of U.S. interests.
ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-13

Advice and Council on Item 12-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 12-13 with this editorial change for clarification: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

“1. Encourage the United States government to continue to comply with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)[, to continue to comply with the terms of that agreement].”

Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age (1988) calls for multilateral engagement to stop nuclear proliferation with the clear goal of nuclear disarmament on a comprehensive basis. One could wish that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) had a longer timeline and might address concerns about Iran’s role within the region; however, these could be addressed alongside the JCPOA agreement or “deal.” The United States’ withdrawal, without any viable alternative plan, alienates allies and may open the door for Iran to restart its nuclear program, making the world less safe. The withdrawal also undercuts the credibility and hence capacity of future administrations to negotiate treaties, making it more difficult for the United States to play a constructive role in preventing nuclear proliferation and supporting disarmament initiatives.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-13

Advice and Council on Item 12-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).


This resolution is aligned with both the core values of our Christian and Reformed faith and commitment to peace and bridge building, not bridge burning among the nations. We are called to “gather all nations and tongues so that they may come and see God’s glory” (Is. 66:18). ACREC is also committed to a policy of openness and collaboration, not close mindedness and separation.

This resolution will certainly bring people together, creating peace, and as such empowering the Christian witness in the Middle East.

By withdrawing from the Iran deal, we will be hurting and weakening U.S. allies and friends, discouraging moderation and without knowing encouraging Islamic extremist ideologies.

By withdrawing from any peace negotiation in the Middle East, we are negatively impacting the life of Christian minorities who usually become the scapegoat (easy target) for such unwise actions taken by western nations.
Names of those killed in the Gaza protests – all Palestinian – since the "Great March of Return" began on March 30, 2018 (Land Day), in reverse order, with their ages:

- **June 18, 2018**
  - Zakariya Hussein Bashbash, 13
  - Sabri Ahmad Abu Khader, 24

- **June 14, 2018**
  - Ahmad Ziad al-‘Aassi, 21

- **June 8, 2018**
  - Haitham Mohammad al-Jamal, 15
  - Ziad Jadallah al-Breem, 27
  - Yousef al-Faseeh, 29
  - Emad Nabil Abu Drabi, 26

- **June 6, 2018**
  - Ezzeddin Abdul-Hafith Tamimi, 21

- **June 4, 2018**
  - Ramzi Najjar, 22

- **June 03, 2018**
  - Mohammad Na’im Hamada, 30

- **June 1, 2018**
  - Razan Ashraf Najjar, 22

- **May 30, 2018**
  - Naji Maisara Abdullah Ghneim, 23

- **May 28, 2018**
  - Nasser Aref al-‘Ereini, 28

- **May 27, 2018**
Abdul-Halim Abdul-Karim an-Naqa, 28
Naseem Marwan al-‘Amour, 20

May 26, 2018
Hussein Salem Abu ‘Oweida, 41

May 25, 2018
Yasser Sami Habib, 24

May 24, 2018
Ahmad Ali Qattoush, 23
Mohannad Bakr Abu Tahoun, 21

May 19, 2018
Mohammad Mazen Oleyyan, 20
Mo’in Abdul-Hamid Sa’ey, 59

May 15, 2018
Omar Abu Fol, 30
Talal Adel Matar, 16

May 14, 2018
Ahmad Mahmoud Rantisi, 27
Said Mohammad Abu al-Kheir, 16
Yahya Ismail Rajab Daqour, 22
Ismail Khalil ad-Dahouk, 30
Ahmad Mohammad Hamdan, 27
Mohammad Abdul-Salaam Harraz, 21
Ahmad Mohammad Hamdan, 27
Emad Ali Sadiq Sheikh, 24
Ahmad Zoheir as-Shawwa, 24
Khalil Ismail Mansour, 25
Mohammad Mahmoud ‘Abdul’al, 39
Mohammad Hani Najjar, 33
Wesal Fadel Sheikh Khalil, 15
Mohammad Abdul-Rahman Miqdad, 28
Sa‘adi Said Abu Salah, 16
Ahmad Abdullah al-Odeini, 30
Ahmad Fares Haarb Shehada, 23
Zayed Mohammad Al-‘Ammarin, 19
Ibrahim Ahmad az-Zarka, 18
Shaheer Mahmoud al-Madhoun, 32
Mahmoud Yahya Hussein, 24
Mohammad Abdul-Salaam Harraz, 21
Ahmad Awadallah, 24
Mahmoud Mustafa ‘Assaf, 23
Ala’ Anwar al-Khatib, 28
Mohammad Ashraf Abu Sitta, 39
Mahmoud Rabah Abu Moammar, 28
Jihad Mofeed al-Farra, 30
Mustafa Mohammad al-Masri, 22
Mos’ab Yousef Abu Laileya, 28
Ahmad Majed Atallah, 27
Ezzedeen Nahed al-’Owaiti, 23
Anas Hamdan Qdeih, 21
Ahmad Adel Mousa Sha’er, 16
‘Ali Mohamed Khafajah, 21
Fadi Hassan Abu Salah, 30
Jihad Mohammad Mousa, 31
Mousa Jaber Abu Hassanein, 36
Mohammad Riyad al-‘Amoudi, 31
Ahmad Fawzi Kamel al-Tatar, 28
Ezzedeen Mousa al-Samak, 14
Mo’tasem Fawzi Abu Louli, 20
Mahmoud Yahya Hussein, 24
Mo’taz Bassam an-Nuno, 31

May 12, 2018
Jamal Abdul-Rahman Affana, 15

May 11, 2018
Jaber Salem Abu Mustafa, 40

May 6, 2018
Mohammad Abu Reeda, 20
Baha’ Qdeih, 23

May 2, 2018
Anas Shawqi Abu ‘Asser, 19

April 29, 2018
Yousef Jasser Abu Jazar, 16
Atiya Mohammad al-‘Ammawi, 20
Yousef Ahmad al-‘Ammawi, 18
April 28, 2018
Azzam Hilal Oweida, 14

April 27, 2018
Khalil Na’im Atallah, 22
Abdul-Salam Bakr, 29
Mohammad Amin al-Moqyd, 21

April 25, 2018
Ahmad Mohammad Abu Hussein, 25

April 22, 2018
Tahrir Mahmoud Wahba, 18
Abdullah Mohammad Shamali, 20

April 20, 2018
Mohammad Ibrahim Ayyoub, 15
Sa’ad Abdul-Majid Abu Taha, 29
Ahmad Rashad al-Athamna, 24
Ahmad Nabil Abu ‘Aqel, 25

April 13, 2018
Islam Herzallah, 28

April 12, 2018
Abdullah Mohammad Shahri, 28
Mohammad Hjeila, 31

April 9, 2018
Marwan Odah Qdeih, 45

April 6, 2018
Hamza Abdul-al, 20
Yassar Mortaja, 31
Tha’er Mohammad Rabe’a, 30
Ala’ Yahya az-Zamily, 17
Osama Khamis Qdeih, 38
Ibrahim al-‘Orr, 20
Sidqi Faraj Abu ‘Oteiwi, 45
Mohammad Sa’id Mousa al-Haji Saleh, 33
Hussein Mohammad Madhi, 16
Majdi Ramadan Shbat, 38
April 4, 2018
Shadi Hamdan al-Kashef, 34
Mojahed Nabil al-Khodary, 23

April 3, 2018
Ahmad Omar Araf, 26

April 2, 2018
Fares Roqab, 29

March 30, 2018
Mosab Zohair Salloul, 25
Sari Waleed Abu Odah, 28
Abdul-Qader al-Hawajri, 42
Jihad Zoheir Abu Jamous, 30
Bader Faeq as-Sabagh, 22
Naji Abdullah Abu Hjeir, 25
Ahmad Ibrahim Odah, 19
Jihad Ahmad Freina, 34
Hamdan Ismael Abu Amsha, 26
Mahmoud Sa’adi Rohmi, 33
Abdul-Fattah Abdul-Nabi, 18
Ibrahim Abu Sha’ar, 22
Mohammad Naim Abu Amro, 27
Amin Mansour Abu Moammar, 22
Mohammad Kamel Najjar, 25
Wahid Nasrallah Abu Sammour, 27

https://israelpalestinetimeline.org/ accessed 6/20/2018

This website records each person killed, and aims to remind us all that every single death is the end of a life, devastating and terrifying to parents, children, siblings, friends, neighbors, witnesses and even entire communities. A neighbor or friend murdered is a loss that doesn’t go away.
**Item 13-01**

[The assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 14, 21.]

In regard to the Jarvie Commonweal Endowment, the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) are directed to form a Reconciliation Team to identify and engage those concerned in a peacemaking and reconciliation process, and report out to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

**[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual—$75,600. Total—$151,200]**

_On Creating an Administrative Commission to Work with the Synod of the Northeast Regarding the Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Fund—from the Presbytery of Huntingdon._

The Presbytery of Huntingdon overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to create an Administrative Commission to work with the Synod of the Northeast to

1. Assess the current placement, management, and location of the Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Fund (now valued at $90 million).
2. Assess the current placement of responsibility for supervising the provision of services to the recipients of the prescribed generous Jarvie Service assistance.
3. Assess the current PC(USA) Presbyterian Mission Agency and Foundation organizational responsibilities for both the services and the endowment of the Jarvie Fund.
4. Affirm the Foundation and PC(USA) Presbyterian Mission Agency for engaging a chaplain and social worker to assist in administrating the Jarvie services.

**Rationale**

The Jarvie Commonweal Service (the “Jarvie Service”) is an old age and relief service for people in the Greater New York City area (fifty-mile circle of Columbus Circle, Manhattan) that was created by James N. Jarvie in the 1920s and subsequently transferred to the Board of National Missions (“BNM”) pursuant to a 1934 Trust Agreement.

The 1934 Trust Agreement created the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee and charged it with the responsibility of conducting the Jarvie Service, requiring that the BNM “shall charge said committee with the duty of administering the commitments above assumed and of adding thereto and continuing as outlined herein, in fact and in spirit, the Jarvie concept of Old Age Relief and Service.”

Until mid-2005, the Jarvie Service and its staff were administered directly by the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee created by the 1934 Trust Agreement, and Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) served as the employer of record for the Jarvie staff.

In mid-2015, the Jarvie Service was outsourced to a for-profit home care agency.

It is unknown whether the control of the trust and the corpus supporting it still resides in New York, as the trust explicitly requires.

A commissioners’ resolution, Item 13-08, was submitted to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) out of which the assembly strongly recommended “that both parties (commissioners and Foundation) avail themselves of the Foundation’s offer to mediate all issues [between Friends of Jarvie and the Presbyterian Foundation] in this resolution” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 957).

Representatives of the Presbyterian Foundation and representatives of the Presbyteries of Elizabeth, Newark, Palisades, Hudson River, Southern New England, and New York City (all having communities lying within the fifty-mile circle) met in person on November 15, 2017, pursuant to the action of the 223rd General Assembly (2016).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) created the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 38–40, 226) and approved the appointment of a new All Agency Review Committee (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 88) and tasked them with evaluating the current structures, mission, and ministry of the current General Assembly structures.

Despite being made aware of the situation described in the first five paragraphs of this rationale, neither the Way Forward Commission, nor the All Agency Review Commission have yet made any recommendations regarding the handling of the Jarvie fiduciary responsibilities.
The actions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on Item 13-08, the creation of the Way Forward Commission, and the creation of the All Agency Review Committee have not resolved the underlying issues and concerns in the management and care of the Jarvie Fund.

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Concurrence to Item 13-01 from the Presbytery of Hudson River.

Concurrence to Item 13-01 from the Presbytery of Long Island with Additional Rationale.

The Jarvie Commonweal Service (the “Jarvie Service”) is an old age and relief service for people in the Greater New York City area (fifty-mile circle of Columbus Circle, Manhattan) that was created by James N. Jarvie in the 1920s and subsequently transferred to the Board of National Missions (“BNM”) pursuant to a 1934 Trust Agreement.

The 1934 Trust Agreement created the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee and charged it with the responsibility of conducting the Jarvie Service, requiring that the BNM “shall charge said committee with the duty of administering the commitments above assumed and of adding thereto and continuing as outlined herein, in fact and in spirit, the Jarvie concept of Old Age Relief and Service.”

Until mid-2015, the Jarvie Service and its staff were administered directly by the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee created by the 1934 Trust Agreement, and Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) served as the employer of record for the Jarvie staff.

In mid-2015, the Jarvie Service was dramatically restructured when the staff of the Foundation, in secret collaboration with a few of the members of the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee, and when Foundation staff, in concert with PMA, orchestrated the sudden outsourcing of the Jarvie Service to a for-profit home care agency.

It is unknown whether the control of the trust and the corpus supporting it still resides in New York, as the trust explicitly requires.

A commissioners’ resolution, Item 13-8, was filed with the 221st General Assembly (2014) out of which the assembly directed the Friends of Jarvie (created by the General Assembly in 1994) to manage the funds and services and the Presbyterian Foundation to “Mediate their differences and report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).”

Representatives of the Presbyterian Foundation and representatives of the Presbyteries of Elizabeth, Newark, Palisades, Hudson River, Southern New England, and New York City (all having communities lying within the fifty-mile circle) met in person on November 15, 2017, pursuant to the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) created the Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee and tasked them with evaluating the current structures, mission, and ministry of the current General Assembly structures.

Despite being made aware of the situation described in the above paragraphs 1–5, neither the Way Forward Commission, nor the All Agency Review Commission, have made any recommendations regarding the handling of the Jarvie fiduciary responsibilities.

The actions of the 221st General Assembly (2014) on Item 13-8 and the creation of the Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee have not resolved the underlying delinquency in the management and care of the Jarvie Fund.

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ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-01

Advice & Counsel on Item 13-01—from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 13-01 requests the General Assembly to direct the Moderator(s) to create an administrative commission to assess aspects of the operation of the Jarvie Commonweal Service, a social service program for older persons in the NYC metro area, whose management was replaced in 2015.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 13-01 be approved.

The Jarvie Commonweal Service has long been known in the New York City metropolitan area as a unique social service agency dedicated to helping Presbyterians and others, often older widows, stay in their homes and congregations, among other activities. Mr. James N. Jarvie was a dedicated Presbyterian and made other generous donations to the church. The provisions of the trust were adjusted previously, without controversy, to devote a percentage of funds to broader housing needs. From the 1970s forward, greater diversity was achieved in management and profile of persons served, within the donor restrictions of the trust agreement. Over the years, dedicated Presbyterians served on a committee required by the trust, supervising the program that has been directed by Presbyterians and providers explicitly linked to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
Since 2015, operation of the Jarvie program has been provided by a large-scale, for-profit social service agency. In the wake of this considerable change, there have been talks between the Presbyterian Foundation and proponents of Items 13-01 and 13-08, who come primarily from presbyteries affected by the action, which they term, “outsourcing.” Clearly, the presbyteries do not believe the letter and the spirit of the program are being maintained, while the Presbyterian Foundation disputes the wording of the proponents and claims greater efficiency in operation. Secular legal authorities (such as the Attorney General of New York) have so far declined to enter the disagreement, and the presbyteries have chosen the Presbyterian process of an administrative commission rather than legal action.

Although the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is tasked to help the church speak to systemic justice questions, such as the rights of peoples subjected to war or deprivation, we do not ignore community and even personal impacts of church decisions, in this case touching 70–125 individuals at any given time. These are members and not simply clients. Jarvie’s model of care has certainly required updating, but he sought to extend the ministry of the church in some uniquely personal ways. And he entrusted his church with his hopes for a particular kind of ministry, which was conveyed in the word, “commonweal.” (A somewhat analogous trust was set up by Mr. Vartan H. Jinishian to care for Armenians and Armenian-Americans. The Jininishian Memorial Program is currently administered within World Mission ministries).

The Foundation indicates that the Presbyterian Mission Agency leadership in 2015 did not see the mission of the Jarvie Commonweal Service to fit within its mission objectives. There also may have been management questions for which a disruption in relationships may have been considered justified. The change of approach, however, appears to have been a decision by managers of the Foundation and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and at least some of the local presbyteries and supporters were not consulted.

The formation of an administrative commission should not threaten the administration of the Jarvie Service, but might helpfully consider such questions as:

1. What is the appropriate level of regional governance and accountability in a relatively limited scale program intended to be anchored in a particular area?

2. What are the appropriate mission considerations to be considered along with the management of a considerable endowment? For example, do the capacities required for social service or home healthcare complement or divert from parish nursing on the congregational side, and concern for better health insurance, housing, and tax policy on the public witness side?

3. How consistent is a for-profit secular service provider with the concept of “commonweal” and its historic church relationships? In this case, how bound should the church’s mission be to the terms of a trust and intentions of a donor? Could Presbyterian or other church-related, nonprofit services that employ social workers and/or home healthcare aides in the region meet Jarvie’s intent?

4. What are the roles of the Foundation, as asset manager, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, as doer of mission and ministry, and were these roles and responsibilities discussed publicly when the changes were made in 2015?

If such a commission were formed, as we find reasonable, it would be important to include persons aware of the interests and history of the Jarvie Committee, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Presbyterian Foundation, with a majority from the regional presbyteries. The role of the Synod of the Northeast seems appropriate to help the relationships of the presbyteries involved. And while the work of assessment does not require full transparency (which may be ill-advised), a public report would be expected and an agreement among participants hoped for.

**BOARD OF NATIONAL MISSIONS AND PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION**

**COMMENT ON ITEM 13-01**

*Comment on Item 13-01—From the Board of National Missions and the Presbyterian Foundation.*

The Board of National Missions and the Presbyterian Foundation recommends that this overture be defeated and provides the following information to help the assembly more fully understand the content and context of this overture.

The General Assembly’s Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement states, “In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will ... [t]reat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2018, p. 63). The Board of National Missions and Presbyterian Foundation are eager to resolve disagreements over the Jarvie Program in this spirit and belief.

One element of building trust and respect is to provide full and accurate detail regarding those areas of disagreement. The information provided below seeks to do that, and can be summarized in four points: This overture is another in a lengthy series of unsuccessful efforts to overturn an administrative decision made three years ago by the Board of National Missions; the assessments in the recommendation section are not necessary and carrying them out would not be a good use of the church’s time and money; the rationale includes false and/or misleading statements; and the Jarvie Program is being operated responsibly and successfully in all respects.
1. This is another in a lengthy series of unsuccessful efforts to overturn an administrative decision made three years ago by the Board of National Missions.

After the Presbyterian Mission Agency withdrew from being the service provider for the Jarvie Commonweal Service Program, the Board of National Missions undertook a careful, eighteen-month search and assessment process to find another service provider, ultimately selecting VIP Health Care Services of Queens, New York. The proponents of this overture and others have attempted to overturn this decision through the following actions:

- Three complaints to the New York State Attorney General, all of which were unsuccessful,
- A complaint to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, which was rejected, and an appeal of that rejection, which was denied, and
- A commissioners’ resolution presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), which was rejected by committee and subsequently voted down on the floor of the General Assembly.

2. The assessments in the Recommendation section are not necessary and carrying them out would not be a good use of the church’s time and money.

   a. In answer to the overture’s Recommendation 1:

      The Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Fund has been managed for the past eighty-four years by the Board of National Missions pursuant to the 1934 Trust Agreement. The fund has been responsibly invested, and its results are audited annually. There is no need to assess “the placement, management, and location” of the fund.

   b. With regards to the overture’s Recommendations 2 & 3:

      There is no need to revisit the governance and operational structure of the Jarvie Program, which have always been as follows:

      - Under the 1934 Trust Agreement, the Board of National Missions (BNM) has custody of and manages the endowment funds and has the overall responsibility for all aspects of the program, including the delivery of service to beneficiaries.
      - Under the Trust Agreement, BNM organizes a committee called the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee. BNM appoints and removes the members of this committee and delegates to the committee, the administration, and oversight of the program.
      - A service provider operates the program, employing and supervising the social workers who provide service directly to beneficiaries.

3. The overture’s rationale includes false and/or misleading statements.

   The following information corrects misstatements made in the overture’s rationale:

   a. Responding to the Second Paragraph:

      - Except in a technical sense, the Trust Agreement did not actually “create” the Jarvie Committee. Instead, it directed the Board of National Missions to “organize” a committee. Thus, rather than having independent existence directly from the trust, the committee is a creature of the board, which “organizes” it, decides its size and structure, and appoints and removes its members.

      - Similarly, the Trust Agreement did not directly “charge” the Jarvie Committee with responsibilities for the service. Instead, the trust directed the board to provide a charge to the committee. Thus, the committee’s mandate with respect to the Jarvie Service is delegated to it by the board, and the board determines the breadth and scope of that mandate.

      - The charge the board is to provide to the committee does not include “conducting” the Jarvie Service. Instead, the trust says the board shall charge the committee with “administering” the service. The trust is silent on whether this “administration” function includes actually providing the service directly to beneficiaries, or whether the board can simply charge the committee with providing administrative oversight over another entity that is the service provider. Either approach would be consistent with the trust language.

      - What is missing from this Rationale is that the trust gives exclusive control over the Jarvie Service—“both of money and service”—to the Board of National Missions. By way of the Trust Agreement, the board assumed “all obligations” for the service. Thus, the board has ultimate accountability, and ultimate control, for all aspects of the Jarvie Service.
b. **Responding to the Third Paragraph:**

- It is unclear what is meant by the words “administered directly.” Both prior to and after mid-2015, the Jarvie Committee has provided close oversight of the Jarvie staff, meeting on a regular basis, and requiring detailed reporting. However, at no time, either before or after mid-2015, were Jarvie staff members employed by the Jarvie Committee.

- It is unclear what is meant by the words “employer of record.” Prior to mid-2015, Jarvie staff were employees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in every sense of the word, receiving salary payment from PMA, being trained by PMA, being subject to PMA’s human resources policies, having reporting relationships to managers at PMA, and potentially being terminated by PMA.

c. **Responding to the Fourth Paragraph:**

- The ultimate accountability of the BNM to operate the Jarvie Service was not “outsourced.” The responsibility of the Jarvie Committee to “administer” the service was not “outsourced.” The service provider that employs the Jarvie staff and operates the program day-to-day was changed as a result of PMA’s decision to withdraw from that function. The agency selected to replace PMA is a private, family-owned agency chosen after an eighteen-month search process from among twelve agencies considered.

d. **Responding to the Fifth Paragraph:**

- It is not “unknown” where control of the trust resides. The 1934 Trust Agreement provides that control of the trust lies with the Board of National Missions. The board is a New York Corporation whose headquarters have been in Jeffersonville, Indiana, since 1988.

- The 1934 Trust Agreement does not “require”—explicitly or implicitly—that control must reside in New York. The Trust Agreement is silent on this issue.

e. **Responding to the Tenth Paragraph:**

- This paragraph refers to “the underlying issues and concerns in the management and care of the Jarvie Fund…” However, nowhere in the recommendation or the rationale are there any allegations of misconduct or poor judgment in the management and care of the fund.

The concurrence from the Presbytery of Long Island includes many of the same false or misleading statements. Additionally, in its last paragraph, the concurrence refers to “the underlying delinquency in the management and care of the Jarvie Fund.” The preceding paragraphs do not itemize any such “delinquencies,” and in fact there have been none.

4. **The Jarvie Program is being operated responsibly and successfully in all respects.**

The Jarvie funds are maintained in segregated accounts and are accounted for separately from other Foundation funds. Income from the Jarvie funds is dedicated exclusively for the support of the Jarvie Program, less a modest (0.99 percent) management fee that is charged on all endowments or other assets managed by the Foundation or BNM. The finances of the Jarvie Program are audited annually, and the Jarvie Endowment funds are audited as part of the Presbyterian Foundation annual audits, providing transparency into the income earned on Jarvie funds, as well as the costs of operating the Jarvie Program.

Since Jarvie Program LLC, a subsidiary of VIP Health Care Services, was engaged as service provider, Jarvie beneficiaries have been surveyed twice, with excellent results. Not a single one of the beneficiaries has expressed dissatisfaction in any way. There have been numerous effusively positive comments about the social workers employed by VIP.

Moreover, the Jarvie Program has achieved these outstanding results while reducing administrative costs and ending a multiyear pattern of deficits. The program has not reduced grants or services to beneficiaries and has also resumed adding new beneficiaries as others leave the program. Twenty-three new beneficiaries have been accepted since the transition, at least nine of whom were referrals from Presbyterian pastors. Prior to the change, deficit budgets were planned through 2020, and no new beneficiaries were scheduled to be added for at least three years.

Improved financial management also made possible a major new commitment to the Jarvie Program with the hiring in June 2017 of the Reverend Marjory Roth, a Presbyterian minister, as full-time chaplain. Rev. Roth provides spiritual care, prayer, and pastoral counselling to Jarvie beneficiaries, in partnership with their congregations.

The Jarvie Commonweal Service Program has a ninety-year track record of success in caring for its beneficiaries. This is due in some measure to the integrity and diligence with which the Board of National Missions has managed the Jarvie funds and to its careful oversight of all aspects of the Jarvie Program. The ongoing stability and vitality of the Jarvie Program is a tribute to the extraordinary vision of James N. Jarvie and his compassion for fellow human beings, his commitment to service, and his faith in God.

The Jarvie Program is an extraordinary success story of which all Presbyterians should be proud.
Item 13-02

[The assembly approved Item 13-02. See pp. 14, 21.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) confirm the following named individuals to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board of Directors:

1. Margaret Cyrus, black female, ruling elder, 66–75, Presbytery of the Pacific, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, at-large position.

2. Sharon Core, white female, teaching elder 46–55, Presbytery of Western Reserve, Synod of the Covenant, presbytery position.

The following positions are currently vacant. The General Assembly Nominating Committee will transmit nominees for positions 3 and 4, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., nominees for positions 5 and 6, and the Presbyterian Foundation Board nominee for position 7.

3 Pending, At-large position
4. Pending, At-large position
5. Pending, PILP At-large position
6. Pending, PILP At-large position
7. Pending, Presbyterian Foundation Board position

Item 13-03

[The assembly approved Item 13-03. See pp. 14, 21.]

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) confirm the following director of its subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., who, as of the submission of this report, has been elected for the year 2017–2018, consistent with the Deliverance for New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., as approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999) and amended by the 212th and 214th General Assemblies (2000) and (2002), and subject to applicable law:

Karen L. Garrett, Attorney, White, Female, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Mid-America.

Rationale

Karen L. Garrett was elected November 9, 2017, to fill a vacancy.

Item 13-04

[The assembly approved Item 13-04. See pp. 20, 21.]

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Board asks the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to confirm the election of the Reverend Dr. Thomas F. Taylor for another term as president and chief executive officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

Rationale

During his two terms of service, Tom Taylor has led the Foundation through a significant period of growth and development by following specified goals and establishing a strategic plan.

Under Tom’s leadership, the Foundation has reversed a downward trend in giving, and has steadily increased the number and dollar amount of new gifts, achieving a record of $72 million in 2017, and a cumulative amount of new gifts of $337 million during his tenure.

Under his leadership, the Foundation partnered with a new organization to manage the Foundation’s investments. This move, in 2017, has allowed us to lower the fees on our funds and improve investment performance, while maintaining the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s commitment to faith-based, socially responsible investing.
Under Tom’s leadership, the Foundation has improved and broadened relationships with other Presbyterian agencies and with other denominations around the world, resulting in improved operating processes and growth in new assets, especially in 2017.

Under Tom’s leadership, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation has devised online giving services now in use by more than 500 congregations, and Project Regeneration, repurposing church assets for new ministries in amounts of more than $60 million.

Under his leadership, the Foundation has accepted responsibility for and worked to improve operations of various large missions and ministries of the PC(USA), such as the Theological Education Fund and the Ghost Ranch Conference Center in New Mexico.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Board of Trustees believes that Tom’s background as a pastor, an attorney, and a professor holding a Ph.D., and having national and international mission experience, uniquely qualify Tom to lead the Foundation in the combination of missional and business complexities that the Foundation’s leadership requires.

Under Tom’s leadership, the Foundation has distributed more than $493 million for mission and ministry.

The trustees, at their stated meeting on February 22, 2018, have unanimously elected Tom for a third term as president and chief executive officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

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**Item 13-05**

Moved to 13-Info (New Covenant Trust Company). [See p. 1189.]

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**Item 13-06**

[The assembly approved Item 13-06. See pp. 14, 21.]

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to do the following:

1. Continue its churchwide gifts program, as well as utilize the Foundation’s subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., for the benefit of churches, church organizations, and individuals who wish to use the foregoing to make gifts as an expression of Christian faith and stewardship.

2. Explore and initiate ways to enhance its expertise and capacity in support of planned and deferred giving (including wills emphasis) and to explore the services of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., that will allow these programs and entities to be ever more effective contributors toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission for the Glory of God.

3. Continue to explore and cultivate the growing number of national and worldwide ecumenical and business relationships consistent with the mission and witness of the PC(USA) to further advance the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation’s & New Covenant Trust Company’s (NCTC’s) work to serve the church in ministry and mission.

4. As donors increasingly ask for more transparency from the mission and ministry organizations they support, continue the Foundation’s commitment to focus on its fiduciary obligation to ensure funds are used in accordance with donor intent.

**Rationale**

Each General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation trustees ask the General Assembly to endorse the Foundation’s work in support of mission and ministry throughout the church. This unbroken series of affirmations allows the Foundation to confidently pursue its ministry among congregations, presbyteries, synods, related organizations, and individual Presbyterians. General Assembly validation of our vital work on behalf of mission and ministry is essential to our effectiveness throughout the church.

An amount of $122 million was made available through the Foundation for mission and ministry in congregations, mid councils, national agencies, and related entities in 2016 and 2017. Additionally, as a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation’s efforts to nurture the accumulated resources of Presbyterians to further the mission of the church, call us to grow the resources that support mission giving for the future. New gifts and accounts amounting to more than $115 million were received over the course of the two-year period.
These striking results are a testament to the power of giving witnessed by the Foundation as it lives its goal of bringing people and mission together. Because of the generosity of faithful Presbyterians, over the past five years the Foundation has made available nearly $300 million for the work and mission of the church.

Item 13-07

[The assembly approved Item 13-07 as amended. See pp. 14, 21.]

The [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, through the Board of National Missions (a constituent corporation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation),] Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, & Foundation recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

1. Commemorate the 90th anniversary of the launch of the Jarvie Commonweal Service (also known as the Jarvie Program) and the acceptance of its first beneficiary in 1927.

2. Affirm the successful transition and ongoing work of the Jarvie Program in support of elderly beneficiaries, and the ongoing oversight of said program by the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee (JCSC) pursuant to the donative documents.

3. Commend [the commissioners to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and others who have collaborated and] [all those who have] worked in good faith and good will [with members of the JCSC and staff of the Presbyterian Foundation] to continue the healthy and strong ministry to the Jarvie family of clients.

Rationale

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) debated a commissioners’ resolution that sought an administrative review of the Jarvie Program by a special committee. The assembly voted overwhelmingly to reject the resolution, and added this comment: “In the interest of Christ’s reconciliation and the hope for closure, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) would strongly recommend that both parties (commissioners and Foundation) avail themselves of the Foundation’s offer to mediate all issues in this resolution” (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 957). Following six constructive meetings (in person and by telephone conference) of Foundation and Jarvie leaders with the commissioners who brought the resolution and other interested parties, the Board of National Missions offers this resolution in response to the assembly’s request.

About the Jarvie Program

The Jarvie Program, formally known as the “James N. Jarvie Commonweal Service,” is an elder-care program that provides social work services and, in many cases, financial support to elderly individuals who meet certain qualifications that were defined by James N. Jarvie, a wealthy lifelong Presbyterian who endowed the program ninety years ago.

The 1934 Trust Agreement that conveyed the funds, fiduciary responsibility, administration, and operation of the Jarvie Program to the Board of National Missions (BNM) expressly stated that the board was to continue the “Jarvie concept of Old Age Relief and Service.” That concept reflected Mr. Jarvie’s “understanding and deep sympathy for the unfortunate, particularly for those who, born and reared and living the active years of their lives in comfortable circumstances, found themselves in their old age in poverty and distress.”

A network of Jarvie Program staff, including social workers and a Presbyterian chaplain, provide care for members of the Jarvie Program family and help sustain them through their lifetime. The social workers are employed by the Jarvie Program LLC, a subsidiary of VIP Health Care Services.

In addition, the Jarvie Program includes a separate fund that provides grants to organizations in the Jarvie catchment area to provide services to older adults. The program provided $100,000 of these grants in 2016 and an additional $100,000 in 2017. This is consistent with the level of grants paid in prior years.

The Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a constituent corporation of the Presbyterian Foundation, has custody of and manages the Jarvie endowment funds and has the overall responsibility for all aspects of the Jarvie Program.

Jarvie Program Governance

Several years after the death of James N. Jarvie in 1929, the trustees who had been operating the Jarvie Program decided to turn that responsibility over to the Board of National Missions, reasoning that this would provide greater stability than continued administration by an independent board that had no institutional affiliation and whose members were growing older.

According to a trust agreement executed in 1934, the Board of National Missions assumed “all obligations” for the Jarvie Program. The board has custody of and manages the endowment funds, and it has the overall responsibility for all aspects of the Jarvie Program, including the delivery of service. It is ultimately accountable for ensuring that beneficiaries are being served appropriately by the Jarvie Program.
Under the trust agreement, the board organizes a committee called the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee (Jarvie Committee). The board appoints and removes the members of the Jarvie Committee and delegates to the committee the administration and oversight of the program. The Jarvie Committee is not a corporation and has no authority to enter into contracts. That authority lies solely with the board. The Jarvie Committee meets regularly in New York City.

Transition of Program Oversight

Separate from the Board of National Missions and the Jarvie Committee, a third group hires and employs the Jarvie social workers and other staff who provide service directly to beneficiaries. In November 2013, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), which had performed this operational function since 1986, informed the BNM that it had decided to terminate its management agreement with the BNM. The PMA had concluded that the program was not consistent with its mission work plan, and its leaders recommended that the program be operated by a larger, New York City-based agency. The board appointed an eight-person ad hoc committee to explore potential providers. A request for information was prepared that identified five different criteria:

- An excellent track record of service to beneficiaries;
- Existing, in-house capability and expertise to operate Jarvie Program;
- A demonstrated ability to operate efficiently and within budget;
- Financial soundness and full regulatory compliance;
- Mission and values alignment.

A total of twelve agencies were contacted, and five finalists were selected. The strengths and weaknesses of the five were carefully considered. Their regulatory compliance history was examined. Questions were asked. Sites were visited. And ultimately VIP Health Care Services of Richmond Hill (Queens), New York, scored highest on all five of the criteria. VIP is a family-owned, licensed home care services agency that has provided social work and health care in the New York City area for more than forty years. VIP has extensive experience in elder-care and is relied upon by state and local agencies to operate numerous funded social work programs. Based on that, and with the concurrence of the PMA, VIP was selected and a contract was negotiated. In July 2015, the PMA terminated its Jarvie employees and its oversight of the program. At that point, the Jarvie Program was transitioned to VIP, operating as Jarvie Program LLC.

Current Operation of the Jarvie Program

The board and the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee have closely monitored the performance of VIP’s Jarvie Program LLC over the two-and-a-half years since the transition, and have been exceptionally pleased. Since the transition, there have been two surveys of Jarvie beneficiaries, and the results have been uniformly positive. There have been numerous effusively positive comments about the social workers employed by Jarvie Program LLC to provide the Jarvie service.

Moreover, the Jarvie Program has achieved these outstanding results while achieving program overhead and administrative cost savings and ending a pattern of deficits the program had been experiencing without any reductions in grants or services to beneficiaries. Additionally, the program has been able to resume adding new beneficiaries as others leave the program. A total of nineteen new beneficiaries have been accepted to the program since the transition, and four to five others are awaiting approval at the time of this writing. At least nine of the new beneficiaries came as referrals from Presbyterian pastors in the New York area. Prior to the change, deficit budgets were planned through 2020 and no new beneficiaries were scheduled to be added from 2015 to 2017.

The Presbyterian Chaplain

In the summer of 2017, the board made a major new commitment to the Jarvie Program by hiring the Reverend Marjory Roth, a Presbyterian minister, as full-time chaplain to the Jarvie Program. Rev. Roth is providing spiritual care, prayer, and pastoral counselling to Jarvie beneficiaries, in partnership with their congregations. The budget to hire the chaplain became available because of the Jarvie Program’s more efficient business model that has achieved significant costs savings without compromising benefits and stipends for beneficiaries.

Conclusion

Questions raised by two commissioners to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) regarding details of the transition and continuing operation of the program have been substantively addressed through a series of constructive meetings with leaders of the Jarvie Committee and Foundation staff. The good faith contributions of these commissioners and other interested parties to the ongoing care for Jarvie beneficiaries are commendable, and are much appreciated by the Board of National Missions.

The Board of National Mission firmly believes that the services provided to Jarvie beneficiaries have improved since the transition, and have been accomplished at a lower administrative and overhead cost than previously and without running a
deficit, thereby enabling the addition of new beneficiaries and the hiring a full-time chaplain to provide spiritual care that has been a missing element.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-07

Advice & Counsel on Item 13-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) answer Item 13-07 with the action taken on Item 13-01.

See Item 13-01 for more information.

Item 13-08

[Item 13-08 was answered by the action taken on Item 13-01. See pp. 14, 21.]

On Creating a Special Committee to Assure Compliance with Donor Restrictions on the Administration of the Jarvie Commonweal Service—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) expresses concern that the recent restructuring of the Jarvie Commonweal Service raises ecclesial issues; and recognizing its responsibility and duty to oversee the work of its bodies, and to ensure that those bodies honor express promises made to donors, and to promote openness and accountability in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), directs the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to appoint, within sixty days from the close of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), a special committee with the following responsibilities:

1. The special committee is to conduct an administrative review, which shall have the power and responsibility to investigate the recent changes to the governance and accounting treatment of the Jarvie Commonweal Service (“Jarvie Service”) and compliance thereof with the terms of the 1934 Trust Agreement and the General Assembly’s instructions to its constituent bodies, and to take what action it finds necessary to assure that the Jarvie Service thenceforth continues to be in compliance with the Trust Agreement and those instructions, including the power to speak with appropriate witnesses and obtain relevant documents under the control of any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) body or agency; and including the authority to obtain staff support (as funded below) through the Office of the General Assembly.

2. The special committee shall complete the first phase of its work and prepare an interim report and set of recommendations no later than one year from its date of appointment, bearing in mind the needs of the Jarvie Service recipients, which shall be presented to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly; and a final report that shall be made to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

3. The expenses incurred by the special committee shall be budgeted and advanced by the Board of National Missions (“BNM”) or its fiduciary, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (“Foundation”), out of the Jarvie endowment or the earnings thereon, as administrative expenses incurred under the Trust Agreement.

[The Presbyterian Foundation finds several untrue and unproven legal conclusory statements in the Rationale which they address in their comments following the overture.]

Rationale

The new Form of Government, in G-4.0101, requires that a corporation formed by the General Assembly to hold property (such as money), shall “receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the council” [i.e., the General Assembly].

The General Assembly has placed express restrictions on the management of “property” by its subordinate entities, which include the Foundation and the Board of National Missions (BNM), which are designed to preserve this property and ensure that the national Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) honors the express terms of any gift accepted by the Foundation or its constituent corporations, including the express terms of the Trust Agreement signed by BNM in 1934 when it accepted the Jarvie endowment.

The 198th General Assembly (1986) included such restrictions in the “Deliverance Implementing a Design for the Corporation Structure of Certain Agencies of the General Assembly,” issued in 1986, which states in Section 3(d)(3) that “in every case where a donor has specified the purposes for which principal or income may be expended, refrain from making any expenditure inconsistent with the terms of the gift.”

The Jarvie Service is an old age and relief service for people in the Greater New York City area (defined by a fifty-mile radius of Columbus Circle, Manhattan) that was created and operated by Mr. James N. Jarvie in the 1920s and subsequently transferred by the Jarvie Fund to BNM with a significant. self-sustaining endowment pursuant to a 1934 Trust Agreement.
The 1934 Trust Agreement required the BNM to create, continue, and support the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee ("JCSC") with the responsibility of conducting the Jarvie Service. It required the BNM to “charge said committee with the duty of administering the commitments above assumed and of adding thereto and continuing as outlined herein, in fact and in spirit, the Jarvie Concept of Old Age Relief and Service.”

The Jarvie Concept of Old Age Relief and Service is not merely care for elderly people; rather, as stated in the 1934 Trust Agreement, the aged needy must be helped to live, not merely to exist. This also includes a Trust requirement for making outside grants to NYC-area senior organizations.

The Jarvie Service is entirely financially supported by the earnings on the Jarvie endowment, now worth approximately $90 million and held and invested as agent for the BNM by the Foundation.

Until mid-2015, the Jarvie Service and its staff were administered solely and directly by the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee, a group independent of the BNM board as required by the 1934 Trust Agreement.

In mid-2015, after secret preparations, the Jarvie Service was dramatically restructured and its regular professional and other staff summarily fired by the Foundation, without the prior approval and knowledge of the entire Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee. The Foundation then hired a private for-profit home care agency to provide all services to Jarvie Service beneficiaries, dismissed some or all of the JCSC members mid-term, and replaced the JCSC itself and its Trust-mandated authority with a Foundation “Jarvie Advisory Committee” which operates in a cloud of secrecy.

In 2016, the Foundation abruptly changed its accounting treatment of the $90 million Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Fund that had been a liability “funds held for benefit of others” for eighty years, commingled it with the Net Assets equity owned by the Foundation, and named the Board of National Missions as its new “beneficiary” without required court approval. A large group of New York City area ministers and elders asked the Foundation to reconsider this new accounting treatment, and provided substantial supporting documents and information. The Foundation refused to make any changes and refused to explain why it would not do so.

The organizational and accounting changes made by the Foundation to the Jarvie Service and Fund will prevent any other Presbyterian stakeholders from verifying compliance with the promises BNM made to the Jarvie donor under the Trust Agreement. All of the earnings on the Jarvie Funds is required to be available in priority to provide benefits to Jarvie beneficiaries, not to the Foundation or its designees.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) received a commissioners’ resolution (Item 13-08) raising concerns with the Foundation’s restructuring of the Jarvie Service, and approved a comment suggesting that the Foundation and the commissioners seek reconciliation of those issues (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 957, https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search). Some inconclusive meetings were held, but the Foundation from the outset refused to consider restoring the Jarvie Service to independent control by the Jarvie Service Committee and other measures required by the 1934 Trust Agreement. The important fundamental issues of governance raised in the commissioners’ resolution thus remain unresolved along with numerous other incidental and derivative matters.

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission declined to take jurisdiction over this dispute with the Foundation, saying that any failure by the Foundation in 2015 to comply with BNM’s fiduciary and other promises to the Jarvie Fund donor raise only civil, state law issues; neither donor nor beneficiaries have any ecclesial compliance recourse within the church. (The Session of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church v. The Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of National Missions, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Remedial Case 222-08).

Despite the prior direction of the General Assembly to meet and resolve these issues, the staff of the Foundation and the BNM and their Boards have so far failed to provide requested relevant information and documents relating to their unlawful decision to restructure the Jarvie Service, and satisfactorily explain how the restructuring and almost total lack of transparency and professional oversight in its subsequent operation meets the plain requirements of the 1934 Trust Agreement and the limitations on use of property entrusted to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) imposed by the General Assembly and the needs of Jarvie beneficiaries.

223rd General Assembly (2018)
Response to Request on Item 13-08—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution received a request for clarification from the leadership team of 13 Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, & Foundation.

Request for clarification on Item 13-08 presents the following questions upon which it seeks constitutional interpretation:

1. Assembly Committee 13 asks the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to advise Assembly Committee 13 whether or not Item 13-08 is out of order in light of the Book of Order citations dealing with administrative reviews stating that the review of a lower council is done by a higher council (Book of Order, G-3.0108). Item 13-08 asks for an administrative review of the Foundation, which is not a council of the church.

2. Assembly Committee 13 asks the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to advise Assembly Committee 13 whether or not Item 13-08, as written, is constitutional. Item 13-08 would grant the authority to a committee to take action vs. recommending action. In addition, since no action by a council has been taken, there is no action to review.

Findings

Pursuant to G-3.0501c and G-6.02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

1. With respect to the first question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that Item 13-08 is not out of order. A special committee to conduct an administrative review is not limited only to the provisions described in G-3.0108b, c. While the Book of Order citation referenced does speak directly of the oversight of a higher council over a lower council, that does not negate the responsibility of any council to review the actions of its own agencies. Book of Order, F-3.0209, states that “Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church.” For the General Assembly, this includes “providing those services, resources, and programs performed most effectively at a national level” (Book of Order, G-3.0501c), which includes the administration of the Jarvie Commonweal Service. This authority can be executed in many ways. In this particular instance, administrative review could be carried out by an individual, a task force, a special committee, or an administrative commission.

2. With respect to the second question presented, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that Item 13-08, as it is written, asks the General Assembly to appoint a committee with responsibilities beyond the purview of a committee. If the assembly intends that administrative review of the work of the Jarvie Commonweal Service be carried out, the reviewing body can be established in accord with the desired parameters of its work. If the assembly desires that the review body be empowered to investigate and to take action on behalf of the assembly, then it needs to appoint an administrative commission. If the assembly desires that the review body be empowered to inquire and recommend subsequent action to the next General Assembly, then a task force, special committee, or other body could be appointed.

Item 13-09

Moved to Item 13-Info. [See p. 1180.]

