



223rd General Assembly (2018)

Women's Orientation Breakfast

Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries in partnership with
Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

Saturday, June 16, 2018 (7:00 AM)

Grand Marriott, St. Louis, MO



The Redbook



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Women's Orientation Breakfast

June 16, 2018

7:00 AM

hosted by:

Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries Office of Gender and Racial Justice
In partnership with the
Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Rhashell D. Hunter

Director, Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries

Opening Prayer

Beth Olker, MDiv

Introduction of Co-Moderators

Associate, Gender and Racial Justice

Greetings from the Co-Moderators of 222nd GA

Rev. Dr. Jan Edmiston & Rev. Denise Anderson

Introduction of the Moderator Candidates

Rev. Kerri Allen

Member, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

223rd General Assembly Moderator Candidates

Elder Chantal D. Atnip & Rev. Ken Hockenberry

Rev. Eliana Maxim & Rev. Bertram Johnson (Co-Moderators)

Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri & Rev. Cindy Kohlmann (Co-Moderators)

Women's Advocacy in the PC(USA)

Opening Statements

Rev. Denise Anderson & Rev. Dr. Jan Edmiston

Study on the Status of Women

Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter

Presbyterian Women (PW) & ACWC Joint Statement on Sexual Injustice

Dr. Wanda Beauman

PW Vice Moderator, Justice & Peace Concerns

Advocacy at GA

GA 101

Dr. Susan Jackson Dowd

Executive Director, Presbyterian Women (PW)

ACWC Business before the Assembly

Courtney Hoekstra, MDiv, ThM

Associate, Advocacy Committee Support

Mission Engagement and Support

Rev. Rosemary Mitchell

Senior Director, Mission Engagement & Support

Closing Prayer

Elder Jeanne Choy Tate

Member, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns



Presbyterian Church (USA)
Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries

Gender & Racial Justice and Women's Leadership Development Staff

The Rev. Dr. Rhashell D. Hunter currently serving as Acting Co-Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with Jose Luis Casal and Barry Creech. She has served as the Director of Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries in the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for more than a decade. She served as Pastor of Community Presbyterian Church in Flint, Michigan, and was Associate Pastor for Worship, Music and the Arts at Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago. She is past Moderator of the Synod of the Covenant. Rhashell was awarded the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching degree and the Master of Divinity degree from McCormick Theological Seminary, the Master of Fine Arts degree from Trinity University, the Bachelor of Arts degree and a Texas Teachers' Certificate in Drama and Journalism from the University of Houston. She has also served as an Adjunct Professor of Preaching at McCormick Theological Seminary, Western Theological Seminary and in the Association of Chicago Theological Schools Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program. She is a contributor to Preaching God's Transforming Justice, a Lectionary Commentary for Church Years A, B & C, published by Westminster John Knox Press. She has a love for preaching a commitment to building bridges in intercultural communities. Dr. Hunter was reared in Dallas, Texas, in intercultural Presbyterian congregations. She is the daughter of The Rev. Dr. Charles A. Hunter and Mrs. Annie Mary Alexander Hunter.

The Rev. Lemuel García-Arroyo serves as the Associate Director of Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries. Lemuel previously served as Director of Alumni and Church Relations at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Prior to that he served as Associate Presbyter in Salem Presbytery in Clemmons, NC, as Associate Executive for Crosscultural Ministries in the Synod of the Sun, Irving, TX, and as Chaplain and Bible Instructor at the Presbyterian Pan American School, one of the PC(USA) Racial Ethnic schools in Kingsville, Texas. Lemuel is an alumnus of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and Presbyterian Pan American School. In his role as Associate Director, Lemuel works providing day-to-day operational management of the ministry area and helping ignite the vision for a transformative church in this intercultural era.