Item 13-10

[The assembly approved Item 13-10 as amended. See pp. 14, 22.]

The Board of Pensions recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) accept the document, Living by the Gospel: A guide to structuring ministers’ terms of call, and request the Board of Pensions to annually update and distribute, at the Board of Pensions’ expense, the document to all mid councils, committees on ministry, committees on preparation for ministry, committees on preparation for ministry, and pastor nominating committees.

[In an effort to promote awareness of gender disparity in clergy benefit and salary packages, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) urges COMs, within twelve months of the close of the assembly, to]

- study and adopt the theology of benefits in the document Living by the Gospel;
- conduct a review of the last five years of salary and benefit statistics by gender in their own context and share the findings with clerks of session, CPMs and candidates for ministry;
- share these statistics annually at presbytery;
provide a copy of Living the Gospel to PNCs and incoming committee members; and,

in situations where a pastor is not receiving benefits, or when his or her salary is below minimum, require the session to provide a full written explanation to the COM.

[Replace “sisters and brothers in Christ” with “siblings in Christ,” in good stewardship, as reprinted.]

Rationale

This guide to structuring ministers’ terms of call promotes employment practices that are a witness to Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. Appendices include salary studies and data on plan benefits provided to newly ordained ministers. Living by the Gospel outlines significant new programs designed to help small employers, innovative new ministries, and recently ordained ministers who are burdened with educational debt. It is intended to be a resource to serve mid councils, committees on ministry, committees on preparation for ministry, churches, and search committees.

The Board of Pensions develops and administers The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Benefits Plan includes pension and retirement savings plan; medical, death, and disability coverage; and optional programs. In addition, the Board of Pensions administers The Assistance Program and provides educational and wholeness programs for members of the Plan.

The church’s provision of benefits for its employees is holy work because it allows them to bring their best gifts to ministry. Living by the Gospel begins with the Board of Pensions’ Theology of Benefits, which is grounded in Scripture, the Book of Confessions, the Book of Order, and reports and papers approved by previous General Assemblies. The church has stated a commitment to compensation that includes salary, benefits, vacation, and opportunity for spiritual growth and renewal.

The Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is based on values. The plan demonstrates the connectional church with community nature and generational equity. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regards benefits as a matter of justice, mission, compassion, and stewardship.

The Book of Order requires that all ministers installed as pastors be provided with the package the Benefits Plan defines as “Pastor’s Participation.” These dues are calculated as a percentage of effective salary, reflecting community nature. Ministers’ well-being is supported by Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants, CREDO, and the Minister Educational Debt Assistance Grants (need-based grants of up to $25,000 over a five-year period).

Living by the Gospel introduces “Pathways to Renewal”—an employer dues incentive that reduces dues for congregations who select Pastors’ Participation for new plan members under the age of forty. This incentive is designed for congregations with less than 150 members where there has not been an installed pastor for at least three years or any church with an installed pastor that expands ministerial headcount. The discount is available to the employer for the lesser of five years or the termination of the employment relationship.

Living by the Gospel exposes and will track gender inequity in the hiring practices of the PC(USA) and its congregations. Over the last ten years, more women than men have been ordained, yet men have obtained benefits at a greater rate and the salary study appendices show an ongoing gender gap in compensation. Continuing to track this important data annually is critical in assessing progress toward true gender equity.

Living by the Gospel concludes with a demonstration of the Board of Pensions’ stewardship in managing the Pension Plan, Retirement Savings Plans, Death and Disability Plan, and Medical Plan. The Board of Pensions is the means through which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) cares for those who answer God’s call to ministry. Living by the Gospel is a resource for mid councils, committees on ministry, committees on preparation for ministry, churches, and search committees. When congregations and other employers provide just compensation for their employees, they provide witness to the Lord and are living by the Gospel.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-10

Advice & Counsel on Item 13-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 13-10 with comment.

ACWC is grateful to the Board of Pensions for explicitly naming the realities of gender disparity in this document:

Over the last ten years, there has been a distinct gender disparity as to the provision of benefits in PC(USA). Women outnumber men ordained, 1,597 to 1,503, but men have obtained benefits at a far greater rate—77 percent to 62 percent. Although there are areas of progress, the gender distinction in compensation is clear, as the salary study in the appendices of this document shows. While the Board cannot know the individual circumstances and choices of those seeking a call, the overall pattern cannot be ignored. It is therefore incumbent on COMs to embrace a goal of gender equity in reviewing and approving terms of call for all ministers (Living By the Gospel 10).

ACWC encourages this assembly to not simply receive this information, but to consider an action plan for addressing this systemic gender injustice beyond hoping COMs will embrace a goal of gender equity.
[In response to Item 13-11, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 14, 22.]

Alternate Resolution:

1. Encourages the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to consider forgiveness of mortgage grants established in 1968 or earlier only to congregations closing and turning over their assets to their presbyteries, potentially including the total amount of the grant as well as any accumulated interest.

2. Request the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to inform all affected congregations and their presbyteries as this decision effectively provides debt relief to presbyteries closing congregations and thus may affect presbytery mission strategy as well as the decisions of congregations.

[Financial Implications: PMA Restricted Annual Loss of Revenue $106,485; PMA Restricted Total Loss of Revenue $212,970]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Issuing a Jubilee Declaration for Church Mortgage Grants Pre 1968.

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to declare a “Jubilee” for all PC(USA) congregations holding church mortgage grants established in 1968 or earlier, forgiving the total amount of the grant and any accumulated interest.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to inform all affected congregations directly of the Jubilee Declaration, notifying them of the note forgiveness and thanking them for their faithful service to the PC(USA).

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to devise ways to publicize and celebrate the Jubilee Declaration.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), provides a wonderful service to the denomination, making low-interest loans (below market) available to congregations and providing professional financial advice to congregations considering building campaigns. This resolution is unrelated to the work initiated since the inception of PILP. Instead, it seeks to forgive the “Church Mortgage Grants” that predate the formation of our denomination. It seeks to provide a “Jubilee” for all PC(USA) congregations (mostly small churches) holding these grants/loans that are more than fifty years old.

Before the formation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1983, the former “northern” UPCUSA issued funds to small congregations to help sustain them. These funds were known as “Church Mortgage Grants.” Though the term “Grants” was used in the name, it was understood that these funds were considered grants only so long as congregations continued in ministry. If they closed their doors, or if they left the denomination to join other denominations, the amount was immediately considered a “loan” and was due and payable, with interest, at the time of the church closing or departure.

Just over 800 of these old loans still exist, totaling approximately $8.7 million without including interest. In today’s numbers, they are comparatively small amounts of money. Most of the grants were issued for as little as $1,000, to as much as $25,000–30,000. Some of the loans were made as early as the 1920s and 1930s, with some as late as the early 1960s.

After the creation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) [PC(USA)] in 1983, and after the creation of the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), in the late 1980s, a predecessor to the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) assigned the responsibility for monitoring and collecting these loans to PILP. They have done so in the form of quarterly statements issued to presbyteries along with quarterly statements on the status of the presbyteries’ other PILP loans.

Reasons to declare a “Jubilee” and grant release from the “Church Mortgage Grants”:

1. It has been fifty to ninety years since these “grants” were made. The role of the church is not to hold indebtedness indefinitely. The time has come, and is overdue, to grant release.

2. As interest is only calculated at the time of closing, a congregation already grieving may discover that a very old grant has been converted to a loan, adding significantly to the indebtedness, with repayment in full required. This can leave the remaining members with a very negative impression of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

3. The repayment requirement removes funds from the church’s presbytery where funds at closing could help initiate new ministries or revitalize existing ones.
ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-11

Advice and Council on Item 13-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve an alternate resolution for Item 13-11.

Item 13-11 proposes ending the potential indebtedness of congregations leaving the denomination or simply closing, whose long-ago mortgage loans convert to debt in either event. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the following substitute motion:

“In response to Item 13-11, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approves the following:

“1. Encourages the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to consider forgiveness of mortgage grants established in 1968 or earlier only to congregations closing and turning over their assets to their presbyteries, potentially including the total amount of the grant as well as any accumulated interest.

“2. Request the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to inform all affected congregations and their presbyteries as this decision effectively provides debt relief to presbyteries closing congregations and thus may affect presbytery mission strategy as well as the decisions of congregations.”

The pre-1968 mortgage grants were structured to provide an incentive for growing congregations. Without distinguishing between congregations closing and congregations leaving the denomination, the commissioners’ resolution provides an incentive for the departure of congregations and weakens our presbyteries. This substitute respects the Presbyterian ecclesial principle that all property is held in trust of our whole church, and should be used in service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy responds to this resolution not to oppose generosity but to affirm that congregations and presbyteries have a moral accountability for any shared or gifted assets of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Item 13-A

Approved. [See p. 22.]

Minutes, Board of Pensions

Item 13-B

Approved. [See p. 22.]

Minutes, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

Item 13-C

Approved. [See p. 22.]

Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Item 13-D

Approved. [See p. 22.]

Minutes, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc.
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("ILP" or the "program") offers low-cost loans for capital purposes to churches, mid councils, and other organizations within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the "PC(USA)" or the "church"). As one of the six agencies of the PC(USA), we are the national lender for the denomination. We fund these loans from two sources: investor funds and endowment funds. The investor funds are raised through the sale of investments called Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts. These investments provide a competitive financial return plus the opportunity to participate in the development of the church through the loans ILP issues. Investor-funded loans and the investments themselves are assets and liabilities of ILP.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. promotes the growth of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bringing together the visions of church developers and the resources of Presbyterian investors and financial partners.

The endowment funds are the result of donations from generous Presbyterians over many years dating back to 1843—donations given specifically to support the growth and development of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The ILP manages the entire loan process for both the investor-funded loan portfolio and the endowment-funded loan portfolio from beginning to end. However, the endowment funds—both the loan portfolios and the uncommitted funds for each endowment fund—are held in trust by the PC(USA) Foundation or the Presbyterian Mission Agency and sit on their respective balance sheets.

Guided by the best practices of the financial industry, ILP is committed to faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us for the support and growth of the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

When we refer to our lending for “capital purposes,” our deliverance issued at the 207th General Assembly (1995) directed us to lend to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) organizations “to enable them to acquire or improve real property” (Minutes, 1995, Part I, p. 366). We can help fund the purchase, construction, expansion, or renovation of worship and mission space. We can also fund the purchase of unimproved land for the purposes of future construction of church buildings or for parking areas. Responding to the 1001 Worshipping Communities initiative and the increased use of rental space by congregations for worship and mission, we now offer loans for leasehold improvements.

Donor restrictions received with the endowment funds have similar restrictions allowing for only capital purpose loans. We cannot extend loans to churches for operating expenses or program or mission purposes; nor can we lend to individuals for any purpose.

The endowment-funded loan portfolio did not experience this jump in loan numbers. Although still quite active, the small projects, the smaller loans. So, although we still had many loans using endowment funds, the total dollar amounts were significantly less and insufficient to replace the loans being paid down or paid off. Therefore, the portfolio actually

Continuing to emphasize these areas, 2016 and 2017 delivered positive results. We have seen increased interest in our program across the denomination as our pipeline of loans (loans approved but not yet closed and closed loans not yet fully disbursed) set historical highs in both years. This now stands at $23.6 million ("M") as was our disbursed loan portfolio. Much of this growth came from (1) our increased emphasis on face-to-face meetings with mid council leadership in order to increase our exposure and their understanding of what we can offer their congregations, and (2) our increased number of face-to-face meetings with congregations seeking to borrow funds. Our expanded consulting services (more thoroughly discussed below) were clearly an important part of stimulating this growth as well.

Having this larger disbursed loan portfolio reflects both the need that exists from the various PC(USA) organizations (primarily churches) and our ability to fulfill our mission in providing low-cost funding to these organizations. Equally important is that this larger portfolio enables ILP to move forward in one of our long-term goals: decreasing our net interest margin. For many years we have strived to decrease our net interest margin that, in turn, would allow us to lower the loan interest rates we charge borrowers. When our loan portfolio increases this allows us to spread our operating costs over a larger base of loans thereby reducing the pressure on the net interest margin needed. As market rates have climbed over the past two years, including five increases in the prime rate, we have not had to increase our rate. This is a direct result of the larger loan portfolio.

The endowment-funded loan portfolio did not experience this jump in loan numbers. Although still quite active, restrictions on endowments limit the type and size of projects/loans the endowments can fund. The endowments fund the smaller projects, the smaller loans. So, although we still had many loans using endowment funds, the total dollar amounts were significantly less and insufficient to replace the loans being paid down or paid off. Therefore, the portfolio actually...
declined, as it has for the past eight years. First hit by the financial crisis of 2008/2009, then by the loss of churches to declining membership and denominational issues, the restrictions on the endowments have not allowed the recovery that the investor-funded portfolio has experienced.

The good news on the endowment-funded lending portfolio? Over the past two years we have been able to increase the loan pipeline by 50 percent as we have grown the overall interest in our program at a time when the economy is strong and congregations can better afford building projects. As a result, we cut the annual decline in half this past year. More importantly, we are still meeting the borrowing needs of the church—just more of the funds are coming from investor funds than endowment funds. We continue to work on ways to put more of these endowment dollars to work as the donors intended.

Behind all these numbers are many loans for renovation purposes (major maintenance projects, updating their buildings, and changing their space to fit their mission as it has changed), some loans for expansion, and some refinancing loans as well. The refinancing loans have been a mix of those seeking better rates and those seeking a loan structure and terms that better fit their church’s cash flow. The purchase or construction of a brand new building or “first unit” building these days is uncommon; however, we funded five of these projects over the past two years. These included a large business condominium with full build out for a congregation that had been renting for many years, a large building purchase for a presbytery that is now using this to house two young congregations as well as their presbytery offices, construction of a first church home for a new church development, and one purchase and one new build for two separate mission projects. Behind these numbers are a countless number of Presbyterians finding ways to do mission in new ways—with the space they need to accomplish it.

Throughout both 2016 and 2017, ILP was able to generate a surplus, something achieved for the past seventeen consecutive years. This is very important to our regulators. As we are not a commercial bank, we are not subject to oversight from federal regulators. However, for the protection of those that purchase our investments we are reviewed on an annual basis by security administrative regulators in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These regulators generally use the North American Securities Administrators Association Statement of Policy as guidelines for their oversight. Generating a surplus is one of the primary guidelines. In addition to meeting the regulatory requirement, surpluses help assure investors of the strength of our program, help provide capital for future expansion of the program, and help raise our capital adequacy ratio (another regulatory item). The combined surpluses from 2016 and 2017 have helped us toward our goal of building our capital adequacy beyond the 5 percent required by regulators to the 10 percent level. According to preliminary yearend figures, at the end of 2017, ILP had $11.9M in unrestricted net assets that supported a capital adequacy of 11.4 percent—up from 9.3 percent two years ago.

The ILP’s investment products are securities regulated under The Uniform Securities Act, which is administered state-by-state. The North American Securities Administrators Association (mentioned above) establishes program guidelines for denominational investment and loan programs. At the end of 2017, ILP exceeded all of the guidelines. In addition to the capital adequacy previously discussed, ILP is expected to maintain a liquidity ratio of liquid assets to Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts (“DARs”) of at least 8 percent. At the end of 2017, our liquidity ratio was 19.4 percent. Another primary guideline is the limitation of senior secured debt to no more than 10 percent of total assets. At the end of 2017, ILP had no senior secured debt.

Our low-cost loans have low interest rates, no application fees or points, and no prepayment penalties. We also offer an opportunity that no other lender we know has, the opportunity to get back some of the interest paid. Through the “Get the Point” program, borrowing congregations earn rebates based on supporting investments. This, in essence, lowers the effective interest rate on their loans. For 2017, ILP returned $270,873 to borrowing congregations, bringing the total returned to congregations since the inception of the rebate program to more than $4 million. This is $4 million that went right back into the mission and ministry of those congregations.

Equally important to the loans we offer is the consulting services we provide. We have issued more than two thousand loans to Presbyterian organizations over the years—the vast majority to churches. We have gained a wealth of knowledge over this time. Working with congregations and presbyteries to help them determine the appropriate size project and loan amount, cash flow requirements, and debt service capabilities, can help avoid severe pitfalls. We work with the congregation to determine the best loan package for their project.

Many lenders only look at the first five or seven years of the church’s cash flow to determine debt service capability. We review the cash flow and debt service requirements through the life of the loan, until the debt is retired. We want the congregation to understand the short- and long-term financial commitments and the leadership to set the appropriate financial expectations in front their congregation. Our goal is to help the congregation avoid a future situation where the debt service for a loan has any negative impact on their ability to fulfill the mission and ministry of their church.

Upon the request of their board and synod, in late 2012 we began the process of transferring the ministry of the Church Development Corporation (“CDC”), an investment and loan program of the Synod of Mid-America, to ILP. They felt that services were being duplicated and if ILP could service the borrowing needs of the synod, they would be able to use their resources for other programs. All but three of their loans have been refinanced and the vast majority of the investments they issued have been reinvested with ILP or redeemed. We anticipate finishing the winding down of CDC late this year.
The 221st General Assembly (2014) had a tremendous amount of interest surrounding the fossil fuel issue. As a positive step in responding to the General Assembly’s fossil fuel concerns, the program and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation met in 2014 to explore the possibility of encouraging proactive steps within congregations to advance green initiatives. A new loan product was developed in 2015 named the “Restoring Creation Loan” that is available to churches and other PC(USA) organizations for the funding of sustainable energy systems, highly efficient heating/cooling systems, or other improvements aimed at reducing their carbon footprint. This loan can be up to $600,000 and offers very low rates, easier equity terms, and utilizes the cost savings into the debt repayment plan. Rather than just responding to borrowing needs from churches and other PC(USA) organizations, our goal is to proactively initiate renovation/construction projects that intentionally reduce our denomination’s carbon footprint while moving energy savings into mission opportunities. At 2017 yearend, we had funded $6.1M of Restoring Creation Loans to date.

Toward the end of 2016, we introduced another loan, the Accessibility Loan. This loan not only incentivizes building projects that improve physical accessibility to PC(USA) churches and other buildings but also visual and aural accessibility. This, too, has a discounted interest rate to promote such projects. As of 2017 yearend, we had issued $1.4M in Accessibility Loans.

The ILP has maintained careful underwriting standards. Although sensitive to the nature of church finances within our underwriting process, we believe that relaxed standards do not benefit the lender or the borrower. We maintain a review process for all lending relationships and work intentionally with presbyteries, who guarantee our loans. This process has resulted in a loan portfolio that continues to have low delinquency rates and a very high collection history. At the end of 2017, ILP had no thirty-day or longer delinquencies in the investor-funded portfolio and only eight delinquencies for the endowment-funded portfolio.

The ILP continues to be in sound financial shape. The balance sheet is strong with total assets of $105 million. As mentioned above, our financial ratios are at healthy levels. We have received an unqualified audit every year. We have been approved for the sale of our Term Notes in every state and jurisdiction for every year since we began our general offering of Term Notes. Although the size of our loan portfolio had fluctuated over the past seven years, we generated surpluses every year (including during the financial crisis) through close management of assets and liabilities, operating expenses, pricing, and margins.

Our hope is that ILP will be the premier provider of financing for capital projects within the PC(USA). We want Presbyterians to think about ILP first when it comes to financing a capital project. We will not compromise our underwriting standards to grow the business, but will build the kind of relationships that help congregations determine what they can afford and what they cannot. We are building an investment base of individuals that has a vision of investing for financial and mission return. We are making it possible for Presbyterians to lend to Presbyterians.

We remain committed to promoting awareness of ILP throughout the church. We continually work to maintain strong and healthy ties with General Assembly agencies and mid councils. We continue to build a competent and diverse staff to serve the church. The program will focus energy on the following areas of activity in 2018:

1. We will continue to develop new avenues to inform congregations and presbyteries of our services. We have encountered many congregations that could have used our consulting services and/or our loan services to improve the management of their capital projects. With the transitional nature of both presbytery and congregational leadership, the challenge is keeping our name in front of church leadership.

2. We anticipate that interest rates will continue to increase throughout 2018. We anticipate that our cost of funds will increase more rapidly than our income from interest on loans. We will manage our costs, interest rates, and margins to help keep loan interest rates as low as possible for our borrowing congregations.

3. We will market the Accessibility Loan and the Restoring Creation Loan actively to help initiate capital projects that will improve the accessibility to our churches and the energy efficiency of our church buildings to lower the carbon footprint of our denomination.

4. Although significantly fewer than in the past, we anticipate that additional congregations with loans and mortgage grants will ask to be dismissed from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We will work with presbyteries to reinforce the language of the loan documentation, including the acceleration clause making the loan due and payable before the congregation can be released. We will work with presbyteries seeking to provide “gracious separation” for congregations wanting to leave the denomination to understand that the mortgage and guaranty remain in place until the loan is paid in full. This will require working with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corp., the presbyteries, and the congregations to ensure the repayment of existing loans and to provide the documentation and recovery of the funds provided many years ago through mortgage grants.

5. The program will work toward completing the transfer of ministry from the Church Development Corporation to the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program. The vast majority of loans and investments have been transferred or redeemed as of 2017 yearend. We are currently administering the remaining $883 thousand loan portfolio of three loans and $427 thousand of investments they have sold to individuals, congregations, and mid councils. We will continue to perform all financial functions and reporting to their board of directors. Work toward refinancing their loans into the ILP portfolio will continue, and we will use the proceeds of this refinancing activity to redeem the Savings Certificates and Stewardship Accounts. Promotional
offers to their investors to invest the funds from these redemptions in ILP Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts will continue to be extended.

6. The staff and the board will use the 223rd General Assembly (2018) as an opportunity to promote the program, to further strengthen existing relationships, and to establish new relationships among PC(USA) entities, mid council leaders, and congregational leaders.

7. The staff will seek out ways to expand our consulting role in advising and guiding churches and presbyteries on financial implications of debt financing.

8. The staff will work to strengthen connections between the marketing team and the underwriting team to create a seamless organization for our customers and prospects; reviewing current processes to uncover opportunities to simplify the loan process for our customers and shorten response times.

9. The staff will continue to explore strategic initiatives to fulfill our desire for continued growth in the loan portfolio. The marketing staff will use leads from the Annual Statistical Reports and conversations with mid council leadership.

10. Senior leadership will work with the board of directors to determine the best structure for board effectiveness. The board and staff will work collaboratively to explore new markets and products to meet changing needs within the church and the program.

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and confirmed by the General Assembly. The 2017 board of directors included:

Linda Bailey
Steven Bass, Vice Chair
Gregory Chan
David Ezekiel
Judi Johnson
Margaret Jorgensen
Thomas McNeill
Rafael Medina
Terry W. Nall
Manley Olson
Linda Scholl, Chair
Joyce Smith
Josephene Stewart
Richard H. White
In Yang

The officers of the corporation in 2017 were:

James G. Rissler, President and Chief Executive Officer
Lorraine Recchia, Senior Vice President Finance and Administration and Treasurer
Clare Lewis, Vice President Sales and Marketing
Martha E. Clark, Secretary
Michael Kirk, Assistant Secretary
Laura J. Olliges, Assistant Treasurer

B. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Agency Summary—2018

Mission Statement

“Building on the Reformed tradition, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation seeks to glorify God by contributing to the spiritual vitality of Christ’s church. To that end, PPC publishes resources that advance religious scholarship, stimulate conversation about moral values, and inspire faithful living.”

Introducing the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, one of the six entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), exists to serve and support the church’s mission. To do so, PPC combines an emphasis on the mission and ministry of the PC(USA) with a strategic focus on customer service and the employment of sound business practices. PPC, which has a religious publishing heritage of more than 175 years, was formally incorporated in 1994 as a nonprofit corporation and is financially self-sustaining.
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation carries out its work by building on the Reformed theological tradition and its commitment to the ministry of the Word, the life of the mind, and engagement with the needs of the world. Accordingly, PPC’s publications are intended to address the needs of the denomination, to make original contributions to religious and theological thinking, and to clarify ethical and moral issues that confront church leaders and the wider society. These publications include, but are not limited to:

- educational and worship resources for Presbyterian congregations and members;
- practical and thought-provoking material for pastors and other church professionals;
- theological and religious books and other materials for use in religious higher education;
- children’s books for use in churches, homes, public schools, libraries, and the general trade;
- books on spirituality, Bible study, Christian living, life challenges, and social issues for mainline Christians and the religiously unaffiliated.

With worldwide distribution of more than 2,000 titles, PPC continues to build one of the most successful and respected publishing programs in the fields of church, academic, and general religious publishing—a program recognized around the world for challenging works by leading authors of diverse viewpoints.

Organizational Overview

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is comprised of:

- Westminster John Knox Press (WJK)—the corporation’s prestigious academic and trade book imprint;
- Flyaway Books—The corporation’s newest imprint, publishing award-winning books for churches, schools, and general readers;
- Geneva Press—the corporation’s imprint that prints titles that are specific to the needs of the PC(USA) community;
- PCUSAStore.com—a comprehensive selection of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resources that provide the information and materials necessary to support new and existing congregations, leaders, study groups, and individuals;
- TheThoughtfulChristian.com—an ecumenical marketplace dedicated to helping Christians and seekers find resources to help them understand, share, practice, and be challenged in their faith;
- These Days—a quarterly devotional magazine that has been a source of comfort and hope throughout the world for decades.

In early 2018, PPC received the transfer of responsibility for PC(USA) denominational curriculum, formerly housed in the Congregational Ministries Publishing (CMP) area of Presbyterian Mission Agency. CMP’s full-time staff became PPC employees effective March 1, 2018.

PPC Highlights in 2017

- Served the church through a new retail marketplace, PCUSAStore.com, adding the sales of Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of the General Assembly, and Presbyterian Women resources through the site.
- Published more than fifty new books and resources.
- Provided retail marketplaces at the PC(USA) Big Tent and Association of Presbyterian Church Educator conferences.
- Continued to promote Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal, while developing additional hymnal-related resources for congregations, worship leaders, and families.
- Continued development of the revised Book of Common Worship, to be published in 2018 on its 25th anniversary, along with the Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians.

PPC Benevolence Programs

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation supports the work of ministry within the PC(USA) through various benevolence programs created for the express purposes of assisting those in need and contributing to the overall mission of the PC(USA). It is
a sign of PPC’s commitment to this mission that the benevolence programs are maintained as well as possible even in years of financial difficulty.

Included in PPC’s benevolence programs are the following:

**BENEVOLENCE**

*Books Without Borders & The Theological Book Network*—PPC provides current publications to international seminaries in need of books through a partnership with Presbyterian World Mission and with the Theological Book Network.

*Disaster Assistance*—Churches that have experienced lost and damaged property and are recovering from disaster receive a package of replacement resources, including copies of the Presbyterian hymnal *Glory to God* and the *Book of Common Worship* (BCW). In collaboration with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

*Resources for New Worshiping Communities, Church Developments, and Fellowships*—Newly formed worshiping communities, church developments, and fellowships receive complimentary resources of their choosing, as they begin their ministries and build a community of faith. In collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

*Resources for Newly Ordained Teaching Elders*—Newly ordained teaching elders in the PC(USA) receive complimentary resources of their choosing as they begin a new phase of ministry to the church. In collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

*Robert W. Bohl Racial/Ethnic Internship Program*—PPC provides a ten-week internship in its offices to a racial ethnic seminary student [PC(USA) preferred] who is interested in considering religious publishing as ministry.

**ADDITIONAL COLLABORATION**

*Book of Common Worship (BCW)*—PPC is collaborating with the Office of Theology and Worship to revise the BCW for 2018.

*Interpretation*—began a collaboration with Union Presbyterian Seminary, under the direction of Brian Blount, to revise the venerated Interpretation Commentary Series.

*Glory to God Hymnal*—PPC collaborated with the Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians to develop and produce the new Presbyterian hymnal.

PCUSAStore.com—PPC is collaborating with Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), Office of the General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Women, and other agency partners to provide this central online store for PC(USA)-produced books, curriculum, and downloadable resources.

Continued a partnership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary on a new lectionary commentary series, Connections.

Partnered with the Presbyterian Foundation to provide a copy of *50 Ways to Help Save the Earth*, by Rebecca Barnes, to all commissioners of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Partnered with the Presbyterian Board of Pensions to provide a copy of *Our Connectional Church*, by Gradye Parsons, to all commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

*Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*

The *Glory to God* hymnal was developed by the fifteen-person Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song (PCOCS), a volunteer committee composed of musicians, scholars, pastors, and theologians. The project was a collaborative effort between Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), the Office of Theology and Worship (TAW) of the PC(USA), and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM). In 2012, the hymnal was commended for use in the PC(USA) by the General Assembly, and it was published in September 2013. PPC has assumed all the costs associated with the development and production of the hymnal, including the expenses of the PCOCS. No PC(USA) mission funding was used.

**FACTS ABOUT GLORY TO GOD**

- There are 853 hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs in the new hymnal.

  *Glory to God* contains music covering all major historical and contemporary sacred genres, including African American/gospel hymns, contemporary praise songs, global music, hymns that have never been published in a Presbyterian hymnal, and more.
- *Glory to God* has several indexes, allowing congregations to use the hymnal for worship preparation and a study/devotional resource.

- *Glory to God* contains liturgical resources, including the Service for the Lord’s Day, Baptism, and Reaffirmation of Baptism.

- This excellent church resource is available in red or purple. There are also two cover editions to choose from: the Presbyterian version (which features the PC(USA) seal and the words “The Presbyterian Hymnal”) and the Ecumenical version (which features the words “Hymnals, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs”).

- There are several accompanying resources, in addition to the pew hymnal, including: accompaniment editions, large-print and large-print text only editions, projection editions, a CD for families and children, a hymnal companion, Advent caroling edition, and more.

**WJK**

Westminster John Knox Press (WJK) is one of the most respected academic religious publishers in the world. For more than 175 years, WJK and its predecessors have served scholars, students, clergy, church members, and general readers. The result has been an award-winning depth and breadth of publications for the training of seminarians, the dissemination of religion scholarship, and the spiritual and ethical formation of clergy and laity.

Books and resources published under the WJK imprint cover the spectrum of religious thought and represent the work of scholarly and popular authors of many different religions and theological affiliations. WJK publishes approximately sixty new books and other resources each year and manages a backlist of more than 2,000 titles that are sold throughout the world.

A few of the top books published by WJK and its predecessors include:

- 1838—*The Way of Salvation Familiarly Explained in a Conversation between a Father and His Children* by Presbyterian Board of Publication;

- 1841—*Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin;

- 1958—William Barclay’s Daily Study Bible series begins;

- 1962—*Race and the Renewal of the Church*, by Will Campbell;

- 1966—*The Gospel According to Peanuts* by Robert L. Short;

- 1974—*Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective*, by Letty Russell;

- 1977—*The Bible Makes Sense*, by Walter Brueggemann;

- 1982—*Prophesy Deliverance!* by Cornel West;

- 1992—*Women’s Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe;

- 2008—WJK starts printing volumes in the twelve-volume preaching commentary series, Feasting on the Word, a partnership with Columbia Theological Seminary;

- 2015—WJK begins partnership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary on the new lectionary commentary series called Connections;

- 2017—WJK published *A Bigger Table* by well-known pastor and author John Pavlovitz.

**Flyaway Books**

In 2017 PPC launched a new children’s book imprint, Flyaway Books. Flyaway Books will be penned by a varied group of authors and illustrators, from beginners to experienced writers and artists. The titles will be intentionally multicultural in their artwork and characters. They will carry themes of diversity, inclusion, self-esteem, kindness, compassion, and care for our world. Many of them will help children understand today’s most pressing social issues. Some will retell familiar religious stories in new ways, while others will carry universal themes appropriate for those from any, or no, religious background.

Many Flyaway Books will be appropriate for use in public and private schools, school and public libraries, and book stores. Others will be aimed at church communities in mainline, emergent, progressive evangelical, and similar traditions.

In just a few short months our first books, still carrying the WJK imprint, have received positive reviews in *The New York Times* Sunday Book Review, *Kirkus*, *Foreword*, and *Publishers Weekly*. Our first book was named a selection of the Junior
Library Guild. Future authors include bestselling children’s book authors Sandy Sasso and Kathy Bostrom, noted New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine, the African American Episcopal pastor and activist Michael Waters, and author and illustrator Katie Yamasaki.

**Retail Marketplaces**

PPC operates several online retail marketplaces to serve the church. These include the following:

The Thoughtful Christian (www.thethoughtfulchristian.com) is an online religious marketplace including digital and print resources that are perfect for Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, clergy and preachers, Christian educators and teachers, religious academic scholars, students, and individuals who seek to grow, nurture and even ask questions to develop their faith and inform their faithful action in the world. By offering current and theologically sound books; studies for youth, adults, and parents; and retreat guides, we strive to encourage Christians to share their thoughts and beliefs while wrestling with questions that inform the way we live out our faith in everyday life.

PCUSAStore.com is a central online store where you can find PC(USA)-produced books, curriculum, and downloadable resources related to the Presbyterian faith, including information about the new Presbyterian hymnal, *Glory to God*. Providing excellent customer service and an overall positive shopping experience are top priorities for the PC(USA) Store team. The store is maintained by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the publishing house of the Presbyterian Church (USA), in partnership with other agency partners from PMA, OGA, and Presbyterian Women.

**These Days**

*These Days* is a quarterly devotional magazine that offers powerful daily inspirational meditations interspersed with Bible verses, reflective prayers, and action steps to encourage readers to apply what they have read to their daily lives. *These Days* is published by PPC in cooperation with the PC(USA), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, the United Church of Christ, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

**How to Contact PPC**

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www.ppcbooks.com  
www.wjkbooks.com  
www.flyawaybooks.com

**PPC Board of Directors, 2017–18**

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The Reverend Dr. Cynthia Rigby  
Austin, Texas
C. Benefits Plan Amendments Report—From the Board of Pensions

The Board of Pensions reports the following amendments to the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Plan”) adopted by the Board of Pensions since the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Since the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the Board of Pensions adopted amendments to add or improve the benefits offered under the Benefits Plan, effective January 1, 2019 (unless a different effective date is stated). The substantive changes are highlighted below.

A. Pension Plan

- A 2.0 percent experience apportionment pension benefit or pension credit increase for Plan Year 2016 (the increase was effective July 1, 2017, for members in pay status and applied to credits accrued as of December 31, 2016, for active and term vested members).

- A 3.9 percent experience apportionment pension benefit or pension credit increase for Plan Year 2017 (the increase is effective July 1, 2018, for members in pay status and applied to credits accrued as of December 31, 2017, for active and term vested members).

B. Retirement Savings Plan

- The Retirement Savings Plan documents were amended, effective January 1, 2017, to allow loans from participant accounts.

- The Retirement Savings Plan documents were amended, effective January 1, 2019, to give employers the option to elect:
  - An auto-enrollment program for new hires that will automatically contribute a percentage of the new employee’s salary into the Retirement Savings Plan. The employee may opt-out of the auto-enrollment or change their contribution percentage.
  - An elective deferral auto-escalation option that will increase the employee’s percentage of salary contribution to the Retirement Savings Plan by a percentage to be determined by the employer, not to exceed the IRS contribution limit. The employee may opt-out of the auto-escalation or change their contribution percentage.

C. Death and Disability Plan

- A new group term life benefit for employers to offer employees enrolled under the menu-based benefits options that provides a lump-sum payment at the time of death to a member’s designated beneficiaries on a noncontributory basis.

- A 1.0 percent disability benefit increase for Plan year 2016 (eff. July 1, 2017).

- A 2.0 percent disability benefit increase for Plan year 2017 (eff. July 1, 2018).

D. Medical Plan

- A new high deductible health benefits option (HDHP Benefits) for the Medical Plan’s menu-based benefits options. The HDHP Benefits coverage option has a higher deductible than the preferred provider organization (PPO) and exclusive provider organization (EPO) Benefits options and is qualified to be offered with a health savings account.

- The Covered Medical Services under the PPO, EPO, and HDHP options will include:
○ A new preventive prescription drug services benefit that reduces or eliminates the copayment amount for drugs designated by the Plan for preventive care (i.e., when a person has the risk factors for a disease but is asymptomatic or to prevent the reoccurrence of the disease).

○ An improved centers of excellence program that reduces the deductible and copayment responsibilities of a member who uses a preferred facility for a procedure and reimburses the Member for reasonable travel and lodging expenses for the member and a companion to travel to that facility. Centers of excellence are designated by the plan on the basis of their expertise and quality performance outcomes in delivering specialty care.

• Appendix F, the summary of benefits, deductibles, and copayment maximums for the Medical Plan coverage options, has been updated for 2018 and 2019.

• A new optional benefits program for Vision Eyewear Coverage offers discounts and reimbursement for a portion of the member’s or eligible family member’s vision wear (eyeglass, contact lenses).

E. Dues

• The Board of Pensions is authorized to offer time-limited, targeted dues reductions or dues waivers to incent employers to offer coverage under the Benefits Plan to employees or designated classifications of employees. This provision facilitates the Board’s adoption of the Pathways to Renewal program for churches that, among other things, offers pastor’s participation coverage to newly ordained ministers at a reduced dues rate. It is effective as of July 1, 2018.

The Board of Pensions communicates all Benefits Plan amendments when they are adopted through The Board Bulletin and other Board of Pensions communications. A copy of the verbatim text of the amendments reported above and the official plan documents for the Benefits Plan and the Retirement Savings Plans, effective as of January 1, 2018, are available on the Board of Pensions’ website (pensions.org) or by calling the Board of Pensions at 800-PRESPLAN (800-773-7752).

D. New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., a Subsidiary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

New Covenant Trust Company, N.A. (NCTC), a subsidiary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, was chartered by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency on January 2, 1998. The company serves as trustee of various types of trust instruments and provides investment management services. NCTC’s Board has enacted policies and procedures to ensure compliance with banking laws and provides oversight of the delivery of services to the Presbyterian community.

NCTC partners with individuals and Presbyterian and related organizations in the delivery of trust services, such as personal trusts, wholly charitable trusts and charitable remainder trusts, and investment management services. These services allow NCTC to create custom solutions such that trust, investment management, and philanthropic goals and objectives can be met. NCTC consistently strives to deliver superior service to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and seeks to enhance opportunities available to Presbyterians to express their Christian faith and generous stewardship.

NCTC provides shareholder and social witness services to New Covenant Funds, a family of mutual funds organized with participation from the Presbyterian Foundation. The services provided by NCTC help ensure the investments in New Covenant Funds are aligned with the social witness principles of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

NCTC also provides customized investment portfolios for individual and institutional investors that align with their mission values. Mission-driven portfolios may include screens for one or more of the following:

• Companies involved in alcohol, tobacco, gambling, war materials;

• Companies that are making a major contribution to carbon dioxide emissions;

• Positive investment in certain parts of the world.

The following individuals were confirmed by former General Assemblies and as of the submission of this report continue in their service as Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.

Foundation Trustee

Stephen C. Kelly, Banker, White, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Living Waters.

Former Foundation Trustee

Timothy P. Clark, Senior Bank Officer, White, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Living Waters.
E. **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary**

**Mission Statement**

A vital part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation cultivates, attracts, and manages financial resources of individuals and institutions to serve Christ's mission.

**Summary**

The Foundation remains true to its original charge from the 1799 General Assembly to solicit from individuals and congregations, “pious donations and bequests in order to supply the funds which are absolutely necessary to carry on with advantage the great and charitable work” of the church.

Today we partner with congregations, councils, agencies, and related ministries to gather, steward, and distribute funds for their mission and ministry. Our nationwide staff of ministry relationship officers works with pastors, ministry leaders, and individual donors to develop communities of Christian generosity in support of Christ’s mission in the world.

In countless ways, the Foundation offers charitable expertise and services that unite and empower Presbyterians and the ministries about which they are passionate. We strive to do so in a trustworthy, clear, and accessible manner that reflects the faith and values of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Foundation has much to offer the church:

*Stability.* The Foundation has been forging partnerships with donors, congregations, and others to fund mission for more than two centuries. One of six national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation is composed of highly skilled officers and support staff trained in the areas of gift administration and compliance, accounting, law, communications, funds development, philanthropy, trust services, and more.

*Connection.* We work in leadership and partnership with the whole denomination to fund its mission. The Foundation does not compete with local congregations or any other institution of the church for charitable gifts. To the contrary, we are committed to strengthening these entities by developing gifts and managing funds on their behalf.

*Commitment.* We provide all Presbyterians with an avenue to realize their philanthropic goals through a variety of giving options. We maintain a strong focus on the Presbyterian values and principles that drive our stewardship initiatives.

**Highlights of Our Work**

**Ministry Relationship Officers**

Our nationwide staff of ministry relationship officers works to cultivate funds for mission and grow communities of generosity throughout the church. Combining decades of pastoral, leadership, and funds development experience, these officers help church leaders assess the financial health, generosity capacity, and stewardship practices of their congregations, then build on their strengths and address their weaknesses.

**Project Regeneration**

Faithful stewardship of church resources always looks to the future because congregations go through life cycles. The reinvention of a congregation, the closing of a church building, or the merger of multiple congregations can mean more than the end of a previously vibrant ministry. It can also mean the opportunity for the sale or transformation of excess church property into funds for new ministry. It can mean freeing an existing congregation from the burden of supporting a facility that no longer meets its mission needs.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation is partnering with churches and presbyteries across the denomination to discover and explore creative options for ministries that need adequate funding in order to grow and prosper. Endowment funds
are among the many options available to leave a lasting legacy of the faith community by naming a ministry and specific purpose for the use of the fund, and provide support in perpetuity.

**Online Giving**

Presbyterians are generous by nature—we are passionate about mission and give joyfully to the projects, causes, and organizations that touch our hearts and engage our minds. To help expedite that generosity, the Foundation has created the Presbyterian Mission Exchange—a web-based giving hub with tools to facilitate easy online donations. Congregations can quickly and easily offer online giving to their members through the Mission Exchange.

Presbyterians use the Mission Exchange to discover and fund churches and charities that are sharing their gifts to heal the sick, feed the hungry, clothe and shelter the poor, educate and build up their communities, and promote the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the world. In 2015 alone, donors made more than 8,800 gifts totaling more than $2.9 million to 332 congregations and ministries using the Presbyterian Mission Exchange.

**Donor-Advised Funds**

The fastest-growing charitable gift vehicle is the Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), and the Presbyterian Foundation offers a flexible and easy-to-use DAF program. Donors make an initial gift (which may offer immediate tax benefits), then recommend over time when to make grants from the fund, which ministries to support, and what amounts to give.

The Foundation provides online tools to manage the funds, including making gifts and grant recommendations, changing investments options, and tracking giving over time.

Donor-Advised Funds are excellent tools for teaching generosity and developing family giving patterns across generations.

**Wills Program**

Annually, the Presbyterian Foundation offers a Wills Emphasis program to congregations throughout the denomination. At the program’s beginning in the 1950s, wills were the main focus of gift development. Currently, that focus has shifted to remembering the church in estate planning. While simple bequests in a will are still important, now the Foundation can provide guidance for complex estate plans in coordination with an individual’s tax and legal advisors.

To complement congregation-based bequest and planned giving efforts, the Foundation offers pastors a package of wills program resources including a leadership guide, website, sample appeal letters, bulletin inserts, social media content, and more. These materials are provided free of charge to any Presbyterian congregation—the only expenses are the shipping and handling costs.

**Expanded Investment Options**

The Foundation and its subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, offer a range of investment services to congregations and related Presbyterian institutions. New Covenant Funds provide an easy entry point and daily liquidity for congregations who want to self-direct their investment portfolio within the PC(USA)’s mission responsibility through investment framework. New Covenant Trust Company offers a variety of more customized investment options to match the congregation’s policy objectives. Presbyterian Endowment Funds are held permanently by the Foundation, invested in a diverse yet socially responsible portfolio by Northern Trust, and pay out according to an established spending formula designed to provide stable funding over many years.

Transformational investment options allow congregations and other Presbyterian institutions to invest positively in organizations creating positive solutions to challenging situations. These include a series of development projects in Israel and Palestine developed in response to the 220th General Assembly’s (2012) call for positive investment in the region.

**Care for the Environment**

While Presbyterians continue to discuss how best to provide care for God’s creation and mitigate the negative effects of climate change, the Foundation’s Board of Trustees has adopted a five-pronged approach to leveraging denominational investments to address environmental concerns:

- The Foundation’s investment committee has allocated an initial investment of at least 1 percent of the Presbyterian Endowment Fund into investments that target climate change solutions.

- The Foundation has directed its investment managers to consider environmental factors in their security selection process. New Covenant Funds (a family of mutual funds created and sponsored by the Foundation) adopted ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) positive screening in 2014.

- The Foundation continues to work with MRTI in dialogue with energy companies to bring about change.
The Foundation is utilizing a portion of the Church Loan Program, for which the Foundation is the fiduciary, for loans that implement renewable energy or carbon reduction solutions. This effort is in partnership with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., which administers the loans, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Mission Development Resource Committee, which sets terms for loans and grants.

The Presbyterian Foundation subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, provides fossil free managed solutions to congregations, institutions, and other clients desiring a customized approach.

**Stewardship Education**

The Presbyterian Foundation is the denomination’s hub for stewardship education. It’s a natural extension of the work we’ve been doing since 1799—helping Presbyterians and their congregations to become people and places of joyful generosity. The Foundation provides an array of stewardship resources, including training seminars and conferences, publications, e-newsletters, planning ideas, case studies, and online tools.

In 2015, the Foundation was awarded a $1 million grant to take part in the Lilly Endowment’s National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. The initiative supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they address the financial and economic struggles that can impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively. In this three-year program, the Foundation is further developing stewardship resources for congregations, along with training programs in financial literacy and leadership for pastoral and lay leaders. The Foundation is working in close collaboration with the Board of Pensions on this, which also received a Lilly program grant.

To learn more about the Presbyterian Foundation, visit our website at [https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/](https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/) or call 800-858-6127.
Item 14-01

[The assembly approved Item 14-01 with amendment. See p. 17.]

On Developing a Letter to Accompany the Confession of Belhar—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve the creation of a task force to:

1. Develop a U.S. letter to accompany the Confession of Belhar that addresses the participation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other Reformed bodies in racism in our historical context, building on prior statements of repentance and apology. As with the original accompanying letter from the church in South Africa, while not of constitutional character, whenever the Confession of Belhar is printed in the Book of Confessions, it should be accompanied by this “U.S. accompanying letter” once the task force prepares it and it is approved by the General Assembly.

2. Include within the development of this U.S. accompanying letter such topics as unfair [unfair] unjust land acquisition; near genocide of native peoples; the enslavement of African men, women, and children; and a system of white privilege that unfairly discriminates against people of color.

3. Share this work with other U.S. Reformed churches and full communion partners, building on past ecumenical efforts to address the sin of racism in view of enduring tensions, and on a common concern to honor our identity as churches “reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God” (Book of Order, F-2.02).

4. Request the Moderators of the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018), in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly and their advisory and advocacy committees, jointly to name a team of seven PC(USA) members from the fields of theology, social ethics, ethnic and racial history, law and/or philosophy, capable of contributing to a concise but comprehensive statement to be presented for approval to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

5. Request the Stated Clerk to invite as many as four other Reformed and/or Full Communion churches to nominate (single) representatives to serve on the task force, sharing in their costs, both to contribute to the drafting work and to help develop shared strategic conversations about our witness in a diverse culture.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $13,364. Total—$26,728]

Rationale

Presbyterians are one of the oldest religious bodies in the United States. A number of U.S. government structures are modeled on our church. We celebrate how Presbyterians helped shape the institutions, founding documents, and religious life of this nation.

Yet, we know the history is much more complex and problematic. Our story is fraught with failure to live according to God’s call and riddled with contradictions and sinful actions that have never been enumerated and confessed in our constitutional documents.

European founders arrived on these shores filled with dreams and seeking religious freedom, but the land was already full of people living their own dreams within thriving and diverse cultures. America had already been “discovered” and was a cherished home to native peoples!

Nevertheless, many Christians, including those from our church, participated in removing native peoples and taking their land, actions that resulted in the near genocide of the original American residents. Soon after came the brutality of 246 years of chattel slavery. Many European settlers, including many Presbyterian church leaders, owned enslaved Africans. Our church split over slavery. Many Presbyterians believed that the tragic civil war solved much of the racial injustice, yet even after slavery was officially abolished and repudiated, various forms of legal and customary racial discrimination reigned in this land for more than a century. And though many laws have now changed, institutional patterns of discrimination linger. Racism is indeed America’s original sin.

The PC(USA) took a big step towards addressing racism by adding the Confession of Belhar, the first confession from the global South, to our Book of Confessions at the last General Assembly. Written by an oppressed church suffering racial discrimination, Belhar is an important statement of solidarity and repudiation of racism. The addition of a U.S. accompanying letter will help us take the next step that is sorely needed: to name and confess the sin of racism built into the fabric of our own corporate society and individual lives.

Why an accompanying letter?

As a reminder, our collection of confessions in the Book of Confessions originated with the adoption of the Confession of 1967. The Book of Confessions includes creeds stating what we believe (Nicene, Apostles, Scots, Second Helvetic, Confession
Various attempts have been made over the decades to convince the PC(USA) to write its own confession regarding racism. Most often, these requests have arisen from people of color in the church calling an overwhelmingly white denomination to account for its actions.

The Confession of 1967 did address the intent of God to break “down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary” (Book of Confessions, 9.44). A concise letter responding to the Confession of Belhar from the U.S. context might strengthen the new confession and also serve to address our historic complicity in sinful actions.

**Why now?**

The U.S. is once again facing a kairos moment with regards to its racist history. Fear of “the other” continues to permeate society and church. People of color live in fear in their own country. While some hope for a return to an imagined better past, many Presbyterians are taking action on issues of racial justice. A denominational letter modeled on and complementing the South African example would help us better understand and apply Belhar in our 21st century U.S. context.

The PC(USA) is an overwhelmingly white denomination wishing to diversify its membership to include people of other ethnicities. We also hope to appeal to younger people. The Millennial generation cares deeply about social justice. How can our church expect to earn the trust of new groups if we do not boldly confess our racist past? We can no longer ignore a sin that has shackled us for generations. This is the time to courageously seek forgiveness as a denomination.

**If not now, when?**

Imagine this generation taking the courageous step to name the sin, articulate the dangerous theology and ideology that allowed the sin to be practiced for so long, and collectively apologize. Let us acknowledge what needs to be forgiven, and ask God to set us free from our sin, and lead us to a world where all people will be free to live with justice, dignity, and peace. What a gift to future generations of the church and what a message to new, diverse communities, that we pledge to strive for the eradication of racism.

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**Concurrence to Item 14-01 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Mid Kentucky, Santa Fe, Upper Ohio Valley, and Wabash Valley.**

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**ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-01**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 14-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).*

Item 14-01 calls for a concise “Accompanying Letter” to go with the newly adopted Confession of Belhar that would suggest ways that South African statement applies to the U.S. context.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval in light of the following considerations.

The existing Accompanying Letter for the Belhar Confession partly reflects the initial efforts to gain support among South African English and Afrikaner background whites as well as black, “Colored,” and Indian South Africans. To date, the confession has not been adopted by the main white Reformed Church in South Africa. While “the Belhar” is used by the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America as well as by the PC(USA), it is generally not as well known in global Reformed churches as the Accra Confession or Declaration, adopted in Ghana in 2004 by the World Alliance (now Communion) of Reformed Churches. Thus, there is not only an educational motivation to the request for a U.S. accompanying letter, there is a question: why does the Confession of Belhar seem to fit the U.S. context, more than thirty years since its first writing, under the conditions of apartheid?

In January of 2010, in preparation for the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy held a consultation on the Belhar and Accra confessions attended by at least one person from all the Reformed churches in North America and the Caribbean. The joint statement from that consultation looked at the particular style of both Belhar and Accra for their “family resemblance” to the Theological Declaration of Barmen of 1934. Though Belhar was addressing race and the church itself, and Accra was addressing globalization, particularly in its economic aspect, both of the children of Barmen were doing a theological critique of culture, and then also providing a promise or annunciation. God was “still speaking,” as the United Church of Christ would say; there was a covenant being renewed with a transcendent God who was calling the church to a next step in reformation.

Coming particularly from the angle of theological ethics, ACSWP sees a great value in the creation of an accompanying letter. We note that the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board endorsed a similar idea in February of 2017, seeking to listen to
Belhar in its reflection and planning of mission. Yet, as our colleagues in Theology and Worship were aware when a very long and awkwardly written letter was presented with Belhar to the General Assembly that approved sending it to the presbyteries, that letter missed the mark. Too affirming of too many pages of boilerplate prose, it was three times as long as Belhar itself.

We hear a different tone in this overture and would be honored to be consulted or included in some fashion, hoping for serious theological and ethical work to be done. Clearly, one part of the preparation work at least would be looking at the legacies of The Confession of 1967 and The Brief Statement of Faith and helping Presbyterians make deep connections without blocking the potential appreciation of Full Communion partners.

As we read the overture, it would include seven PC(USA) persons and three from our Full Communion partners, if those bodies so chose, even if their own adoption of Belhar as a confession were unlikely. Gene TeSelle once distinguished six kinds of confessions, however: church uniting, polemical, educational, reforming, etc. Thus, each study participant would be recognizing that the same document would be performing different functions than those envisioned by its original authors and adopters.

**ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-01**

*Advice & Counsel on Item 14-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 14-01.

ACREC supports this overture as it demonstrates faith in action recognizing that the PC(USA), a predominately white Christian denomination, write its own confession regarding racism. The letter would allow us to own our particular context and complicity in systems of racism and expose with honesty the places where repentance is still necessary.

The U.S. is once again facing a kairos moment with regards to its racist history. Fear of “the other” continues to permeate society and church. People of color live in fear in their own country. While some hope for a return to an imagined better past, many Presbyterians are taking action on issues of racial justice. A denominational letter modeled on and complementing the South African example would help us better understand and apply the Confession of Belhar in our 21st century U.S. context.

This overture supports ACREC’s core values of advocating for peace and unity among God’s creation. ACREC believes this overture enables the confession and forgiveness of members of the PC(USA) of the sin of racism. Once forgiven, members are now free to live together in unity and peace.

**PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-01**

*Comment on Item 14-01—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).*

This overture calls for the development of a “U.S. Letter to accompany the Confession of Belhar,” addressing the participation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other U.S. Reformed bodies in racism in the specific context of the United States of America. This accompanying letter would stand alongside and have the same (non-constitutional) status as the original accompanying letter that addressed the confession’s implications for the South African context in which the confession was first affirmed.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency notes that an accompanying letter specific to the United States and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was developed and submitted to 221st General Assembly (2014) by the Special Committee on the Confession of Belhar. It was submitted as part of the action that brought the Confession of Belhar itself before the assembly for possible inclusion in the *Book of Confessions*. Though the 221st General Assembly (2014) voted not to send the newly drafted accompanying letter to the presbyteries, that letter and its content are relevant to the concerns articulated in Item 14-01.

This is the text of the new accompanying letter composed by the Special Committee on the Confession of Belhar and submitted to the 221st General Assembly (2014):

**THE ACCOMPANYING LETTER TO THE CONFESSION OF BELHAR**

*from the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on the occasion of the adoption of the Confession of Belhar*

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is again facing a critical time in its history. We are rent apart by division and schism, we have yet to confront directly and confess the racism that has been a significant force in our own history, and we have shown a failure of resolve to make courageous stands for justice. We believe that the Confession of Belhar, a profound statement on unity, reconciliation, and justice in the church, comes to us as a word from God for this particular time and place for the PC(USA).

We understand confession as both the church’s response to human sin and as witness to our faith. Confession by the church is necessary because sin is present in social injustice and in our conscious or unconscious participation in human suffering. Confession is not a way to cast aspersions or in
any way denigrate, castigate, or delimit any person or group of persons. We the church are called to confess sin because the Word of God as revealed in and through the life of Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures calls us to bear witness to a just, loving, and compassionate Creator.

The Confession of Belhar calls us to renew our understanding and confessional affirmation of the “one triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The confession centers us in the reality of the Holy God of creation, the covenant, and the prophets, who was incarnate in Jesus Christ. The Spirit fills all who have come to know God through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. As the Confession of Belhar affirms, the God whom we worship and serve has gathered us, protected us, and cared for us through the Word and Spirit. “This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.”

The Confession of Belhar is particularly helpful to our common life as Presbyterians for two reasons. First, it comes to us in a time of Kairo in South Africa, when the church dared to speak with unusual clarity. It can help the PC(USA) speak and act with equal clarity. Second, it focuses the church’s confession on its own life. It is far too easy for the church to look outside of its walls and find fault, all the while ignoring the sin in its own life. Belhar focuses the church’s attention on the way its own life and witness have fallen short of the gospel.

Unity.

We believe that the gospel of God calls the entire universal church into the unity of the one triune God. At the heart of the Creator God revealed in Scripture is the invitation to enjoy the fellowship of the personal God who is one, yet three. The Lord whom we confess has a purpose and plan for the cosmos into which we have all been born by God’s providence. We learn from Scripture of “…the mystery of [God’s] will … set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up [unite] all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1:9–10).

To this end, Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, fully human and fully God, offered us new life when he gave his life for us through his incarnation, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. This new life broke down dividing walls of hostility within humanity; transforming hatred into love and making unity a mandate from God. Unity is God’s will for humanity, beyond the differences of Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, male and female, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, and beyond social categories of races. All who heard the good news and believed in God through Christ the Savior were incorporated into the new humanity. Through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, those who trusted in Jesus Christ became members of the household of God and experienced themselves as being built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. This spiritual temple called “the church” was given a mission of proclaiming, living, making visible, and extending the good news of the New Creation in Christ (Eph. 2:11–22).

Presbyterians have confessed this gospel from the early years of our history in America. Yet we have had great difficulty of living into the gift of God’s unity and mission revealed and made possible through the cross of Jesus Christ. Like our brothers and sisters in South Africa, we have been afflicted by the division of the church along racial, political, cultural, theological, and class divisions.

In South Africa the system of “apartheid,” or separation of the races, divided both nation and church into separate spheres. The Reformed Churches of South Africa justified this division and developed theological rationales for this division so that blacks and whites were not allowed to come to the same Lord’s Table. The white settlers who came from Europe to the tip of the African continent came with a vision of a Promised Land that required the removal of the native Africans or the separation of the races for the sake of racial purity, spiritual well-being, and economic development. The spiritualized gospel adopted by the white church focused upon the saving of souls but had lost its prophetic word and mission for the healing of the divisions caused by human sinfulness.

Reformed/Presbyterian Christians who came to the New World of the North American continent carried with them a sense of their own election and privilege. They too came to a “Promised Land” of new beginnings, seeking freedom and opportunity for themselves. They brought with them an understanding of the gospel that was not whole, that did not understand the completed work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, and that did not call for the church to be visibly one. To complicate matters, in order to develop the New World’s economic base, lands and workers were needed. Native Americans were removed from their lands and African slaves imported to be a source of cheap labor. Human persons were oppressed, defined as property, and denied basic human rights. The church embraced a spiritualized gospel that justified the enslavement of people forcefully and violently captured and held in dehumanizing slavery for the good of white masters and landowners. Every aspect of American culture became divided. Slaves were only counted as 3/5ths persons under the new Constitution of the United States. God’s election, interpreted as social privilege, became a theological justification for chattel slavery and racial segregation.

Privileges based on race, wealth, gender, class, and power became institutionalized and legalized. As a result, we have witnessed to the eleven o’clock hour of Sunday morning as the most segregated hour of life in the United States of America. We Presbyterian Reformed churches found ourselves in betrayal of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in our own internal worship, fellowship, and witness. We continue to live under the specters of racism, classism, sexism, and division, which remain as enduring conflicts and challenges for both church and culture.

Beyond the issues of race and class, Presbyterians in the United States of America have, from the beginning, been troubled by differing theological world views and practices. We have been willing to divide over and over again. Political ideologies, hermeneutical theories, racial prejudices, economic ideologies, and powerful personalities have driven wedges between believers, causing congregations to divide and to seek new affiliations of like-minded believers. Old School/New School believers separated and debated theology. Racial theologies divided the church and nation into north and south and led to the American Civil War. Brothers and sisters went to war reading the same Bible and praying to the same God with the confidence that God was on their sides. Fundamentalists and Modernists did battle over issues of biblical and scientific interpretations. The divisions over the ordination of women remained present into the last century. For the last quarter of the 20th century, the Presbyterian church has argued and divided over human sexuality and how to read its Scriptures in these matters. Once again, the reality of diversity has threatened to divide us so that the visible unity of the church now hangs by a slender thread.

We believe that the PC(USA) needs to be called to the unity taught and proclaimed in the Confession of Belhar. Belhar’s witness to the unity of God, the unity created by the good news of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, calls us to the hard work of spiritual transformation and surrender to the way of Jesus Christ who came to unite all believers in the visible communion of the body of Christ, the church.

Belhar asks us to look first at ourselves when faced with church division, rather than moving quickly to blaming those with whom we are separated. It is far too easy to look at others and blame them for division. Belhar directs us to look at our own behavior that has led to disunity. What is the log in our own eye?

Reconciliation.

The Confession of Belhar reaffirms the vision of mission articulated in the Confession of 1967: that God in Christ has done what we could not do for ourselves. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:18–20).
In the 1960s, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) confessed its faith in the reconciling power of God in the context of a society being driven apart by racial divisions, issues of war and peace, poverty and abundance, and by anarchy in sexual relationships.

The Confession of Belhar reaffirms this witness, but more specifically calls the members of this church and the corporate structures of the church to be claimed by the gospel of God, who alone can bring us together as one family of Christ, healing the deep divides that still haunt us all.

We believe that all who have trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord, and been baptized into the fellowship of Christ’s church, have been welcomed to the Lord’s Table. At the Lord’s Table, we receive by faith the presence of the resurrected Lord. His spiritual presence feeds us with bread and wine. At his Table we are reconciled to God, united as races, tribes of peoples speaking different languages, and representatives of many nations. We are Jew and Gentile, male and female, rich and poor, black and white and every color. We are blue and red, Democrat and Republican, Independent, Conservative and Progressive, Protestant and Catholic and Orthodox. We share in the Lord’s Table as a foretaste of the Reign of God.

In Christ, the hope of glory, we are members of the one family of God. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. And like all human families, we have our differences; we engage in conflicts. We often agree to disagree. We at times are arrogant; other times we are humble toward one another and serve one another. At each moment in time we live by the forgiveness of sins. Over time we come to realize that our life together is only in and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This side of the perfection of the New Creation we will all remain sinners and in need of spiritual transformation.

Nevertheless, Christians are called to be seekers of justice, peacemakers, reconcilers, mediators, who extend hospitality and love toward those with whom we differ. Down deep we are longing to embrace our calling, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:2-6).

Therefore, as God’s reconciled people we have promised not to break the covenant in which we are bound through the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. At reunion we attempted to create the PC(USA) as a reunited church in the absence of confessing the sin that had created our original division. In the last several decades, we in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have become increasingly separated into different political, economic, and theological camps. More than ever, we need to be claimed by the gospel of God’s reconciling love. This gospel allows believers to come together, knowing that we have more in common that unites us, than what divides us.

We American Presbyterians have not been able to fully confront our own past in regard to race. The fact is that both streams that came together to form the PC(USA), southern and northern, used theology to justify permanent inequality in church and society. A theology that grew out of giving all glory to God became justification for divinely sanctioned inequality, particularly directed at African Americans. To fully embody God’s ministry of reconciliation, we Presbyterians must confess that we have used God against others in our own church and commit ourselves to new patterns of relationship.

Reconciliation implies repair of that which has been broken. Our verbal and written confessions, while important, are far less than adequate means of repairing the harms done, restoring the losses, and reconciling the relationships that have been historically distorted. Concrete steps are required to produce the healing that we so desperately want and need.

The Confession of Belhar calls us to renew the covenant, to embrace one another as members of one family of God. Jesus Christ calls us to a costly discipleship of dying to ourselves so that we might allow his light to shine through us as a witness into the darkness of our world.

Justice

Jesus began his public ministry in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4). He read from the Scripture of the day, Isaiah 61. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Lk. 4:18–19).

Then he announced that in the reading of this Scripture, on that day, it had been fulfilled. He was God’s Spirit anointed Messiah who had been sent to inaugurate the Year of Jubilee, the year in which wrongs would be righted, wounds be healed, sins forgiven, slaves set free, sight restored, lands returned to their rightful heirs. It was a day of new beginnings. The kingdom of God was at hand in the person and words of Jesus. With his coming in the power of the Holy Spirit, God’s vision of justice and social righteousness were breaking into a troubled and unjust world.

Isaiah 61 was Jesus’ mission statement and it became the mission statement of the church. His mission was God’s project of healing the cosmos, making right ancient wrongs, reversing the injustices of human society, of lifting up the poor and humble and bringing down the high and mighty, (“to be repairers of the devastations of many generations”). His mission was not only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but also to believing Gentiles who would welcome his good news. Not all received Jesus, but to as many as turned around and believed, he gave the power to become the children of God (John 1).

As Jesus launched his mission, the poor, the sinners, the wounded, the oppressed, the blind, and the tax collectors gladly welcomed him. It was those whose privilege was threatened by transformation who rejected Jesus. They realized that he was turning the world upside down in a new day of justice and righteousness.

As the ambassadors of Christ’s reconciling love, the apostles, the sent ones, often met resistance and persecution. Many gave their lives to advance the reign of God in their announcement of the good news of God’s gracious presence and new life for those who repented and believed.

We are being called to launch this mission again in our place and time. While the Confession of Belhar arose from the struggle of South African Christians to give witness to the Gospel amidst the injustice of apartheid, we are also being called to give witness in the face of injustice here among us in the U.S.A. We see that injustice in the faces of thousands of First Nation peoples who still live in dire poverty on reservations; in young African American men who are incarcerated disproportionate to their percentage of the population; in the “legal limbo” status of immigrants, and in both native born Latinos who are subject to question in virtually every quarter of the nation; in public policies such as “stop and frisk” and “stand your ground” that put poor, black and brown young men at risk in the public square.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) confesses its commitment to God and to the biblical principles of unity, justice, and reconciliation because in times like these in which we live, we need to remind ourselves and others of our discipleship to Christ and follow God’s mission in the world.

Some will no doubt say that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) already has confessions for the reasons identified herein and more. But we say that these are unique times in the United States of America. The winds of polarization blow strong and threaten the body politic as never before. There is a not-so-subtle dangerous intermingling of God and nation that makes discerning the difference between the two difficult. Historic Reformed theological values are under...
constant attack. The forces of evil tempt followers of Christ to walk in the spirit of disunity, conflict, and injustice. As we claim the church’s earliest confession, JESUS IS LORD, we put on notice, every principality and power, that the only Sovereign in heaven and earth is on the move.

We, therefore, close with the ringing affirmation found in the final words from the Confession of Belhar:

“Jesus is Lord.

“To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.”

Endnote for Attachment 3

1. Confession of Belhar, first article.

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### Item 14-02

*On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.*

The Presbytery of Santa Fe respectfully overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 1, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

1. Shall W-3.0101 (The Day of Resurrection) be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“We gather to worship God on the Lord’s Day (Sunday) because the gospels testify that Jesus rose from the dead early on the first day of the week. The Lord’s Day is also called the ‘eighth day’ of creation, a sign of the new creation that has begun with Christ’s resurrection. Like the Jewish Sabbath, the Lord’s Day is a day for holy rest and spiritual renewal for faith communities as well as individuals and families. While we may worship God on any day and at any time, the Sunday service in particular is a celebration of Christ’s resurrection and an anticipation of the fullness of God’s coming reign.”

**Rationale**

The intention behind proposing this addition to the Directory for Worship is that it is too common for worship and church programming to get overloaded on Sundays. In directly guiding the planning and conduct of worship for the Lord’s Day, this addition to this particular paragraph and chapter would serve as a helpful reminder to remember the need for, and benefit of, congregational Sabbath time.

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 2, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

2. Shall the third paragraph of W-3.0205 (Confession and Forgiveness) be amended by adding new text to the end as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“Other actions may follow—a song of praise, such as “Glory be to the Father” or “Glory to God”; a summary of the law or call to faithfulness; and the sharing of peace as a sign of reconciliation in Christ. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the sacrament of Baptism (W-3.0307, W-3.0402–.0408) to be administered at this point in the worship service.”

**Rationale**

Section W-3.0205 already establishes the link between confession and forgiveness, and the Sacrament of Baptism. In practice, for duly considered pastoral reasons, many ministers of the Word and Sacrament over the years have chosen to include the administration of Baptism at this point in the service, rather than later, especially with infants and younger children. Besides accommodating family needs, it can also make it more possible for other small children to be present to witness the sacrament, and be reminded of their own baptisms. In addition to practical reasons, there may be times when it is pastorally and symbolically significant for the person or persons being baptized to receive this sacrament of forgiveness, reconciliation, and assurance at this point in the service. In giving guidance to the ordering of worship, it is appropriate for the Directory for Worship to include this option.

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 3, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

3. Shall the fifth paragraph of W-3.0409 (Theology of the Lord’s Supper) be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italic.]
“The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding. If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation, when appropriate, to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended.”

Rationale

The changes suggested here are very slight. It has been said that discerning an invitation to the Lord’s Supper is also an invitation to baptism. This is certainly true in the case of unbaptized children, youth, and others seeking membership in a community of faith. There are, however, Christian believers from nonsacramental Christian bodies such as the Society of Friends and Salvation Army, who may have occasion to be attending services with us and find themselves moved by the Holy Spirit to accept the invitation to participate in the Lord’s Supper, and yet not to seek baptism. Simply dropping the word “yet” more clearly allows for this. Including the word “appropriate” serves as a reminder that matters such as age, competency, and faith tradition (as preceding) should be borne in mind.

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 4, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

4. Shall W-3.0412 (Great Thanksgiving) and W-3.0413 (Breaking the Bread) be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-3.0412: Great Thanksgiving

“Following the offering and the preparation of the table, a minister of the Word and Sacrament† invites worshipers to the Lord’s Supper using sentences of Scripture (including the institution narrative, if not used elsewhere). At the table, facing the people, the minister of the Word and Sacrament† shall lead the people in a prayer to the triune God: giving thanks for God’s creative power, providential care, and covenant faithfulness, along with particular blessings of the day; remembering God’s acts of salvation through Jesus’ birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and promised return, as well as Jesus’ institution of the Sacrament (if not otherwise spoken at the invitation to the table or the breaking of the bread); and calling on the Holy Spirit to draw worshipers into the presence of the risen Lord, nourish them in the body and blood of Christ, unite them with Christ in the communion of saints and the Church in every place, and send them in mission to the world. The prayer ends with praise to the triune God. Musical acclamations, such as “Holy, holy, holy,” “Christ has died,” and “Amen,” may be included. The Lord’s Prayer follows.

“W-3.0413: Breaking the Bread

“At the table, in full view of the people, the minister of Word and Sacrament† breaks the bread and pours the cup, or lifts a cup that has already been filled. These actions may be accompanied by sentences of Scripture (including the institution narrative, if not used elsewhere) or performed in silence. The use of one loaf and one cup expresses the unity of the body of Christ and the communal nature of the Sacrament. The bread used for the Lord’s Supper should be common to the culture of the congregation; those who prepare the bread shall make provision for the full participation of the congregation. The session will determine whether wine is used; a non-alcoholic option shall be provided and clearly identified.”

Rationale

Reference to the “institution narrative” is somewhat hidden away and easy to miss in W-3.0412. These additions at additional key places, where the narrative frequently appears in Reformed celebrations of the Lord’s Supper, help to remedy that. This is important because inclusion of the narrative is seen as normative to the administration of the Lord’s Supper by churches of the Reformed Tradition and essential in the greater family of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and other Protestant Communions. (See, for example, the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Paper 111: Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, 1982).

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 5, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

5. Shall the second paragraph of W-3.0414 (Communion) be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“When all have received the bread and cup the remaining elements are placed on the table. The minister of Word and Sacrament† then leads the people in prayer. A prayer follows, thanking God for the gift of the Sacrament and asking for grace to live and serve faithfully until the coming of Christ’s realm in fullness.”

Rationale

Although certain portions of the administration of the Lord’s Supper (institution narrative, breaking the bread and pouring the cup, and the invocation of the Holy Spirit) are widely held to be particular to the role and function of ministers of the
Word and Sacrament, offering or leading the prayer after Communion need not be similarly restricted. Asking a ruling elder, deacon, or another who has been invited to serve to lead this prayer is appropriate to our Reformed understandings both of ordered ministry and the priesthood of all believers.

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 6, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

6. Shall the first paragraph of W-5.0104 (Household Worship) be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“We respond to God’s grace in the context of personal relationships, particularly when Christians who live together worship together. Historically, household worship has been a central and important practice within the Reformed tradition, an important means of faith formation. Opportunities for household or family worship include: sabbath-keeping and rhythms of daily prayer; Bible reading, study, or memorization; prayers before meals; singing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs; and expressions of giving, sharing, and service to others. Congregations are encouraged to nurture and equip households and families for these practices.”

Rationale

As witnessed by numerous accounts and memoirs (example: Robert Burns’s warm-hearted poem, “The Cotter’s Saturday Night”), the practice of household worship has a particularly strong and distinctive place in the Reformed Tradition. In noting this, the suggested wording also emphasizes the function of the practice in faith formation.

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 7, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

7. Shall W-5.0104: Household Worship be amended by adding a new third paragraph, to read as follows:

“Prayers of thanks and blessing at the household table draw upon ancient Jewish practice, and on the example of Jesus, his disciples, and the early Christian community. As the worshipping community gives thanks for God’s providence at the Lord’s Supper, so prayers at household meals provide an opportunity for remembering God’s gracious sustenance of our lives and Jesus’s giving of himself to and for us. We respond with heartfelt thanks and praise in the sharing of our daily bread.”

Rationale

In expanding the biblical context in which we understand the Lord’s Supper (W-3.0409: Theology of the Lord’s Supper—“Jesus shared meals with his followers throughout his earthly life and ministry …”), the Directory for Worship implicitly re-contextualizes the practice of prayer at meals. While administration of the Lord’s Supper in the Reformed Tradition is largely limited to a congregational setting under the leadership of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders, household prayers at meals can be viewed as a sort of para-sacramental practice, as well as being tied to historic Jewish practice (example: Shabbat observance) and family traditions (example: prayer at table on Thanksgiving Day and other holidays). The intent of this added paragraph is to guide households in the practice of prayer at meals, to help make the practice richer and more meaningful.

[The assembly referred Item 14-02, Recommendation 8, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship. See pp. 14, 17.]

8. Shall the third paragraph of W-5.0204 (Pastoral Care) be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“All members are called to take part in the ministry of pastoral care, visiting the sick, supporting the weak, and comforting those who mourn. Ruling elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament have particular responsibility for the exercise of pastoral care within the community of faith. Those with special gifts and appropriate training may be called to the ministries of spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, or chaplaincy. In certain circumstances, persons may need to be referred to other qualified and credentialed professionals to receive appropriate counseling and care.”

Rationale

The new Directory for Worship is, in many ways, equally a guide for spiritual formation. Among the practices of spiritual formation that have emerged in the PC(USA) over the last generation, spiritual direction is a particularly important pastoral practice. Pioneered by the late former Moderator Howard Rice, various of our seminaries offer training in spiritual formation and in spiritual direction. “Appropriate” training is stressed by associations of spiritual directors such as Spiritual Directors International. Adding spiritual direction into this section of the Directory for Worship would be both a recognition of this ministry, and provide some guidance (as per training) in practice.

[Editorial Note: Please notice the adjusted punctuation after the phrase “pastoral counseling.”]
9. Shall the fourth paragraph of W-5.0204 (Pastoral Care) be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“Services of wholeness and healing are one way of enacting the church’s ministry of pastoral care. The central element in these services is prayer, calling upon God’s saving grace or giving thanks for healing received, in life and in death, in body, mind, or spirit. A service of wholeness includes the proclamation of the Word, focusing on the promise of abundant peace and ultimate well-being through life in Christ. Prayer may be enacted through the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, provided that these actions are carefully introduced and interpreted: healing always in its many forms comes as a gift from God, not as a product of human prayer. The Lord’s Supper is a fitting way to seal the promise of wholeness proclaimed in the Word. Services of wholeness are to be authorized by the session and are under the direction of the minister of Word and Sacraments†, but may involve leadership from ruling elders, deacons, and others with gifts for prayer. They may take place on a regular basis, as an occasional event, or as a part of the Service for the Lord’s Day.”

Rationale:

The concern behind this suggested revision is itself pastoral. In the setting of a study of the new Directory for Worship in a particular congregation, concern was expressed around what “healing” is, and about why, when it seems so many prayers for healing “go unanswered,” we still “bother” to pray in this way. Such concerns are voiced in many ways and places. The suggested changes are an attempt to address them in a biblically and theologically appropriate way.

10. Shall W-5.0201 (The Church’s Ministry within the Community of Faith) and W-5.0301 (The Church’s Mission in the World) be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-5.0201: The Church’s Ministry within the Community of Faith

“God calls the Church in the name of Jesus Christ to mutual love, discipleship, and service. Jesus’ ministry and the church’s worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is ministry. The church’s ministry springs from its worship, where God builds up the body of Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The church’s ministry flows back into worship as we bring to God the celebrations and concerns of the community of faith.

“Within the church, we seek to love and serve one another through the rhythm of daily prayer, the ministries of Christian education and pastoral care, the activities of councils of the church, and other gatherings of believers. The church’s ministries are shaped and nourished by the Word and Sacraments, and are to be carried out in the spirit of faithful discipleship and constant prayer (F-1.0301; F-1.0302a; F-1.0303; F-1.0403). ...

“W-5.0301: The Church’s Mission in the World

“God sends the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to join the mission of Jesus Christ in discipleship and service to the world. Jesus’ mission and the church’s worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is mission. The church’s mission springs from its worship, where we glimpse the reality and the promise of God’s eternal realm. The church’s mission flows back into worship as we bring to God the joy and suffering of the world.

“Through its mission in the world, the church, as a community of disciples, seeks to bear witness to God’s reign through the proclamation of the gospel, acts of compassion, work for justice and peace, and the care of creation. The church’s mission is shaped and nourished by the Word and Sacraments, and represents the living out of our prayer for the world (F-1.01; F-1.0303; F-1.0304).”

Rationale

The emphasis on “discipleship” found elsewhere in the Directory for Worship, and also in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (F-1.0303), suggested this small but important addition. There has been much emphasis in recent years on the “missional” nature of the church, but the formational aspect of “discipleship” in faith and life is of comparable importance. Mission speaks to the apostolic work of Christians; but, the Apostles of Jesus were first his disciples, called, formed, and trained by him, and ministering in his name and under his direction. So are we.

[Editorial Note: If a title change is desired, it may best serve to make a change to the title of the entire fifth chapter, as in Chapter Five: Worship and Discipleship in Christian Life. Please also notice the adjusted punctuation.]
In offering the above revisions and amendments to the Directory for Worship, the Presbytery of Santa Fe is deeply grateful for the hard work of all who prepared and presented the new Directory for Worship adopted in 2017. As our constitutional guide for understanding and planning worship in the PC(USA), it is an extremely important document in the ongoing life of the denomination. It is our hope and prayer that what we offer will only help to make a good document even better. We have chosen to offer our proposals as items, each with their own rationale, and each intended, if passed by the General Assembly, to be voted on individually by the presbyteries.

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**Concurrence to Item 14-02 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Sierra Blanca, and Wabash Valley.**

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**ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 14-02**

**Advice on Item 14-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.**

Item 14-02 consists of multiple parts. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution will advise on each numbered item in this item separately. In its advice, the committee reminds the assembly of the following general principles of constitutional interpretation:

- That which is not prohibited is permitted.
- Itemized lists are presumed to be exhaustive unless otherwise stated. Recent revisions of the Form of Government and Directory for Worship have tried to replace lists containing specific elements with broader categories that suggest possibilities.
- The Directory for Worship is a combination of the theology, practice, and polity of this church’s worship. While all of it is constitutional and therefore authoritative for this church, not all of its content is polity.
- The *Book of Order*, including its parts, should be read as a whole. No section contains all the information pertinent to a particular topic.

**Recommendation 1: On Amending W-3.0101**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 14-02, Recommendation 1.

The overture, which would amend W-3.0101, seeks to add a sentence to the Directory for Worship emphasizing the value of holy rest and spiritual renewal on the Lord’s Day.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that this overture is unnecessary. The Directory for Worship, at W-5.0103, already contains language that accomplishes the stated intent of this overture, using much the same language offered by this overture. The committee also notes that the overture would insert this language into a discussion of the ordering of Reformed worship where its insertion interrupts the flow and sense of that paragraph.

**Recommendation 2: On Amending W-3.0205**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 14-02, Recommendation 2.

This overture seeks to amend W-3.0205, a section in the Directory for Worship that describes confession and forgiveness as an element of the worship service. The proposed language would articulate the possibility that the sacrament of Baptism might be administered following confession and proclamation of forgiveness in the worship service.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that this amendment is unnecessary. Reformed theology commonly links Word and Sacrament as in W-1.0106, but W-3.0307 already provides for the sacrament of Baptism ordinarily to be in response to the Word. It does not, however, require that the sacrament only be administered at that time in the service. As the overture’s rationale points out, many ministers have chosen for years to administer baptism after confession and forgiveness in the worship service.

However, if the 223rd General Assembly (2018) believes that the intent of Item 14-02, Recommendation 2 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that it would be better and more simply accomplished by inserting “the sacrament of Baptism;” in the final sentence of W-3.0205: “Other actions may follow—a song of praise, such as “Glory Be to
the Father” or “Glory to God”; a summary of the law or call to faithfulness; \textit{[the sacrament of Baptism]}; and the sharing of peace as a sign of reconciliation in Christ.”

\textit{Recommendation 3: On Amending W-3.0409}

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that Item 14-02, Recommendation 3 presents the following issues that the assembly should consider:

This recommendation of the overture seeks to amend W-3.0409 to underscore pastoral discretion regarding an invitation to baptismal preparation when persons who have not previously been baptized participate in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the proposed changes have the potential to weaken the link between Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The use of “should” (not the mandatory “shall”) in the present language of W-3.0409 already provides latitude for pastoral discretion in determining the appropriateness of an invitation to baptismal preparation. If the assembly believes that the present language of W-3.0409 does not provide sufficient pastoral discretion, the language proposed in this overture is clear and consistent with the stated intent.

\textit{Recommendation 4: On Amending W-3.0412 and W-3.0413}

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 14-02, Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 4 in this overture would add the words “including the institution narrative, if not used elsewhere” in two paragraphs (W-3.0412 and W-3.0413) describing the components of the Lord’s Supper.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the present language of W-3.0412 already requires “Jesus’ institution of the Sacrament” and offers options for its placement in the service “(if not otherwise spoken at the invitation to the table or the breaking of the bread).” To add the language proposed in the overture would place the same information in the sentence preceding its current location in W-3.0412. The phrase “institution narrative” supplied by the overture should not be used because it is undefined and not used elsewhere in the Directory for Worship.

\textit{Recommendation 5: On Amending W-3.0414}

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 14-02, Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 5 in this overture would eliminate the current requirement that the prayer after Communion be led only by a minister of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elder authorized by the presbytery to administer Communion.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the current language of W-3.0414 is unnecessarily restrictive and amendment is advisable.

\textit{Recommendation 6: On Amending W-5.0104}

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that Item 14-02, Recommendation 6, does not present constitutional issues. If the 223rd General Assembly (2018) believes that the intent of Item 14-02, Recommendation 6 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with that intent.

\textit{Rationale}

Recommendation 6 in this overture would add a new sentence to W-5.0104, the current paragraph on household worship, adding the notion of its importance in faith formation.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that this addition provides historical information and does not raise constitutional issues.

\textit{Recommendation 7: On Amending W-5.0104}

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that Item 14-02, Recommendation 7, presents the following issues that the assembly should consider:

Recommendation 7 in this overture, amending W-5.0104, would add a new paragraph emphasizing the role of mealtime prayers to the section on household worship.
The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the proposed amendment risks diminishing the meaning of the Lord’s Supper by linking it with family meals and may lead to confusion in the church about the orderly administration of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

If the 223rd General Assembly (2018) believes that the intent of Item 14-02, Recommendation 7, is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language could be improved with these changes.

At W-5.0104: Household Worship, adding a new third paragraph, as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough and with brackets; text to be inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“Prayers of thanks and blessing at the household table draw upon ancient Jewish practice[,] and [on] the examples of Jesus, his disciples, and the early Christian community. [As the worshipping community gives thanks for God’s providence at the Lord’s Supper, so prayers at household meals provide an opportunity for remembering God’s gracious sustenance of our lives and Jesus’s giving of himself to and for us.] [Mealtime prayers provide opportunities to give thanks for God’s works of creation and redemption by which we are sustained for Christ’s service.] We respond with heartfelt thanks and praise in the sharing of our daily bread.”

Recommendation 8: On Amending W-5.0204

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that Item 14-02, Recommendation 8, presents the following issues that the assembly should consider.

Recommendation 8 in this overture on amending W-5.0204 would add “spiritual direction” to those named ministries of pastoral care.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that adding this item creates a list that would then be presumed to be exhaustive. Adding more specific language is counter to recent constitutional changes that give various councils parameters and responsibility to define their own practices. Decisions about appropriate validated ministries are properly left to the individual presbyteries and their committees.

If the assembly believes that the intent of Item 14-02 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that it could be accomplished, while addressing the issues presented above, by striking “the ministries of pastoral counseling or chaplaincy” in W-5.0204 and inserting “particular specialized pastoral care ministries” so that it would read “Those with special gifts and appropriate training may be called to [the ministries of pastoral counseling or chaplaincy] [particular specialized pastoral care ministries.]”

Recommendation 9: On Amending W-5.0204

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 14-02, Recommendation 9.

Recommendation 9 in this overture would amend W-5.0204 by adding to a paragraph on pastoral care language describing healing. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the overture would add descriptive words that do not change the meaning of the paragraph. The stated intent is better addressed in other contexts than that of the Constitution.

Recommendation 10: On Amending W-5.0201 & W-5.0301

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2010) to approve amendment to W-5.0201 and disapprove amendment to W-5.0301.

Recommendation 10 in this overture would introduce the concept of discipleship in various places in paragraphs describing (a) the church’s ministry within the community of faith (W-5.0201) and (b) the church’s mission in the world (W-5.0301).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that sections W-5.0201 and W-5.0301 should be seen as complementary, not contradictory or mutually exclusive. It is unnecessary to amend W-5.0301 to incorporate discipleship as this is sufficiently addressed by the proposed amendment to W-5.0201.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-02

Comment on Item 14-02—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

This overture consists of ten proposals to amend the PC(USA) Directory for Worship. The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Theology and Worship, responsible for coordinating the process of revision that resulted in the current Directory for Worship, extends its gratitude to the Presbytery of Santa Fe for its careful review and thoughtful ideas for refining the document. On Recommendation 3., the Presbyterian Mission Agency notes that the language of those who are “not yet baptized” stands
on the wording of a statement of pastoral advice (Item 16-06) approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010). The use of “yet” highlights the integral connection between font and table and expresses the hope that unbaptized persons who receive communion will seek out deeper relationship with Christ through baptism.

Item 14-03

[The assembly approved Item 14-03 with comment. See p. 17.]

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 14-03, directing the Stated Clerk to send the proposed amendment along with the rationale and comments from the ACC and PMA, and advice from the ACC to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes.

On Amending W-4.0202 Concerning Participation in the Lord’s Supper by Baptized Children—From the Presbytery of Grace.

The Presbytery of Grace overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall W-4.0202 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-4.0202 Welcoming to the Table

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

Rationale

The current language “provide an occasion to welcome them” could be interpreted as the need to provide a “first communion” service for baptized children. If taken this way, the language could develop a mindset that baptized children must wait until a certain age or complete certain educational requirements before belonging at the table. This mindset would violate our understanding that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are linked (W-3.0408 “Welcome”) and that “all who come to the table are to be offered the bread and cup regardless of their age or understanding,” (W-3.0409 “The Theology of the Lord’s Supper”).

Striking this phrase simplifies the wording while maintaining the intent—to welcome the baptized and provide them with ongoing instruction. The responsibility for instruction in baptismal identity and worship education and participation is addressed in W-4.0201 “Nurturing the Baptized,” W-2.0303 “Ruling Elders,” and W-2.0305 “Shared Responsibility and Accountability.” The issue of welcome to those not baptized is addressed in W-3.0409 “The Theology of the Lord’s Supper.”

Concurrences to Item 14-03 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Newton, and Palo Duro.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 14-03

Advice on Item 14-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 14-03. This amendment seeks to clarify that when children receive the Lord’s Supper for the first time, the Directory for Worship is not suggesting a service such as “first communion.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the overture has identified a possible contradiction between W-3.0409 and the current language of W-4.0202 and has provided an amendment to W-4.0202 that would resolve that contradiction. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with the stated intent of the overture.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-03

Comment on Item 14-03—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

This overture is an effort to clarify what the PC(USA) Directory for Worship says about welcoming baptized children to the Lord’s Table. Specifically, it seeks to avoid the impression that children must wait until they have reached a certain age of
discretion, or until they have fulfilled other requirements, before receiving the sacrament. If the General Assembly wishes to affirm this overture, the Presbyterian Mission Agency notes that the following wording (including cross-references to the paragraph on baptized members in G-1.0401 and the statement on welcome in W-3.0408), might accomplish a similar intent: “Children of any age are welcome at the Lord’s Table as baptized members of the body of Christ (G-1.0401, W-3.0408). The session should ensure that all members receive ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.”

**Item 14-04**

[The assembly disapproved Item 14-04. See p. 17.]

On Amending W-4.0404 by Adding Constitutional Questions to the Installation of Ministers of Word and Sacrament to Be Answered by Members of the Presbytery—From the Presbytery of Wabash Valley.

The Presbytery of Wabash Valley overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall W-4.0404 be amended by adding at the end of the section constitutional questions to the service of installation of a minister of Word and Sacrament to be answered by members of the installing presbytery as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“Following the affirmative answers to the questions asked of the congregation, the moderator shall face the congregation along with the (associate) pastor-elect and remind the congregation that installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship (G-2.0805) and therefore it is incumbent upon the presbytery to covenant to support and uphold this pastoral relationship to the best of its ability. The moderator shall affirm that those included under the banner of presbytery are the members of the installing congregation in addition to the members of the commission and other special guests in the congregation. The moderator shall then ask the presbytery to answer the following questions:

“a. Will we, the Presbytery of ________, do everything in our power to uphold and support the pastoral relationship established this day between (pastor-elect) and (congregation), to pray for them, to offer encouragement, and in all things work cooperatively to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

“b. Do we, the members of the Presbytery of ________, welcome (pastor-elect) as a friend and colleague in ministry? Do we promise to work with (him/her), subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit?”