Elder Jewel McRae is the Associate for Women's Leadership Development and Young Women's Ministries. Jewel's work involves relationship building with women across the church as well as providing support, programming and resources to women, along with facilitating leadership development opportunities. She engages in strategies for addressing issues facing all women in the church including clergywomen, seminarians, new immigrants, elders and other women leaders, along with working in collaboration with mid-councils, congregations, and other ministry offices. She supports the Young Women's Ministries field staff as they work to provide development opportunities and engage in ministry with college-aged, racial ethnic and young adult women across the church. Jewel has experience in leadership development and a proven track record of increasing diversity in the church. She has served as the Associate for Racial Ethnic Referrals and Matching/Church Leadership Connection in the Office of Vocation. Jewel has a passion to empower, develop and enhance leadership abilities for all women.

Beth Olker, MDiv is the Associate for Gender and Racial Justice. Before beginning this role, she served as deployed field staff for Presbyterian College Women and Young Women. She is from South Carolina and earned her bachelors in arts and sciences from Presbyterian College. Beth served as a Young Adult Volunteer in Nashville, TN. She has a Masters of Divinity from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA and a Masters of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. She currently sits on the Educate a Child Roundtable.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

Rev. Terry Alexander: Ordained in 1973, Terry served numerous small and medium PC(USA) churches. He has always been a feminist and a justice advocate. Terry has special training in conflict management, 9 quarters of advanced CPE and training as an interim pastor. He served two previous terms on ACWC and served as liaison with ACREC, ACSWP and MRTI. He retired 6 years ago and is glad to be back on ACWC.

Rev. Kerri N. Allen is a womanist, Reformed theologian, PhD student, and hospice chaplain. In 2010, Kerri moved to Chicagoland to serve as a Lilly Pastoral Resident at the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago. Before that, Kerri worked in politics, serving as a political appointee at multiple levels of government, including serving as a legislative assistant in the US Senate with an expertise in healthcare policy. Now, as a student of theology and ethics at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, under the tutelage of Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Kerri uses her diverse experiences to focus on Black women's healthcare, especially on inequities and structural sin. Kerri's theological interest focuses on developing a liberative, Reformed, and womanist doctrine of election. Originally from St. Paul, MN when Kerri is not buried in a book or writing a paper, she enjoys hiking, travel, watching sports, cooking or spending time with one of her many nieces or nephews.

Dr. Wanda Beauman is serving on the ACWC as the elected representative from the national board for Presbyterian Women, where she is the Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace Concerns. Her advocacy work in women's ministry spans forty years and has taken her throughout the United States as well as to Zimbabwe and South Africa. She works with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and seeks to inspire women to advocate for themselves and their children. She is currently serving as Vice Moderator for the Presbytery of Denver, and says, "The Ministry of Seeking Justice and Peace is Actually the Practice of Putting the Love of Jesus Christ into Action!"

Jon Forbes is a recent graduate of Presbyterian College, receiving degrees in History and Theatre. He currently lives in Athens, GA, and is working on a Masters in Teaching. Jon was one of the YAAD Co-moderators at the 222nd General Assembly, and has served on the ACWC since 2016.

Rev. Dr. Mary McClintock Fulkerson is an ordained minister in the PC(USA) and the Professor of Theology at Duke University Divinity School. Her book, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology*, examines the liberating practices of non-feminist church women and feminist academics. Her book, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* explores the practices of an interracial church that includes people with disabilities. *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*, co-edited with Sheila Briggs, is a collection of essays on feminist theology and globalization. Her book co-authored with Marcia Mount Shoop is *Body Broken, Body Betrayed: Race, Memory, and Eucharist in White-Dominant Churches*. A member of the steering committee of the Duke Human Rights Center's Pauli Murray Project, Fulkerson is involved in its mission to use the stories of an activist African American woman to raise local community consciousness around justice issues.

Rev. Joann Lee is the Associate Pastor for Community Formation at Calvary Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. She was born in New York City to Korean immigrant parents and grew up in Houston, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Psychology from The University of Texas at Austin and a Masters of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. Joann and her husband Mike live in San Francisco with their two kids, one dog, and her in-laws.