**Rationale**

As G-2.0805 affirms, it is our understanding as Presbyterians that “Installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship.” The call of a minister of Word and Sacrament to service in the context of a particular congregation is a threefold call of: candidate, congregation, and presbytery. Yet historically in our service of installation, as outlined in the Directory for Worship, we have only asked two members of this covenant relationship (congregation and candidate) to publicly and audibly answer constitutional questions affirming their commitment to live into this threefold covenant relationship. The Presbytery of Wabash Valley would submit that it is incumbent upon us to give definitive expression to our belief that the call of a minister of Word and Sacrament to service in the context of a particular congregation is a threefold call of: candidate, congregation, and presbytery by inviting members of the installing presbytery to publicly and audibly answer constitutional questions thus affirming their place in this covenant relationship.

**G-2.0805 Installation Service**

When the congregation, the presbytery, and the minister of the Word and Sacrament (or candidate) have all concurred in a call to a permanent or designated pastoral position, the presbytery shall complete the call process by organizing and conducting a service of installation. Installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship. A service of installation occurs in the context of worship. The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.04) shall be followed. (*Book of Order*, G-2.0805)

**Concurrences to Item 14-04 from the Presbyteries of Albany, Blackhawk, de Cristo, and Tropical Florida.**

**ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 14-04**

Advice on Item 14-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that Item 14-04 presents the assembly with the following issues to consider:
Item 14-04 proposes a third set of questions at an installation service, after the questions posed to the pastor and to the congregation. The general objective of the overture is consistent with the constitutional understanding of the relationship between presbytery, pastor, and congregation.

The idea of posing questions to the presbytery parallels the act of putting questions to the congregation at the time of installation. The congregation’s answers to the constitutional questions, as a previous authoritative interpretation points out, “affirm, but do not replicate, actions previously taken” (Minutes, 1992, Part I, paragraph 21.079). Nevertheless, the questions are not merely ceremonial. The installation is deemed incomplete unless all questions are answered affirmatively (Ibid. 21.081).

The presbytery’s answers might be similarly understood to “affirm” the presbytery’s previous votes to confirm the pastoral call and conduct the installation. However, a commission conducting an installation would not have the authority to answer the question negatively. The commission is charged to conduct the installation based on the presbytery’s prior action.

Certain portions of the overture’s current form, however, introduce understandings of that relationship that are unfamiliar to the Constitution.

1. The notion that “it is incumbent upon the presbytery to covenant to support and uphold [a] pastoral relationship to the best of its ability” does not appear in the Book of Order. Language that more closely reflects the presbytery’s responsibility vis-à-vis a pastoral relationship can be found at G-3.0101: “… [it is the presbytery’s responsibility] to nurture, guide, and govern [the witness of its ministers and congregations,] to the end that such witness strengthens the whole church and gives glory to God.”

2. The current language speaks of the “installing congregation.” Yet the overture itself correctly recognizes that the “installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship” (see G-2.0805, G-3.0301c). In addition, some “special guests” attending an installation service may be members of a presbytery other than the one conducting the installation, or members of another denomination.

3. Members of presbytery in attendance at an installation service but not appointed to the installation commission do not have authority to speak on behalf of the presbytery. Only a commission to which the presbytery has granted certain powers has authority to act in the presbytery’s stead. Similarly, only officers of the presbytery or a duly appointed commission have authority to speak on behalf of the presbytery in accordance with their respective charges.

4. In some places within the proposed questions, the language is unfamiliar to times of installation. In another instance, the language is familiar, but appears to lift up one among several aspects of the pastoral relationship. Doing so may give the false impression of limiting the presbytery’s oversight responsibilities.

If the assembly agrees with the intent of Item 14-04, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the assembly (i) direct the Department of Constitutional Interpretation to develop language for a constitutional amendment that might accomplish the intended goal; (ii) instruct the department to consult with the Presbyteries of Wabash Valley, Albany, Blackhawk, de Cristo, and Tropical Florida; and (iii) further instruct the department to receive the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in drafting such amendment.

If this assembly prefers instead to propose a constitutional amendment for the presbyteries’ consideration, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the following language is preferable:

“[Following the affirmative answers to the questions asked of the congregation the moderator shall face the congregation along with the pastor-elect and remind the congregation that the installation is an act of the presbytery establishing the pastoral relationship (G-2.0805). The moderator shall affirm that the presbytery is represented by the members of the commission. The moderator shall then ask the commission to answer the following questions on behalf of the presbytery:

“[a. Has the presbytery affirmed that [name] has been chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead them in the way of Jesus Christ? Does it affirm that this call is for the good of the whole Church?]

“[b. Will you pray for this pastor and congregation? Will you be friends and colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit?]”

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-04

Comment on Item 14-04—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

This overture proposes two additions to the constitutional questions asked at the installation of a minister of Word and Sacrament in a particular ministry context. Typically, this is a three-way agreement between a minister of Word and Sacrament, a congregation, and the presbytery. The proposed questions are directed to the presbytery for response.
Actions by the presbytery have been approved prior to the installation service. These include the approval of the terms of call between the congregation and the minister of Word and Sacrament, and the examination of the person, as determined by the presbytery. The installation service is conducted on behalf of the presbytery and includes an approved administrative commission that is composed of both ruling elders and ministers of Word and Sacrament. It is this administrative commission that acts on behalf of the presbytery.

The addition of the proposed questions is problematic in that those present on behalf of the presbytery have not been given the authority to answer. The language of the first question includes the words, “Will we do everything in our power to uphold and support the pastoral relationship …” This might be seen as binding the presbytery to prolong a pastoral relationship that is a bad match between the pastor and congregation.

A more appropriate setting for these types of questions to be asked is when a new minister member is welcomed into the life of a presbytery at a stated meeting. A suggested revision is:

- “Do we, the members of the Presbytery of ________________, welcome (minister of Word and Sacrament) as a friend and colleague in ministry?
- “Do we promise to work with (him/her) subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit?
- “Will we offer encouragement, including prayer, and in all things, work cooperatively to further the peace, unity and purity of the church?”

Answering these questions at a stated meeting of the presbytery would include all new minister members, not just those who are in an installed position.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk …” (Organization for Mission, IV.C.2.). COGA regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

**Item 14-05**

[In response to Item 14-05, the assembly approved an alternative resolution. See pp. 17, 18.]

On Adopting the “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” Written by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as a Contemporary Statement of Faith (But Not with Constitutional Standing)—from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as a contemporary statement of faith, a reliable aid for Christian study, liturgy, and inspiration (with the understanding that only the current Book of Confessions has constitutional standing).  

Alternate Resolution: The 223rd General Assembly (2018) commends the “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” written by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to the church for study, as a resource that provides prophetic witness that inspires, challenges, and educates both church and world, and furthermore, to begin the process outlined in G-6.03 to include it in the Book of Confessions.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $20,540. Total—$41,080]

**Rationale**

We Presbyterians are obligated to work for the Great Ends of the Church, which are:

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
- the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
- the maintenance of divine worship;
- the preservation of the truth;
- the promotion of social righteousness; and
- the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. (Book of Order, F-1.0304).

In accordance with the Book of Confessions, we are called specifically to work to abolish all racial discrimination, to work for peace and practice the forgiveness of enemies, and to advance the common welfare to end poverty (Book of Confessions, The Confession of 1967, 9.44–.46), recognizing that the church must obey Jesus Christ as the one Word of God, and not merely become “an organ of the State” (Ibid., The Theological Declaration of Barmen, 8.11, 8.24), “even though the authorities and
human laws might forbid [the church from obeying Jesus Christ] and punishment and suffering be the consequence” (Ibid, Confession of Belhar, 10.9).

Fifty years ago, a man gave his life in the service of others, consistent with these teachings from our *Book of Confessions*: The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). On December 4, 1967, Dr. King announced his intention to organize a “Poor People’s Campaign,” so that the poor from many different races (e.g., “Indians, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Appalachians, and others”) would lobby the federal government to change inadequate public policies, including “low minimum wages,” “a degrading system of inadequate welfare,” “subsidies of the rich and unemployment and underemployment of the poor,” “a war mentality,” “slums and starvation, and racism.”4 In April 4, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee.5

Many find inspiration from the life and teachings of Dr. King, of which his “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” “has probably been reprinted more than anything else Dr. King wrote.”6, 7

In Dr. King’s letter, he describes how Christ led him to organize nonviolent resistance to systemic injustice within the context of a specific event in Birmingham, Alabama, which is described below.

In November 1962, citizens of Birmingham voted to change their city’s form of government from a system of being governed by three elected commissioners (each with oversight of specific areas) to a mayor/city council system. Eugene “Bull” Connor, Commissioner of Public Safety who had oversight over Birmingham’s fire and police departments, ran for mayor, but lost the election on April 2, 1963.8

On April 3, 1963, the day after the election, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) and the SCLC began coordinated nonviolent confrontations in Birmingham, Alabama, to demonstrate opposition to the city’s practices of racial discrimination, “including sit-ins at libraries and lunch counters, kneel-ins by black visitors at white churches, and a march to the county building to mark the beginning of a voter-registration drive.” Dr. King was arrested, along with fifty Birmingham residents, on Good Friday, April 12, 1963. He was denied consultation with an attorney from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) without guards present.9

Eight white Alabama clergymen, seven Christian (including the moderator of a Presbyterian synod), and one Jewish, published “A Call for Unity” in a newspaper on April 12.10 The “Call for Unity” said, in part:

> [W]e are now confronted by a series of demonstrations by some of our Negro citizens, directed and led in part by outsiders. We recognize the natural impatience of people who feel that their hopes are slow in being realized. But we are convinced that these demonstrations are unwise and untimely. We agree rather with certain local Negro leadership which has called for honest and open negotiation of racial issues in our area. …

> We commend the community as a whole, and the local news media and law enforcement officials in particular, on the calm manner in which these demonstrations have been handled. We urge the public to continue to show restraint should the demonstrations continue, and the law enforcement officials to remain calm and protect our city from violence.

> We further strongly urge our own Negro community to withdraw support from these demonstrations, and to unite locally in working peacefully for a better Birmingham. When rights are consistently denied, a cause should be pressed in the courts and in negotiations among local leaders, and not in the streets. We appeal to both our white and Negro citizenry to observe the principles of law and order and common sense.11

A copy of this newspaper was smuggled into jail, and Dr. King wrote the “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” in response. Dr. King described his writing of the letter as follows: “Begun on the margins of the newspaper in which the statement appeared while I was in jail, the letter was continued on scraps of writing paper supplied by a friendly black trusty, and concluded on a pad my attorneys were eventually permitted to leave me.”12

Among the many teachings of Dr. King’s letter are the following:

1. All Americans are impacted by injustice.

   I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against “outsiders coming in.” I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. … I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

   But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their “thus saith the Lord” far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. …

   Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial “outside agitator” idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.13
2. Insisting that those who labor under crushing poverty should wait and be patient for the convenience of those who are not in such poverty will not resolve poverty. “Wait” too often means “Never,” and justice delayed is justice denied.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city’s white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was “well timed” in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word “Wait!” It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This “Wait” has almost always meant “Never.” We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that “justice too long delayed is justice denied.”

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jet-like speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, “Wait.” But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: “Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?”; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; … when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerate sense of “nobodiness”—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

Christians are obligated to distinguish between just laws and unjust laws.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court’s decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: “How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?” The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. One would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that “an unjust law is no law at all.”

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the God of An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because they are rooted in the self-esteem of man’s soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority…. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man’s tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal. Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state’s segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was “legal” and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was “illegal.”

4. There is a better way than either accommodating injustice or advocating violence: Nonviolent resistance.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of “somebodiness” that...
they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation. … Nourished by the Negro’s frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible “devil.”

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the “do nothingism” of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle. If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. …

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham’s economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants—for example, to remove the stores’ humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained. As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self-purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: “Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?” “Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?” We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change. 

5. The worst stumbling blocks to establishing social justice may not be extremists, like members of the Ku Klux Klan, but moderates in white churches who seem content to do little.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to “order” than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action”; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a “more convenient season.” Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: “All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth.” Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. …

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. …

But, … I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.
I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: “Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother.” In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevances and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: “Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern.” And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

... In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being “disturbers of the peace” and “outside agitators.” But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were “a colony of heaven,” called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be “astronomically intimidated.” By their example and by their actions they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church’s silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today’s church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekkllesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times.

6. Love your enemies, and respect your opponents—as demonstrated in Dr. King’s tone of his letter.

My Dear Fellow Clergymen: ...

I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. ...

You may well ask: “Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn’t negotiation a better path?” You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. ...

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. ...

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. ...

I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago. ...

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

... Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping “order” and “preventing violence.” I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather “nonviolently” in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. ...

I wish you had commended the Negro sit ins and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. ...

Never before have I written so long a letter. I’m afraid it is much too long to take your precious time....
If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our dear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood, Martin Luther King, Jr. 18

About Dr. King

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was a remarkable human being, and one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century. Born in 1929 in a lineage of pastors, he graduated high school at fifteen and graduated college at nineteen. At Crozier Theological Seminary, he was elected president of his predominantly white senior class, graduated seminary at age twenty-two, and won a fellowship that supported his doctoral studies at Boston University, where he completed his PhD in systematic theology at age twenty-six. 19

When he met and married Coretta Scott in Boston, they could have stayed in the north where racial discrimination was not as extreme. However, they chose to move to Montgomery, Alabama, returning to the south where they had both been born, and Dr. King was installed as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. 20, 21 On December 1, 1955, in the same year Dr. King completed his doctorate, Ms. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus to a white man. 22 Although Dr. King (to his surprise) was elected to be the leader of a boycott of Montgomery buses, he struggled with whether such a boycott was Christian. He then remembered reading David Thoreau’s essay “Civil Disobedience” in his earlier years, where Thoreau said: “We can no longer lend our cooperation to an evil system.” The evening of the first day of the boycott (December 5), Dr. King gave what he later called the most decisive speech he ever made, spelling out his principles:

[O]ur method will be that of persuasion and not coercion. We will only say to the people, “Let your conscience be your guide.” 23 Our actions must be guided by the deepest principles of our Christian faith. … Once again we must hear the words of Jesus echoing across the centuries: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.” 24

The Montgomery bus boycott lasted for 381 days. During that time, at least ninety people were arrested and sentenced to jail or fined. The homes and churches of protestors were firebombed, and protestors were often assaulted themselves. Dr. King’s own home was firebombed. Even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Alabama’s laws requiring segregated seating on buses was unconstitutional, and the city of Montgomery thereafter passed an ordinance to remove restrictions on where black passengers could sit on buses, violence continued. Someone fired a shotgun through the front door of Dr. King’s family’s house. Snipers fired upon buses, and shot a pregnant woman in both of her legs. Five black churches and the home of a white pastor who had supported segregation were destroyed by bombs. Klansmen lynched a black man, claiming that he was dating a white woman. Nevertheless, laws that mandated segregated seating on buses were changed, and Dr. King’s work began to become nationally known. 25

Dr. King’s biography after the Montgomery bus boycott reads as follows:

In 1957 he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide new leadership for the now burgeoning civil rights movement. The ideals for this organization he took from Christianity; its operational techniques from Gandhi. 26 In the eleven-year period between 1957 and 1968, King traveled over six million miles and spoke over twenty-five hundred times, appearing wherever there was injustice, protest, and action; and meanwhile he wrote five books as well as numerous articles. In these years, he led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that caught the attention of the entire world, providing what he called a coalition of conscience, and inspiring his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”, a manifesto of the Negro revolution; he planned the drives in Alabama for the registration of Negroes as voters; he directed the peaceful march on Washington, D.C., of 250,000 people to whom he delivered his address, “I Have a Dream,” he conferred with President John F. Kennedy and campaigned for President Lyndon B. Johnson; he was arrested upwards of twenty times and assaulted at least four times; he was awarded five honorary degrees; was named Man of the Year by Time magazine in 1963; and became not only the symbolic leader of American blacks but also a world figure.

At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr., was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified of his selection, he announced that he would turn over the prize money of $54,123 to the furtherance of the civil rights movement.

On the evening of April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking garbage workers of that city, he was assassinated. 27

In conclusion, adopting Dr. King’s “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” would be a way that the General Assembly could make a meaningful tribute to Dr. King, fifty years after he began a “Poor People’s Campaign” and also fifty years after his assassination at age 39. Lifting up Dr. King’s letter would help inspire and encourage all of us to carry on Christ’s demanding work to establish social justice.

Endnotes

All website resources were retrieved on February 18, 2018.

1. The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (“The King Center”) in Atlanta, Georgia, established by Mrs. Coretta Scott King in 1968, “is dedicated to educating the world on the life, legacy and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther

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King, Jr., inspiring new generations to carry forward his unfinished work, strengthen causes and empower change-makers who are continuing his efforts today” (http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-king-center). It has posted a copy of the letter to which Dr. King was responding, as well as the published text of Dr. King’s letter, at: http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/letter-birmingham-city-jail-0. The letter can also be found at: https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

2. There is precedent for the General Assembly to approve statements of faith that do not have constitutional standing. “The 197th General Assembly (1985) of the PC(USA) made its own the action of the 177th General Assembly (1977) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) with reference to “A Declaration of Faith,” which is as follows: “That ‘A Declaration of Faith’ be adopted as a contemporary statement of faith, a reliable aid for Christian study, liturgy, and inspiration ...” (Minutes, 1977, PCUS, Part I, p. 168), with the understanding that only the current Book of Confessions has constitutional standing. https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/declaration-faith/.

3. The Book of Confessions speaks of the need to establish social justice in many places. For example, the Westminster Larger Catechism teaches that the Sixth Commandment forbids “the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful or necessary means of preservation of life” (7.246, cf. Matt, 25:42–43; James 2:15–16). See also: WLC 7.251; C67 0.17 (“Man is free to seek his life within the purpose of God: ... to work for justice and peace in society”), Confession of Belhar, 10.7, and A Brief Statement of Faith, 11.4 lines 66 and 70–71.


7. Several versions of the “Letter,” with different breaks between paragraphs, have been published. Dr. King once wrote: “Although the text remains in substance unaltered, I have indulged in the author’s prerogative of polishing it.” (c.f., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_from_Birmingham_Jail). Quotations below, and paragraph references, are from the version: https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.


10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_from_Birmingham_Jail. A copy of this letter, along with the names and titles of the bishops (Catholic, Methodist, and Episcopalian), a rabbi, the moderator of the Alabama Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and a Baptist pastor who signed it, may be found at: http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/letter-birmingham-city-jail-0.

11. Ibid.


20. Ibid.


23. The first of our Historic Principles of Church Order is that “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship” (F-3.0101a; c.f. Book of Confessions, Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.109).


26. Dr. King was also influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu and an Indian nationalist who led nonviolent resistance against the British government so that they would permit India to have home rule. Dr. King said, “Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force. … I found in the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Gandhi … the only morally and practically sound method to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.” See: https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/press.html.


Concurrence to Item 14-05 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Muskingum and from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

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**ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 14-05**

**Advice on Item 14-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that Item 14-05 presents issues that the assembly should consider.

Item 14-05 asks the General Assembly to approve the “Letter from the Birmingham City Jail” by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King as a contemporary statement of faith, but not with constitutional standing. This recommendation poses issues both in constitutional terminology and process.

The phrase “contemporary statement of faith without constitutional standing” is not defined in the *Book of Order*. A statement of faith is defined in F-2.0101:

>The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the *Book of Confessions*. In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. These statements identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Reformed Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation. They serve to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers. (*Book of Order*, F-2.0101)

The *Book of Confessions* makes no distinction between a creed, confession, statement of faith, or catechism in terms of being ‘contemporary’ or not. The items in the *Book of Confessions* are from three distinct eras in church history: the early church, the Reformation, and the twentieth century. In the latter group, the Confession of Belhar and A Brief Statement of Faith are over a quarter century more “contemporary” than Dr. King’s Letter from the Birmingham City Jail.

All of the statements of faith in the *Book of Confessions* went through an approval process defined in G-6.03. Item 14-05 seeks to give Dr. King’s letter certain standing (as a statement of faith) without going through the process to give it that standing. It creates confusion as to what has “constitutional standing” and what does not, that is, what are “authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do” (W-4.0404c) and what are short of that standard.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the General Assembly to consider one of the following two options regarding Item 14-05.

If the General Assembly believes that Dr. King’s letter should be recognized as a statement of faith, then the assembly can begin the process outlined in G-6.03 to include it in the *Book of Confessions*.

Amendments to the confessional documents of this church may be made only if all the following steps are completed:

- The proposal to amend the *Book of Confessions* is approved by the General Assembly for study in the church.
- The General Assembly appoints a committee of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, numbering not fewer than fifteen, of whom not more than two shall be from any one synod, to consider the proposal. This committee shall consult with the committee or council from which the proposal originated. It shall report its findings to the next General Assembly.
- The next ensuing General Assembly considers the report of the study committee and approves the proposed amendment and recommends it to the presbyteries for vote.
- The proposed amendment receives the approval in writing of two thirds of the presbyteries.
- The proposed amendment is approved and enacted by the next ensuing General Assembly following the amendment’s receipt of the necessary two-thirds approval of the presbyteries. (*Book of Order*, G-6.03)
The second option is for the General Assembly to commend Dr. King’s letter to the church for study, as a resource that provides prophetic witness that inspires, challenges, and educates both church and world. Section G-3.0501c gives the General Assembly the power and responsibility of:

... communicating with the whole church on matters of common concern; warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; providing such services of education and nurture as its presbyteries may require; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration; discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world; ... (Book of Order, G-3.0501c).

Dr. King’s letter touches much of what is in this paragraph, and on this basis, can be commended to the councils of the church for their study and use.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-05

Advice & Counsel on Item 14-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 14-05 proposes Martin Luther King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail be a non-confessional faith statement.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises disapproval.

The proponent presbytery is right to appreciate the spiritual depth of Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous letter. It was not intended, nor has it been used, as a statement of faith by a church body. But it has been used in a manner similar to that proposed in this overture. A Study of The Belhar Confession and Its Accompanying Letter by Eunice T. McGarrahlan (2008) contains the text of King’s letter in its entirety with some commentary: http://www.synatantic.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Belhar-study_guide.pdf.

Thus, while we advise disapproval, their objective may already have been partly realized.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-05

Advice & Counsel on Item 14-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 14-05.

ACREC supports this overture as it demonstrates faith in action advocating for the realization of living in God’s beloved community. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is recognized worldwide as a prophetic voice committed to racial and economic justice.

The recommendation supports the core values of ACREC as it advocates for combating racism, prejudices, world peace, and unity across differing religious and theological beliefs.

Valued members of PC(USA) congregations believe in equality and genuine Christian love. The Letter from the Birmingham Jail commends us to demonstrate God’s love to others creating the beloved community.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-05

Comment on Item 14-05—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

This overture calls on the General Assembly to “approve” Martin Luther King Jr.’s Letter from Birmingham City Jail, “as a Contemporary Statement of Faith (but not with constitutional standing).”

The rationale of the overture makes clear the importance of this document for Christians in the United States, as it articulates and explores God’s call to grapple with the sin of racism today. The rationale helpfully shows the connections between Dr. King’s Letter and the PC(USA)’s statement of faith in the Book of Confessions. Letter from Birmingham City Jail is clearly (in the words of the overture) “a reliable aid for Christian study, liturgy, and inspiration.” The PMA stands ready to join in commending it to members, congregations, and councils of this denomination, and to support those who do so.

There is an element of the overture that calls for careful reflection. The overture asks that the Letter be “approved” and given the status of “contemporary statement of faith (but not with constitutional standing).” It is unclear what this status is in the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

To date only one document has carried this designation—A Declaration of Faith. A Declaration of Faith was written within one of the predecessor denominations to the PC(USA): the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). It was put before that denomination to be voted on for adoption as a confession of faith with constitutional standing. A majority of PCUS
presbyteries voted in favor of such adoption, but the vote failed to reach the required super-majority. As noted in the rationale to the overture, the 117th General Assembly of the PCUS (1977) then voted: “That ‘A Declaration of Faith’ be adopted as a contemporary statement of faith, a reliable aid for Christian study, liturgy, and inspiration, with the clear understanding that only the Westminster Standards are constitutional” [Minutes, 1977, PCUS, Part I, p. 168]. The action of that General Assembly does not appear to have intended by this action to create a new category of documents in its polity.

The General Assembly has regularly approved documents and commended them to the denomination for study, reflection, and liturgical use. This has proven to be a good and useful way for the General Assembly to bring attention to the documents in question and to their content. Should commissioners wish to call on this denomination to engage the Letter from Birmingham City Jail as a decisive statement of the demands and opportunities of Christian life and witness today, the overture itself provides alternate language that does not also implicitly establish a new category of document. The assembly could commend the Letter from Birmingham City Jail to members, congregations, and councils as “a reliable aid for Christian study, liturgy, and inspiration.”

Item 14-06

[The assembly approved Item 14-06 as amended. See pp. 17, 18.]

Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century.

The General Assembly’s Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Encourage the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to adjust to a shift in Christian education paradigms and practices over the last several decades and therefore
   a. support the restructuring, resourcing, and staffing of the ministry area of Christian formation, working to [deemphasize] [include and expand upon] [continue resourcing] age and stage Christian education, and instead focus on [by developing] [while transitioning to an emphasis on] lifelong Christian education and faith formation, especially intergenerational ministry;
   b. encourage the newly structured ministry area of Christian formation to dedicate resources to be focused on supporting local congregations (facilitating the networking, coaching, and training of local leaders).

2. Direct that curriculum and/or resources produced by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and [Congregational Ministries Publishing] [Geneva Press] shall be in consultation and collaboration with the ministry area[s] of Christian Formation [and Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries] of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Moreover, PPC and Geneva Press should make it a priority to hire culturally proficient and multilingual staff to produce culturally sensitive and appropriate resources.]

3. Direct the [Office of the] General Assembly [to adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report] to collect disaggregated data on certified Christian educators and non-certified Christian educators (employed or volunteer who are functioning as staff).

4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to encourage the Educator Certification Committee (ECC) to expand and promote the level of Christian Education Associate (CEA), making it more accessible and emphasizing the diverse needs of committed Christian education and faith formation leaders.

5. Advise the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) to encourage Presbyterian seminaries to offer some Christian education and faith formation courses that specifically address intergenerational ministry.

6. Authorize that the special committee’s work be extended by the General Assembly for two years to report back at the 224th General Assembly (2020)
   a. for further study of the certified Christian educator process and recommendations for its future;
   b. for further study of Christian education and faith formation in racial ethnic minority congregations and small congregations;
   c. for the membership of this special committee to be expanded to eleven total members, at least four of whom are racial ethnic minorities or serving in racial ethnic minority congregations and/or ministries.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual $13,732. Total—$27,464]
Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2016 Referral: Item 14-12. Recommendation to Create a Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 14, 20–21, 1014).

The Reformed faith is a faith that, in the footsteps of St. Augustine, seeks understanding. Five-hundred years ago, the Protestant Reformation began as Scripture and worship were made accessible in the vernacular, inviting and calling the lay-people to know their faith. We are their descendants.

In February 2018, the Reverend J Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), stated:

If we don’t learn to teach again as we have done historically, and as we are known for—theology, education, and how-to—if we don’t begin to learn how to do this today, we will probably be no more than a remnant going into the middle of the 21st century … we must teach what it means to love the Lord God with all our hearts, souls and minds.

The role of such Christian education is not just about knowing about God, but knowing God; not just about knowing a doctrine of grace, but of knowing grace and experiencing it in one’s own soul. We learn who and whose we are. That identity shapes our faith and sends us out in ministry and mission.

Given Jesus’ invitation to love the Lord God with all our hearts, souls, and minds,” we offer the use of the term “Christian education and faith formation” as a central part of the church’s mission in which we seek to integrate our ways of knowing God. It is not through Christian Education and Faith Formation by which we are saved, but it is through Christian Education and Faith Formation that we deepen in our relationship with the Triune God, the one who offers us grace and salvation.

As the special committee began our work, we quickly noticed shifts in traditional understandings of Christian education, from the basic language churches are using to talk about education and formation, to how such ministry is being adapted in light of changing understandings of human spiritual development, learning styles, and cultural dynamics. Our recommendations just scratch the surface of these changes. We hope they reflect the beginnings of our work, and not the culmination of it.

On Recommendation 1—supporting changes to the structure and emphasis of the PMA in the area of Christian formation:

- Our study showed that intergenerational ministry is an area of congregational life that is thriving in diverse settings. Many pastors, educators, and volunteer leaders are looking towards this model of ministry in the future church. Current research trends also emphasize holistic understanding of lifelong faith formation and spiritual practice, noting the limits of only age-segregated, classroom-style education.
  - Intergenerational ministry can thrive in congregations regardless of membership size or financial resources. With the majority of PC(USA) churches categorized as small churches, intergenerational ministries and lifelong Christian education across all areas of congregational life will best serve across multiple contexts, lifting up a sustainable model of ministry with Christian education and faith formation at the core. We believe our national office resources are best utilized supporting this model of ministry.
  - Communication with leaders across the denomination connected to educational ministries led us to infer that connections between local congregations could be improved upon in order to strengthen ministry overall. We also note the reemphasis on the work and ministry of the local church and the decentralization of institutions in the culture overall.
  - Local practitioners best know the needs and challenges of their context. It is networks of local congregations that will be the ones adapting resources and supporting one another in much of the church’s efforts to serve their communities. Investing in those natural networks will benefit congregations and the denomination.

On Recommendation 2—directing Presbyterian Publishing to collaborate with the PMA ministry area of Christian formation:

- We discovered there is little collaboration between the Presbyterian publishing entities and the PMA. There are exciting opportunities for them to be more aligned and mutually supportive. The PMA ministry area of Christian Formation offices also work closely with covenant partners, which expands the number of people available to collaborate on the resources and make training available based on them.

On Recommendation 3—including Christian educators on annual statistical reports:

- During our research to find the current trends and employment for Christian educators and certified Christian educators, we discovered that there is no statistical documentation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of Christian educators, currently employed, retired, or deceased. We do not know who they are, where they carry out their ministry, or how they are active in the denomination. Updating the statistical report could
  a. identify Christian educators in the PC(USA);
b. assist the Board of Pensions in their recommendations/changes, and presbyteries in writing compensation guidelines in implementing benefits;

c. aid the Educator Certification Committee in identifying educators to encourage to enter the certification process;

d. aid mid councils in identifying educators to serve on committees and as resources.

On Recommendation 4—encouraging the ECC to expand the Christian education associate level (the level not requiring a BA/BS):

- Currently, the ECC sets the standards for the process of certification for all certified Christian educators, which includes certified Christian educators (CCE) and Christian education associates (CEA).

- In our research we found that, for a variety of reasons, those serving in the role of church educators, employed or volunteer, do not know about or have access to the CEA level of certification. The CEA is underutilized and ripe for adaptation, especially for smaller congregations and racial ethnic congregations who have volunteer or part-time educators. Additionally, there are opportunities to shape the education and training for specific ministry contexts and functions. In promoting and increasing awareness for the CEA, collaboration with partnering organizations would be mutually beneficial.

On Recommendation 5—asking COTE to encourage seminaries to add more courses in faith formation/intergenerational ministry:

- Pastors are, by nature of their role as preachers and teachers, Christian educators. In many congregations the pastor is the only person employed to carry out the function of teaching. As moderators of session and strategic leaders, pastors often have great say in what is emphasized and prioritized in ministry and mission. It is essential they are given the skills in seminary to keep up with new understandings of Christian spiritual formation and educational processes.

On Recommendation 6—extending the special committee for continued work:

- This special committee was formed in April of 2017 and began work in May of 2017. Therefore, the special committee had only nine months to complete its work, which was not enough time to complete the full scope of the charge.

- Given the reality of evolving demographics, the Presbyterian church of the future will not look the same as it does now, and given that one of our charges is to study racial ethnic minority congregations, the special committee feels it needs more diverse experience, voice, and representation on the committee to faithfully live out that charge.

- Through the study of Christian education and faith formation, as well as the role of the Christian educator, the committee has come to understand that the role of educational ministries in the church has a connection to congregational vitality. Further study will allow the committee to offer crucial recommendations regarding the training of those providing lifelong Christian education and faith formation in local congregations.

- Through the study of Christian education in the 21st century and how the educator can be a resource to the denomination, the committee has learned that those providing for educational ministries in our churches is an expanding role. Further study will allow for recommendations about equipping and identifying these leaders and how they can shape faith formation in our churches in the 21st century.

Closing Statement

Jesus invited his disciples to follow him; later he asked them “who do you say that I am?” The special committee proposes that Christian education and faith formation has as much to do with discipleship as it does with learning doctrine. Christian education and faith formation is thus a lifelong, ongoing, iterative process in which we follow Jesus, in so doing learn about him and get to know him, and offer our confession of faith. This whole process is Christian education and faith formation. It is what Jesus did with his disciples. It is what we are called to now.

To this end, the special committee encourages congregations to continue to move toward an intergenerational model of Christian education and faith formation that involves the teaching and learning of Scripture just as much as it involves discipleship in the world combined with reflection and prayer.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-06

Advice & Counsel on Item 14-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 14-06 with the following amendment to Recommendation 2: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]
“2. Direct that curriculum and/or resources produced by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and Congregational Ministries Publishing shall be in consultation and collaboration with the ministry area of Christian Formation [and the Racial/Ethnic and Women’s Ministries of] the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Moreover, PPC and CMP should make it a priority to hire culturally proficient and multilingual staff to produce culturally sensitive and appropriate resources.]”

Many of the resources developed by PPC and CMP are written from the dominant culture’s perspective, that is, white and middle class. As the country and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s demographics continue to change and diversify, the current resources produced do not meet the cultural, social, and religious contexts of people of color and immigrants from the Global South, even when those resources are translated.

Item 14-07

[The assembly approved Item 14-07 with comment. See pp. 14, 18.]

Comment: The Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions recommends that the assembly direct the Committee on Theological Education to encourage member theological institutions to actively recruit Native American, Hispanic, and other underrepresented communities, as well as equal and appropriate gender representation, as members for these boards of trustees.

Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education.

The Committee on Theological Education recommends the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the new trustees elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological institutions in 2016–2018:

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary: Jill Duffield, Stephen Giles, Bobbi Kaye Jones, Keatan King, Sloan Leonard, Denise Nance Pierce, Mark Ramsey, Matthew Ruffner, John Van Osdall, Elizabeth Williams, Margaret Aymer (faculty rep).


University of Dubuque Theological Seminary: J. Hazen Graves.

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary: Laurie Laidlaw Deacon, Kenneth McClellan, Elizabeth L. Sheppard, Anne C. Steele, Mr. Tim Stoepker, Lee Walthall.

McCormick Theological Seminary: William Evertsberg, Diane Hart, Stewart Hudnut, Connie Lindsey, Marc Miller, Amy Pagliarella, Jacquelyn Pinkowski, Doug McMahon, David Roberson, Damon Smith, Randall Tate, Reggie Williams.


Princeton Theological Seminary: Peter J.M. Henry, Robert Underhill, Peter Whitelock, Steven Yamaguchi.

San Francisco Theological Seminary: YongKyu Kang, Alvin McLean, Jeannie Kim.

Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary: no new trustees to present.

Union Presbyterian Seminary: Terry Coffey, Marvin Pullen Daniel, Mindy Douglas, Delano Douglas, Lori Raible, Brent Torstrick, Peter Bynum, Christopher Edmonston.

Rationale

“A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986) requires COTE to present presidents and trustees of PC(USA)-related seminaries to the General Assembly for approval. A list of the entire board of trustees of each of the PC(USA)-related seminaries as well as brief biographical information about trustees to be approved will be made available by COTE for review by the appropriate committee during the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Similar information will also be available about those currently serving on the boards of Auburn Theological Seminary and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, which are related to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through covenant agreements.
In addition, and as required by vote of the 209th General Assembly (1997), the following information is offered in regard to racial ethnic and gender representation on the various seminary boards.

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**Item 14-08**

[The assembly approved Item 14-08. See pp. 14, 18.]

_Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord’s Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education._

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) grant permission to the following theological institutions to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in 2016–2017 [from January 2018 through to the conclusion of the 224th General Assembly (2020)]: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, San Francisco Theological Seminary, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, and Auburn Theological Seminary.

_Rationale_

Beginning in 1989, the General Assembly became the governing body that grants permission to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper at Presbyterian theological institutions. Each seminary is entrusted with identifying a governing group on campus to discern appropriate occasions and leaders to celebrate on each campus. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) granted permission for celebrations in 2016–2017.

**Item 14-09**

[The assembly approved Item 14-09 with amendment. See pp. 16, 18–19.]

_Recognize Persons for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education—From the Committee on Theological Education._

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Recognize the Reverend Katie Geneva Cannon, Ph.D., Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Presbyterian Seminary, and the Reverend Douglas Oldenburg, Ph.D., President Emeritus at Columbia Theological Seminary, for outstanding lifetime contributions to theological education in and for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and present them with the Award for Excellence in Theological Education.

2. Schedule [three minutes each] docket time in plenary session to celebrate with each awardee.

_Rationale_

**Katie Geneva Cannon**

Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon is the Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Christian Social Ethics at Union Presbyterian Seminary. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Barber-Scotia College in Concord, N.C., and a Master of Divinity from Johnson C. Smith Seminary in Atlanta. She received her Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Union Theological Seminary in New York.
Dr. Cannon has taught at Union in Richmond since 2001 and has received numerous awards for her teaching. She has been the Lilly Distinguished Visiting Professor of Religion at Davidson College and the Sterling Brown Visiting Professor in Religion and African American Studies at Williams College. She has received the distinguished professor award from Spelman College, the Lucy Craft Laney award at the Black Presbyterian Bicentennial Celebration, and was a Professor-Scholar honoree at the National Black Church Summit at Emory University. Additionally, and significantly, she was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award by the American Academy of Religion.

She has authored the following: *Black Womanist Ethics; Katie’s Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community; Teaching Preaching: Isaac R. Clark and Black Sacred Rhetoric*. She has edited *God’s Fierce Whimsy: The Implications of Feminism for Theological Education*. She has coedited *Womanist Theological Ethics (A Reader)* with Emilie M. Townes and Angela D. Sims and *The Oxford Handbook of African American Theology* with Anthony Pinn.

Since 2012, Dr. Cannon has served as executive director of the Squaring the Womanist Circle Project at Union Presbyterian Seminary. This academic and communal integration of scholarly endeavor in womanist thought and practical application of womanist study and research to the social circumstances surrounding the lives of women of color has been widely supported by womanist scholars from around the country and world. Following from the research results learned from the Womanist Circle Project, Dr. Cannon is currently working with the administration of Union Presbyterian Seminary and several foundations to establish The Center for Womanist Leadership at Union Presbyterian Seminary. The Center will be the first of its kind at any theological academic institution in the United States.

Dr. Cannon is the first African American woman to be ordained in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Douglas Oldenburg

Doug Oldenburg dedicated his life to service in the Presbyterian church. He was first a pastor, a seminary president, and then moderator of the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Following his graduation from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia in 1960, he served as pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. After seven years he left and began serving as a pastor at Davis Memorial Presbyterian Church in Elkins, West Virginia. His last pastoral position was in the city he grew up in at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. He worked for twenty-six years as a pastor and then decided he was called to a new role.

In 1987, he became the seventh president of Columbia Theological Seminary, a position he held until 2000. Oldenburg’s leadership at Columbia Seminary was key to advancing the seminary from regional to national prominence. He recruited extraordinary faculty and built an exemplary board. His unique contribution was to the wider world of theological education. In a day when the emphasis in presidency was championing one’s own institution and gaining competitive advantage, Doug insisted that the whole was as important as the parts and that the Gospel concept of losing one’s life in order to save it applies to institutions as well as persons. He put his money where his mouth was, supporting the institution of the theological education fund even though, by leaving the former funding pattern, Columbia lost and other schools gained, and always asking how any new formula or policy affected all the schools, not just his own.

Oldenburg served on a variety of committees for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) prior to becoming Moderator. He was elected to serve this position because he placed a large emphasis on theological education and social justice. He called not only for support of the ordination of educators, but also for unity among the nation’s church-related colleges and universities. As Moderator he also sought to support and pursue the study of the Bible. He called for every congregation and presbytery to engage in a program of study about what Presbyterians believe about the Bible and how they read the Bible because he believed “how we read and interpret the Bible is a crucial issue for the church.”

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**Item 14-10**

[The assembly approved Item 14-10. See pp. 16, 19.]

*Recommendations from the Committee on Theological Education Self Study Report, Fall 2010–Fall 2017.*

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 223rd General Assembly do the following:

1. Suspend COTE’s accountability to those documents that presently specify the purpose, functions, and structure of COTE, for a period of two years, allowing for a period of experimentation, during which COTE will be governed by its Manual of Operations.

2. Elect church-at-large/elected members to the COTE class of 2022 by re-nomination of eligible members of the class of 2018.
Rationale

The COTE Self-Study Report provides a thorough analysis that has led to these recommendations. A full understanding of the realities that lead to these recommendations will be found by reading that report.

The conclusion of the report draws that analysis together, leading directly to the first of these recommendations. That conclusion is the following:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in a time of flux and transition and the Committee on Theological Education is no different. The COTE has spent much time over the past few years attempting to get at the heart of how it might best serve the denomination. Its members stayed true to the purposes and functions found in the Manual of Operations when possible, while also wrestling with how to prioritize such a wide-ranging and historically bound list of responsibilities. While this committee, throughout the years, has been responsible for facilitating and fostering an ongoing relationship between PC(USA) seminaries and the denomination in the years since our last self-study in 2010, it has become clear to COTE members that the current list of purposes and functions no longer serve to reflect the richness of the covenantal relationship between PC(USA) seminaries and the denomination. It seems to the self-study committee and the committee as a whole that the time has come for a fundamental reorientation of how that relationship will function going forward. We commend the revision of the Manual of Operations and any further development of the work of the Purpose, Form, and Structure task force to this end.

In order to facilitate this fundamental reorientation, the Committee on Theological Education requests a two-year period of study and experimentation, exploring what structures and patterns of meeting best facilitate a fruitful and mutually supportive relationship between the denomination and the seminaries, making best use of opportunities opened by the present realities of both. In order to allow the needed study and experimentation, COTE has made the recommendations at the beginning of this report.

The second recommendation is linked to the first. Primarily because of the deep-going nature of the issues at stake in this discussion, and the need to produce recommendations for the 224th General Assembly (2020) regarding these matters, COTE believes that it would be difficult for new members of the committee to become familiar enough with the issues and institutions involved in the time available. Secondarily, in February 2018, COTE revised its Manual of Operations to facilitate the ongoing discernment of how best to serve the denomination and make proposed changes at the 224th General Assembly (2020). That revision includes reducing the number of members serving on COTE. Since the term of elected members is four years, adding new members now could either delay the implementation of a permanent change or occasion the awkward task of asking elected members to resign. Limiting the number of new members elected to COTE now will facilitate the experimentation before, proposal to, and implementation of changes following the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Item 14-11

[The assembly approved Item 14-11 with amendment. See pp. 17, 19.]

Approval of Seminary President and Request for Docket Time for President-Elect to Make Brief Remarks—From the Committee on Theological Education.

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) do the following:

1. Approve Alton B. Pollard, III as president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

2. Approve [three minutes of] docket time in the plenary session for Dr. Pollard to make brief remarks.

Rationale

General Assembly approval of the Reverend Dr. Alton B. Pollard III’s election as president of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is required by “A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986).

The Reverend Dr. Alton B. Pollard III, president-elect of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, currently serves as Professor of Religion and Culture and is the former Dean at Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. He is concluding a sabbatical year as Visiting Professor of Religion and Culture and Scholar-in-Residence at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Dr. Pollard received a Ph.D. in Religion and Culture from Duke University, a M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School, and a B.A. from Fisk University.

Dr. Pollard was the Dean of Howard University School of Divinity from 2007–2017. Prior to that position, he served as Associate Professor of Religion and Culture and Director of the Black Church Studies program at Candler School of Theology at Emory University for nine years. He also served as Chair of American Religious Cultures in the Graduate Division of Religion at Emory (PhD Program) and has taught at Wake Forest University and St. Olaf College.

Item 14-12

[The assembly referred Item 14-12 to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship, with amendment and with comment. See pp. 17, 19.]

Comment: [The assembly calls for an examination by members, congregations, and presbyteries of what it means to be a people “Reclaiming Jesus,” the Jesus of scriptures. We commend for study, comment, and prayer the resources that the “Reclaiming Jesus” movement gives, including the Reclaiming Jesus statement and its summary, its Bible studies and its Civil Discourse Curricula.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. On Supporting the Reclaiming Jesus statement with Prayer and Study.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. Commends to its members, congregations, and presbyteries the Reclaiming Jesus statement concerning matters of Christian faith and how that faith interacts with the “spirits” of our times.

2. Calls for an examination by members, congregations, and presbyteries of what it means to be a people “Reclaiming Jesus,” the Jesus of the scriptures. We commend for study, comment, and prayer the resources that the “Reclaiming Jesus” movement gives, including the Reclaiming Jesus statement and its summary, its Bible studies and Civil Discourse Curricula.

3. Authorizes the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to develop, in coordination with the Reclaiming Jesus movement, ancillary materials to expand this process of study, examination, comment, and prayer, and to make these materials, along with the Reclaiming Jesus materials, available to individuals, congregations, sessions, and presbyteries.

[2.] [4.] Encourages the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its 224th General Assembly [(2018)] [(2020)], to endorse the Reclaiming Jesus movement through signing onto its statement.

[Financial Implications: Per Capita 2019 Total $105,000]

Rationale

The growth of the evangelical community in the United States of America has become increasingly divided. This division has resulted in the perception in the non-Christian world that Christ, as seen through His followers, is a demanding King who insists upon submission, rather than a loving Kin who died so that all may hear the call of the Gospel to “come unto me and rest.”

This perversion of the Gospel hinders by the creation of false first impressions not only the work of the church in spreading the Gospel but in contradicting the very work of God through the Holy Spirit.

We do believe that each and every human being is made in the likeness of God, and therefore do reject white nationalism and racism, including that expressed in the very halls of our government.

We do assert our kinship with all others in the body of Christ, without regards to race, gender, identity, or class and, therefore, condemn misogyny, sexism, abuse, harassment, and oppression of others who are our kin, being all people, include that expressed in the politics of our country.

We believe that God has a special place in God’s heart for those who are “the least of these” (all people) “who are members” of God’s family, and that God calls for us to be, like God, especially present, accepting, loving, and nurturing of them, and therefore condemn language by any and all of those who would lead us by saying that there is anyone “first” in line except these vulnerable ones, and by saying that anyone should lord it over others. We condemn actions that affirm sinful language, including making the vulnerable targets of political action, of neglect including through government, and take the vulnerable away from being the neediest, making the richest among us first instead of servants.

We believe the truth of the Gospel has been perverted by many claiming to be proponents of the Gospel in and to the halls of government, making a false witness of the promises of Scripture and how power in society should act in light of the love of
God; and, therefore, condemn all forms of falsehood, including the dissemination of “fake news” by our very leaders, and inconsistent statements that make holding our leaders accountable impossible.

We view ourselves, and in particular our church and its members, congregations, and presbyteries, as well as those among us who have received abundance in wealth, as following in the steps of Christ, leaders by being servants of our kin, and therefore call for all those who would lead, through democratic election or by appointment, to reject the temptation to be autocratic, to dictate to others without regard to their kinship, to subvert what gift from God our country’s democracy has given us, to lord it over others and especially over the vulnerable among us, and to worship power over responsibility to our kin.

We view our calling as Christians, a call from Jesus, to be disciples among all peoples, nations, and communities of the love of God and, therefore, view the concept of primacy of our country over others in any way, economically, politically, environmentally, and militarily, as profound distortion of the Gospel of love for our kin throughout the world and therefore as heresy, to be named and identified as such.

Attachments: See also http://reclaimingjesus.org/, where Bible studies, a five-session study on Civil Discourse in our time, a summary of the statement, as well as the detailed statement can be found.

Paul Uzel, TEC, Presbytery of The John Knox Presbytery
Randolph Nolen, Presbytery of Sierra Blanca

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-12

Advice and Council on Item 14-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 14-12 as amended below. [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. Authorizes the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to develop, in coordination with the Reclaiming Jesus movement, ancillary materials[,] drawing on Reformed, Presbyterian, and ecumenical social teaching[,] to expand this process of study, examination, comment, and prayer, and to make these materials, along with the Reclaiming Jesus materials, available to individuals, congregations, sessions, and presbyteries.

“4. Encourages [individual members and congregations of] the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [to consider] [, through its 224th General Assembly (2018), to endorse] [endorsing] the Reclaiming Jesus movement through signing onto its statement.”

The “Reclaiming Jesus” statement is very good statement by a group of well-known ecumenical leaders about the current need for and content of public Christian witness. The initiating group of individuals, coordinated by the Sojourners ministry and other groups, did not include a Presbyterian, but Presbyterians can certainly gain from it. The proponents wisely provide for resources or material to contextualize for a denomination, but that is not the context assumed by the signers. To the extent it is a “movement” document, it bears comparison with the Poor Peoples Campaign, and in that spirit, we advise encouraging congregations and individuals like the signers to consider it.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-12

Comment on Item 14-12—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency affirms the need for members of the PC(USA), alongside partners in the church ecumenical, to think well and deeply about how our primary commitment to the God with whom we are united in Jesus Christ, calls us to live and act during the societal and political realities of this time. Many members of the PC(USA) have found resources for such reflection in the Reclaiming Jesus statement. Should commissioners decide to commend this statement (and any resources developed to aid in study of the statement) to the denomination for study and reflection, we urge that the General Assembly direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop a resource, or resources, that explore how the affirmations and concerns raised in each of the six affirmations of the Reclaiming Jesus statement are treated in a distinctive way in the confessional documents in the Book of Confessions that constitute us, the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as one denomination across our varied political commitments. This resource or resources are to be framed in a way that seeks to draw the members of the PC(USA) together, rejecting the divisiveness and partisanship that so deeply characterizes political discourse in our nation today.

Item 14-A

Minutes, Committee on Theological Education

Approved with comment: [See p. 19.]
Comment: Although it was necessary to involve two different clerks over the course of the past two years, consistency is needed in presentation of the minutes:

1. Persons attending should be referenced by their full name or with title.

2. Care should be exercised in recording actions as motions and votes with less emphasis on recording discussion, especially when discussion notes are unclear, spotty, and incomplete. The minutes from February 21 are more helpful in clarity. Earlier minutes were less clear.

These comments were also part of the recommendation to approve with comment by the Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

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Item 14-Info

**Committee on Theological Education Self Study Report, Fall 2010–Fall 2017**

1. Introduction

Since the last self-study submitted in 2010 to the 219th General Assembly (2010), the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) has undergone significant transformation. The most noteworthy change within COTE during this time was the transfer of fiduciary responsibility of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN) as of January 1, 2015. With time and space now opened up for work beyond the TEF, COTE envisioned increased opportunity and resources to respond to the needs of the denomination, its congregations, its ministries, and its seminaries in new and nimble ways.

The Committee on Theological Education is uniquely positioned to be the location of partnership between the denomination and its seminaries. The COTE Manual of Operations, revised in February 2013, states the following purpose and functions of the COTE:

**Purpose:** The Committee on Theological Education will be responsible:

a. to further the cause of theological education in the church
b. to provide a vehicle through which the individual theological schools can coordinate their activities and report to the church.
c. to provide for official communication from the church to the schools; to preserve the freedom of the schools for the benefit of the church;
d. to assure visible representation at national levels of the church’s organization.

**Assigned Functions:**

1. To develop and maintain a comprehensive overview of theological education from the perspective of the whole church.
2. To identify, develop, and propose strategies for a systemic approach to theological education within the denomination.
3. To serve as an advocate before the whole church for theological education and to interpret the mission of the denomination’s seminaries to the whole church.
4. To provide a way for the church’s needs to be addressed to the denomination’s seminaries.
5. To review the effectiveness and stewardship of the seminaries on behalf of the church.
6. To encourage and enhance cooperation among theological seminaries of the denomination.
7. To relate the governing bodies and agencies of the PC(USA), particularly those which have responsibilities for theology and worship, for education, for candidacy, and for leadership development for pastors and church members.
8. To maintain appropriate relationships with those responsible for theological education in other branches of the church catholic.
9. To receive and act upon requests and recommendations from the church.
10. To receive and review reports from the theological seminaries appropriate to the work of the committee.
11. To identify the issues, needs, and opportunities of the seminaries individually and corporately, and where appropriate, address these as requests and recommendations to the church.
12. To authorize use of Theological Education Fund monies, prepare an appropriate formula for disbursements to the theological seminaries of the PC(USA), and to advocate for financial support of the seminaries.
13. To maintain relations with educational and ecumenical associations which share common concerns with the committee.
14. To serve as an agency of the denomination for relation to theological seminaries other than those of the PC(USA).
15. To recommend to the General Assembly those theological seminaries which shall qualify as members of the Committee on Theological Education.
This report will highlight the ways in which COTE has fulfilled its purpose and functions throughout the last seven years as well as name ways in which we think some of our functions are no longer helpful in that they are no longer necessary or feasible in order to stay true to our purpose. We are mindful that concurrent discussions within COTE have envisioned a faithful future for COTE, including new ways for Presbyterian seminaries to serve the denomination, and ways for COTE to organize and operate to maximize its service to the PC(USA).

II. Summation of the COTE’s Activity and Changes Since the Self-Study of 2010

A. Significant Activities, Accomplishments, and Partnerships of the COTE since 2010:

1. Leadership Initiatives and Research and Development Task Forces

   Responding to observations raised in the paper, “Raising Up Leaders for the Mission of God” by the Joint Committee on Leadership Needs, in September of 2010, COTE appointed two task forces: One to focus specifically on Leadership Initiatives and the other on Research and Development.

   In 2011, COTE received recommendations from the two task forces and approved the following:

   From the Leadership Initiatives Task Force, COTE voted to send an official communication to the church at large inviting presbyteries and congregations into a conversation regarding investment in PC(USA) seminary graduates who have creative ideas about starting innovative ministries, supporting smaller membership congregations in a way that would make full-time calls possible, affirming congregations and presbyteries supporting new ministry ideas and joint ventures, inviting the Board of Pensions into a conversation regarding alternatives to meet pension dues, and continuing to explore the possibilities with the Office of Vocation regarding call and ministry with respect to the ordination process.

   The Research and Development Task Force was empowered to organize a Theological Education Symposium, which was held in conjunction with the 219th General Assembly (2010) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the Mobilizing the Talents gathering of pastors and emerging seminary leaders at the 220th General Assembly (2012).

2. Revisions to the COTE Manual of Operations

   In 2011, a task force was also named to review the COTE Manual of Operations. The recommendations of this committee were received and adopted in early 2013. On the basis of our findings and subsequent conversations, we recommend another revision of the COTE Manual of Operations.

3. Cooperative Seminary Courses

   In 2010, the COTE once again co-sponsored the Cooperative Seminary Course at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, “Leaders for a Connectional Church,” and the 2012 “Presbyterianism: Principles and Practice” course given at the 220th General Assembly (2012) and offered by San Francisco Theological Seminary and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

4. Award for Excellence in Theological Education

   In 2010, John Trotti was named the winner of the PC(USA) Award for Excellence in Theological Education. In 2014, Jack Rogers and Cynthia Campbell received the award. In 2016, Katherine Sakenfeld and Craig Dykstra received the award.

5. “Why PC(USA) Seminaries Matter” Video Project

   In the fall of 2013, members of COTE were featured in a promotional video project entitled “Why PC(USA) Seminaries Matter” that was circulated throughout the greater church. The videos served specifically as promotional materials for the TEF, but also as a broader source of advocacy for the theological education throughout the denomination.

6. Interschool Cooperative Grants Awarded

   In 2013, COTE awarded a grant of $2,500 to Allan Cole, dean at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and $2,000 to Jeff Japinga at McCormick Theological Seminary to help fund interschool cooperative grant proposals for academic deans and doctor of ministry program directors to foster resource collaboration and mutual enrichment in leadership and curricular development.

7. Ongoing Discussions About the Role of COTE at This Time

   As early as 2011, the COTE invested time and energy reflecting on how we might best fulfill our purpose, as mandated by the PC(USA). Many conversations highlighted and affirmed COTE’s role as a connection point between “the church” and PC(USA) seminaries, and also acknowledged our discomfort with the regulatory language that pervades the list of functions. In the time since our last self-study in 2010, COTE discussed:
a. Promoting the value of theological education, especially within the PC(USA) and emphasizing its seminaries;

b. Coordinating events at large denominational events, such as General Assembly and Big Tent, for folks to engage with seminaries;

c. Bringing deans, presidents, and elected members of COTE together to talk about what it means to be a PC(USA) seminary;

d. Mediating questions about PC(USA) seminaries that arise at General Assembly or within the denomination.

8. Facilitation of Review of the Bible Content Exam on Behalf of Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCCEC)

In 2016, COTE served as a respected third-party facilitator of an independent review of the Bible Content Exam, in response to a protest filed with the PCCEC due to concerns about its difficulty in relation to recent decreases in pass rates. Through Tim Cargal, PCCEC asked the COTE, at the September 2016 executive committee meeting, to convene an independent review with four readers, Michelle Bartel (then coordinator of theological education and seminary relations) as convener, two PCCEC members as observers, and Tim Cargal as staff support. The COTE carried out this task and the review was completed by February 2017.

B. Significant Changes to COTE Since 2010

1. The Theological Education Fund (TEF)

In 2010, COTE began a period of collaborative discernment with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA, previously the General Assembly Council) regarding the future of the TEF. This effort resulted in the 220th General Assembly (2012) acting to establish the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions (SCFTI).

In 2014, the final recommendation of the SCFTI was to transfer the fiduciary responsibility for the TEF from the PMA to the Presbyterian Foundation. The decision was then made to hire staff to manage and develop the fund. Lee Hinson-Hasty and Nancy Benson-Nicol were hired as senior director and associate director, respectively, and took up their posts as of January 1, 2015.

Although the move brought about many technical questions, particularly moving data and software, the transition was remarkably smooth thanks to the continued presence of Lee and Nancy in the new context.

Now that COTE has a new partner with the Presbyterian Foundation for the TEF’s development and management, greater opportunities for growth are possible. The COTE maintains its connection to the TEF by continuing oversight of the formula by which distributions of the fund are determined, as well as how any remaining discretionary funds are put to use. The COTE also remains dedicated to the promotion of the TEF in whatever ways the work of the committee might be useful and appropriate. The COTE celebrates the newly found partnership with the FDN and the gifts it is bringing to growing the TEF in support of future ministers and our PC(USA) seminaries.

2. Denominational Staffing for COTE

In the PMA, the work of COTE was supported by Barry Ensign-George, who handled the annual February meeting, until the new coordinator, Michelle Bartel, was hired in February 2015. At the time of the last self-study, there were four staff members for the then-named Office of Theological Education and Seminary Relations. It was reduced to one, Michelle Bartel, who served as coordinator of theological education and seminary relations and as executive officer of the COTE from February 2015 to September 2017. Barry Ensign-George returned to serve as our staff liaison in late 2017 to the time of this writing.

3. The Make-Up of COTE

Changes in COTE membership come about in two ways. The first is by virtue of changes in leadership naturally occurring within our PC(USA) seminaries. New institutional representatives since the last self-study include:

a. Frank Yamada—McCormick Theological Seminary (who was replaced by interim president David Crawford in June of 2017)

b. Leanne Van Dyk—Columbia Theological Seminary

c. David Esterline—Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

d. Craig Barnes—Princeton Theological Seminary

e. Paul Roberts—Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary

Second is the rotation of elected members:
Class of 2018
   a. Alan Bancroft, Teaching Elder
   b. Matthew Miles, Teaching Elder
   c. Mary Elva Smith, Ruling Elder
   d. Saundra Tracy, Ruling Elder
   e. Tom Trinidad, Teaching Elder

Class of 2020
   a. Jodi Craiglow, Ruling Elder
   b. Garnett Foster, Ruling Elder
   c. Vanessa Hawkins, Teaching Elder
   d. Katherine Smith, Teaching Elder
   e. Amaury Tanon-Santos, Teaching Elder
   f. Mike Williams, Teaching Elder

III. Steps of Current Self-Study
A. The COTE Nominating Committee appointed the following Self-Study Task Force: Alan Bancroft (chair), Kathy Wolf-Reed, Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri, Ted Wardlaw, Gary Eller, and Doris Garcia-Rivera.

B. The Self-Study Task Force met in person at Austin Seminary, then had several conversations in conjunction with COTE stated meetings and by conference call.

C. Task force members were asked to interview two-to-three people representing various constituencies of the church at-large, using a common rubric of questions, to gain insight into general impressions about COTE, the TEF, and theological education in the PC(USA) in general.

D. Reports from these conversations were discussed over conference call and were submitted to the chair for collation. The chair then summarized common themes and shared these with the entire task force. These themes are shared below.

E. Significant discussion was given to the effects of the transfer of the TEF to the Presbyterian Foundation, and to how this impacts the shape of COTE’s work. This showed up especially in the September 2015 stated meeting of the COTE when the subcommittees reviewed their mandates and called for review of their work.

F. A draft of this report was produced and circulated to the Self-Study Task Force. After further revisions, a final draft was submitted to the full COTE for approval.

G. Concurrently, a task force to evaluate the Purpose, Form, and Structure (PFS) of COTE was formed to address dissatisfaction with the stated functions of the COTE, especially those that are regulatory in tone, and to envision a fruitful relationship between Presbyterian seminaries and the denomination. The results of this task force include an inspirational course of service for the seminaries to the denomination, and a revision of the COTE Manual of Operations.

VI. Common Themes from Interviews
A. People offer mostly positive feedback when asked about our theological institutions. PC(USA) seminaries are still thought of highly and are considered to be the center of theological education within our denomination.

B. For the past few years, awareness of and connection to the TEF have declined within local congregation and mid council bodies. While some congregations continue to give, many have decreased giving, or have ceased doing so altogether. We have work to do in telling the story of why the TEF matters, and what impact it makes in the life of seminarians and seminary operations. While we are seeing positive strides in this area with regard to giving, we acknowledge this trend and hope to give it more attention.

C. There is concern from people representing various groups within the denomination that we be more intentional about engaging with racial ethnic communities in our efforts to train leaders for the future of the church. We are asked to consider the following: How might COTE play a role in fostering conversation/providing resources from CPMs, COMs, and theological institutions with regard to ways in which our current system leaves members of certain racial ethnic groups at a disadvantage?
D. Almost everyone we interviewed suggested that COTE might take a more active role in guiding/convening/fostering the wide variety of conversations happening within our denomination about the changing nature of leadership and how our theological institutions are training folks for the future needs of the church. As reflected earlier in this report, COTE has made efforts in this area, but those efforts seem to have gone unnoticed.

E. Many pastoral leaders in our denomination desire opportunities to continue receiving theological education throughout their service, and not all of them wish to engage with official degree programs to do so. We are asked to consider the following: How might COTE serve as a resource to aggregate all of the enriching programs being offered through our theological institutions and beyond for the ongoing theological development of pastoral leadership? We acknowledge that this falls outside of our mandate and functions, but we received enough feedback in this area that we wanted to make note of it.

F. Our PC(USA) seminaries are increasingly diverse theologically and denominationally. At the same time, candidates for ministry in the PC(USA) are attending a wider variety of theological institutions. We are asked to consider the following: What role does COTE have in providing guidance to CPMs and mid council bodies as to the ability of non-PC(USA) seminaries to adequately and effectively train future pastoral leaders on behalf of our denomination?

V. Conclusion

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in a time of flux and transition and the Committee on Theological Education is no different. The COTE has spent much time over the past few years attempting to get at the heart of how it might best serve the denomination. Its members stayed true to the purposes and functions found in the Manual of Operations when possible, while also wrestling with how to prioritize such a wide-ranging and historically bound list of responsibilities. While this committee, throughout the years, has been responsible for facilitating and fostering an ongoing relationship between PC(USA) seminaries and the denomination in the years since our last self-study in 2010, it has become clear to COTE members that the current list of purposes and functions no longer serve to reflect the richness of the covenantal relationship between PC(USA) seminaries and the denomination. It seems to the self-study committee and the committee as a whole that the time has come for a fundamental reorientation of how that relationship will function going forward. We commend the revision of the Manual of Operations and any further development of the work of the Purpose, Form, and Structure task force to this end.

In order to facilitate this fundamental reorientation, the Committee on Theological Education requests a two-year period of study and experimentation, exploring what structures and patterns of meeting best facilitate a fruitful and mutually supportive relationship between the denomination and the seminaries, making best use of opportunities opened by the present realities of both. In order to allow the needed study and experimentation, COTE has made the recommendations at the beginning of this report.

As a result of its time of study and experimentation, COTE will submit for General Assembly consideration and action proposed revisions to the relevant governing documents that set forth the purposes, functions, and structure of COTE to the 224th General Assembly (2020). [See Item 14-10 for the recommendations submitted by the Committee on Theological Education as part of its self-study.]

Faithfully submitted, Committee on Theological Education Self-Study Task Force.

Appendix A

The PC(USA) Seminaries in Review by Alphabetical Order

Austin Theological Seminary, President Theodore Wardlaw

Degrees offered:
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Arts in Ministry Practice (MAMP)
- Master of Arts (Theological Studies) (MATS)
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
- Dual Degree Program (MDiv/MSSW)
- Certificate in Ministry (CIM)
- Certificado en Ministerio en Español (CeM) (new)

Columbia Theological Seminary, President, Leanne Van Dyk

Degrees offered:
- Master of Arts in Practical Theology (MAPT)
- Master of Arts (Theological Studies) (MA(TS))
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Theology (ThM)
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
- Doctor of Educational Ministry (DEdMin)
- Certificate programs
  - Christian Spiritual Formation,
  - Compass Points (A Certification Program for Camp and Conference Leaders), Spiritual Direction, and Older Adult Ministry

Faithfully submitted, Committee on Theological Education Self-Study Task Force.

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- Master of Arts (Theological Studies) (MA(TS))
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Theology (ThM)
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
- Doctor of Educational Ministry (DEdMin)
- Certificate programs
  - Christian Spiritual Formation,
  - Compass Points (A Certification Program for Camp and Conference Leaders), Spiritual Direction, and Older Adult Ministry
Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, President, Paul Roberts
Certifications and Programs:
- Advent Experience
- Belhar Confession
- Racial Justice
- Institute for Worship, Preaching, and Sacred Arts

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary,
Degrees offered:
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT)
- Master of Arts (Religion) (MAR)
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)

McCormick Theological Seminary, Interim President David Crawford
Degrees offered:
- Master of Arts in Ministry (MAM)
- Master of Theological Studies (MTS)
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Certificate in Theological Studies
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, President David Esterline
Degrees offered:
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Divinity with Church Planting Emphasis
- Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry
- Master of Divinity/Master of Social Work Joint Degree (MDiv-MSW)
- Master of Divinity/Juris Doctor Joint Degree (MDiv-JD)
- Master of Divinity/Master of Public Policy Joint Degree (MDiv-MSPPM)
- Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry (MATM)
- Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS)
- Master of Arts (MA)
- Master of Theology (ThM)
- Certificate in Spiritual Formation

Princeton Theological Seminary, President Craig Barnes
Degrees offered:
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Joint MDiv and MSW Program in Ministry and Social Work (MDiv/MSW)
- Master of Arts Program (MA)
- Master of Divinity/Master of Arts Dual (MDiv/MA)
- Master of Theology Program (ThM)
- Master of Arts (Theological Studies) MA(TS)
- Doctor of Philosophy Program (PhD)

San Francisco Theological Seminary, President James McDonald
Degrees offered:
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- The Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS)
- The Common Master of Arts (MA)
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
- Doctor of Theology (ThD)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Certificate in Black Church Studies, Ministry Studies, Trauma and Spiritual Care, Worship Leadership
- Diploma in Art of Spiritual Direction, Spiritual Formation Studies, Executive Leadership, Advanced Pastoral Studies

Union Presbyterian Seminary, President Brian Blount
Degrees offered:
- Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE)
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
- Master of Divinity/Master of Arts in Christian Education (MDiv/MACE)
- Master of Theology (ThM)
- Master of Arts in Theology Studies (MATS)

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, President Jeffrey Bullock
Degrees offered:
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
- Master of Divinity (MDiv)
Even in the early moments of our developing nation, the Presbyterian church—one of the earliest and most influential churches during and beyond the colonial period—steadfastly planted educational institutions in order to nurture the stewardship of the mind. Further, because of the church’s historic commitment to an educated clergy, Presbyterian theological institutions began springing up as early as 1794, when the earliest predecessor institution to the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary was founded, and 1812, when Princeton Theological Seminary was founded. Some of these theological institutions closed over time, merged with other schools, or shifted from the preparation of clergy to other missions; but ten of them have flourished and continue to be relevant resources for the PC(USA).

In 1983, when the two largest Presbyterian bodies reunited, finally healing a rupture brought about by the American Civil War, the seven seminaries of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (the so-called Northern Presbyterian Church) combined with the four seminaries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (the so-called Southern Presbyterian Church).

The UPCUSA seminaries were:

- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
- Princeton Theological Seminary
- McCormick Theological Seminary (1829)
- University of Dubuque School of Theology (1852)
- Louisville Theological Seminary (aligned dually with both denominations and dating back to 1853)
- Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (1867)
- San Francisco Theological Seminary (1871)

The PCUS seminaries were:

- Union Presbyterian Seminary (1812)
- Columbia Theological Seminary (1828)
- Louisville Theological Seminary
- Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1902)

Since reunion, the General Assembly has established renewable covenant agreements with two additional seminaries with historical ties to the PC(USA)’s predecessors:

- Auburn Theological Seminary (1818)
- The Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (1919)

Although theological education takes place in many venues across the church, most notably in congregations week in and week out, the focus of the work of COTE has been the ministry of theological education expressed through the mission and work of the theological seminaries related to the PC(USA) whose primary calling is the preparation and enhancement of women and men for ministry in the church of Jesus Christ. The ten theological schools of the PC(USA) named above and the two in covenant agreement are vital centers of teaching and learning. Collectively these schools have more than three thousand students in degrees ranging from the Master of Divinity (MDiv) and other master’s degrees to the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). These students are prepared by more than two hundred and fifty fulltime faculty as well as by scores of adjunct professors. The library resources of these schools represent some of the most important collections in the United States and the world. The scholarly work of seminary faculty members regularly appears in curriculum, journals, and books that support the work of pastors and teachers across the church.

Although preparation of leaders for the PC(USA) is the historical mission of these schools, students from many other denominations and from churches around the world are attracted to our seminaries because of the rich theological resources and the strong history of scholarship and teaching. The schools offering PhD programs (Princeton and Union) are important providers of faculty for theological schools in the United States and around the world. Of the twenty largest Doctor of Ministry programs in the United States, four are from mainline denominational traditions; three of those are Presbyterian schools (Columbia, McCormick, and San Francisco). While the degree programs that these schools offer are similar, each school responds to the unique needs of the church in its region and seeks to provide a distinctive focus in its education so as to enhance the range of resources available to the church.

The theological schools of the PC(USA) represent collectively one of the strongest systems of theological education of any denomination. Even after the devastating economic challenges of 2008–2009, our seminaries are among the strongest in the United States in terms of financial reserves. Much of this strength is due to the stewardship of the seminaries’ board of trustees, made up almost entirely of members and officers of the PC(USA). Their dedication and professional expertise has greatly contributed to the robust character of the schools.
Committee on Theological Education (COTE) Agency Summary

Introduction

The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) is the primary formal connection between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the denominational level and the COTE member seminaries. The COTE member seminaries include ten institutions that are Institutional Members of COTE:

- Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary,
- Columbia Theological Seminary;
- Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary;
- Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary;
- McCormick Theological Seminary;
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary;
- Princeton Theological Seminary;
- San Francisco Theological Seminary;
- Union Presbyterian Seminary;
- University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

COTE also includes two Covenant Member institutions:

- Auburn Theological Seminary;
- Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico.

The Omaha Seminary Foundation is a Corresponding Member of COTE.

These institutions have long historical ties to the PC(USA) and have participated in the life of this denomination across its and their existence.

COTE’s Self-Study: Request for a Two-Year Period of Reflection and Experimentation

Over the last four years, the Committee on Theological Education has worked diligently on its periodic self-study, which it is submitting to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for consideration. The time since COTE’s previous self-study [submitted to the 219th General Assembly (2010)] has been a time of significant change, for COTE itself and for both the denomination and the seminaries. The current self-study explores these changes.

On the basis of that exploration, COTE is requesting that the General Assembly suspend, for a two-year period, some of the mandates presently governing it. In the self-study, the committee recommends “that the General Assembly suspend COTE’s accountability to those documents that presently specify the purpose, functions, and structure of COTE, allowing for a period of experimentation, during which COTE will be governed by its Manual of Operations.” It goes on to say: “As a result of its time of study and experimentation, COTE will submit for General Assembly consideration and action proposed revisions to the relevant governing documents that set forth the purposes, functions, and structure of COTE to the 224th General Assembly (2020).” In order to facilitate this work, COTE is recommending that the General Assembly fill the COTE Class of 2022 church-at-large members only with persons currently serving who are eligible for another term. This will facilitate COTE’s experimentation with a smaller sized committee. It will also save the need to orient members new to COTE, and to do the work of incorporating those new members into its work.

Developments at Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary

The last four years have brought significant changes to Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (JCSTS), the only historically black theological seminary of the PC(USA). In order to survive and thrive in the current environment for theological education, JCSTS in 2014 entered into a period of institutional transition. This transition brought a time of, and a commitment to, extensive reflection and wide consultation on the particular shape of its participation in the ministry of theological education. Foundational in this time was JCSTS’s commitment to its identity: it is a justice-oriented Christ-centered institution providing theological education. Based on this process of reflection and consultation, JCSTS has launched study centers (including the
In 2016 JCSTS offered certificate programs in clergy wellness and worship leadership for more than fifty participants. In collaboration with the Metro Industrial Areas Foundation of Baltimore and NEXTChurch, it has offered a certificate in Community Organizing and Congregational Leadership, with a cohort of fifty-six students. In 2016–17 JCSTS has cohorts in two programs: Certificate in Worship Leadership and Certificate in Clergy and Congregational Wellness. Feedback from participants has been very positive and has enabled JCSTS to strengthen these programs.

JCSTS’s commitment to offering certificates means that it is not at the present time awarding degrees. It also is not presently accredited. As JCSTS moves in this time of experimentation, it remains open to again offering degrees and seeking accreditation. It has had some conversation with Johnson C Smith University of Charlotte, North Carolina, the institution from which it separated in the 1960s. It is also exploring the possibility of offering “stackable” certificates. A relatively new idea in education, stackable certificates are designed to interlock with one another in a way that can add up to a terminal degree. JCSTS is poised to be able to explore such innovations as it fulfills its mission.

Like many New Worshipping Communities, JCSTS’s mission and ministry have taken shape in unusual forms. JCSTS is housed in the offices of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, and it makes use of space in a WeWork location. Instruction and learning happen both in person, in varied locations, and online.

The leadership of JCSTS is committed to using this time of transition and exploration in bold ways, welcoming the opportunities this time has opened up.

COTE has received regular reports from Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary through its president, the Reverend Paul T. Roberts. COTE has commended the leadership of JCSTS for its faithfulness, courage, and vision. COTE has sought ways to be of help to JCSTS as it charts a new way forward.

Further information can be found at the JCSTS website: www.smithseminary.org.

Response to Referral from 222nd General Assembly (2016)

As reported to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, COTE has responded to a referral from the 222nd General Assembly (2016): Item 11-22. Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community. Recommendation 11. This referral encouraged seminaries to address matters related to racism through training, curriculum, and hiring. As part of its regular meeting in February 2018, the presidents of those seminaries in attendance reported on how their institutions are addressing matters of race. The members of COTE were overwhelmed by the presidents’ reports.

The presidents reported such activities as: Adding a day of new student orientation dealing with matters of race; offering a January term for intercultural learning; partnering with The Wabash Center to embed multiculturalism into the syllabi; hosting regular “courageous conversations” on matters of race; requiring each core theological discipline to include a class dealing with race, as well as requiring students to take that course; and revising search protocols to ensure diversification of the faculty.

Some matters of note include: Of the fourteen new faculty hires over the past five years at Princeton Theological Seminary, nine are people of color; The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary emphasizes its opportunity to address racism not simply as a societal matter, but from the theological category of sin; Union Presbyterian Seminary has created the Center for Womanist Leadership at its Richmond campus, under leadership of one of this year’s Excellence in Theological Education awardees, Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon; Union Presbyterian Seminary has received an endowment gift that has funded the establishment of a Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation on its Charlotte campus that will work on issues of race (among other justice-oriented issues), convening conversations within the seminary community; several seminaries are conducting historical analyses of the impact racism has had on their institutions, preparing to incorporate the truths discovered, beginning with repentance.

COTE members were instructed and inspired by the reports of our seminary presidents, and encouraged to witness how they are learning from one another and how they are preparing future ministers to lead congregations responsibly in dealing with issues of race.

Report: Changes in Charter/Bylaws of COTE Member Seminaries

The following COTE member institutions report changes in their charter/bylaws over the period 2016–17.

* Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary* reports two changes. Two degrees have been added: Master of Arts (Ministry Practice), and Master of Arts (Youth Ministry). The Finance and Administration Committee is to be notified in the case of dismissal of a senior member of the nonacademic administrative staff for cause.
Princeton Theological Seminary reports a change to its Articles of Incorporation, and a change to its bylaws.

Article VII of the Articles of Incorporation has been revised. Previously it specified that officers of the board of trustees would be ministers or ruling elders of the PC(USA). It has been revised to specify that ordinarily the chair or vice-chair of the board will be a minister or ruling elder of the PC(USA).

Article XI (“Relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”) of the bylaws has been revised.

What follows is the text of this article prior to revision:

Princeton Theological Seminary is recognized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as one of its theological institutions. In accord with this recognition, for so long as it shall remain in effect and to the extent permitted by law, the Seminary agrees to respect the polity of said Church, to be attentive to the recommendations of the General Assembly thereof, and to conduct a program of theological education in a manner not inconsistent with the standards of that Church. Whenever any funds or estate shall be conveyed to the Corporation by the General Assembly of said Church, with specific instructions for their disposition, the Corporation shall hold and use those funds and estate for the purpose specified.

Here is the text of this article as revised:

A professional and graduate school related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Seminary stands within the Reformed tradition, affirming the sovereignty of the triune God over all creation, the gospel of Jesus Christ as God’s saving word for all people, the renewing power of the word and Spirit in all of life, and the unity of Christ’s servant church throughout the world. This tradition shapes the instruction, research, practical training, and continuing education provided by the Seminary, as well as the theological scholarship it promotes.

San Francisco Theological Seminary reports that it has changed the phrase “women and men” to “persons” in the first line of its Mission Statement. It has also changed the name of its Budget and Investment Committee to Finance Committee.

University of Dubuque reports a change in membership of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, which will include not more than four at-large representatives from the board, serving three-year terms that are nonrenewable unless waived by the board or the executive committee acting on the board’s behalf. Previously the bylaws specified that there would be not more than three at-large representatives.
## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION
Approved By The 222nd General Assembly (2016)
All amendments require 86 affirmative votes.

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### VOTES BY PRESbyterIES ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

From the 222nd GA (2016) to the 223rd GA (2018)

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## Votes by Presbyteries on Constitutional Amendments

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**Totals:**

- A: 106
- N: 24
- NA: 130
- 1: 125
- 6: 121
- 3: 118
- 7: 2090
- 1894: 196
SECTION THREE

SUPPLEMENT:

Roll of the General Assembly,
Standing Rules,
Moderators and Clerks,
Members of Entities Elected by the General Assembly
Abindon
Ruling Elder Ann Manley
Teaching Elder Jon Martin
YAAD Katie Pratt

Albany
Teaching Elder Laurence Greenwold
Ruling Elder Charlotte Hasselbarth
YAAD Anni-Maxine Quaye

Arkansas
Ruling Elder Kim Brooks
YAAD Emma Gillaspy
Teaching Elder Dari Rowen
Teaching Elder Michael Vinson
Ruling Elder Ray Woodruff

Atlantic Korean
Teaching Elder Eun Sang Cho
Ruling Elder Kimhyongsun Robinson

Baltimore
Ruling Elder John Brewington
YAAD Melissa Courtney
Ruling Elder Bill Daniel
Teaching Elder Sue Lowcock Harris
Teaching Elder Michael Moore

Beaver-Butler
Teaching Elder Judy Angleberger
Ruling Elder Allen Kitchen

Blackhawk
YAAD Audrey Dyer
Ruling Elder Jeanne Ohms
Ruling Elder Katherine Pearson
Teaching Elder John Rickard
Teaching Elder John Walker

Boise
Ruling Elder Mathew Eardley
YAAD Alden Glass
Teaching Elder Katey Schwind Williams

Boston
Ruling Elder Thatcher Freeborn
Teaching Elder Cynthia Kohlmann
YAAD Princely Tamfu

Carlisle
Ruling Elder Chantal Attnip
Teaching Elder Anthony Lorenz
Ruling Elder John Shaddock
Teaching Elder Heather Sigler
YAAD Paul Um

Cayuga-Syracuse
YAAD Rachel Kilts
Teaching Elder Diane Monger
Ruling Elder Rebecca Wind

Central Florida
Ruling Elder Luis Davila
YAAD John Daniel DeBevoise
Ruling Elder Dawn Neff
Teaching Elder Maynard Pittendreigh
Ruling Elder George Spaeth
Teaching Elder Laura Viau
Teaching Elder Michael York

Central Nebraska
Teaching Elder Daniel Davis
Ruling Elder Sharon Rees

Charleston-Atlantic
YAAD Andrew Byrd
Teaching Elder Christine Herrin
Teaching Elder Isaac Moore Jr.
Ruling Elder James Parlor
Ruling Elder Mary Porter
Ruling Elder Reece Smith
Teaching Elder Beth Yarborough

Charlotte
YAAD Casey Aldridge
Ruling Elder Katherine Dunlap
Ruling Elder Patricia Franks
Ruling Elder Harry Greyard
Teaching Elder Julie Hill
Ruling Elder Sharon Lambeth
Teaching Elder Alexander Porter
Teaching Elder Stephen Ratliff
Teaching Elder Lorenzo Small

Cherokee
YAAD Hayden Deal
Ruling Elder Beth Gaines
Teaching Elder Greg Moore

Chicago
Teaching Elder John Chu
Ruling Elder Jodi Craiglow
Ruling Elder John Fyfe
Teaching Elder Kenneth Hockenberry
Teaching Elder Michael Kirby
Ruling Elder David Myles
Teaching Elder Stewart Pattison
YAAD Carolyn Santos
Ruling Elder Sandy Zeles

Cimarron
YAAD Samantha Avila
Ruling Elder Mike Dvorak
Teaching Elder Deborah Meinke

Cincinnati
Ruling Elder Madeline Bronaugh
Teaching Elder Edward Goode
YAAD Margaret Heidenreich
Teaching Elder Deborah Uchtman
Ruling Elder Robert Young

Coastal Carolina
Ruling Elder John Baker
Teaching Elder Mamie Lee Hooker
YAAD Andrian Jackson
Teaching Elder Steuart T. Link
YAAD William Paul Pope
Ruling Elder Curt Simpson
Teaching Elder William Young

Dakota
Teaching Elder Maeng-Ho Ahn
Ruling Elder Fern Cloud
THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**De Cristo**
Ruling Elder Eloise Fredrickson
Teaching Elder Bart Smith
YAAD Michael Tuohy

**Denver**
Ruling Elder Georgia Comstock
Ruling Elder Cleve Dixon
Teaching Elder Ruth McCollum Huff
Teaching Elder Jason Whitehead
YAAD Claire Wineman

**Des Moines**
YAAD Ben O'Connell
Teaching Elder Alex Thornburg
Ruling Elder Sandy Wagener

**Detroit**
Teaching Elder Robert Agnew
YAAD Katie Baker
Ruling Elder Charon Barconey
Teaching Elder Kara Hildebrandt
Teaching Elder John Judson
Ruling Elder Ellen Schreuder
Ruling Elder Kevin Smith

**Donegal**
YAAD Hannah Atchinson
Ruling Elder Kathryn Barr
Teaching Elder Emily Chudy
Ruling Elder Douglas Good
Teaching Elder Noe Juarez

**East Iowa**
Teaching Elder Trey Hegar
Ruling Elder Kerry Jennings
Ruling Elder Marta Pumroy
Teaching Elder Lisa Ross Thedens

**East Tennessee**
Teaching Elder Laura Becker
YAAD Andrew Brittain
Ruling Elder John Guthrie
Ruling Elder Carl McDonald
Teaching Elder Elizabeth Peterson

**Eastern Korean**
Teaching Elder Evelyn Chang
Ruling Elder Dong Kim
YAAD James Kim
Ruling Elder Moon Lee
Teaching Elder David Yi

**Eastern Oklahoma**
Teaching Elder Jan Condren
Ruling Elder Grace Goodeagle
YAAD Maika Liwai

**Eastern Oregon**
YAAD Evan Bigler
Teaching Elder Linda Toth
Ruling Elder Mary Lou Welby

**Eastern Virginia**
YAAD Kenmerly David Benraty
Ruling Elder Roxie Holder
Teaching Elder Valena Hoy
Teaching Elder David Rollins
Ruling Elder Kenneth Wheeler

**Eastminster**
Teaching Elder Richard Lapehn
Ruling Elder Beth Loresch
YAAD Lex Prindle

**Elizabeth**
YAAD Katherine Barany
Ruling Elder MaryJane Finne
Teaching Elder Erin Hayes-Cook
Teaching Elder Carlos Wilton
Ruling Elder Arthur Winter

**Flint River**
Ruling Elder Sherrida Crawford
YAAD Lily Ingle
Teaching Elder Virgil Marshall

**Florida**
Teaching Elder Kenneth Kelley
Ruling Elder Mary Keyt
YAAD Lauren Scott

**Foothills**
Teaching Elder Deborah Broadwell
YAAD Mary Moore Driggers
Ruling Elder Beverly George
Ruling Elder Russell Harris
Teaching Elder Marc Mason

**Genesee Valley**
Ruling Elder Ralph Carter
Teaching Elder Thomas Gardner
Ruling Elder Hezekiah Simmons
Teaching Elder Susan Thaine
YAAD Benjamin Vacanti

**Geneva**
Teaching Elder Glenn Kennedy
YAAD Cherokee Lane
Ruling Elder Linda Werts

**Giddings-Lovejoy**
Teaching Elder Rebecca Barnes
YAAD Kennedy Carnes
Teaching Elder Robert Dyer
Teaching Elder Miriam Foltz
Ruling Elder Victoria Sherman

**Glacier**
Ruling Elder Martha Ripley
Teaching Elder Scott Wipperman

**Grace**
Teaching Elder Cheryl Bourne
Ruling Elder Catherine Cuellar
Ruling Elder Lissa Dallas
Ruling Elder Melinda Hunt
Ruling Elder Phyllis Kidwell
YAAD Elizabeth Parker
Teaching Elder Dale Patterson
THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Grace (continued)
Teaching Elder David Schaefers
Teaching Elder Thomas Tickner
Teaching Elder Krista Welch Rasco
Ruling Elder Curtis Wells

Grand Canyon
Ruling Elder Kiana Brewer
YAAD Abby Kaup
Ruling Elder Jean Montgomery
Teaching Elder Terry Palmer
Teaching Elder Edward Spence

Great Rivers
Teaching Elder Ryan Landino
Teaching Elder Harold Losey
YAAD Fiona McGrath Nagle
Ruling Elder Gary Terpstra
Ruling Elder Sandi Woodward

Greater Atlanta
Teaching Elder Carrie Barnes
Ruling Elder Deloris Bryant-Booker
Teaching Elder Shelli Latham
Teaching Elder Mun Lee
YAAD Elysee Mahangama
Teaching Elder Rick Neale
Teaching Elder Micah Nutter Dowling
Ruling Elder Hiram Perez-Cordero
Ruling Elder Margaret Rightmyer
Ruling Elder Mary Smarr
Ruling Elder Jeff Vaughan

Heartland
YAAD Megan Berry
Ruling Elder James Gibson
Teaching Elder Elaine Loggi
Ruling Elder Jo Eloise Randolph
Teaching Elder Edward Thompson

Holston
Teaching Elder Paul Helphinstine
YAAD Haley Lack
Ruling Elder Noah McMillian

Homestead
Teaching Elder John Duling
YAAD Donald Hanson
Ruling Elder Maggie Horak

Hudson River
Ruling Elder Betsy Bostwick
Ruling Elder Keith Brokaw
YAAD Austin Kim
Teaching Elder Lori Knight-Whitehouse
Teaching Elder Martin McGeachy

Huntingdon
Teaching Elder K. Joy Kaufmann
Ruling Elder Dan Mertz
YAAD Miranda Prough

Indian Nations
Ruling Elder Melissa Gill
Teaching Elder C Meinhart

John Calvin
Teaching Elder Gregory Esselman
YAAD Shannon Simmons
Ruling Elder Lorraine Whittington

Kendall
Teaching Elder Phil Price
YAAD Caitlyn Probasco
Ruling Elder Kristie Wagner

Kiskiminetas
YAAD Andrew Hreha
Ruling Elder David Murphy
Teaching Elder Stephanie Weaver

Lackawanna
YAAD Josiah Armstrong
Teaching Elder Scott Loomer
Ruling Elder Bonnie J Yuscavage

Lake Erie
YAAD Ben Fugate
Ruling Elder Doug Lee
Teaching Elder Emily Zeig Lindsey

Lake Huron
YAAD Not Attending
Ruling Elder Jacob Bennett
Teaching Elder Sharlyn Gates

Lake Michigan
Teaching Elder Edwin Brinklow
Teaching Elder Laurie Hartzell
Ruling Elder Denise Martin
Ruling Elder Tedd Oyler
YAAD Aliah Weeldreyer

Lehigh
Teaching Elder Sue Marie Baskette
YAAD Brittney Daniel
Ruling Elder Nicole Vogel

Long Island
Teaching Elder Kymerley Clemons-Jones
Ruling Elder Luci Duckson-Bramble
Teaching Elder Ida Rosario
YAAD Anderson Seecharan
Ruling Elder Gale Seidler