Elder Gina Meester currently calls Omaha, Nebraska home. She was elected to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in 2014 and serves on the ACWC as a liaison from the board. Gina was YAAD to the both the 2008 General Assembly and to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. She also served on the Synod Committee on Representation. Gina was a Young Adult Volunteer in Tanzania and later volunteered at Kinnaird Academy

with the Presbyterian Education Board in Lahore, Pakistan. Gina is a student at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. In her free time, she enjoys reading, listening to music, and being outdoors.

Elder Jeanne Choy Tate serves as co-moderator for the ACWC and is a Commissioned Lay Pastor from Old First Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. Before completing her PhD in Religion and Psychology, she was founder/director of Yook Yau Ji Ga Daycare, a Cantonese bilingual-bicultural childcare center at the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown. Author of *Something Greater: Culture, Family, and Community as Living Story* (WipfandStock 2013), Jeanne builds on her experiences as an Early Childhood Educator, partner in a biracial marriage, and parent of a bicultural child to compare childrearing in biblical, Chinese and American communities.

Rev. Floretta L. Watkins was born to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence and the late Flossie E. Watkins in Atlanta, GA. She graduated from Walker High School and then matriculated at Mercer University in Macon GA where she earned a BA in Communications. In 1993, she graduated from Johnson C. Smith Seminary of the Interdenominational Theological Seminary with an emphasis in Homiletics and Christian Education. After seminary she was ordained and immediately began her vocational service to the church as Presbytery Staff of Campus Ministry at South Carolina State University and Claflin College. After serving the campuses in Orangeburg SC, she received a call to serve Pleasant Ridge of Lancaster SC and Hermon Presbyterian Church in Rock Hill, SC. Under her leadership, Hermon erected a new worship facility. In 1997, Reverend Watkins was commissioned to serve as a Chaplain in the United States Air Force National Guard. She is the first African-American female Chaplain in the Air National Guard. She has served as support to airmen and soldiers in various situations including the floods of North Carolina in Kingston, NC and during deployment to Elmendorf, AFB in Alaska and Osan, South Korea. Today she serves as Deputy Wing Chaplain to the 145th Air National Guard. In 2002 Reverend Watkins began her service at well-known Seigle Avenue Presbyterian Church. Known for its interracial make-up, Reverend Watkins opened the doors for more inclusion and acceptance of all of God's children to become an affirming church for LGBTQ members.

Rev. Susan Carter Wiggins serves Germantown Presbyterian Church, Germantown, TN as the Associate Pastor for Congregational Care. She is a Licensed Associate Marriage & Family Therapist and holds both an MDiv and a Master of Marriage & Family Therapy from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Rev. Wiggins has served on ACWC for six terms, currently on Leadership Team, and serves as the Corresponding Member to the Office of General Assembly for the ACWC for GA223 (2018). She serves the Presbytery of the Mid-South on the Minutes Review Committee and the Executive Presbyter Search Committee. She is a devoted advocate for women and girls, particularly in helping them to find their voices, and in seeking gender justice in both church and society. She is passionate about building and nurturing relationships, and helping to foster a sense of wholeness among individuals, families, church families, and communities. Rev. Wiggins is a native Arkansan where her loves – her children and grandchildren - reside. She is also the widow of Ralph J. Wiggins, whose memory is a blessing and continuous source of encouragement.

ACWC's Liaison and Adjunct Members

Elder Joyce Rarumangkay is a ruling elder of the Emmanuel Indonesian Presbyterian Church, a Fellowship under the National Capital Presbytery (NCP). Joyce was born and raised in Indonesia with a Protestant background. She and her family moved to Washington, D.C. in 1989 for her job with the World Bank (WB). She retired from the WB after 30 years of service working on the Organization's operations support and office management, including leading the WB Administrative and Client Support Network. She served her Presbytery as member of the Church Development Committee and Secretary of the NCP Immigrant Ministry Network. She is currently serving as the Secretary of the Mid-Atlantic Synod Presbyterian Women and member of the GA ACWC. Joyce earned her coaching certificate from the George Mason University, a secretarial certificate from the Trinidad Junior College in Colorado, attended management and leadership courses offered by the World Bank, the Wharton School, and Harvard School

of Public Health. She completed a class on Pastoral Care for the Sick and Dying from the Virginia Theological Seminary, and attended trainings and workshops on new church development, working in multicultural environment, and PC(USA) polity through programs offered by the NCP and through a number of Big Tents. Joyce was featured in an article published by the Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries Office, in January, 2014. Joyce and her husband has one daughter, Patricia, who is also an elder.

Elder Sylvia Thorson-Smith is the liaison to ACWC from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). She is retired from teaching sociology and gender/women's studies at Grinnell College in Iowa and has a long history of involvement in social justice issues for the PC(USA). Sylvia is active at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona.

Elder JoAnne Sharp is a Church Educator in the PC(USA). She serves as Liaison to the PC(USA) & it's Seminaries for the National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen. Christian Education is her passion, especially when it intersects with Gender Justice. She has two grown children and two grandchildren.



FAQ on The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

Q. What is the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)?

A. The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns is called into being and understands its work in the context of a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in our God of liberation and motivated by a painful recognition of sexism in the church and the world, the church 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 historic commitment.

Q. What is the role of ACWC at General Assembly?

One member of ACWC serves as the corresponding member to the General Assembly, which entitles her to voice but no vote. ACWC brings to GA resolutions with recommendations for the church related to current issues of gender justice. In addition, the committee provides advice and counsel memoranda (A&Cs) to the GA and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports and actions before the GA that impact women. At GA, ACWC members resource GA committee members on the resolutions brought by ACWC as well as the A&Cs they submitted. Each year ACWC co-hosts the Women's Orientation Breakfast, which includes the distribution of the famous Redbook.

Q. Why is ACWC important to GA and the PC(USA)?

A. As a prophetic witness, ACWC is called to give voice to those whose voice still often goes unheard. Given its call to monitor the work of the denomination in order to ensure the full and equitable participation of women, ACWC finds itself in a position that could be and often is interpreted as adversarial. The motivation behind the work of ACWC, however, is to continue to challenge the church to live into being a representation of the body of Christ that reflects equal partnership between people of all genders.

Q. How do I become a member of ACWC?

A. Members of ACWC are elected by the General Assembly Nominating Committee. To be eligible for nomination, you must complete the forms found on the General Assembly Nominating Committee webpage: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/committees/nominations/how-can-i-apply/>

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2018 Candidates for Moderator/Co-Moderator Rev. Eliana Maxim (Seattle Presbytery) and Rev. Bertram Johnson (Presbytery of New York City)



Rev. Eliana Maxim, associate executive presbyter of Seattle Presbytery and a vice moderator of the Way Forward Commission, will stand for co-moderator with Rev. Bertram Johnson, minister of justice, advocacy and change at Riverside Church in New York.

Eliana Maxim, a native of Colombia, emigrated with her parents to Los Angeles as a child, and earned an undergraduate degree in communications from Loyola Marymount University. She worked as a news producer until her family moved to Seattle; then she became director of children and family ministries at Mercer Island Presbyterian Church from 1996 to 2010. She earned an MDiv from Seattle University and was ordained in 2011.

Maxim has served the church at the national level as a member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency review committee, the Committee on the Belhar Confession, and as vice moderator of the PC(USA) National Hispanic/Latino-a Presbyterian Caucus.

Maxim, 56, is married to Alex Maxim; they are the parents of young adult children.

Bertram Johnson graduated from the University of Florida and became a Presbyterian after volunteering with youth ministry through Young Life.

Johnson, who is gay, earned his MDiv from Princeton Seminary in 1996 and a masters in social work in 1997 from Rutgers University, at a time when the PC(USA) was deeply conflicted about whether to ordain gays and lesbians who were not celibate.