Los Ranchos
Teaching Elder Sung Joo
Teaching Elder Adel Malek
YAAD Unique Martinez
Ruling Elder John McCallum
Ruling Elder Penny Prol

Mackinac
Teaching Elder Elizabeth Broschart
Ruling Elder Richard Smith
YAAD Allison Trainer

Maumee Valley
Ruling Elder Gloria Box
Teaching Elder Douglas Holmes
YAAD Katrina Riepenhoff
Miami Valley
Ruling Elder Cyndi Adams
YAAD Courtney Hemmelgarn
Teaching Elder Kenneth Locke
Ruling Elder Cynthia Nowka
Teaching Elder Kelley Wehmeyer Shin

Middle Tennessee
Ruling Elder Patricia Bridges
Teaching Elder Gregory Glover
Teaching Elder Mary Louise McCullough
Ruling Elder Geeta McMillan
Teaching Elder Carol Tate
Ruling Elder Bart Walker

Mid-Kentucky
YAAD Katherine Brucken
Ruling Elder Vince Patton
Teaching Elder John Roper

Mid-South
Teaching Elder Anne Apple
YAAD James Dickson
Ruling Elder Curt Wilson

Midwest Hanmi
Ruling Elder Kum Lee
Teaching Elder Jeremiah Yi

Milwaukee
Ruling Elder Noel Adams
YAAD Theo Leavell
Teaching Elder Jim Rand

Minnesota Valleys
Ruling Elder Deb Hess
Teaching Elder Scott Prouty
YAAD Julia Prouty

Mission
Ruling Elder Liz Anzaldua
Ruling Elder Rick Covington
Teaching Elder Nancy McCranie
Teaching Elder Dan Milford
YAAD Alexis Milford-Rosales
Teaching Elder Carolina Trevino
Ruling Elder Dahlia Vela

Mississippi
Ruling Elder Althea Jerome
Teaching Elder Robert Phelps

Missouri River Valley
Teaching Elder Paul Masters
Ruling Elder Patricia Tooles

Missouri Union
Teaching Elder Dan Festa
YAAD Marcus Moore
Ruling Elder Anne Schneider

Monmouth
Teaching Elder Diane Ford
Teaching Elder Linda Goeddel
Ruling Elder Glenn Sandberg
YAAD Sara Sharp
Ruling Elder Nancy Tindall

Muskingum Valley
Teaching Elder Jeff Bergeson
Ruling Elder Richard Hastings
YAAD Vadalyn Taylor

National Capital
Ruling Elder Miriam Dewhurst
Ruling Elder Susan Etherton
Teaching Elder E. Quinn Fox
YAAD Sarah Golemon-Mercer
Teaching Elder Elanora Giddings Ivory
Teaching Elder Donald Meeks
Teaching Elder Bryan Mickle
Ruling Elder Antoine Nixon
Ruling Elder Judith Wenig

Nevada
YAAD Emily Fonder
Teaching Elder B. E. Luckett Jr.
Ruling Elder Elaine Noble

New Brunswick
YAAD Marissa Beyer
Teaching Elder Leslie Dobbs-Allsopp
Teaching Elder Paul Rhebergen
Ruling Elder Clarke Walker
Ruling Elder Lorelei Zupp

New Castle
Teaching Elder Laurie Hiller
YAAD Caroline Hutchison
Ruling Elder Gary Patterson

New Covenant
Teaching Elder John Barden
Teaching Elder Debbie Cenko
YAAD Alexandra Hunt
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Teaching Elder Michael Umbenhaur
Ruling Elder Larry Wheeler
Ruling Elder Susan Wittjen

New Harmony
YAAD Catherine Henderson
Ruling Elder Susan Holton
Teaching Elder Samuel Sparks

New Hope
Teaching Elder Cheryl Barton Henry
Ruling Elder Nancy Chiles
YAAD AJ Gunter
Ruling Elder Cader Howard
Teaching Elder Alan Koenke
Ruling Elder Susan Landis
Teaching Elder Mac Schafer
Teaching Elder Elizabeth Whitmer

New York City
Ruling Elder Selma Jackson
Teaching Elder Bertram Johnson
Teaching Elder Samuel Park
Ruling Elder Brunhilda Sanders-Lane

Newark
Teaching Elder Ruth Boling
Ruling Elder Lorraine Cuffie
YAAD Emma Gritsch
Newton
Ruling Elder Sharon Guthrie
Teaching Elder David Harvey
Teaching Elder Amy Lincoln
Ruling Elder Stuart Ours
YAAD Katherine Scott

North Alabama
Ruling Elder Ramsey Huffman
Teaching Elder Tom Lovell
YAAD Grace Marenka

North Central Iowa
Ruling Elder Judy Kлепfer
Teaching Elder Ian McMullen
YAAD Joanna Wilson

Northeast Georgia
Ruling Elder Charles Grant
YAAD Savannah McGinnis
Teaching Elder Dorinda Trouteaud

Northern Kansas
Teaching Elder Patricia Brown-Barnett
Ruling Elder Gary Miles
YAAD Cami Raines

Northern New England
Teaching Elder Deadra Ashton
YAAD Emily Costello
Ruling Elder Samuel Wondal

Northern New York
Ruling Elder Constance Martin
Teaching Elder Deborah Packard

Northern Plains
Ruling Elder Marilyn Dean
Teaching Elder Mary Holtey
YAAD Sedalia Mahlum

Northern Waters
Ruling Elder Larry Annett
Teaching Elder Richard Blood

Northumberland
Ruling Elder Ron Butler
YAAD Elizabeth Henning
Teaching Elder Doug Orbaker

Northwest Coast
Teaching Elder Ashley Birk
Ruling Elder Samuel Dechter
Teaching Elder Paul Kim
Ruling Elder Steve Shively

Ohio Valley
YAAD Natalie Cushman
Ruling Elder Joe Kimmel
Teaching Elder Katrina Pekich-Bundy

Olympia
YAAD Daniel Herron
Ruling Elder Char McMullen
Teaching Elder Julie Scheer Johnson

Palisades
Ruling Elder Diane Anderson
Teaching Elder Steve Huston
YAAD Alicia Mucciolo

Palo Duro
Teaching Elder Janell Blair
YAAD Ashley Denham
Ruling Elder David Kemp

Peace River
Teaching Elder Jeffrey DeYoe
Ruling Elder Wayne Largent
YAAD Mariah Martin
Ruling Elder Charmaine Ponkratz
Teaching Elder William Teng

Philadelphia
Ruling Elder James Ballengee
Ruling Elder Ronald Cronise
Teaching Elder Troy Janel Dixon
Teaching Elder Christopher Holland
Teaching Elder Byungil Kim
Ruling Elder Contina Lundy
Ruling Elder Zandra Maffett
YAAD Madeline Steinmangel Taylor
Teaching Elder Lewis Casey Thompson

Pines
YAAD Chet Andrews
Teaching Elder Erin Kaye
Ruling Elder Pedro Pizarro

Pittsburgh
Ruling Elder Rebecca Abbott
Ruling Elder Dan Beckstrom
Teaching Elder Trent Hancock
Teaching Elder Tami Hooker
Ruling Elder Hill Jordan
Teaching Elder Rob Marrow
Ruling Elder Rebecca Price
YAAD Ben Smith
Teaching Elder Steve Werth

Plains and Peaks
YAAD Emma Carney
Ruling Elder Diane Kenning
Teaching Elder Michael Moore

Presbiterio de San Juan
YAAD Arnaldo Rodriguez
Teaching Elder Raul Felipe Santiago Rivera
Ruling Elder Hctor Torres-Betancourt

Presbiterio del Noroeste
Teaching Elder Madeline Alvarez Soto
YAAD Karina Sylvette Gonzalez Cordero
Ruling Elder Elisanel Santiago
Ruling Elder Wandick Acevedo

Presbiterio Del Suroeste
YAAD Keila M. Candelario Lugo
Teaching Elder Zodet Zambrana De Negron
THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Prospect Hill
Ruling Elder William Crawford
YAAD Emma Dau
Teaching Elder Tim Harmon

San Joaquin
 YAAD Hannah Evans
 Ruling Elder Tom Link
 Teaching Elder David Bruce Rose

Providence
Teaching Elder Sam McGregor
YAAD Mary Kathryn McGregor
Ruling Elder Paul Smith

San Jose
 Teaching Elder Edd Breeden
 Ruling Elder Carol Holsinger
 YAAD Hananeel Tanojo

Redstone
 YAAD Emily Hartz
 Teaching Elder Wendy Keys
 Ruling Elder Janie Short
 Ruling Elder Rich Smith
 Teaching Elder Sue Washburn

Santa Barbara
 Teaching Elder Dennis Falasco
 YAAD Margaret Mae Knauss
 Ruling Elder Sandy Thoits

Riverside
 YAAD Lilian Bolanos
 Teaching Elder Julie Hodges
 Ruling Elder Susan Skoglund

Santa Fe
 Ruling Elder Judy Belvin
 YAAD Nicole Castellano
 Teaching Elder Kathy Westmoreland

Sacramento
 Teaching Elder Pamela Anderson
 YAAD Jacqueline Laybourn
 Ruling Elder Wayne Mitchell

Savannah
 YAAD Wyman Bailey
 Ruling Elder Paul Pressly
 Teaching Elder John Ruehl

Salem
 Teaching Elder Kenneth Broman-Fulks
 Ruling Elder Ty Buckner
 Teaching Elder Lindsay Conrad
 Ruling Elder James Harley
 Teaching Elder Emily Larsen
 Teaching Elder Felicia Stewart Hoyle
 Ruling Elder Lee Woods
 Ruling Elder Y. Wright

Scioto Valley
 Teaching Elder Roger Au
 Ruling Elder James H. Boggs
 Ruling Elder Mark Johnson
 Ruling Elder Carla Mavis
 Teaching Elder Justice A. Ofosuhene
 Teaching Elder Robert R. Tolar

San Diego
 YAAD Rebecca Matsch
 Ruling Elder Bridget Meckley
 Teaching Elder Michael Mudgett
 Ruling Elder Sue Skala
 Teaching Elder Rosalind Ziccardi

Seattle
 Ruling Elder Leslie Ferrell
 YAAD Rachel Jewett
 Teaching Elder Doug Kelly
 Teaching Elder Eliana Maxim
 Ruling Elder Julia Sensenbrenner

San Juan
 YAAD Asher Arey
 Ruling Elder Donald Baker
 Ruling Elder Richard Comstock
 Teaching Elder Patrick Lanaghan
 Teaching Elder Debra McKune

San Fernando
 Teaching Elder Darren Pollock
 Ruling Elder Carol Sherwood

Shenandoah
 YAAD Rachel Hemmerlin
 Teaching Elder Robert McCreight
 Ruling Elder Jamie Schiestle

San Francisco
 Teaching Elder Debra Avery
 Ruling Elder Mary Jane Gordon
 Teaching Elder Vincent Mok
 Ruling Elder Jon Myers
 YAAD Ethan Sullivan

Sheppards And Lapsley
 Ruling Elder Mark Hopkins
 Teaching Elder Ed Hurley
 YAAD Julie Potts
 Teaching Elder Leeann Scarbrough
 Ruling Elder Deborah C Thomas

San Gabriel
 YAAD Sophia Alesci
 Ruling Elder Deborah Owens
 Teaching Elder Bear Ride

Shenango
 Ruling Elder Richard Comstock
 Teaching Elder Patrick Lanaghan
 Teaching Elder Debra McKune

Sheppards And Lapsley
 YAAD Elizabeth Loman
 Teaching Elder Randolph Nolen
 Ruling Elder Betty Ragan

South Alabama
 YAAD Charles Hoekenga
 Ruling Elder Bligh T Jones
 Teaching Elder Matthew McCollum

1254
218th General Assembly (2018)
South Dakota  
Teaching Elder Chad Ensz  
Ruling Elder Jim Hulbert  
YAAD Morgan Small  

South Louisiana  
Teaching Elder Barry Chance  
Ruling Elder Jacqueline Cummings  

Southeastern Illinois  
YAAD Brett Eisenhauer  
Ruling Elder Bryce Marsiglia  
Teaching Elder Ann Schwartz  

Southern Kansas  
Ruling Elder Mary Dusenbury  
Teaching Elder Mark Miller  

Southern New England  
Teaching Elder Julie Emery  
Ruling Elder Stephen Hart  
YAAD Walter Manuel  

St. Andrew  
Ruling Elder Robert Green  
Teaching Elder Ann Kelly  
YAAD Britton Walker  

St. Augustine  
Ruling Elder Mary Brown  
YAAD Emma Cottrell  
Ruling Elder Ed Kelly  
Teaching Elder David Lee  
Teaching Elder Paige Porter-Buhl  

Stockton  
Teaching Elder David Hill  
Ruling Elder Stacy Mahloch  

Susquehanna Valley  
Ruling Elder Jo Gray  
Teaching Elder Patricia Raube  
YAAD Not Sending  

Tampa Bay  
Ruling Elder Vivian Bryant  
YAAD Emily Bush  
Ruling Elder Amy Fleming  
Ruling Elder Rachel Gibson  
Teaching Elder Robert Shaw  
Teaching Elder Alex Sosa  
Teaching Elder William Wildhack  

The Cascades  
YAAD Robert Belz-Templeman  
Teaching Elder Vicky Brown  
Ruling Elder Eva Clarke  
Ruling Elder Martin Jones  
Teaching Elder Katie Pate  

The Inland Northwest  
Ruling Elder Jo Ann Kauffman  
YAAD Abigail Nye  
Teaching Elder Bill Stonebraker  

The Jamers  
Ruling Elder Winston Barham  
Teaching Elder Sylvester Bullock  
YAAD Corinne Burch  
Ruling Elder Linda Coye  
Ruling Elder David Ross  
Teaching Elder Peter Smith  
Teaching Elder Brenda Walker  

The John Knox  
Ruling Elder Sue Dravis  
YAAD Hannah Leystra  
Teaching Elder Sandra Nuernberg  
Teaching Elder Paul Uzel  
Ruling Elder Wendy Weber  

The Pacific  
Teaching Elder Paul Kang  
Teaching Elder Sunny Kang  
Ruling Elder Tracie Lyons  
Ruling Elder Marney Wilde  

The Peaks  
Ruling Elder John Collins  
Ruling Elder Helen Dean  
Teaching Elder Jane Johnson  
YAAD Rachel Sutphin  
Teaching Elder Catherine Taylor  

The Redwoods  
Teaching Elder Veronica Goines  
Ruling Elder Jillian Robinson  
YAAD Arielle Sexton  

The Western Reserve  
Teaching Elder Robin Craig  
Teaching Elder Mark Eldred  
Ruling Elder Kathleen Farkas  
Ruling Elder Ed Pawlowski  
YAAD Jose Soto  

Transylvania  
Ruling Elder Thomas Burns  
YAAD Nathan Dent  
Teaching Elder Wanda Olive  

Tres Rios  
Ruling Elder Lynn Fowler  
YAAD Crystal Perez  
Teaching Elder Jessica Vaughan-Lower  

Trinity  
Teaching Elder Herbert Codington  
Teaching Elder Mark Durrett  
Ruling Elder Barbara Freese  
Ruling Elder Phyllis Sanders  

Tropical Florida  
Teaching Elder Christopher Benek  
Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri  
YAAD James Zachary Myers  
Ruling Elder Manuel Perez  
Teaching Elder Jennifer Stroud
### Twin Cities Area
- YAAD Janimah Igwacho
- Teaching Elder Barbara Anne Keely
- Teaching Elder David Parker
- Ruling Elder Walter Rockenstein II
- Ruling Elder Phillip Romine

### Upper Ohio Valley
- YAAD Caroline Dill
- Teaching Elder Robert Nagy
- Ruling Elder Connie Quinn

### Utah
- Teaching Elder Nancy Pearson
- Ruling Elder Barbara White

### Utica
- Ruling Elder Tom Heitz
- Teaching Elder Jeanne Kumbalek
- YAAD Daniel Stevens

### Wabash Valley
- Ruling Elder Ralph Goldsberry
- Teaching Elder Stanley Kessler
- Ruling Elder Linda Long
- Teaching Elder Quincy Worthington

### Washington
- Ruling Elder Don Herschell
- Teaching Elder Sharon Woomer
- YAAD Anna Woomer

### West Jersey
- Ruling Elder William Boer
- Teaching Elder Joel Buckwalter
- Ruling Elder Virginia Magnus
- Teaching Elder Sandra Shaner
- YAAD Natalie Sperlunto

### West Virginia
- Ruling Elder John Bolt
- YAAD Paul Brady
- Teaching Elder Susan Sharp Campbell
- Teaching Elder Larryetta Ellis
- Ruling Elder Randy Fife

### Western Colorado
- Ruling Elder Carol Blatnick
- Teaching Elder William Mangrum

### Western Kentucky
- Ruling Elder Kevin Dick
- Teaching Elder Evan Evans
- YAAD Garrett Evans

### Western New York
- Ruling Elder Marcia Buhl
- YAAD Kaitlyn Khayat
- Ruling Elder Robert Sillars
- Teaching Elder Amir Tawadrous
- Teaching Elder Cynthia Wickwire Lundquist

### Western North Carolina
- Teaching Elder Harold Bennett
- Teaching Elder Samantha Gonzalez-Block
- YAAD Katharyn Anne McGinnis
- Ruling Elder Mimi Michael
- Ruling Elder Roger Rizk

### Whitewater Valley
- Teaching Elder Caroline Dennis
- YAAD Rosina Shipman
- Ruling Elder Phil Votaw
- Ruling Elder Jill Werling
- Teaching Elder Shelly Wood

### Winnebago
- Ruling Elder Ann Grittinger
- Teaching Elder Rose McCurdy
- YAAD Taylor Wittman

### Wyoming
- Ruling Elder Melinda Brazzale
- Teaching Elder Diana Hartline
- YAAD Haley Walk

### Yellowstone
- Teaching Elder Richard Davis
- YAAD Tamara Lucht
- Ruling Elder John Patterson

### Yukon
- Ruling Elder Shirley Novak
- Teaching Elder Matthew Schultz

### OTHER ADVISORY DELEGATES

**Theological Student Advisory Delegates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric Adamcik</td>
<td>Auburn Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Ballard</td>
<td>Princeton Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brett Foote</td>
<td>Princeton Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forrest Foxworth</td>
<td>Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annica Gage</td>
<td>McCormick Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khayla Johnson</td>
<td>Columbia Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Johnston</td>
<td>San Francisco Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda Kurtz</td>
<td>Union Presbyterian Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teresa Larson</td>
<td>Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shavonn Lynch</td>
<td>Northeastern Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Reinowski</td>
<td>University of Dubuque Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix Robles</td>
<td>Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Shaley</td>
<td>Pittsburgh Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Taylor</td>
<td>Pittsburgh Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Williams</td>
<td>Austin Theological Seminary</td>
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THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Missionary Advisory Delegates

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Ellen Smith</td>
<td>Russia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joshua Heikkila</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Marlene Van Brocklin</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Karla Koll</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Leslie Vogel</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victor Makari</td>
<td>Israel and Palestine</td>
<td>Leisa Wagstaff</td>
<td>South Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wong Fook-Yee</td>
<td>Hong Kong Christian</td>
<td>Richard McDuffie</td>
<td>Christian Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farouk Hammo</td>
<td>Assm of Evangelical</td>
<td>Martha Muñoz-Duarte</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church of Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mai-Aiki Kadade</td>
<td>Evangelical Church in the Republic of Niger</td>
<td>Manuel Nzoh Asumu</td>
<td>Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megrditch Karagoezian</td>
<td>Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East</td>
<td>Isaias Noé Sánchez Mejía</td>
<td>National Evangelical Church of Guatemala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyo-Jung Kim</td>
<td>United Church of Christ</td>
<td>Lemuel Thuston</td>
<td>Church of God in Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicola Kontzi-Méresse</td>
<td>United Protestant Church of France</td>
<td>Carola Tron</td>
<td>Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Plate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jae-Cheon Lee</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea</td>
<td>Jill Westbrook</td>
<td>Moravian Church in America</td>
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Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wong Fook-Yee</td>
<td>Hong Kong Christian Council</td>
<td>Richard McDuffie</td>
<td>Christian Methodist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farouk Hammo</td>
<td>Assm of Evangelical Presb Churches of Iraq</td>
<td>Martha Muñoz-Duarte</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church of Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mai-Aiki Kadade</td>
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<td>Manuel Nzoh Asumu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jae-Cheon Lee</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea</td>
<td>Jill Westbrook</td>
<td>Moravian Church in America</td>
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CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Office of the General Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Herbert Nelson II</td>
<td>Stated Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry Rice</td>
<td>Associate Stated Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia Dykers-Koenig</td>
<td>Associate Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laurie Griffith</td>
<td>Associate Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Hay</td>
<td>Associate Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Hessel</td>
<td>Associate Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robina Winbush</td>
<td>Associate Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cora Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Cargal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molly Casteel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luke Choi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Craft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah Davies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valerie Izumi</td>
<td>Assistant Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everdith Landrau</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martha Miller</td>
<td>Assistant Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jihyun Oh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kris Valerius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flor Vélez Diaz</td>
<td>Assistant Stated Clerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teresa Waggener</td>
<td>Assistant Stated Clerk</td>
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Presbyterian Mission Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diane Givens Moffett</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Godshall</td>
<td>PMAB Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsha Anson</td>
<td>PMAB Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molly Baskin</td>
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<td>Gregory Chan</td>
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<td>Tom Fleming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz</td>
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<td>Warren Lesane</td>
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<td>Joseph Morrow</td>
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<td>Conrad Rocha</td>
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<td>Melinda Sanders</td>
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<td>David Shinn</td>
<td>PMAB Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jo Stewart</td>
<td>PMAB Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jose Luis Casal</td>
<td>Director, World Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martha Clark</td>
<td>Legal Counsel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barry Creech</td>
<td>Exec Dir Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Kathryn Francis</td>
<td>Director, Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhashell Hunter</td>
<td>Director, RE&amp;WM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ray Jones</td>
<td>Director, TFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Lisherness</td>
<td>Director, CP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Miller</td>
<td>Interim Director, Shared Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosemary Mitchell</td>
<td>Director, Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Priest</td>
<td>ACREC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raymond Roberts</td>
<td>ACSWP</td>
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<td>Tom Trinidad</td>
<td>COTE</td>
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<td>Susan Carter Wiggins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Winkler</td>
<td>Presbyterian Women</td>
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Board of Pensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frank Spencer</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hamm</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Taylor</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Kelly</td>
<td>Chair</td>
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</table>
PERMANENT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

Advisory Committee on the Constitution
Forrest Claassen
Alyson Janke
Dan Saperstein
Cathy Ulrich
Dan Williams
Michael Williams
Judy Woods

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
Stephanie Anthony
Margaret Elliott
Barb Gaddis
Lynn Hargrove
Andy James
Wilson Kennedy
Leon Lovell-Martin
Kathleen Matsushima
Carol McDonald
Marcia Mount Shoop
Luis Ocasio Torres
Alejandra Spir-Haddad

Permanent Judicial Commission
Julia Henderson

Advisory Committee on Litigation
Matthew Hall

GA Nominating Committee
Danny Murphy

SYNOD EXECUTIVES
Ruben Ortiz Rodriguez  Boriquen En Puerto Rico
Raafat Zaki  The Covenant
Elona Street-Stewart  Lakes And Prairies
Sara Dingman  Lincoln Trails
Terry Newland  Living Waters
Landon Whitsett  Mid-America
Warren Lesane  Mid-Atlantic
Harold Delhagen  The Northeast
Joyce Lieberman  South Atlantic
Mark Hong  S. California & Hawaii
Conrad Rocha  The Southwest
Valerie Young  The Sun
Susan Faye Wonderland  The Trinity

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION PRESIDENTS
Theodore Wardlaw  Austin Theological Seminary
Leanne Van Dyk  Columbia
Jeffrey Bullock  Dubuque
Paul Roberts  Johnson C. Smith
Michael Jinkins  Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
David Esterline  Pittsburgh
Craig Barnes  Princeton Theological Seminary
James McDonald  San Francisco Theological Seminary
Brian Blount  Union Presbyterian Seminary
Katharine Henderson  Auburn Seminary

MODERATORS OF FORMER ASSEMBLIES
Tawnya Anderson
Jan Edmiston
Fahed Abuakel
Susan Andrews
Joan Gray
Neal Presa
Heath Rada
Bruce Reyes-Chow
ASSEMBLY/COMMITTEE/STUDENT ASSISTANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assembly Assistants</th>
<th>Committee Assistants</th>
<th>Student Assistants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chip Andrus</td>
<td>Emily Anderson</td>
<td>Jerald Egbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Choi</td>
<td>Mary-Gene Boteler</td>
<td>Benjamin C Fitzgerald-Fye</td>
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<td>Jim Collie</td>
<td>Theresa Cho</td>
<td>Jessie Partridge</td>
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<td>Terry Epling</td>
<td>Jodi Craiglow</td>
<td>Jocelyn Wildhack</td>
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<td>Rhoda Frasier</td>
<td>Bridgett Green</td>
<td>Ben Rumbaugh</td>
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<td>Edwin Gonzalez-Castillo</td>
<td>Lynn Hargrove</td>
<td>April Hewes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Grimes</td>
<td>Anna Claire Huntley</td>
<td>Jamila Cervantes</td>
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<td>Therese Howell</td>
<td>Sunny Kang</td>
<td>Megan H. McMillan</td>
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<td>Aleida Jermigan</td>
<td>Rebecca Kirkpatrick</td>
<td>Erin Angeli</td>
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<td>Eun Joo Kim</td>
<td>Carol McDonald</td>
<td>Amy Simes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Lincoln</td>
<td>Rick Nutt</td>
<td>Brook Scott</td>
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<td>Jerrod Lowry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Youngs</td>
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</table>

MID COUNCIL EXECUTIVES, STATED CLERKS, AND OTHER DESIGNATED STAFF

Synod Stated Clerks
- David Bartley  The Covenant
- Nancy Talbot  The Northeast
- Kathy Runyeon  The Pacific
- Lynn Smit  The Rocky Mountains
- Wayne A. Yost  The Trinity

Presbytery Staff and Stated Clerks
- Presb Stated Clk  William Parish  Abingdon
- Presb Stated Clk  H. Daniel Rogers  Albany
- Presb Exec  Stewart Smith  Arkansas
- Presb Stated Clk  Leslie Belden  Arkansas
- Presb Exec/Stated Cl  David Kang  Atlantic Korean
- Presb Exec  Jacqueline Taylor  Baltimore
- Presb Stated Clk  John Carlson  Baltimore
- Presb Exec  Alan Adams  Beaver-Butler
- Presb Exec/Stated Cl  John Rickard  Blackhawk
- Presb Exec  Daryl Wilson  Boise
- Presb Stated Clk  Richard Green  Boise
- Presb Exec  Cindy Kohlman  Boston
- Presb Stated Clk  T. J. DeMarco  Boston
- Presb Stated Clk  Jim Speedy  Carlisle
- Presb Exec  Brian Heron  The Cascades
- Presb Stated Clk  Paul Belz-Templeman  The Cascades
- Presbytery Staff  Clark Scalera  The Cascades
- Presb Stated Clk  Larry Beasley  Utica
- Presb Stated Clk  Dan Williams  Central Florida
- Presb Exec/Stated Cl  Polly Deppen-Williams  Central Nebraska
- Presb Exec  Donnie Woods  Charleston-Atlantic
- Presb Stated Clk  Catherine Byrd  Charleston-Atlantic
- Presb Exec  Jan Edmiston  Charlotte
- Presb Stated Clk  Tamara Williams  Charlotte
- Presb Exec  Joan Gray  Cherokee
- Presb Exec  Sue Krummel  Chicago
- Presb Stated Clk  Barbara Bundick  Chicago
THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Presb Exec  B. Gordon Edwards  Cimarron
Presb Stated Clk  Deborah Meinke  Cimarron
Presb Exec  Nancy Kahaian  Cincinnati
Presb Stated Clk  Melana Scruggs  John Calvin
Presb Exec  Brad Munroe  de Cristo
Presb Stated Clk  Robert Schulz  Grand Canyon
Presb Stated Clk  Olivia Hudson Smith  Denver
Presb Exec  James Koopman  Des Moines
Presb Stated Clk  David Hamilton  Des Moines
Presb Exec  Allen Timm  Detroit
Presb Stated Clk  Edward Koster  Detroit
Presb Exec  Erin Cox-Holmes  Donegal
Presb Stated Clk  Michael Wilson  Donegal
Presb Stated Clk  Rebecca Blair  East Iowa
Presb Exec  Judd Shaw  East Tennessee
Presb Exec/Stated Cl  Hyon Kim  Eastern Korean
Presb Exec  Greg Coulter  Eastern Oklahoma
Presb Stated Clk  Leigh McCaslin  Eastern Oklahoma
Presb Exec  Linda Toth  Eastern Oregon
Presb Stated Clk  Mike Hachquet  Eastern Oregon
Presb Exec  Elizabeth Hendricks  Eastern Virginia
Presb Stated Clk  Quinn Tamm  Eastern Virginia
Presb Exec/Stated Cl  Cathy Ulrich  Eastminster
Presb Stated Clk  Jeremy Campbell  Elizabeth
Presb Exec  Debra Bibler  Flint River
Presb Exec  Roy Martin  Florida
Presb Stated Clk  Gordon Raynal  Foothills
Presb Staff  Debbie Foster  Foothills
Presb Exec  Amy Fowler  Genesee Valley
Presb Stated Clk  Susan Orr  Genesee Valley
Presb Exec  Linda Becker  Geneva
Presb Stated Clk  Val Fowler  Geneva
Presb Exec  Craig Howard  Giddings-Lovejoy
Presb Stated Clk  Joy Myers  Giddings-Lovejoy
Presb Stated Clk  Marsha Anson  Glacier
Presb Exec  Janet DeVries  Grace
Presb Exec  Brad Munroe  de Cristo
Presb Stated Clk  Robert Schulz  Grand Canyon
Presb Stated Clk  Elissa Bailey  Great Rivers
Presb Exec  Aisha Brooks-Lytle  Greater Atlanta
Presb Stated Clk  Donna Wells  Greater Atlanta
Presb Exec/Stated Cl  Sally Hinchman  Heartland
Presb Exec/Stated Cl  Rich Fifield  Holston
Presb Exec  Richard Wyatt  Homestead
Presb Stated Clk  Raymond Meester  Homestead
Presb Exec  Gavin Meek  Hudson River
Presb Stated Clk  Susan De George  Hudson River
Presb Exec  K. Joy Kaufmann  Huntingdon
Presb Stated Clk  Virginia Rainey  Huntingdon
Presb Stated Clk  Matt Meinke  Indian Nations
Presb Exec  Sheryl Kinder-Pyle  The Inland Northwest
Presb Stated Clk  Lawrence Veith  The Inland Northwest
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Presb Exec  Chaz Ruark  The John Knox
Presb Stated Clk  Alyson Janke  The John Knox
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Presb Exec  Cathy Chisholm  Kendall
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### THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES**
- Seth Agidi
- Michael Blair
- Anthony Cirelli
- George D Crenshaw
- Ary Fernandez Alban
- Israel Flores
- Kyoung Gyun Han
- Jose Francisco Huertas Rodriguez
- Paul Janssen
- Kathryn Johnson
- Richard Mammana
- Carmen Elena Martinez de Diaz
- Bessala Mbesse
- Therese Mukamakuza
- Fritz Mutti
- John Yor Nyiker Deng
- Penny Ross-Corona
- Hendrik Shanazarian
- Bassem Thabet
- Phil Tom
- Anita Sue Wright Torres
- Ling Zaw
- Daniel Ženatý

**INTERFAITH REPRESENTATIVES**
- Leonard Gordon
- Ziauddin Mahmood
Standing Rules of the General Assembly

[AS AMENDED BY THE 223RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2018).]

Introduction

Values Present at General Assembly

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. … If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Cor. 12:4–7 and 26–27)

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness. (G-3.0501)

With glad and grateful hearts, we affirm these core values in our worship, work, and witness together in gatherings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

• That the common life of the whole church, as evidenced in our meetings, will reflect the mind of Christ, demonstrating consolation, spiritual sharing, compassion and sympathy, and doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regarding others as better than ourselves. We will be in full accord and strive to model the faithful, obedient, humble, and self-emptying witness of Jesus Christ.

• That our engagement with one another in the ministry of the gathered church will reflect the transforming love of God, enabling us to discern God’s will together. We will use our gifts on behalf of one another and the world, giving glory to God. We will love genuinely and hold fast to all that is good. We will rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. We will live in harmony with one another and overcome evil with good.

• These values will enable us
  ◦ to engage with one another in love, humility, grace, and servant discipleship, as the council of the whole church;
  ◦ to encourage and increase collaboration within and among all councils of the church;
  ◦ to participate in discussion, deliberation, and discernment in ways that are fair and honest and open;
  ◦ to focus each meeting of the General Assembly to encourage the full and prayerful participation of those seeking the mind of Christ for the whole church.

We acknowledge these core characteristics of gatherings of the General Assembly:

• Affirming the Presbyterian distinctives that God is sovereign and God alone is Lord of the conscience;

• Encountering and learning from Presbyterians and many others from across the United States and around the world;

• Gathering again with old friends in the family reunion that is General Assembly;

• Creating and expanding generative relationships with fellow Christians;

• Learning from individuals who are quite different from one another;

• Witnessing with joy and thanksgiving the emergence of new leaders for the church;

• Experiencing an intentional, faithful process for discernment and decision making;
• Experiencing God’s presence through worship, devotions, hallway prayers, and Christ-centered conversations;

• Hoping and yearning together that our mutual witness will point to the reign of God;

• Demonstrating the church is not focused on any one cause or individual;

• Growing in our understanding of Christ and the church;

• Meeting sisters and brothers in Christ who represent a particular perspective and who listen and share with care and respect;

• Making decisions through contemplation, prayer, and heartfelt sharing;

• Continuing a history and heritage together since 1789.

We demonstrate and sustain our core values through these central commitments.

• Reflect the Body and Seek the Mind of Christ
  In all things, the General Assembly reflects the body of Christ and seeks the mind of Christ through worship, prayer, discernment, and action.

• A Broad Context for Christ’s Broad World
  The General Assembly provides a helpful, faithful context for understanding the beauty and diversity of the body of Christ in the world.

• Expansive and Spiritual Deliberation
  The General Assembly embraces an easily understood and accessible process that creates opportunities for questions, prayer, and God’s unexpected movement, rather than hurrying to yes/no votes.

• Order and Flexibility
  The General Assembly deliberates with fairness, attention to process, order, and the encouragement of minority voices, while creating space for decision making grounded in discernment and dialogue and for the emergence of new leadership.

• Reunion and Affirmation
  The General Assembly encourages the best of our Presbyterian tradition and friendships new and old.

• Faithful Stewardship
  The General Assembly demonstrates faithful stewardship of human and financial resources.
## Sources of Business for the Meeting

### 1. Papers in General

a. Papers to Be Considered
b. Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly

### 2. Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees

a. Reports Deadline
b. Budget Consultation
c. Appropriate Background Information
d. Report Length
e. Report with Recommendations

### 3. Overtures

a. Definition
b. Writing Overtures
c. Submitting Overtures
d. Distributing Overtures
e. Overture Advocate

### 4. Entity and Synod Minutes

a. Submit for Review
b. Review Process

### 5. Presbytery Reports

### 6. Commissioners’ Resolutions

a. Who May Propose
b. Deadline
c. Existing General Assembly Policy
d. May Not Amend Book of Order
e. Already Before Assembly
f. Same Issues as Previous Assembly
g. Referral
h. Referral Declined

### 7. Communications and Resource Material

a. Provide Comment or Advice
b. Forty-five Day Deadline
c. Resource Materials
d. Advice and Counsel Memoranda

### 8. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report

a. Report
b. Presented Directly to General Assembly

### 1. Papers in General

a. The General Assembly shall consider only those papers delivered to the Stated Clerk in compliance with Standing Rule A. Ordinarily, such papers shall have been forwarded to the Stated Clerk postmarked, or electronically delivered, no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

b. All papers intended for consideration by the General Assembly that are forwarded to the Stated Clerk and postmarked less than sixty days, but no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be reviewed by the Stated Clerk, who shall determine whether or not to refer them to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The Stated Clerk shall report to the committee regarding those papers not referred.

c. It is the responsibility of the Stated Clerk to distribute the business of the assembly, with translations as appropriate, in a manner that allows the church to carefully discern the work of the assembly.
2. Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees

   a. All reports from entities, commissions, and committees of the General Assembly shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk on or before 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall publish these reports (print or electronic) and distribute them so that they shall reach the commissioners thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly.

   b. An entity, commission, or committee submitting a report with a recommendation that affects the work or budget of another entity(ies) shall submit evidence that a consultation has been held with the affected entity(ies).

   c. Committees, agencies, or corporations presenting reports shall provide the appropriate background information necessary to interpret or understand the recommendations or responses to referrals to the members of the General Assembly committees to which the business is referred. Any and all documents or publications referred to in these reports that require approval by the assembly for publication and distribution to the church, including but not limited to curriculum, study papers/guides, position papers, and program resources, shall be made available to commissioners at the time the reports are published.

   d. All reports shall be limited to five thousand words except the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the length of which shall be determined by the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. A request for an exception to the length of a report, up to ten thousand words, shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than forty-five days prior to the deadline for the submission of the report and shall include the anticipated length of the report. The Stated Clerk may assess a fee of the entity or committee whose report exceeds five thousand words for the costs incurred in translating, printing and distributing the excess pages. Payment of the fee shall be submitted to the treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. If the Stated Clerk and the representatives of any body are unable to agree, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the length of the report.

   e. All reports that bring recommendations shall use the following form:

   The [name of agency, commission, or committee] requests the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [year] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action or actions the General Assembly is being asked to take].

   To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the requests and/or the report of the entity, commission, or committee.

3. Overtures

   a. Overtures are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery (with concurrence of another presbytery) or a synod and shall request the General Assembly to take a particular action, or approve or endorse a particular statement or resolution. (See Book of Order, G-3.0302d.)

   b. Concurrences are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery that recommend an action identical to that in an overture already received for that assembly. The first concurrence received by the Stated Clerk, fulfilling Book of Order, G-3.0302d, must be submitted by the deadlines appropriate for the overture and entitles the submitting presbytery to an overture advocate. Subsequent concurrences must meet the forty-five-day rule for business.

   c. The stated clerk of a presbytery or synod considering an overture to the General Assembly shall:

   (1) Examine the most recently published Minutes of the General Assembly to determine if a similar overture has already been passed.
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“Submit for Review

a. Entities and synods required to submit minutes for review by the General Assembly shall submit such minutes on a calendar year basis so as to present minutes of all meetings for the calendar year (from January 1 through December 31) preceding the year in which is held the session of the General Assembly to which such minutes are submitted. The minutes shall contain

4. Entity and Synod Minutes

...
the attestation that they have been approved by the entity or synod submitting them in the manner regularly in use within that body.

**Review Process**

b. The assembly committee to which it is assigned is authorized to approve minutes of the agencies and entities without referral to plenary unless discrepancies occur that call for reporting to the assembly. Minutes of General Assembly agencies will be reviewed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Preparation of Minutes of Agencies” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Minutes of the synods will be reviewed in accordance with “Guidelines for Reviewing Synod Records” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

### 5. Presbytery Reports

Each presbytery shall act upon all papers sent to the presbytery to be voted upon in ample time to permit the stated clerk of the presbytery to transmit the results to the Stated Clerk so that they are received no later than one year following the adjournment of the assembly responsible for the proposed amendments.

### 6. Commissioners’ Resolutions

**Who May Propose**

a. An item of new business, in the form of a commissioners’ resolution, must be signed by commissioners representing at least one other presbytery. Such resolutions must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk or the Stated Clerk’s designee. No commissioner may sign more than two such resolutions.

**Deadline**

b. The Stated Clerk shall determine and announce at the first meeting at which business is conducted the deadline for receipt of commissioners’ resolutions. The deadline shall not be earlier than twenty-four hours after the assembly has convened.

**Existing GA Policies**

c. In the preparation of a resolution, commissioners are urged to be aware of existing General Assembly policies relevant to their proposal and, where appropriate, to make reference to these policies.

**May Not Amend Book of Order**

d. Commissioners’ resolutions shall not contain business that requires an amendment to or interpretation of the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-6.04a).

**Already Before Assembly**

e. The Stated Clerk shall not transmit as new business any resolution that deals with matters of business already before the General Assembly, nor transmit any resolution whose purpose can be achieved by the regular process of amendment and debate.

**Same Issues as Previous Assembly**

f. Should the commissioners’ resolution deal with substantially the same issue considered by one of the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures take one of the following actions on the commissioners’ resolution: “refer to a subsequent assembly,” “decline for consideration,” or “take no action.”

**Referral**

g. If the proposed resolution does deal with new business, the Stated Clerk shall transmit it to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures with a recommendation for its referral.

**Referral Declined**

h. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may decline to refer proposed items of new business if it decides that the matters proposed are already before the assembly or that the purpose of the proposals can be reached by the process of amendment and debate. Proposed items of business not referred, whether declined by the Stated Clerk or the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall be identified in the first report of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures distributed to commissioners after the period docketed for committee meetings, with a brief description of the content and a statement of the reasons for declining the proposed business. Twenty-five percent of commissioners present and voting is required to overturn action of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to decline, take no action, or refer a commissioners’ resolution to a subsequent assembly. Should the assembly overturn a Bills and Overtures decision not to refer an item of business, the assembly committee who would ordinarily receive this item will be reconvened for the purpose of considering the business. If a commissioners’ resolution affects a substantial change in an existing social witness policy, the Stated Clerk should recommend to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures that it be referred to the next General Assembly.
7. **Communications and Resource Material**

   a. Communications and resource material provide comment or advice on business already under consideration by the assembly and shall neither contain nor constitute business to be considered by the assembly. Communications may be directed to the General Assembly

   (1) by entities of the General Assembly that desire to comment on a single item of business coming before the General Assembly from any source other than their own entity, but which do not introduce new business,

   (2) by organizations in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) holds membership, and

   (3) by other denominations in correspondence with the General Assembly.

   b. All communications intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

   c. Resource material (except for previously published books), including advice and counsel memoranda from advocacy and advisory committees, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred. This material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the assembly meeting, who shall then publish (print or electronic) and distribute the material to all commissioners prior to the assembly.

   d. Advice and counsel memoranda are resources prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns for the purpose of providing information about existing policy, current work on specific topics, recent developments, and other factors useful to commissioners as they consider issues before the assembly.

8. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report**

   a. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report to the General Assembly its findings along with its recommendations on all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*, including proposals for constitutional change. The General Assembly shall vote on the recommendations, and may amend or decline to approve them (*Book of Order*, G-6.02). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report any editorial changes made to the *Book of Order* since its last report to the General Assembly.

   b. The report of the committee shall be presented directly to the General Assembly. The General Assembly may take action on the recommendations immediately, or it may refer them to an assembly committee for consideration by that committee and report to the General Assembly for action later during the same session of the General Assembly.
Commissioners, Delegates, and Other Participants at the Meeting

1. Commissioners
   a. Election
   b. List Delivered by 180 Day Deadline
   c. Able to Attend
   d. Entitlements, Expenses
   e. Newly Created Presbytery’s Commissioners
   f. Alternates

2. Advisory Delegates
   a. Definition
   b. Categories
   c. Voting Privileges
   d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates
   e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates
   f. Missionary Advisory Delegates
   g. Ecumenical Advisor Delegates

3. Corresponding Members
   a. Definition
   b. Entitled to Speak, Not Vote

4. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

5. Other Participants
   a. Special Guests
   b. Assembly Committee Moderators
   c. Ecumenical Representatives
   d. Resource Persons
   e. Presbytery Staff
   f. Ecumenical Visitors
   g. Interfaith Representatives

6. List of Participants

1. Commissioners
   a. Each presbytery shall elect commissioners to the General Assembly in accordance with Book of Order, G-3.0501. The number of commissioners attending General Assembly will be based on the number of active members, including resident clergy members of presbytery. The figures for active members will be taken from the information recorded in Minutes of the General Assembly, Part II, Statistics of the year in which per capita apportionment is assessed for the year in which General Assembly meets.

   b. Presbyteries shall elect commissioners in sufficient time to permit the list of commissioners to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are commissioned.

   c. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders considered for election as commissioners must be able to be in attendance for the duration of the General Assembly.

   d. Commissioners shall be entitled to speak under the rules, and to vote and present motions in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees to which they are assigned. Commissioners shall be reimbursed for approved expenses.

   e. In the case of a newly created presbytery, the presbytery shall be entitled to elect commissioners to the General Assembly if the qualifying enrollment of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and congregations in that presbytery shall have been completed by December 31 of the year preceding the assembly meeting (see Book of Order, G-3.0501).
Alternates

f. Presbyteries may elect alternates in number up to, but not exceeding, the number of commissioners to which the presbytery may be entitled. Such alternates shall be seated with other visitors to the assembly.

2. Advisory Delegates

Definition

a. Advisory delegates are persons who are active members in one of the constituent churches or councils of the General Assembly (or, in the case of ecumenical advisory delegates, of a denomination of Christians designated by the General Assembly) who are selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints.

Categories

b. There shall be four categories of advisory delegates: young adult, theological student; missionary, and ecumenical. When the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners exceeds one to three, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be authorized to make changes to the Standing Rules to create a ratio of less than one to three. The expenses of each advisory delegate shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception).

Voting Privileges

c. Advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees as voting members and shall have the privilege of the floor of the General Assembly without vote. Only voting members shall have the privilege of proposing or seconding a motion. When certain issues come before a plenary session of the General Assembly, the advisory delegates may be polled prior to the vote of commissioners to determine their advice.

Young Adult Advisory Delegates

d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates

(1) Each presbytery shall appoint an active member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who shall be between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three years on the date the General Assembly convenes, to be a young adult advisory delegate.

(2) Presbyteries shall elect young adult advisory delegates in sufficient time to permit the list of advisory delegates to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected.

Theological Student Advisory Delegate

e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates

There shall be a delegation of theological student advisory delegates each year: two from each of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and one each from three selected other theological seminaries. The selection process for these delegates is as follows:

(1) Each theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate three students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. Two of these students shall be designated by the institution as delegates and the other student shall be designated as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, or a student nominated by the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the names of the two students to be delegates to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(2) Each theological institution in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate two students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. One of these students shall be designated by the institution as the delegate and the other student as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall
transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(3) All non-Presbyterian theological schools represented by corresponding members on the Committee on Theological Education and one additional non-Presbyterian theological seminary shall be asked to nominate one theological student advisory delegate and one alternate. The additional non-Presbyterian seminary shall be chosen on a rotating basis, descending alphabetically, from those that have at least twelve Presbyterian enrollees (either inquirers or candidates under the care of a presbytery) as of October 1 in the year preceding the assembly. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(4) Nominated students shall have at least one more year of study following the assembly remaining in their degree program. The Stated Clerk shall forward the name of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election and confirmation.

f. **Missionary Advisory Delegates**

(1) There shall be eight missionary advisory delegates who shall be chosen by the Worldwide Ministries Division from persons who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and mission personnel assigned by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in another country in which this church is engaged in mission. To the degree possible, the selection shall provide a global geographical representation with no two delegates representing the same country or geographical area and rotating the geographical representation. The Worldwide Ministries Division shall notify the Stated Clerk at the time these persons are named.

(2) The expenses to the General Assembly of each missionary advisory delegate shall include transportation only from the point of entry or domicile of the delegate in the United States and return.

g. **Ecumenical Advisory Delegates**

There shall be up to fifteen ecumenical advisory delegates. Ten of these delegates shall be from churches outside of the United States. No more than five shall be from member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Ecumenical advisory delegates shall be selected by the highest ecclesiastical authorities of their churches, in response to the invitation of a previous General Assembly. The assembly shall extend such invitations at the recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency upon nomination by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

3. **Corresponding Members**

a. The following persons shall be corresponding members: Moderators of earlier General Assemblies; the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other members of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly as designated by the Stated Clerk; the members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; the members of the PMA Executive Committee and staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and of the divisions and related entities designated by the council; all members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the executives of synods; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly, including permanent, special, and advisory committees (additional persons may be designated by such bodies if authorized by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly); the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. or her designee; and the presidents (or their designees) of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and seminaries related by covenant agreement.

b. Corresponding members shall be entitled to speak, under the rules, in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees on matters related to the work of the body represented, but they may neither vote nor present motions.
4. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

During the General Assembly, three or more members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution [this committee] shall be present at the session of the General Assembly to advise the General Assembly and its Moderator on constitutional matters.

5. **Other Participants**

- **Special Guests**
  
  a. The assembly, out of honor, courtesy, recognition, and the need for information and resource material, may recognize other persons as guests or observers. As such, they may be invited by the General Assembly to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing enlightenment or information germane to the decision-making process. An assembly committee may extend a similar invitation at its own meeting.

- **Assembly Committee Moderators**

  b. When the moderator of an assembly committee is not a commissioner to the current assembly (Standing Rules C.1.c), they shall have voice in committee and voice in plenary on business from their committee.

- **Ecumenical Representatives**

  c. Ecumenical representatives are individuals sent at the initiative of another church to be the official representative of that church. The Stated Clerk may announce to member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches the date and place of the next meeting of the General Assembly. When officially certified through appropriate ecclesiastical channels at least forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, these persons shall be welcomed as guests of the General Assembly and introduced to the council through the report of the assembly committee addressing ecumenism. The assembly may assume the expense and housing of such guests on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

- **Resource Persons**

  d. The assembly may welcome persons invited by the Presbyterian Mission Agency or another entity of the General Assembly for the purpose of establishing or affirming particular ecumenical, mission, or program relationships, or assisting the entity in the presentation of particular items of business. Any expense reimbursement shall be the responsibility of the inviting entity.

- **Presbytery Staff**

  e. The presbytery’s executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery’s stated clerk shall be supplied with all reports and materials related to the General Assembly, but shall not be entitled to speak in plenary meetings or in meetings of assembly committees unless called upon by a moderator to provide information.

- **Ecumenical Visitors**

  f. Ecumenical visitors are individuals attending a session of the General Assembly at their own initiative. These persons are welcomed to the assembly as unofficial visitors. The assembly shall assume no expenses for these ecumenical visitors.

- **Interfaith Representatives**

  g. Interfaith Representatives—Three observers of other faiths or religious traditions, who shall be representatives chosen by recognized religious bodies of non-Christian religious traditions and/or faith communities shall be present at the assembly at the invitation of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. The interfaith representatives shall be present with the church in its deliberations, and to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing information germane to the decision-making process. The assembly may assume the expense of housing and on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

6. **List of Participants**

Upon request, the Stated Clerk shall make available the list of participants registered for a session of the General Assembly to entities of the General Assembly, councils of the denomination, educational institutions, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, ruling elders, and independent organizations composed primarily of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A fee will be charged for lists or mailing labels to cover the costs incurred for printing, postage, and handling.
Formation of Committees and Referral of Business

1. Assembly Committee Structure
   a. Number and Designation of Assembly Committees
   b. Committee Assistants
   c. Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator
   d. Assembly Committee on Business Referral
   e. Orientation

2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees
   a. Committee Assignments
   b. Notification of Assignment
   c. Assignment List Provided
   d. Random Selection Process

3. Referring Business
   a. Recommendation for Referral of Business
   b. General Assembly Action on Referrals
   c. How Business Is Referred
   d. Referral Considered by One Committee
   e. Referring Overtures to Committees

4. Tentative Docket

1. Assembly Committee Structure
   a. The Stated Clerk shall propose the number and designation of assembly committees to the General Assembly, which shall include a Committee on Mid Councils. The Stated Clerk shall present the proposed committee structure to the General Assembly for consideration and ratification at the first assembly meeting at which business is transacted. In making these proposals, the Stated Clerk shall consult with the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities, and may consult with other persons.

   b. The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly for appointment the names of persons to serve as committee assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before recommending persons to serve as committee assistants. Persons proposed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly or any person who is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or any person who is a member of any other entity of the General Assembly. A committee assistant shall be appointed to provide staff services to each assembly committee. The appointments shall be made in accordance with Book of Order, F-1.0401.

   c. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a moderator and a vice moderator to each committee. The moderator positions are filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly or may be from an assembly within the last six years. All vice moderator positions shall be filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly. Final appointment shall be made only after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and then also with representatives of the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding the inclusivity mandated in the Book of Order, F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees, including any committees dealing with finance and budgets, shall be ruling elders. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees should be women. The moderators of at least two-thirds of the assembly committees shall be current commissioners. No more than one person from any one presbytery may be appointed to serve as a moderator. All synods shall be equitably represented.
Assembly Committee on Business Referral

d. The moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, shall function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall function as the moderator and vice moderator of this committee as well. This committee shall report to the assembly for its action at the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

Orientation

e. The Stated Clerk shall conduct an orientation for moderators, vice moderators, and committee assistants of assembly committees no less than three weeks prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The orientation shall include information regarding business likely to be referred to each committee; suggested procedures for dealing with business referred to committees, especially the use of *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*; utilization of available resources, both persons and materials; and preparation and presentation of assembly committee reports. The Stated Clerk, following consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, may invite persons designated by the council as General Assembly resource coordinators to participate in the orientation. During this orientation, the Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall meet and carry out the duties given it by these rules. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall also meet, if necessary, just prior to the convening of the assembly and its function shall end at the convening of the assembly.

2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees

Committee Assignments

a. Forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner and advisory delegate to one of the assembly committees by the random selection process described in this standing rule.

Notification of Assignment

b. No later than thirty days before the convening of the assembly, commissioners shall receive the number and designation of committees. At the same time that the number and designation of committees is communicated, the Stated Clerk shall notify each person of the assignment, the time of their first meeting, and the necessity to confirm appropriate housing and travel arrangements.

Assignment List Provided

c. The Stated Clerk shall provide a list of the assignments to those who need it to facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

Random Selection Process

d. Commissioners and advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees by random selection as follows:

(1) The Stated Clerk shall divide the presbyteries into six regional districts. Each district shall be composed of one or more presbyteries so arranged that, insofar as possible, the presbyteries in the district have contiguous boundaries and the numbers of commissioners in the several districts are approximately equal. Within each district the presbyteries shall be arranged alphabetically. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be listed alphabetically in two parallel lists: the first containing the names of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament; the second, the ruling elders. In those cases where the presbytery has not designated commissioners, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified. The names of moderators and vice moderators of assembly committees shall be removed from the list and the names below them shall be moved up to fill the vacated positions. The ministers of the Word and Sacrament commissioners and vacant positions for minister of the Word and Sacrament commissioners shall be numbered in sequence. The list of ruling elder commissioners in each district shall be rotated downward so that no ruling elder commissioner is opposite a minister of the Word and Sacrament commissioner from the same presbytery. Separate lists of groups identified in *Book of Order*, F-1.0403, shall be prepared, insofar as it may be practical, to assure the most equitable distribution of such commissioners to the various committees in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0403.

(2) The Stated Clerk shall list the young adult advisory delegates in one list arranged in the alphabetical order of the presbyteries that designated the delegates. In any case where the presbytery has not designated a young adult advisory delegate, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified.
(3) The Moderator shall pick by lot a number from one to ten. This number shall identify the number of the name in the first column of names in each district in which the assignment will begin. It will also identify the number of the young adult advisory delegates in which assignment will begin.

(4) The Moderator shall then pick by lot a second number equal from one to the number equaling the total number of committees. This number shall identify the assembly committee in the order in which the committees are arranged in the standing rules to which the first assignment of members shall be made.

(5) The assignment of members of the assembly committees shall then proceed in sequence. When initial assignments have been made to all committees in sequence so that the committees with the fewest number of commissioners are full, additional assignment shall be made to the other committees in the same manner, until all commissioners and young adult advisory delegates have been assigned to committees.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall assign missionary advisory delegates and ecumenical advisory delegates to assembly committees in consultation with those delegates. Ordinarily not more than two persons in each of these categories shall be assigned to any one assembly committee.

(7) Theological student advisory delegates will be assigned to committees at the same time and in the same way as are commissioners to ensure their full participation and attendance.

(8) Names of commissioners and advisory delegates received after these assignments have been made shall be inserted in the appropriate position in the original list and assigned to the committee to which that position was assigned.

3. Referring Business

Recommendation for Referral of Business

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a recommendation for the referral of all items of business coming before the General Assembly.

General Assembly Action on Referrals

b. After making any necessary changes, this committee shall present the prepared referrals to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend referrals to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business. Ordinarily, this committee shall recommend referrals to the General Assembly for its action. When the General Assembly is not scheduled to meet in time to act on its recommendation, the committee may refer business. Such referrals shall be reported to the General Assembly at its next business meeting.

How Business Is Referred

c. Items of business to be considered by the General Assembly shall be referred in one of the following ways:

(1) for consideration by an assembly committee and recommendation for action by the General Assembly;
(2) for consideration and action by an assembly committee with a report of the action to the General Assembly;
(3) for consideration by the General Assembly through its inclusion in a consent agenda when the committee has approved a motion by 75 percent or more;
(4) for consideration by the General Assembly in a plenary business session.

d. Each item of business referred to a committee shall ordinarily be considered by only one assembly committee, but in no case should there be more than one committee making a recommendation on an item of business. Business of a related nature shall be assigned to a single committee insofar as possible.
e. The Stated Clerk shall present such items of business to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with a recommendation for their referral. In the event that the presbytery or synod disagrees with the referral recommendation, this procedure shall be followed: The presbytery or synod shall be entitled to submit a written statement regarding the background and intent of the overture at the time the overture is initially being considered for referral by the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. If, after that committee makes its recommendation, the presbytery or synod still disagrees with the referral recommendation, the presbytery or synod shall notify the Stated Clerk, in writing, of its disagreement. The overture advocate will then be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture at a special meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral that shall be held no more than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the convening of the assembly.

4. Tentative Docket

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a tentative docket. After making any necessary adjustments, this committee shall present a proposed docket to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend the docket to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

b. The reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly regarding the initial docket of the General Assembly and referrals of business shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with any items of business not included in them (see Standing Rules I.4.b.(3) and I.4.b.(4)). Review of the minutes of the synods pursuant to G-3.0502c and of statement(s) of compliance with decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission by councils, reported by the Stated Clerk pursuant to IV.B.2.d. of the Organization for Mission, shall be assigned to the same assembly committee. Following the convening of the assembly, such matters shall be directed to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.
### Beginning of the General Assembly Meeting

**1. Registration and Seating**

- a. **Registration of Commissioners and Delegates**
- b. **Commissioners with Disabilities**
- c. **Assigned Seats**
- d. **Alternates**
- e. **Ecumenical Representatives**
- f. **Presbytery Staff Seating**
- g. **Access to Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Seating**

**2. Quorum**

**3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting**

### Registration of Commissioners and Delegates

a. The Stated Clerk shall enroll commissioners and delegates on the opening day of the General Assembly and at such other times as may be necessary. The Stated Clerk shall determine any question that may arise regarding registration of commissioners and delegates. Any complaints regarding such decision shall be received by the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures.

### Commissioners with Disabilities

b. A commissioner certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be entitled to designate a person to function as an assistant without vote during all proceedings of the General Assembly, including executive sessions and committee meetings, in order that the commissioner may fully participate in those proceedings. The expenses of the assistant shall be paid for by the General Assembly on the same basis as expenses of commissioners. The Stated Clerk shall also enroll assistants to commissioners who have been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance.

### Assigned Seats

c. The Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner, advisory delegate, and corresponding member to a seat in advance of the meeting. They shall occupy the assigned seats during each meeting of the General Assembly at which business may be transacted. An assistant to commissioner who has been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be assigned a seat adjacent to the commissioner.

### Alternates

d. When a principal commissioner is replaced by an alternate prior to or during the course of an assembly session, whether for the remainder of the session or for a period of time during the session, the alternate shall assume that assembly committee position and seat assignment.

### Ecumenical Representatives

e. Ecumenical representatives shall be seated on the floor of the assembly in a section clearly designated for such guests.

### Presbytery Staff Seating

f. The presbytery’s executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery’s stated clerk shall be provided assigned seating in proximity to the area that corresponding members are seated.
g. The only persons who shall be permitted access to the commissioner and advisory delegate seating area during plenary sessions are commissioners, advisory delegates, assistants enrolled by the Stated Clerk to assist commissioners having a disability warranting assistance, the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other staff and assembly assistants who are assigned responsibilities that require access to this area, including assisting at the floor microphones, delivery of official messages to commissioner and advisory delegates, and locating commissioners who are needed on the platform. The Stated Clerk will provide special credentials for the particular staff and assembly assistants who are authorized to enter the commissioner/advisory delegate seating area. Registered presbytery staff may have access to the seating area to contact their commissioners and advisory delegates during breaks in business.

2. Quorum

At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the General Assembly that the roll call of commissioners be established by registration. Alternately, the Stated Clerk may call the roll of commissioners and advisory delegates by calling the names of absentees as they appear on the roll. After any needed corrections have been made, the Stated Clerk shall announce whether or not a quorum is present (see Book of Order, G-3.0503). When commissioners and advisory delegates subsequently register, they shall be seated by the General Assembly. A commissioner who has not registered may not be seated and may not vote.

3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting

The Office of the General Assembly shall, on the first business day of the assembly, before committees meet to consider business, organize a forum where assembly committee moderators shall meet with overture advocates to discuss procedures for participation in committee discussion of business related to the overture that they are advocating.
Committee Meetings

1. Committee Leadership and Support
   a. Moderator and Vice Moderator
   b. Recorder
   c. Committee Assistant

2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings
   a. Open Meetings
   b. Time of Worship and Prayer
   c. Parliamentary Procedures
   d. Use and Preparation of Resources
   e. Reports of Special Committees
   f. Privilege to Speak
   g. Overture Advocates/Signer of Commissioners’ Resolution
   h. Responsibilities of Overture Advocate

3. New Business
   a. Consider Only Matters Referred
   b. Proposing Amendment to Constitution
   c. Constitutional Matters
   d. Approval Requirement
   e. Presentation of
   f. Referral to Advisory Committee on the Constitution

4. Organizational Meeting

5. Public Hearings
   a. Schedule
   b. Time Limits for Presentations
   c. Hearing Form

6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
   a. Responsible for Referral of Business
   b. Coordination Between Committees
   c. Distribution of Materials
   d. Requests to Schedule Event

7. Reports of Assembly Committees
   a. Writing the Report
   b. Content
   c. Fiscal Implications
   d. Identify Entity
   e. PMA to Determine Entity
   f. Votes Recorded
   g. Confer with Entity Affected by Action
   h. Minority Report

1. Committee Leadership and Support

Moderator and Vice Moderator

a. The moderator presides over the committee’s deliberations. The moderator may request the vice moderator or others to preside and to assist in the work of the committee.

b. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a recorder appointed by the Stated Clerk. The recorder shall be appointed from a pool of individuals who will already be attending the General Assembly, including staff members, local volunteers, and others. The recorder shall keep an accurate record of the actions of the committee with the votes on each indicating the number of committee members voting in the affirmative, or negative, or those abstaining; and shall assist in drafting the committee report.

c. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a committee assistant. The committee assistant may address the committee offering suggestions regarding procedure, but shall not participate in its deliberations on any issue before the committee as an advocate of one position or view regarding its action. The committee assistant shall assist the committee in securing desired resources.
2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings

a. Meetings of assembly committees shall be open to the public (as space permits) provided, however, that the committee may go into executive session at any time in accordance with the Open Meeting Policy printed in the Manual of the General Assembly. Ordinarily, the committee assistant will be expected to remain with the committee in executive session.

b. Each meeting of the committee shall include a time of worship and opportunity for prayer.

c. Committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised except when in contradiction to the Constitution of the PC(USA). Prior to a vote, methods of deliberation shall be consistent with the principles of Presbyterian government. (F-3.02 and G-3.0305)

d. Use and Preparation of Resource Material:
   (1) Each committee determines the use to be made of the resource material or resource persons available to assembly committees. Each assembly committee determines whether or not to permit the distribution of particular materials to the committee members.
   (2) Resource material (except for previously published books or interpretive brochures), including advice and counsel memoranda, that provides background or advice on items of new business, including commissioners’ resolutions, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall be as succinct as possible. This material shall be submitted to the assembly committee leadership team prior to presentation to the assembly committee to which the business has been referred. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, with a commitment to equitable presentation of different perspectives, shall distribute this resource material to the full assembly.

   Resource material provided for the committee by the appropriate General Assembly entity shall include well-written presentations from the variety of different perspectives on any issue under consideration. These presentations on other perspectives should come from the most articulate and informed proponents of that particular point of view. A report including a summary of the actions taken on this issue by our ecumenical partners and previous General Assemblies shall also be prepared by an appropriate General Assembly entity.

e. When business has been referred by a previous assembly to a special task force, committee, or commission created for that purpose, the assembly committee receiving that report shall set aside no less than ½ hour (30 minutes) to hear a presentation by the special task force (or committee or commission) giving background on their report. Each committee shall determine if additional time is required for presentation.

f. During the deliberations of the committee, in contrast to public hearings, only the following persons, having been recognized by the moderator, may speak:

   (1) Members of the committee;
   (2) Committee assistant;
   (3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities; when such experts advocating a particular point of view have spoken to the committee, the committee moderator shall offer to the committee the opportunity to hear from experts advocating a different point of view;
   (4) Members of special committees, task forces, commissions created by previous assemblies (see E.2.d and K.1.f), overture advocates, and signers of commissioners’ resolutions;
   (5) Persons invited by the committee through a majority vote of the committee; and
   (6) Representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, who may speak to overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, or other business on which the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has presented advice or recommendations, or matters that propose amendments to the Constitution, or that affect compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.
(7) In the event that business being considered by an assembly committee has been referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for advice, representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall be entitled to speak.

(8) The committee moderator provides that the total time allotted to persons, other than members of the committee, who speak for or against a recommendation be equal so far as possible except as outlined in E.2.e.

g. Overture advocates and one signer of each commissioners’ resolution shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by any assembly committee considering the matter. The overture advocate or one of the signers of a commissioners’ resolution shall be entitled to speak, as an individual (or in cooperation with other overture advocates in a pre-arranged presentation), to the background and intent of the overture or resolution immediately after the motion is made and seconded, placing the overture or resolution on the floor of the committee or subcommittee.

h. Overture advocates who have been designated by their presbytery or synod to speak to the response from a General Assembly entity to a referral of an overture shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by the assembly committee considering the response. The overture advocate shall be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture or as asked for clarification by the committee concerning the original intent of the overture.

i. A representative of any agency affected by an overture or commissioners’ resolution, either with respect to the use of its financial resources or its mission priorities, shall be entitled to speak to the item of business immediately after the presenter of the overture or the commissioners’ resolution, and shall be allocated reasonable time to speak.

j. The financial effect of each recommendation on any agency or entity of the denomination that would be affected by the action shall be clearly presented at the time that an overture or commissioners’ resolution is considered by the committee.

3. New Business

a. Each assembly committee shall consider only matters referred to it by the General Assembly. No assembly committee may initiate new business except as it relates to the business of the particular assembly committee.

b. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (Book of Order, G-6.04b and G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter so referred and report its findings and recommendations, which may include proposals for constitutional change, to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The assembly committee shall vote on the recommendations and may amend or decline to approve them. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

d. Recommendations and reports to the assembly regarding such new business must be approved in assembly committees by three-fourths of the committee members voting on the matter.

e. New business, other than that described in this standing rule, must be presented in accordance with Standing Rule A.8.
Referral to Advisory Committee on the Constitution

f. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution (Book of Order, G-6.04) or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (Book of Order, G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter referred and report its findings and recommendations (which may include proposals for constitutional change) to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

4. Organizational Meeting

a. Ordinarily, the initial meeting of each assembly committee is an organizational meeting in private session for up to one hour for the purpose of developing intragroup dynamics and determining procedural matters, such as approval of the committee’s agenda and consideration of the style in which the committee plans to operate.

b. During this executive session, business items before the committee shall not be discussed or acted upon.

5. Public Hearings

Schedule

a. Each committee, with the exception of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall schedule at its convenience one or more public hearings on matters before it, including on any commissioners’ resolutions submitted to it. Public hearings are the opportunity for the committee to hear from those who do not have other avenues for addressing the committee—including those who are not Presbyterian. For this reason, those who are given privilege to speak to the committee in E.2.f.(1–7) are not entitled to address the committee during public hearings.

Time Limits for Presentations

b. The committee may limit the time for the presentation by any person during a public hearing, including an elected member or staff member of an entity of the General Assembly. If the time allotted for the public hearing is not sufficient to accommodate all the persons wishing to speak, a method shall be approved by the assembly committee that ensures that an equal number of persons on each side of an issue have an opportunity to speak. Any person denied the right to speak at the hearing may appeal to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures on the basis that the method employed in selecting speakers was not fair.

Hearing Form

c. Any person who wishes to be heard in a public hearing shall sign up on a hearing form, posted in a public place in the building in which the assembly is being held, no later than the close of business on the second day of the General Assembly or noon of the day after the subsequent referral of business to the committee by the General Assembly. The location of hearing forms shall be announced during the first session of the assembly. In the event that an issue is expected to be controversial, those wishing to speak shall be asked to indicate whether they wish to speak for or against the recommendation.

6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures

a. This committee shall neither retain any items of business for its own consideration, nor suppress any matter that comes before it. However, business that substantially duplicates matters already before the assembly may be declined by this committee and reported to the assembly with a statement of the committee’s action.

b. This committee shall keep itself informed of the subjects being considered by the other assembly committees, and, when any subject is taken up by more than one committee, this committee shall advise the moderators of those committees regarding ways to avoid redundant or inconsistent recommendations.
c. This committee shall determine whether or not particular materials may be distributed to the commissioners and delegates to the General Assembly, and specify the time and manner of distribution of any authorized by it. Particular materials distributed in assembly committees shall not be distributed to the full assembly without the approval of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, including the time and manner of distribution.

d. The committee shall review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate, to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.

7. Reports of Assembly Committees

a. The moderator, vice moderator, committee assistant, and recorder, together with such other persons as the moderator may designate, shall draft the report of the committee following the sample form provided by the Stated Clerk.

b. The reports of assembly committees shall contain only (1) the recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly, and, where necessary, a brief statement of the committee’s reasons for such recommendations, and (2) the actions taken by the committee on items referred to the committee for action. Material necessary to identify the item of business and brief explanations may be included in the report. Extensive background information and detail contained in other documents in the hands of the commissioners shall not be included.

c. Each assembly committee shall include with each recommendation or action in its report statements advising the General Assembly whether or not the recommendation or action has fiscal implications affecting any budget under consideration by the assembly.

d. Recommendation for assembly action, or action taken by the committee, shall identify the entity that is directed to carry out and report back to the General Assembly regarding the matter dealt with by the recommendation or action.

e. When the entity to which an assembly action is directed is a part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, such as a division or related entity, the Stated Clerk shall automatically amend the language so that the action is directed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall determine which entity shall carry out the responsibility and report to the assembly on the matter.

f. The votes recorded in the assembly committee on each recommendation or action shall be included in the report for the information of the commissioners, but shall be omitted from the Journal of the General Assembly.

g. If the report of an assembly committee proposes or records an action affecting the interests of an entity of the General Assembly or of a council other than the General Assembly, it shall be the responsibility of that assembly committee to confer with the representative(s) designated by the entity or council concerned before proposing such action to the General Assembly or taking such an action.

h. Minority Report

(1) A minority of the members of an assembly committee, or an individual member of an assembly committee, may submit in writing views that differ from those in the committee report. If the moderator of the committee shall affirm in writing that the positions expressed as recommendations for action by the assembly in a written minority report were presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter, the Stated Clerk shall reproduce the minority report and distribute it with the report of the committee.

(2) A minority report must be appropriate for consideration as a substitute motion (see Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 2011, p. 527).
**General Assembly Plenary Meeting**

1. **Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports**
   a. Report at Beginning of Each Meeting
   b. Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket
   c. Review Minutes
   d. Requests for Communicating with Assembly
   e. Referral of Protests

2. **Reports of Assembly Committees**
   a. Distribution
   b. Adequate Docket Time
   c. Committee Moderators
   d. Financial Implication

3. **Minority Reports**
   a. Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute
   b. Reasons Supporting Committee’s Recommendation

4. **Committee Reports on the Budget**
   a. Per Capita Budget
   b. Amended Per Capita Budget

5. **Plenary Meeting Procedures**
   a. Debate
   b. Voting Methods
   c. Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations
   d. Constitutional Questions
   e. Electronic Devices
   f. Emergency Messages
   g. Confidentiality

6. **General Assembly Nominating Committee**
   a. Presentation of Nominations
   b. May Decline to Submit Nomination
   c. Nominating from the Floor

7. **Docket Time for Special Greetings**
   a. Head of Communion
   b. Assignment of Docket Time

8. **Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials**
   a. Approval for Announcements
   b. Nonofficial Printed Material

9. **Distributing Study Documents**
   a. Distribution
   b. Responsible Entity Identified

10. **Forming Social Policy**

11. **Peaceful Demonstrations**
   a. Where Allowed
   b. Prohibited in Building

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1. **Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports**

   a. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall report at the beginning of each meeting, recommending any necessary changes in order of business and any referrals it may have considered since its last report.
The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may, at any time, recommend limits on debates or changes in the docket to facilitate the handling of business. The reports of the committee shall take precedence over any other business, including orders of the day.

c. This committee shall review the minutes of the General Assembly daily, report to the General Assembly any suggested corrections, and recommend approval of the minutes. The minutes shall be posted on the church’s website and two printed copies of the minutes shall be posted in different places during the following day for examination by commissioners. The minutes of the meetings of the General Assembly during the last two days of its session shall be submitted for review and approval within ten days after the adjournment of the General Assembly to a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

d. During the assembly, requests for the privilege of communicating with the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. This includes requests from assembly committees who wish to include reports or presentations that don’t relate directly to an item of business that is before the assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall confer with persons making such requests about the time and the manner in which their concerns may be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall recommend to the General Assembly a response regarding any possible presentation to the assembly at the beginning of the plenary where the presentation will occur.

e. Protests expressing disagreement with an action or failure to act on the part of the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, which shall decide whether or not the protest is decorous and respectful. Should the committee decide the protest is decorous and respectful, the protest shall be entered in the Minutes. The committee may prepare an answer to be printed with any protest so entered (see Book of Order, G-3.0105b).

2. Reports of Assembly Committees

a. Electronic copies of the written reports of assembly committees shall ordinarily be distributed to commissioners no later than the close of the meeting prior to the one at which they are to be considered. When necessary the Stated Clerk shall arrange for the reproduction and distribution of reports.

b. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Stated Clerk, shall docket adequate time for the reports of committees, including ample time for debate and action. If a report requires more time than docketed, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall consult with the committee for additional time to complete consideration of the report.

c. Committee moderators should move the approval of recommendations with minimum comment, and material in the commissioners’ provided resources shall not be read.

d. The financial effect of each recommendation on budgets previously approved or under consideration shall be clearly presented at the time that the recommendation is considered by the assembly.

3. Minority Reports

a. In order to be considered by the assembly, a minority report shall not only set aside the majority report but also be able to stand as a full and complete substitution for the majority report recommendations. A minority report shall be moved as a substitute only after the majority report has first been moved. When this happens, the assembly shall first consider (and may amend) the majority report. When consideration of the majority report is completed, the assembly may then consider (and may amend) the minority report. Further efforts to perfect each report shall be held to a minimum in order that the assembly can concentrate instead on the issue of whether to make the proposed substitution.
b. The moderator of the committee, or another member of the committee, shall present reasons supporting the committee’s recommendation. They may be presented before any minority report is moved or presented during the narrative report of the committee, or presented during debate on the question of whether or not the substitution shall become the main motion. (See also Standing Rule E.7.h.)

4. Committee Reports on the Budget

a. At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business following the meetings of assembly committees, the assembly shall hear a report on the per capita budget from the committee that has reviewed that budget.

b. On the final day of the assembly, an amended per capita budget that incorporates the financial implications of actions taken by the assembly shall be presented to the assembly for approval.

5. Plenary Meeting Procedures

a. In debate on any pending matter, no commissioner or delegate shall be allowed to speak more than two minutes until all other commissioners or delegates who desire to speak on the pending matter have been heard.

b.(1) The General Assembly shall ordinarily decide questions by electronic voting. The Moderator may also call for unanimous consent by voice vote or show of hands. All decisions made by assembly standing committees by a three-quarters (supermajority) vote shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda to be considered as the first order of plenary business following committee meetings. Any actions requesting constitutional change must be considered in plenary.

(2) In addition to all consent items from assembly committees, the following items shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda:

(a) All unchallenged nominations from the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) Unanimous recommendations from assembly agencies and entities for confirmations of those offices that, according to the Manual of the General Assembly, require General Assembly confirmation.

(3) In all cases, the right of any commissioner to remove any item from the plenary consent agenda or to call for one of the other forms of voting shall be preserved.”

c. In view of the relative ease in which studies and programs may be approved, commissioners and other assembly committee members are cautioned to be mindful of the effort required of staff and elected members to carry out the General Assembly’s instructions.

d. When the General Assembly is in plenary session considering an item of business, questions arising in debate concerning constitutional matters shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) present at the plenary (see Standing Rule B.4.). In cases where the ACC cannot give an immediate response, the Moderator may entertain a motion to postpone the pending motion until the ACC is prepared to advise the assembly concerning the question that has been asked.

e. Commissioners are expected to be present when meetings are in session both physically and mentally. The use of electronic devices for purposes other than those directly related to the current topic is therefore discouraged when meetings are in session. Commissioners are also expected to adhere to the General Assembly Social Media Policy.
f. Emergency messages will be relayed to a commissioner or advisory delegate during plenary meetings by way of a written message delivered by one of the Stated Clerk’s designated staff or assembly assistants.

g. Any person permitted to remain during any executive session is expected to agree to be bound by the confidentiality required of commissioners.

6. General Assembly Nominating Committee

a. Unless the General Assembly shall have made some other provision, the nominating committee shall present to each session of the General Assembly a nominee for election to each vacancy on the entities of the General Assembly that shall exist because of a scheduled end of term, resignation, death, incapacity to act, change of residence, or any other reason.

b. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may decline to submit a nomination(s) to a particular vacancy(s) when requested to do so by the affected entity because of an expected merger of entity or a transfer of duties between entities in order to reduce the number of persons serving on a particular entity(s).

c. N nominating from the Floor

(1) Nominations by commissioners shall be in order unless the vacancy is required to be filled upon nomination from some other source.

(2) When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the “Nomination by Commissioner Form” provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk. The availability of the pertinent information provided by the person challenging the nominating committee’s nominee shall be announced to the assembly at least twenty-four hours in advance of the nomination being made from the floor.

(3) In the event that there are nominations from the floor, the election shall proceed as follows:

(a) The General Assembly will deal with one challenged position at a time.

(b) The name of the General Assembly Nominating Committee’s nominee shall be placed in nomination by its moderator. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall call upon the commissioner who is placing a nomination from the floor to put that name in nomination.

(c) Once the names are placed in nomination, the order of speaking shall be first, the commissioner or a designee speaking on behalf of the floor nominee and second, the General Assembly Nominating Committee member or a designee speaking to its nominee. Both the commissioner (or designee) and the General Assembly Nominating Committee member (or designee) shall speak from the platform. Such speech shall not exceed three minutes in length. There shall be no other speeches seconding the nomination of any nominee.

(d) Without further discussion or debate, the General Assembly will move to vote.

7. Docket Time for Special Greetings

a. When the Head of Communion of a member church of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, or the National Council of Churches is in attendance at a session of the General Assembly as an ecumenical advisory delegate or as an ecumenical representative, and proper notice is provided, the assembly shall provide up to three minutes of docket time to each such Head of Communion to present a greeting to the assembly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment of Docket Time</th>
<th>b. The placing of this greeting on the docket will be assigned by the Stated Clerk.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials</td>
<td>a. Only announcements connected directly with the business of the General Assembly shall be read from the platform and all notices shall be submitted either to the Moderator or the Stated Clerk for approval. Telegrams and special letters shall be reported to the General Assembly only at times to be designated by the Moderator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ordinarily, printed materials that are not official business before the General Assembly may only be distributed at authorized booths in the General Assembly Exhibit Hall. Other distribution is permitted to be handed out twenty-five feet or more from entrances to the building in which the General Assembly meets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Distributing Study Documents</td>
<td>a. Whenever the General Assembly itself shall require the distribution of a document for study (whether the proposal originates through the recommendation of an entity, the presentation of an overture or resolution, or arises during the conduct of the assembly’s business) with a request for a response (whether the response is sought from individuals, congregations, councils, organizations of any kind, or any combination of these), the study document shall be accompanied by resource materials, bibliography, and aids as set forth in the document “Forming Social Policy,” Section 5, printed in the Manual of the General Assembly. Along with a response instrument and the resource materials, bibliography, and aids, the document shall be distributed on a schedule that provides for the study guide and all accompanying material to be in the possession of the proposed respondents for a minimum of twelve months before the due date of the response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The entity to be responsible for receiving the responses and reporting to the General Assembly the summary of the responses shall be identified in the material. The report on the responses to the study may be presented no earlier than to the General Assembly that convenes in the second year after the session of the General Assembly that approves the study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Forming Social Policy</td>
<td>The entities of the General Assembly, including its committees, commissions, and special committees, shall be governed by the document, “Forming Social Policy” printed in the Manual of the General Assembly, when that entity is considering making a social witness policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Peaceful Demonstrations</td>
<td>a. Peaceful demonstrations shall be allowed twenty-five or more feet outside of the entrances to the building in which General Assembly meets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Spontaneous or planned demonstrations by individuals or groups are prohibited inside the building where the General Assembly meets. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall declare all demonstrations that occur in plenary session out of order and, if demonstrators fail to immediately disband and desist, may recess the General Assembly to a fixed time and place. This rule does not prohibit the spontaneous or planned celebration of an action of the General Assembly or of any event in the life of the church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Assembly Meeting Worship

Services of Worship

a. Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning

b. Ecumenical Worship

c. In Conformity with Directory for Worship

Services of Worship

a. The Moderator of the preceding General Assembly shall plan daily worship at the General Assembly, and a worship service including the celebration of the Lord’s Supper; and shall provide, in advance, suitable leadership for these periods of worship. The Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated at the first service of worship of the General Assembly session, and the Moderator shall preside on this occasion and preach a sermon or deliver an address. The Moderator shall seek advice to ensure inclusivity in the planning of appropriate daily worship periods. The Moderator shall assure adequate transmittal of information about the planning of worship periods to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

b. The Stated Clerk shall plan an ecumenical period of worship and provide, in advance, suitable leadership for this period of worship.

c. The various acts of worship planned for the session of the General Assembly shall be in conformity with the requirements of the Directory for Worship, and shall be developed and led according to the guidance of the document, “Presbyterians at Worship in Mass Assemblies.” In the preparation and conduct of all worship services, care shall be taken that all language, sight, hearing, accessibility, and other barriers be eliminated so that there can be full participation of all attendees. [Example: That printed orders of service also be printed in braille and that signing be available.]
1. **Moderator of the General Assembly**
   
a. **Title/Functions**
   
   (1) The Moderator of the General Assembly is an ecclesiastical person in ordered ministry, along with the Stated Clerk, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). The ministry of the Moderator is grounded in the ministry of baptized persons and in the particular ordained ministry of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.
   
   (2) The office of Moderator may be shared by Co-Moderators. In this case, the office of Vice Moderator will remain vacant until the next election of a Moderator.
   
   (3) The title of the Moderator is “The Moderator of the [number] General Assembly [(year)] of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”
   
   (4) The Moderator of the General Assembly is a commissioner of the General Assembly.
   
   (5) When the Moderator presides at the assembly, it is to be a sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church. During the period between assemblies, the Moderator serves as an ambassador of the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, telling the story of the church’s life and upholding the people of God through prayer.
   
   (6) The Moderator shall preside over the General Assembly that elects him or her, and over the meetings of the next General Assembly until a successor is elected. The Moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the council (*Book of Order*, G-3.0104).
   
   (7) The Moderator(s) and the Vice Moderator (when filled) shall submit a written report of their work to the session of the General Assembly at which their successors are installed.

b. **Stand with Either Co-Moderator or Vice-Moderator Candidate**

   (1) At the discretion of the candidate, he or she may choose to stand for election with a Co-Moderator or with a Vice Moderator candidate. When choosing to stand with another Moderator candidate, both candidates:
   
   (1) must fulfill all the requirements specified in these Standing Rules,
   
   (2) notify the Stated Clerk of their intention to stand for election together, and
   
   (3) will together determine how to fulfill the duties of the office.
c. Election of the Moderator

(1) Each person nominated to serve as Moderator of the General Assembly must be a commissioner to the General Assembly. Action by presbyteries to endorse candidates for Moderator of the General Assembly shall not take place until after the adjournment of the immediately preceding assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall provide resourcing and orientation for Moderatorial candidates.

(2) Ordinarily, no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the assembly, the Moderatorial candidates will announce the name of a commissioner each has selected to offer to the assembly to elect as Vice Moderator, as appropriate.

(3) The following guidelines are intended to create an equal and open opportunity for moderatorial candidates. To this end, the following procedures shall be observed:

(a) Candidates shall covenant not to spend in excess of $2,000 in making their candidacy known to the church. This $2,000 includes out of pocket expenses as well as the estimated value of in-kind contributions, but does not include travel and meeting expenses.

(b) Each candidate shall submit to the Stated Clerk an itemized statement of expenses, including travel and meeting expenses related to his/her candidacy and in-kind contributions. This statement shall be submitted to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly prior to the convening of the General Assembly. This information shall be distributed to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the election of the Moderator. The statement of expenses of all candidates shall be kept on file in the Office of the General Assembly following the meeting of the General Assembly.

(c) The Office of the General Assembly shall not reimburse a candidate for campaign expenses, but shall assume expenses involved in printing and distributing material submitted for information packets as outlined in Standing Rule H.1.c.(3)(g).

(d) In order to encourage reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit in the selection of the Moderator, neither candidates or their advocates are allowed to communicate with commissioners and/or advisory delegates.

(e) Distribution of written campaign materials at General Assembly shall be limited to the public distribution area.

(f) Candidates are encouraged to meet and make themselves available for conversation with commissioners and advisory delegates within the scope of these procedures.

(g) Not less than fifteen days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish for commissioners and advisory delegates an electronic information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Moderator who is known to the Stated Clerk and who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate that includes a statement regarding the candidate’s sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) A written presentation by the presbytery having jurisdiction over the candidate, if that council has endorsed the candidate,

(iii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the Stated Clerk.

The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but all material including photographs submitted for each presentation shall be provided in electronic format as well as print. The material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no less than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution, and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Moderator, if elected.

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be elected in the following manner:
(a) When the General Assembly is ready to elect its Moderator, each candidate shall be nominated by a commissioner to the assembly in the following manner: the commissioners making nominations shall be recognized at microphones on the assembly floor. Upon recognition by the assembly Moderator, the nominator shall say one of the following statements:

(i) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament ____ from the Presbytery of ______ and Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament ________ from the Presbytery of ___.”

(ii) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament _______ from the Presbytery of _____. And for Vice Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament _____ from the Presbytery of ___.”

The nominator shall then return to his/her seat on the plenary floor. No seconds to nominations are required.

(b) After nominations are closed, each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to address the General Assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the concerns that nominee feels to be the most important for the church. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot, the drawing conducted by the most recent Moderator attending the General Assembly.

(c) At the conclusion of all the presentations by the nominees, they shall respond to questions from the floor. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who spoke first in the original presentation, and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they spoke earlier. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly.

(d) Where there is only one nomination for Moderator, the election may be by acclamation. Where there is more than one, the election may be by secret ballot in a format which is determined by the Stated Clerk and announced to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the convening of the assembly.

(5) The Stated Clerk shall provide a service of installation for the newly elected Moderator and Vice Moderator, as appropriate, as the last item of business at the session in which the Moderator is elected. The families of the newly elected officers and all present previous Moderators shall be invited to the platform. The service shall use the order of service for “Installation of Governing Body Officers and Staff” from the Book of Occasional Services. The processional banner of the Moderator shall precede the newly elected Moderator into the assembly. The Moderator’s cross and stole shall be presented by the most recent serving Moderator. The newly elected Moderator invites a person to lead the prayer of installation. The most recent serving Moderator gives the charge, a hymn is sung by the assembly, and the newly elected Moderator gives the benediction.

**Vice Moderator**

(d) Vice Moderator

(1) The Vice Moderator represents the assembly at the request of the Moderator. When the Vice Moderator serves in this capacity, all those duties incumbent on the Moderator shall be expected of him/her.

(2) Each proposed Vice-Moderator candidate shall include biographical information and a photograph in electronic format to be included with the Moderator candidate information.

(3) The Moderator may request the Vice Moderator to preside and to assist in the performance of other functions of the Moderator during and following the General Assembly.
Vacancy

e. Vacancy in the Office of the Moderator or Vice Moderator

(1) Should the office of the Moderator of the General Assembly become vacant, the Vice Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator. In such circumstance, all constitutional obligations and functions as prescribed by the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the Book of Order shall be incumbent upon the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly.

(2) Should the office of the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly also become vacant, the most recent living Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator as specified in the Constitution of the church.

2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

a. Title and Functions of the Stated Clerk at the General Assembly

(1) The title of the Stated Clerk is “The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

(2) The Stated Clerk is accountable, through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, to the General Assembly for the performance of the duties of the office, and shall present to each meeting of the General Assembly a report on the state of the church.

(3) The Stated Clerk is responsible for all matters related to the sessions of the General Assembly and all other matters relative to and arising from the General Assembly for which no other assignment has been made.

(4) The Stated Clerk shall also be responsible for guidance of the procedures for candidates seeking the office of Moderator, and for supervision of the election of each Moderator.

(5) In accordance with directives from previous General Assemblies and in consultations with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and other General Assembly agencies, the Stated Clerk is authorized to decide on matters pertaining to facilities and special events that must be established before the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall receive all reports, communications, overtures, and any other materials appropriate for General Assembly consideration. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for presentation to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, a referral of such items of business coming before the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.3.e.).