Johnson served as an oncology chaplain, directing spiritual and practical care for people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as working in HIV education research, along with working in regional theatre in the Pacific Northwest. He was ordained in 2014.

Johnson is a member of the NEXT Church Leadership Team and has served on the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

2018 Candidates for Moderator/Co-Moderator
Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri (Presbytery of Tropical Florida) and
Rev. Cindy Kohlmann (Presbytery of Boston)



Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Moderator of the Presbytery of Tropical Florida, will stand for co-moderator with Rev. Cindy Kohlmann, resource presbyter for the Presbytery of Boston and the Presbytery of Northern New England.

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, a native of Puerto Rico and an English as a Second Language teacher, is a ruling elder who has served on the Committee on Theological Education and as a translator from English to Spanish at numerous General Assemblies. Cintrón-Olivieri earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Puerto Rico and a master's in education from Turabo University.

She lives in Miami with her husband, José Manuel Capella-Pratts, pastor of First Spanish Presbyterian Church.

Cindy Kohlmann, a PC(USA) minister, has a master of divinity from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a bachelor's degree in theatre and religion from Whitworth University. She previously served as pastor of Clinton Presbyterian Church in Clinton, Massachusetts, and of New Jersey Presbyterian Church in Carlisle, Ohio.

Kohlmann is married to Eric Markman, also a PC(USA) minister, who is pastor of Hartford Street Presbyterian Church in Natick, Massachusetts.

2018 Candidates for Moderator/Co-Moderator Elder Chantal D. Atnip (Presbytery of Carlisle) and Rev. Ken Hockenberry (Chicago Presbytery)



Elder Chantal D. Atnip, Clerk of Session at Pine Street Presbyterian Church will stand for moderator with the Rev. Ken Hockenberry, interim pastor of Carter-Westminster United Presbyterian Church as vice-moderator.

Chantal Atnip was born in France while her father was in the Air Force. After moving back to the states as a child, she grew up attending First Presbyterian Church in Vero Beach. In college, Atnip became involved in a Methodist campus group. After college, she and her husband, Robert G. Atnip, a vascular surgeon, belonged to Independent Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

After attending both Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in their college and young adult years, the Atnips are members at Pine Street Presbyterian where Chantal has served on the board of trustees, taught Sunday school, sung in the choir, volunteered at the church's soup kitchen, and helped manage a major capital campaign. She has also served as treasurer of the Synod of the Trinity since 2005.

Ken Hockenberry is a New Jersey native who earned an MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary and did doctoral work at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Before moving to Illinois, Hockenberry served as pastor and co-pastor of Beulah Presbyterian Church in Louisville from 1994 to 2015 (with his wife Judy, a PC(USA) minister now serving a congregation in Chicago), as part time stated clerk of Mid Kentucky Presbytery, and as interim field education director for Louisville Seminary. The Hockenberrys have three young adult children.