(7) The Stated Clerk shall prepare for consideration of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a proposed docket for the General Assembly’s consideration of its business (Standing Rule C.4.a.). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall present the proposed docket to the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures so that it may recommend a docket to the commissioners at the first business session. The docket presented to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall provide a time early in the General Assembly for a report by the Stated Clerk on the state of the church, and for a report by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

(8) The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly the number of assembly committees and a name for each committee after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities (Standing Rule C.1.). The Stated Clerk shall present the committee structure to the General Assembly for ratification at the first business session. Each commissioner and advisory delegate shall be assigned by random selection to one assembly committee at least forty-five days before the opening date of the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.2.).

(9) The Stated Clerk shall provide opportunity for orienting the commissioners, advisory delegates, and others taking part in the session of the General Assembly. The use of
Robert's Rules of Order, sources of parliamentary advice, and the availability of resource persons and materials to facilitate their work should be part of the orientation.

(10) The Stated Clerk shall be the parliamentarian for the meetings of the General Assembly, or arrange for the service of a professional parliamentarian.

(11) The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the councils and agencies of the assembly, persons who presented business to the assembly, and others affected by the assembly’s actions, a report on actions of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to their concerns. The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the presbyteries all assembly actions on which the presbyteries are requested to take action.

(12) As soon as practicable after the adjournment of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish the assembly’s proceedings and other documents as the assembly may direct in an appropriate format (i.e. print or electronic) to be determined by the Stated Clerk.

Election

b. Election of the Stated Clerk

(1) The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires the election of a Stated Clerk and the standing rules describe the procedures for the election. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected for a term of four years and is eligible for reelection to additional four-year terms. The Stated Clerk is accountable to the General Assembly for the performance of the assigned functions.

(2) The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected in the manner described in this standing rule. No member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly or other persons involved in this procedure as a member of the search committee or as a person providing staff services to the committee may be considered for nomination as Stated Clerk. The incumbent Stated Clerk may not participate in any way in the election process described in this standing rule. In the year there is an election of a Stated Clerk, the Moderator shall appoint a temporary Stated Clerk during the period of the election at the General Assembly.

(3) The General Assembly that meets prior to the end of the term of a Stated Clerk shall elect a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(a) The slate of nominees for the nomination committee shall consist of the following: three members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (nominated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, one of whom shall serve as moderator of the committee), one member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), and five at-large members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee in the following categories: one mid council stated clerk and four persons (two ruling elders and two ministers of the Word and Sacrament) from among commissioners who have attended an assembly in the past six years. The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall present to the assembly for election the slate of nominees for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. The slate presented shall reflect the denomination’s commitment to inclusiveness.

(b) Nominations from the floor for the nomination committee shall be in order following the distribution of the printed list of proposed nominees by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and a declaration by the Moderator that the names are in nomination. Names placed in nomination from the floor shall be in opposition to a particular name of an at-large member placed in nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and must be in the same category (H.2.b.(3)(a)). More than one person may be placed in nomination from the floor in opposition to an at-large nominee.

(c) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for providing the nomination committee with an up-to-date position description.
(d) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will ensure that an adequate budget for the nomination process is provided in the Office of the General Assembly and shall designate staff services for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(e) The nomination committee shall begin its work no later than 300 days before the start of the assembly that will elect the Stated Clerk.

(f) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for conducting the end-of-term evaluation of the Stated Clerk.

(g) The nominating committee shall announce that persons seeking the position of Stated Clerk shall file a completed application form and a resume or personal information form (PIF) with the committee 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly.

If the incumbent wants to be considered, he or she will notify the committee in writing and submit a current resume or PIF 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall provide a copy of the end-of-term evaluation to the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee.

(h) Additional written material may be requested by the committee. No one may be nominated to serve as Stated Clerk who has not provided an application to the committee.

(i) The committee shall review and evaluate all applications to determine the constitutional eligibility of the candidates. Any candidate who is determined to not be eligible will be notified in writing within forty-five days of receipt of their resume or PIF.

(j) The committee shall interview all eligible candidates using the same methodology and select one as the committee’s recommendation. All members of the committee shall ordinarily participate in the interview. The committee shall declare its nominee no later than sixty days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(k) Any of the applicants for the position of Stated Clerk, including the incumbent Stated Clerk if not the nominee of the committee, who wish to be placed in nomination against the nominee of the committee shall declare their intention to the committee to do so no later than forty-five days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(l) At the convening of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly shall distribute to commissioners and advisory delegates an information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Stated Clerk who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate, including a statement regarding the candidate’s sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the committee based upon issues that will be before the church as presented in business to be considered by the General Assembly.

(iii) The material submitted shall be typewritten on paper 8-1/2 x 11 inches in size. The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but the copy submitted for each presentation shall be provided in one color on one side of one sheet. The material shall be submitted to the Office of the General Assembly no less than thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(m) The candidates may not distribute any other materials, print or electronic, including flyers, buttons, tokens or other objects that would denote a campaign for the office of Stated Clerk.

(n) Other organizations supporting the candidacy of a particular candidate may not distribute materials electronically, through the mail, or at the General Assembly with the knowledge, support, or permission of that candidate. Should a candidate discover that an organization is advocating or campaigning for him or her, it is expected that the candidate will request that organization to cease its activities. The same expectation will be true of organizations that are critical of a particular candidate for Stated Clerk.
(o) Each candidate will be provided a place to meet and talk with commissioners and advisory delegates two days before the election. Only information provided by the Office of the General Assembly may be distributed in those rooms. Other materials, apart from that packet, are not permitted. Each candidate for Stated Clerk will be allowed to post the times when he/she will be available for conversation in that room.

(p) Any questions concerning interpretation of the election process outlined in H.2.b. shall be determined by the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(4) The General Assembly, by majority vote, shall elect the Stated Clerk in the following manner:

(a) Within forty-eight hours of the convening of the assembly, the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall place in nomination a single nominee.

(b) The Moderator shall then invite other nominations from those who have completed the nomination process. Only one speech, made by a commissioner or a member of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee not to exceed five minutes in length, shall be made to nominate each nominee. There shall be no speech seconding any nomination. Each person nominated from the floor shall reaffirm a willingness to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(c) In the event there are no other nominations, the election shall proceed immediately as follows:

(i) The nominee for Stated Clerk shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee’s views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

(ii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. Time allocated shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominee for Stated Clerk. The time allocated should not exceed fifteen minutes, after which the voting shall take place.

(d) In the event there are other nominations, the election shall proceed as follows:

(i) The election of the Stated Clerk shall take place as the first order of business on the next to last day of the assembly’s session.

(ii) Each nominee shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee’s views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The nominees shall speak in the same order as the presentation of nominating speeches.

(iii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominees for Stated Clerk. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who was nominated first and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they were nominated. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly, after which the voting shall take place.

(5) Should there be a vacancy in the office of the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose to the assembly, if the assembly is in session, members for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee, or shall propose to the Moderator for appointment, if the assembly is not in session, to a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. This committee shall be composed of members as outlined in Standing Rule H.2.b. and begin the process of a search for a candidate for Stated Clerk. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an acting Stated Clerk until such time as a Stated Clerk is elected.
(6) The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall be dismissed at the adjournment of the session of the General Assembly at which the committee presents a nominee for Stated Clerk.

(7) A new Stated Clerk shall normally assume office thirty days after the adjournment of the assembly. A longer period of transition between Stated Clerks may be negotiated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, but shall not exceed ninety days.

Acting Stated Clerk

c. Acting Stated Clerk

In case of the incapacity, resignation, or death of the Stated Clerk, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an Acting Stated Clerk until such time as the Stated Clerk is able to resume the duties or the General Assembly elects a new Stated Clerk. The person so designated may be one of the Associate Stated Clerks or another person eligible for election as Stated Clerk.

Associate Stated Clerks
d. Associate Stated Clerks

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.
General Assembly Arrangements

1. Date and Place of Meeting
   a. Determining Date and Place
   b. Presbytery Invitations
   c. Criteria
   d. Rotating the Place of the Meeting

2. Meeting Arrangements
   a. Arrangements and Housing
   b. Assembly Assistants
   c. Simultaneous Interpretation
   d. Sponsorship of Events

3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses
   a. Reimbursement/Per Diem
   b. Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner

4. Assembly Meeting Work Group
   a. Membership
   b. Responsibilities

1. Date and Place of Meeting

Determining Date and Place

a. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall meet on the date and at the place fixed by the preceding General Assembly for a period, which shall be known as a session of the General Assembly, preferably between May 15 and July 31, subject to the possibility of change (see Standing Rule I.4.b.(10) and Book of Order, G-3.0503, for exceptions). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall recommend to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any necessary changes in dates and places of meetings previously set. Should action regarding date or place of meeting become necessary at a time when the General Assembly is not in session, this committee is empowered to fix a new date or place of meeting.

Presbytery Invitations

b. The host body for any session of the General Assembly shall be a presbytery(s) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any presbytery that desires to invite the General Assembly to meet within its bounds shall forward an invitation to the Stated Clerk no later than May 1 of the year that is seven years prior to the earliest effective date of the invitation.

Criteria

c. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the criteria that render a place an eligible site for a meeting of the General Assembly, including the requirement that all meeting arrangements shall be made to facilitate full participation by persons with disabilities. These criteria may be obtained from the Office of the General Assembly.

Rotating the Place of the Meeting

d. In order to distribute the benefits experienced from hosting a General Assembly meeting throughout the church, the place of meeting shall be rotated among the following four areas (unless prevented by financial or other practical considerations):
   • Area A: Synod of Alaska/Northwest, Synod of the Pacific, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Synod of the Southwest;
   • Area B: Synod of the Sun, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod of Mid-America;
   • Area C: Synod of Living Waters, Synod of Lincoln Trails, Synod of the Covenant;
   • Area D: Synod of South Atlantic, Synod of Puerto Rico, Synod of the Northeast, Synod of the Trinity, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.
2. Meeting Arrangements

a. The Stated Clerk shall oversee all arrangements for the meeting and housing of the General Assembly, including: the assignment of time and place for all special events and public meetings connected with or scheduled at the time of the General Assembly; the assignment of time and place for exhibits at the General Assembly; and the assignment of commissioners, advisory delegates, and others to hotels and other accommodations.

b. The Stated Clerk shall appoint persons to serve as assembly assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. Persons appointed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly. Assembly assistants shall be assigned to particular tasks to facilitate the work of the General Assembly. The appointments shall be made in accordance with Book of Order, F-1.0403.

c. The Stated Clerk shall arrange for the simultaneous interpretation of proceedings into Spanish and Korean languages for any participant during plenary meetings of the General Assembly. This service shall also be provided during assembly committee meetings, services of worship, and other events during the assembly for commissioners, advisory delegates, ecumenical guests, and, when possible, for other participants.

d. An event scheduled before, during, or immediately following a session of the General Assembly and extending an invitation to any or all participants of the assembly shall clearly identify the sponsor or sponsoring organization(s) in any invitations, announcements, or other publicity about the event.

3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses

a. The approved reimbursement for the travel expenses, food, lodging, and other approved expenses of commissioners at the sessions of the General Assembly shall be paid by the treasurer or the treasurer's designee. The treasurer shall have the authority to deposit funds for such purposes in a bank or trust company where the General Assembly is to be in session. Commissioners shall be reimbursed by means of individual checks upon receipt of a voucher on a form provided by the treasurer. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly the amount of any per diem. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall set the per diem, and the Stated Clerk shall publish such per diem in the materials (print or electronic) provided to the commissioners. The treasurer shall determine the manner in which such checks shall be distributed and shall announce the place or places where such checks may be cashed.

b. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse an alternate commissioner for cost of meals (as specified in the per diem expenses for the particular session of the assembly to which the person is commissioned) during the period in which the alternate is actually seated as a commissioner. The total of the payments to the two persons shall not be larger than payment to a single commissioner attending the full assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse either the original commissioner or the alternate who replaced the original commissioner for the costs of transportation and other approved expenses, but not both. It shall be the responsibility of the two individuals, with the assistance of the presbytery that elected them, to determine an appropriate division of the costs, whether reimbursement was in cash or a prepaid ticket was provided. Both persons shall be listed in the Journal as commissioners, with an indication of the period during which they served.

4. Assembly Meeting Work Group

a. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall establish a work group on assembly arrangements to be composed of designated members from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The moderator of the Committee on Local Arrangements, and the moderator and vice moderator of the
Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (when selected) shall be nonvoting members of the committee at all meetings in which matters will be considered that affect their particular work. This work group shall be assigned responsibilities (1) through (10) in this Standing Rule I.4.b.

**Responsibilities**

b. Responsibilities

(1) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.

(2) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.

(3) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk’s proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly.

(4) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk’s proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee.

(5) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee.

(6) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly.

(7) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.

(8) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.

(9) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be printed and distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.

(10) Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set.
### Special Meetings of the General Assembly

1. **Method of Calling**
   - a. Petition’s Subject Matter
   - b. Resolution Form
   - c. Not Called for Discussion Only
   - d. Resolved in 1 or 2 Days
   - e. Full Text on Each Page of Petition
   - f. Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures
   - g. 120-day Requirement

2. **Signatures**
   - a. Verification of PC(USA) Membership
   - b. Verification of Signature
   - c. Removal Request
   - d. Failure to Reply
   - e. Verification Process Report

3. **Date and Location**
   - a. Report of Decision to Call Meeting
   - b. COGA Sets Date and Place
   - c. Expense Plan
   - d. Letter of Notification

---

1. **Method of Calling**

   The *Book of Order* permits the calling of special meetings of the General Assembly (G-3.0503). The method of calling a special meeting is the required number of commissioners submitting a petition with the full text of the resolution to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

   **Petition’s Subject Matter**
   - a. A special meeting may be called providing the petition’s subject matter falls within the General Assembly’s responsibilities. (G-3.0501).

   **Resolution Form**
   - b. The urgent matter shall be brought in the form of a resolution or resolutions, stating the specific action proposed to be taken by the commissioners at the special meeting and shall include the reasons for proposing the decision to be made.

   **Not Called for Discussion Only**
   - c. A special meeting may not be called for the purpose of discussion only.

   **Resolved in 1 or 2 Days**
   - d. The matters should be able to be resolved in a session of one or two days.

   **Full Text on Each Page of Petition**
   - e. The full text of the resolution shall appear on each page of the signed petitions.

   **Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures**
   - f. The Moderator may consult with the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution meets the criteria for a called meeting or concerning the specific actions in the proposed resolution. This may take place by conference call.

   **120-day Requirement**
   - g. Resolutions requiring or proposing constitutional interpretation are subject to the 120-day requirement in G-6.02. The 120-day requirement begins upon receipt of the petition by the Moderator. The Moderator may consult with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution requires a constitutional interpretation.
2. **Signatures**

   The *Book of Order* establishes the minimum number of signatures to require a called meeting. The Moderator, upon receipt of the petition, shall ask the Stated Clerk to complete the following within thirty days:

   a. Send each presbytery stated clerk or clerk of session a letter verifying the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) membership of the individual signatory to the petition.

   b. Send each signatory to the petition a letter of verification asking the commissioner to verify the signature on the petition and if the commissioner concurs with the purpose of the request as stated in the resolution.

   c. During the verification process, a commissioner may request removal of his or her name from the petition by notifying the Stated Clerk.

   d. After all reasonable efforts to establish contact have been made, the name of a commissioner failing to reply to the letter of verification shall be removed from the petition.

   e. The Stated Clerk shall report to the Moderator the results of the verification process.

3. **Date and Location**

   The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has the responsibility to fix the date and place of a meeting of the General Assembly when the General Assembly is not in session.

   a. Upon receiving certification from the Stated Clerk that the petition has met the requirements of the *Book of Order* and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the Moderator shall report to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) the decision to call the meeting.

   b. The COGA shall set the date and place of a called meeting.

   c. The COGA shall submit to the called meeting a plan to pay for its expenses. This plan shall be considered to be part of the business of the special meeting.

   d. The letter of notification of the called meeting will be mailed to the commissioners no later than sixty days before the start of the meeting.
Commissions, Special Committees, and Special Administrative Review

### 1. Commissions and Special Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>a. The General Assembly may establish special committees and commissions to carry out decisions of the assembly or make recommendations to the assembly on matters that cannot be undertaken or accomplished by an existing entity. <em>(Book of Order, G-3.0109)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considerations for Creating</td>
<td>b. In considering the creation of a special committee or commission the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from relevant agencies, a representative from the General Assembly Nominating Committee, a representative from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, as well as from the assembly committee considering the proposal. Financial implications of special committees or commissions shall accompany any recommendation to the assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed by Moderator</td>
<td>c. The Moderator of the General Assembly appoints members of special committees or commissions, unless otherwise designated, in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation. The Moderator is authorized to fill any vacancies that may occur. No person appointed may serve on more than one committee or commission unless otherwise designated by the assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Existence and Reports</td>
<td>d. Special committees or commissions shall normally complete their work within two years. Requests for an extension of work shall be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. An extension shall require a two-thirds vote of the assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>e. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall review the work of each special committee or commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation at General Assembly and Funding</td>
<td>f. When the report of the special committee or commission is presented, its moderator shall serve as a corresponding member of the assembly and may be accompanied by one other member of the committee or commission. The expenses of these authorized representatives shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission’s budget.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the event of a minority report, a designated member of the minority shall also be invited to attend the assembly. The expenses of this member shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission’s budget.

Other members of special committees or commissions may be reimbursed for attendance at the assembly only if they are required to be involved in hearings or for other official purposes.
K.1.g.–K.2.b.

Coordination

g. The Stated Clerk shall provide staff services and other assistance to special committees and commissions. The work of the special committees and commissions shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly.

2. Special Administrative Review of Synods

a. The General Assembly has authority to undertake special administrative review of synods (Book of Order, G-3.0502c). There are three ways the General Assembly could be requested to consider such review:

(1) by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-3.0302d; G-3.0402; Standing Rule A.3.);

(2) by request from one of the General Assembly entities (Standing Rule A.2.);

or

(3) By a commissioners’ resolution (Standing Rule A.6.). If such overture, request, or resolution is acted on favorably by the General Assembly, the General Assembly could undertake Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b) through commission or special committee as provided for in Standing Rule K.1. and G-3.0109.

Written Request for Review

b. Special administrative review of an alleged synod irregularity or delinquency may occur when a written request for such review is received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly from another synod or a presbytery within the synod of the alleged irregularity or delinquency. If the request relates to an alleged delinquency, the request can only be filed with the Stated Clerk after the failure or refusal of the synod to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, having been requested to do so in writing prior to the meeting. When the request for special administrative review is received, the Stated Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. If the request is in order and all the moderators agree that for the good of the church the special administrative review needs to be undertaken before the next meeting of the General Assembly (when the request could be considered by the whole General Assembly), the Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a special committee (Standing Rule K.1.) to conduct a special administrative review in accordance with G-3.0108b and report its findings and recommendations to the next General Assembly.
Amendment or Suspension of the Standing Rules

1. Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules
2. Amending the Standing Rules
3. Suspending the Standing Rules

Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules
1. In consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the next session of the General Assembly any changes in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly deemed necessary. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before proposing to the General Assembly any amendment to the standing rules.

Amending the Standing Rules
2. The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable.

Suspending the Standing Rules
3. A motion to suspend the standing rules is not debatable and shall require a two-thirds vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners.
MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A—SUCCESSION OF MODERATORS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1789—1837

A.D. NAME PRESBYTERY PLACE


1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)

1845 *John Michael Krebs, D.D. New York Cincinnati, Ohio
1848 *Alexander T. McGill, DD, LL.D. Ohio Baltimore, Md.
1850 *Aaron W. Leland, D.D. Charleston Cincinnati, Ohio
1851 *Edward P. Humphrey, D.D., LL.D. Louisville St. Louis, Mo.
1852 *John Chase Lord, D.D. Buffalo City Charleston, S.C.
1854 *Henry Augustus Boardman, D.D. Philadelphia Buffalo, N.Y.
1855 *Nathan Lewis Rice, D.D. St. Louis Nashville, Tenn.
1856 *Francis McFarland, D.D. Lexington New York, N.Y.
1859 *William L. Breckinridge, D.D. Louisville Indianapolis, Ind.
1860 *John Williams Yeomans, D.D. Northumberland Rochester, N.Y.
1862 *Charles C. Beatty, D.D., LL.D. Steubenville Columbus, Ohio
1864 *James Wood, D.D. Madison Newark, N.J.
1866 *Robert Livingstone Stanton, D.D. Chillicothe St. Louis, Mo.
1867 *Phineas Densmore Gurley, D.D. Potomac Cincinnati, Ohio
1869 *M.W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D. Ohio New York, N.Y.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1851 *Albert Barnes Philadelphia, 4th Utica, N.Y.
1853 *Duruca Howe Allen, D.D. Cincinnati Buffalo, N.Y.
1855 *William Carpenter Wisner, D.D. Niagara St. Louis, Mo.
1856 *Laurens P. Hickok, D.D., LL.D. Troy New York, N.Y.
1860 *Robert Wilson Patterson, D.D. Cleveland Chicago, Ill.
1862 *John Michael Krebs, D.D., LL.D. Pittsburgh Cincinnati, Ohio

* Deceased

MODERATORS AND CLERKS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.D.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PRESBYTERY</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Samuel Miles Hopkins, D.D.</td>
<td>Cayuga</td>
<td>St. Louis, Mo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Henry Addison Nelson, D.D.</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>Rochester, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Philemon Halsted Fosler, D.D.</td>
<td>Utica</td>
<td>New York, N.Y.</td>
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**REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS 1870–1958**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.D.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PRESBYTERY</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Samuel J. Wilson, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>St. Louis, Mo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Edward D. Morris, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cincinnati, Cleveland, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Henry Jackson Van Dyke, D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brooklyn, Brooklyn, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Henry Harris Jessup, D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lackawanna, Saratoga, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>New York, Saratoga, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>George P. Hays, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Denver, Saratoga, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Elijah R. Craven, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newark, Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>David C. Marquis, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>St. Louis, Minneapolis, Minn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>William Eves Moore, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Columbus, Saratoga, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Hunter Corbet, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shantung, Des Moines, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>William H. Roberts, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Hazen F. Fullerton, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Philadelphia, Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>J. Frank Smith, D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dallas, Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>John Willis Baer, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, St. Louis, Mo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Calvin C. Hays, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Des Moines, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Charles R. Eldman, D.D., D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Brunswick, Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

**CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1829–1906**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.D.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PRESBYTERY</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Thomas Calhoun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lebanon, Princeton, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>James B. Porter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elk, Princeton, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Alexander Chapman</td>
<td></td>
<td>Logan, Princeton, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Samuel King</td>
<td></td>
<td>Barnett, Nashville, Tenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Thomas Calhoun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lebanon, Nashville, Tenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Samuel King</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lexington, Princeton, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Reuben Burrow</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forked Deer, Nashville, Tenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Hiram A. Hunter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Indiana, Lebanon, Tenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Reuben Burrow</td>
<td></td>
<td>Union, Elkon, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>William Ralston</td>
<td></td>
<td>Richmond, Owensboro, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>M.H. Bone, D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tennessee, Owensboro, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Hiram A. Hunter, D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ohio, Lebanon, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Milton Bird, D.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Morgan, Memphis, Tenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.D.</td>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>PRESBYTERY</td>
<td>PLACE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>David Lowry</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Nashville, Tenn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Isaac Shoak</td>
<td>Elk</td>
<td>Memphis, Tenn.</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>M.H. Bone, D.D.</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>Lebanon, Tenn.</td>
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<td>1857</td>
<td>Carson P. Reed</td>
<td>Richland</td>
<td>Lexington, Mo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Felix Johnson, D.D.</td>
<td>McCreasy</td>
<td>Huntsville, Ala.</td>
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<td>1861</td>
<td>A.E. Cooper</td>
<td>Hopewell</td>
<td>St. Louis, Mo.</td>
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<td>1862</td>
<td>P.G. Rea</td>
<td>New Lebanon</td>
<td>Owenboro, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Jesse Anderson</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Lebanon, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Hiram Douglass</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Evansville, Ind.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Richard Beard, D.D.</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Owenboro, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>G.W. Mitchell</td>
<td>Richland</td>
<td>Lincoln, Ill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>T.C. Blake, D.D.</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>Springfield, Mo.</td>
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<td>1876</td>
<td>J.M. Gill, D.D.</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>D.E. Bushnell, D.D.</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Lebanon, Tenn.</td>
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<td>1879</td>
<td>J.S. Grider, D.D.</td>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>Memphis, Tenn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>A. Templeton, D.D.</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick</td>
<td>Evansville, Ind.</td>
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<td>1881</td>
<td>W.J. Darby, D.D., LL.D.</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Austin, Tex.</td>
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<td>1882</td>
<td>S.H. Buchanan, D.D.</td>
<td>Searcy</td>
<td>Huntsville, Ala.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>John Frizzell</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>McKeesport, Pa.</td>
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<td>1886</td>
<td>E.B. Crisman, D.D.</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick</td>
<td>Sedalia, Mo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>*Nathan Green</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Covington, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>W.H. Black, D.D., LL.D.</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>Waco, Tex.</td>
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<td>1889</td>
<td>J.M. Hubbert, D.D.</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Kansas City, Mo.</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>E.G. McLean, D.D.</td>
<td>Walla Walla</td>
<td>Union City, Tenn.</td>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>E.E. Beard</td>
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<td>Owenboro, Ky.</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>W.S. Danley, D.D.</td>
<td>Mackinaw</td>
<td>Memphis, Tenn.</td>
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<td>1895</td>
<td>M.B. DeWitt, D.D.</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>Meridian, Miss.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>A.W. Hawks</td>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>Birmingham, Ala.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>H.S. Williams, D.D.</td>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<td>1898</td>
<td>H.H. Norman</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>H.C. Bird, D.D.</td>
<td>Union</td>
<td>Chattanooga, Tenn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>E.E. Morris, D.D.</td>
<td>New Lebanon</td>
<td>West Point, Miss.</td>
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<td>1904</td>
<td>W.E. Settle</td>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>Dallas, Tex.</td>
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<td>1906</td>
<td>Ira Landrith, D.D., LL.D.</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Decatur, Ill.</td>
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**CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES 1869–1920**

1869 | William Hughes | Racine, Wis. | Columbus, Ohio |
| 1871 | William Roberts | Scranton, Pa. | New York, N.Y. |
| 1873 | Howell Powell | Cincinnati, Ohio | Racine, Wis. |

| 1879 | Peter Bullins, D.D. | Albany | Xenia, Ohio |
| 1883 | A. Young, D.D., LL.D. | Monmouth | Xenia, Ohio |
| 1885 | John B. Clark, D.D. | Allegheny | Washington, Iowa |
| 1887 | John B. Dades, D.D., LL.D. | Philadelphia | Xenia, Ohio |
| 1891 | R.A. McAyden, D.D. | Des Moines | Xenia, Ohio |
| 1892 | John S. Easton, D.D. | Westbrook | Washington, Iowa |
| 1895 | W.W. Barr, D.D. | Philadelphia | Wooster, Ohio |
| 1898 | S.G. Irvine, D.D. | Oregon | Cambridge, Ohio |
| 1899 | William Bruce, D.D. | Xenia | New Wilmington, Pa. |
| 1900 | E.T. Jeffers, D.D., LL.D. | Mercer | Xenia, Ohio |
| 1904 | William H. French, D.D. | First Ohio | St. Louis, Mo. |
| 1905 | William Johnston, D.D. | College Springs | Topeka, Kansas |
| 1906 | John T. Brownlee, D.D. | Chartiers | Hamilton, Ohio |
| 1908 | Wm. T. Meloy, D.D., LL.D. | Chicago | Cedar Rapids, Iowa |
| 1910 | Andrew Watson, D.D., LL.D. | Egypt | Buffalo, N.Y. |
| 1913 | James Bruce, D.D. | Delaware | Monmouth, Ill. |
| 1916 | James White, D.D. | Kansas City | Xenia, Ohio |

**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA 1858–1958**

1858 | John Hammond | Scranton, Pa. | Columbus, Ohio |
| 1859 | * Deceased | | |
| 1860 | *Ruling Elder | | |

---

* Deceased
### MODERATORS AND CLERKS

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<td>J.A. Thompson, I.H.D.D., LL.D.</td>
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<td>Wm. C. Williamson, D.D., LL.D.</td>
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<td>J. Kelly Giffen, D.D.</td>
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<td>W.R. Sawhill, D.D.</td>
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<td>J. Knox Montgomery, DD, LL.D.</td>
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<td>J. Alvin Orr, D.D., LL.D.</td>
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<td>Homer B. Henderson, D.D.</td>
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<td>W. Kyle Geary, LL.D.</td>
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<td>James Leon Kelso, D.D., LL.D., LL.D.</td>
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<td>1955</td>
<td>Albert E. Kelly, D.D., LL.D.</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Akron, Ohio</td>
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### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

#### 1861–1983

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<td>Benj. M. Palmer</td>
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<td>J.L. Kirkpatrick</td>
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<td>George Howe</td>
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<td>Andrew Hart Kerr</td>
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<td>Nashvile</td>
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<td>1870</td>
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<td>Huntsville, Ala.</td>
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<td>Hampden C. Drμse</td>
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<td>Samuel A. King</td>
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<td>J.W. Lapsley</td>
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### THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

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* Deceased
† Ruling Elder
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<td>New Orleans</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>*E. J. Bolbach</td>
<td>Mecklenburg</td>
<td>Montreat</td>
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<td>1963</td>
<td>*E. J. Bolbach</td>
<td>Mecklenburg</td>
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**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

1983–

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Moderator</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>A.D. Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>*Benjamin M. Weir</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Minneapolis, Minn.</td>
<td>Minneapolis, Minn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>*Isabel Wood Rogers</td>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>Biloxi, Miss.</td>
<td>Biloxi, Miss.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>*J. E. Simmons</td>
<td>Beaver-Butler</td>
<td>Beaver-Butler</td>
<td>Beaver-Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>*Price H. Gwinn III</td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>Utah</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>*John M. Fife</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>New York City</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>*David Lee Dobler</td>
<td>Yokon</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
<td>Orlando, Fla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>*Marj Carpenter</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>*Patricia G. Brown</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Syracuse, N.Y.</td>
<td>Syracuse, N.Y.</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>*Freda Gardner</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Fort Worth, Tex.</td>
<td>Fort Worth, Tex.</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>*Fahed Abu-Akel</td>
<td>Greater Atlanta</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>*Bruce Reyes-Chow</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>San Jose, Calif.</td>
<td>San Jose, Calif.</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>*Cynthia Bolbach</td>
<td>National Capital</td>
<td>Minneapolis, Minn.</td>
<td>Minneapolis, Minn.</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>*Cindy Kahlmann</td>
<td>Tropical Florida</td>
<td>St. Louis, Mo.</td>
<td>St. Louis, Mo.</td>
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**B—SUCCESSION OF STATED CLERKS**

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

1789–1837

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Place</th>
<th>A.D. Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
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<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>*George Duffield</td>
<td>D.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>*Ashbel Green</td>
<td>D.D.</td>
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<td>1791</td>
<td>*Philip Milledoler</td>
<td>D.D.</td>
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</table>

†Co-Moderator
*Deceased
‡Ruling Elder
MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D. NAME
1806 *Nathaniel Irwin
1807 *Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.
1817 *William Neill, D.D.
1825 *Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D.
1836 *John McDowell, D.D.

1839–1869
1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)
1838 *John McDowell, D.D.
1840 *Wm. Morrison Engels, D.D.
1846 *Willis Lord, D.D., LL.D.
1850 *John Leyburn, D.D.
1862 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)
1838 *Erskine Mason, D.D.
1846 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.

(REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS)
1870–1958
1870 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.
1883 *T.C. Blake, D.D.
1896 *J.M. Hubbert, D.D.

CLERKS

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1829–1906
1829 *F.R. Cossitt
1834 *James Smith
1841 *C.G. McPherson
1850 *Milton Bird
1872 ‡*John Frizzell
1883 *T.C. Blake, D.D.
1896 *J.M. Hubbert, D.D.

CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES
1869–1920
1869 *M.A. Ellis
1870 *J.P. Morgan
1871 ‡*T.L. Hughes
1873 *M.A. Ellis
1875 *M.A. Ellis
1877 *T.C. Davis
1880 *James Jarrett
1883 *H.P. Howell
1886 *W. Machno Jones

A.D. NAME
1889 *John R. Jones
1892 *Edward Roberts
1895 *John Hammond
1898 *David Edwards
1901 *Joshua T. Evans
1904 *J.R. Johns
1907 *W.E. Evans
1910 *John E. Jones
1913 *W.O. Williams
1916 *R.E. Williams
1919 *J.O. Parry
1920 *J.O. Parry

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
1858–1958
1858 *Samuel Wilson, D.D.
1859 *James Prestley, D.D.
1863 *Jos. T. Cooper, D.D., LL.D.
1875 *Wm. J. Reid, D.D., LL.D.
1903 *David F. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
1931 *O.H. Milligan, D.D., LL.D.
1954 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1958–1983
1966 ‡*William P. Thompson, J.D., J.C.D., LL.D.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983
1861 *John N. Waddel
1865 *Joseph R. Wilson
1898 *William A. Alexander
1910 *Thos. H. Law
1922 *J.D. Leslie
1959 *James A. Millard Jr., Th.D.
1973 *James E. Andrews

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–
1983 ‡*William P. Thompson (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)
*James E. Andrews (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)
1984 *James E. Andrews
1988 *James E. Andrews
1992 *James E. Andrews
1996 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2000 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2004 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2008 Gradye Parsons
2012 Gradye Parsons
2016 Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II
* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder
C—SUCCESSION OF ASSOCIATE STATED CLERKS

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1958–1983

A.D. Name
1972 ‡Otto K. Finkbeiner
1972 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
1978 ‡Flynn V. Long Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

1974 ‡*Donald A. Speck
1978 Flynn V. Long Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

1983 ‡Otto K. Finkbeiner
1983 Flynn V. Long Jr.
1983 Robert F. Stevenson
1987 Margrethe B.J. Brown
1988 William B. Miller
1989 ‡Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
1993 *C. Fred Jenkins
1993 J. Scott Schaefer
1993 Eugene G. Turner
1997 ‡Frederick J. Heuser
1997 Janet M. De Vries
2001 ‡Loyda Puig Aja
2001 Kerry Clements
2001 Gradye Parsons
2001 Mark Tammen
2001 Gary Torrens
2001 Robina Winbush
2008 Jill Hudson
2008 Marcia Myers
2010 Thomas Hay
2012 Andrew Black
2014 Sue Davis Krummel
2014 Joyce Lieberman
2014 Kerry Rice
2016 Beth Hessel
2018 Tricia Dykers-Koenig
2018 C. Laurie Griffith

D—SUCCESSION OF ASSISTANT STATED CLERKS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1907–1921, 1953–1958

1907 ‡*James M. Hubbert, D.D.
1953 ‡*Henry Barraclough, LL.D.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
1868–1913, 1952–1958

1868 —
1913 *A.G. Wallace, D.D., LL.D.
1914 Office discontinued

A.D. Name
1952 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.
1954 *John M. Bald, Ph.D.
1956 *J.Y. Jackson, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1967 ‡Otto K. Finkbeiner
1967 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
1981 ‡Mildred L. Wager

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

1930 *E.C. Scott
1949 P.J. Garrison Jr.
1979 Joyce C. Tucker
1975 Flynn V. Long Jr.
1980 Ms. Lucille Scott Hicks
1980 Ms. Catherine M. Shipley
1982 Eugene D. Witherspoon Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

1983 Ms. Lucille S. Hicks
1983 ‡Ms. Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
1983 ‡Ms. Mildred L. Wager
1987 Mrs. Juanita H. Granady
1990 Paul M. Thompson
1995 Ms. Maggie Houston
1995 Ms. Deborah Davies
1995 Kerry Clements
2001 Zane Buxton
2001 Dennis Cobb
2001 Jerry Houchens
2001 Carlos Malavé
2001 ‡Joan Richardson
2001 ‡Margery Sly
2001 ‡Valerie Kiriishi Izumi
2002 ‡C. Laurie Griffith
2002 ‡Doska Ross Radebaugh
2003 Lesley A. Davies
2006 ‡Chris Nicholas
2006 Julia Thorne
2006 Sharon Youngs
2007 ‡Kerry Rice
2008 Evelyn Hwang
2008 ‡Jewel McRae
2008 Joyce Lieberman
2008 ‡Martha Miller
2012 Molly Casteel
2012 Kay Moore
2012 Kris Valerius
2014 SanDawna G. Ashley
2014 Timothy Cargal
2014 Melissa G. Davis
2014 Toya Richards
2014 Teresa Waggener
2016 Nancy Taylor
2018 Luke Choi
2018 Amanda Craft
2018 Laura Polk

E—SUCCESSION OF PERMANENT CLERKS
MODERATORS AND CLERKS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  1789–1837

1802 *Nathaniel Irwin
1807 *John Ewing Latta
1825 *John McDowell, D.D.
1837 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.

1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)  1838–1869

A.D. Name
1838 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.
1845 *Robert Davidson, D.D.
1850 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
1862 *Wm. Edward Schenck, D.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *Eliphalet W. Gilbert, D.D.
1854 *Henry Darling, D.D., LL.D.
1864 *J. Glentworth Butler, D.D.

REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS  1870–1921

1870 *Cyrus Dickson, D.D.
1882 *Wm. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.
1884 *Wm. Eves Moore, D.D., LL.D.
1900 *Wm. Brown Noble, D.D., LL.D.
1916 *Edward Leroy Warren, D.D.‡

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES  1861–1983

1861 *Joseph R. Wilson
1866 *William Brown
1885 *Robert P. Farris
1905 *Thomas H. Law
1910 *J.D. Leslie

F—SUCCESSION OF RECORDING CLERKS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1951 ‡*Henry Barraclough, L.L.D.
(Elected for this one General Assembly)

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder
### Key: column after member’s name: first letter is racial and ethnic identification followed by gender and ordination status

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<th>Racial Ethnic Designation</th>
<th>Gender and Ordination designation:</th>
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<tr>
<td>A-Asian American</td>
<td>FT-Female Teaching Elder</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-African American</td>
<td>FR-Female Ruling Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-Hispanic/Latinx</td>
<td>FL-Female Church Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>M-Middle Eastern</td>
<td>FC-Female Minister (Non-Presbyterian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-Native American</td>
<td>MT-Male Teaching Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-Other or Multiracial</td>
<td>MR-Male Ruling Elder</td>
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<tr>
<td>W-Caucasian</td>
<td>ML-Male Church Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-Middle Eastern</td>
<td>MC-Male Minister (Non-Presbyterian)</td>
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### Last Column: Synod

| ANW-Alaska-Northwest          | NE-Northeast                                |
| BPR-Borinquen de Puerto Rico  | PAC-Pacific                                 |
| COV-Covenant                  | ROC-Rocky Mountains                         |
| LAK-Lakes and Prairies        | SA-South Atlantic                           |
| LIN-Lincoln Trails            | SCH-Southern California and Hawaii          |
| LW-Living Waters              | SUN-Sun                                     |
| MAM-Mid America               | SW-Southwest                                |
| MAT-Mid-Atlantic              | TRI-Trinity                                 |

### Advisory Committee on Litigation

| Class of 2020                | Robin W. Hadfield                         | WFR | Homestead |
|                              | Barry McDonald                            | WML | San Fernando |
| Class of 2022                | Jeana Lungwitz                            | WFR | Mission |
|                              | Michael E. Williams                       | WMR | San Diego |
| Class of 2024                | Jay Summerville                          | WMT | Giddings Lovejoy |
|                              | Judy L. Woods                             | WFR | Whitewater Valley |

### Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

| Class of 2020                | Beverley Brewster                        | WFT | Redwoods |
|                              | Rachel Eggebeen                          | WFL | deCristo |
|                              | Kevin Johnson                            | BMT | Detroit |
|                              | Sylvia Thorson-Smith                     | WFR | deCristo |
|                              | Gloria Tuma                              | MFR | Cascades |
| Class of 2022                | Darcy Metcalfe                           | WFT | East Iowa |
|                              | Erica Nelson                             | WFR | Utah |
|                              | Rick Nutt                                | WMT | Scioto Valley |
|                              | Susan Smith                              | WFR | Monmouth |
|                              | Robert Trawick                           | WMR | Hudson River |
|                              | Steven B. Webb                           | WMR | National Capital |
Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Class of 2020

Alyson Janke WFR John Knox
Christian Boyd WMT Milwaukee
Michael E. Williams WMR San Diego

Class of 2022

Forrest Klaussen WMT Los Ranchos
Catherine Ulrich WFT Denver
Judy Wood WFR Whitewater Valley

Class of 2024

Carla Campbell WFR Pittsburgh
Greg Goodwiller WMT St. Andrew
Daniel Saperstein WMT Lake Huron

Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

Class of 2020

Terry Alexander WMT Western North Carolina
John Forbes WMT Northeast Georgia
Mary M. Fulkerson WFT New Hope
Courtney Steininger WFD National Capital
Susan Wiggins WFR Arkansas

Class of 2021

Joy Durrant WFR Mission

Class of 2022

Cecilia Armstrong BFT Charleston Atlantic
Jeanne Choy Tate WFR San Francisco
Madison McKinney NFR Northern Kansas
JoAnne Sharpe WFR National Capital
Floretta L. Watkins BFT Charlotte

Board of Pensions

Class of 2020

Mary (Molly) C. Baskin WFR Chicago
Adam Ceteznik WMR Seattle
Harold Doak WMR Mission
Fairfax Fair WFT Detroit
Amy Williams Fowler WFT Genessee Valley
Margaret Fox WFO Mid-Kentucky
Arlene W. Gordon BFT Tropical Florida
Mark S. Lu AML Los Ranchos
Kathy Lueckert WFR(D) Heartland
David McBride WMO New Castle
Linda Patrick Wood WFL Middle Tennessee
Suzanne Welsh WFR Philadelphia
Floyd White BMT West Jersey
Philip D. Amoa BML Philadelphia

Class of 2022

Fredric Joseph Bold, Jr. WML Greater Atlanta
Richard R. Clark WMR Milwaukee
Gordon Enderle WMR John Knox
George Hauptfuhrer WMR Greater Atlanta
Andrew Junkin WML Denver
Charles (Bill) Keith WMR Charlotte
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Levering</td>
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<td>Fernando Rodriguez</td>
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<td>Joshua Power Stevens</td>
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<td>Paul Vikner</td>
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**Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment**

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<td>Elizabeth Dunning</td>
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<td>Utah</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty</td>
<td>WFT</td>
<td>Mid-Kentucky</td>
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<td>Joseph Kinard</td>
<td>BMR</td>
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<td>Noha Khoury-Bailey</td>
<td>MFT</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
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<td>Regina Meester</td>
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<td>Sandra Moon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gregory Simpson</td>
<td>BMR</td>
<td>New York City</td>
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<td>WMR</td>
<td>National Capital</td>
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<td>Richard H. White</td>
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**Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**

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<td>Stephanie Anthony</td>
<td>WFT</td>
<td>Blackhawk</td>
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<td>WMT</td>
<td>Beaver-Butler</td>
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<td>Margaret Elliott</td>
<td>WFR</td>
<td>Salem</td>
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<td>Barbara J. Gaddis</td>
<td>WFR</td>
<td>North Central Iowa</td>
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<td>Lynn Hargrove</td>
<td>WFT</td>
<td>New Covenant</td>
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<td>Samuel Bonner</td>
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<td>New Brunswick</td>
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<td>Vilmarie Cintrón-Oliveri</td>
<td>HMR</td>
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<td>Frank S James</td>
<td>BMR</td>
<td>Sheppards and Lapsley</td>
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<td>WMD</td>
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<td>Nigel Leon Lovell-Martin</td>
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<td>Sallie Watson</td>
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**Committee on Theological Education**

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<td></td>
<td>Jodi Craiglow</td>
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<td>Chicago</td>
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<td>Garnett Foster</td>
<td>WFT</td>
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<td>Annie Vanessa Hawkins</td>
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<td>Katherine Smith</td>
<td>WFT</td>
<td>Middle Tennessee</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Amaury Tañon Santos  H/BMT  Elizabeth
Michael Williams  WMT  New Castle
Saundra Tracy  WFR  Ohio Valley

Class of 2022

Educator Certification Committee

Hugh Anderson  WMT  Cascades
Mary Marcotte  WFR  New Covenant
Gordon Mikoski  WMT  New Brunswick
Susan Sharp Campbell  WFT  West Virginia
Johanna Wagner  WFT  Giddings-Lovejoy

Class of 2022

Jenna Campbell  WFR  Indian Nations
Denise Kennedy  BFT  Newark
Krista Lovell  WFR  North Alabama
H. Carson Rhyne  WMT  The James

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

Anne Bond  WFR  Denver
Laura Brekke  WFT  San Jose
Jack Felch  WMR  Lehigh
Paul Janssen  WFC  RCA
Hyo-Jung Kim  AMC  UCC
Brian Merritt  WMT  Santa Fe
Christopher D. Olkiewicz  WMC  ELCA
Aaron Stauffer  WML  Middle Tennessee
Shannan Vance-Ocampo  WFT  Albany
Y. Dianna Wright  BFR  Salem
Randall C. Bailey  BMC  Progressive Natl Baptist Con

Class of 2022

Amantha L. Barbee  BFT  Charlotte
Heidi Hadsell de Nascimento  WFL  Chicago
Leon Lovell-Martin  BMT  Tropical Florida
Mary Newbern-Williams  BFT  Minnesota Valley
Brian Paulson  WMT  Chicago
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