223rd General Assembly (2018) Committee Leadership Roster

	Committee	Moderator	Vice-Moderator	Committee Assistant	Parliamentarian	Resource Coordinator	Transcriptionist/Recorder
2	Bills and Overtures	Cheni Khonje	Ryan Landino	Bridgett Green			Julia Henderson
3	GA Procedures	Diana Wright	Madeline Alvarez Soto	Kevin Porter	Bronwen Boswell	Cora Brown	Matthew Schramm
4	The Way Forward	Cynthia Jarvis	Veronica Goines	Steve Yamaguchi	Paul Hooker	Charles Wiley	Madeline Hart-Anderson
5	Mid Councils	Moon Lee	Bear Ride	Carol McDonald	Maureen Wright	Tricia Dykers-Koenig	Diane Minter
6	Church Polity and Ordered Ministry	Ruth McCollum Huff	Melinda Hunt	Emily Anderson	Therese Howell	Flor Velez-Diaz	David Staniunas
7	Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	Susan Etherton	Scott Prouty	Mary Gene Boteler	Barbara Bundick	Robina Winbush	Chris Lieberman
8	Environmental Issues	Michael Kirby	Wilma Quinonez-Cubero	Rick Nutt	Carson Rhyne	Lydia Kim	Catherine Reuning
9	Peacemaking, Immigration and International Issues	Luci Duckson-Bramble	Amir Tawadrous	Theresa Cho	Andy James	Teresa Waggoner	Dayna Oliver
10	Mission Coordination	Walter Rockenstein II	Sunny Kang	James Tse	Diane Curtis	Toni Carver-Smith	Alejandra Sherman
11	Social Justice Issues	Bill Wildhack	Julie Hodges	Jodi Craiglow	Terry Epling	Jimmie Hawkins	Tonia Trice
12	Middle East Issues	Charon Barconey	Steve Shively	Rebecca Kirkpatrick	Sandra Hedrick	Carl Horton	Louisa Gallup
13	BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation	Vince Patton	Kathryn Barlow Westmoreland	Anna Claire Huntley	Jim Speedy	Andy Browne	Raymond Bonwell
14	Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions	Anne Apple	Miriam Foltz	Lynn Hargrove	Rebecca Blair	Barry Ensign-George	Cheri Harper



223rd General Assembly (2018) Committee Locations

	Committee	Room
2	Bills and Overtures	132
3	GA Procedures	263
4	The Way Forward	260
5	Mid Councils	275
6	Church Polity and Ordered Ministry	276
7	Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	274
8	Environmental Issues	220
9	Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues	231
10	Mission Coordination	224
11	Social Justice Issues	221
12	Middle East Issues	222
13	BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation	241
14	Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions	223



Summary of Items Important for Women 223rd General Assembly (2018)

	Committee	Items
6	Church Polity & Ordered Ministry <i>Consider matters related to: amendments to Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (chapters 1 and 3), Form of Government Chapters I-VI with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; amendments to the Rules of Discipline with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; Advisory Committee on Litigation; Advisory Committee on the Constitution.</i>	6-04; 6-07; 6-09; 6-13; 6-14; 6-15; 6-17
8	Environmental Issues <i>Consider matters related to: the church's response to issues and matters related to carbon fuels, food sovereignty and the environment</i>	8-01; 8-03; 8-04; 8-05
10	Mission Coordination <i>Consider matters related to: Mission programs authorized by General Assembly; PC(USA) vision and mission goals; Organization for Mission and General Assembly Mission Council Manual of Operations; mission budget; audits; churchwide compensation; initiatives on church growth and the 1001 Worshipping Communities program.</i>	10-03; 10-06; 10-b
11	Social Justice Issues <i>Consider matters related to: Concerns of the 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 ACSWP</i>	11-05; 11-07; 11-09; 11-11, 11-12; 11-13; 11-14
14	Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions <i>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</i>	14-03

[06-04] **On Amending D-2.0203b Regarding the Definition of “Offense”—From the Presbytery of North Alabama.**

Recommendation

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 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.

Concurrence

Albany

Boise

Grand Canyon

Huntingdon

de Cristo

- [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.**

Recommendation

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."

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 process², 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 meet³. 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 Preamble⁴. 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-10.0203c⁵:

- 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,⁶ accountable when they are accused of misconduct⁷. (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 does⁸.)

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^{9,10}. 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 website¹¹, 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 truthful¹².
 - 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.
- 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."¹³

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 liability¹⁴, 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).
11. Retrieved as of October 16, 2017.
12. In 2001–2002, an Independent Committee of Inquiry appointed by the General Assembly Council of the PC(USA) investigated the actions of missionaries working under the aegis of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission who were accused of molesting children between 1945 and 1978. The administrative commission cited in footnote 2 above summarized part of the Independent Committee of Inquiry's (ICI's) Final Report (<https://childrenofsim.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/ici-report.pdf>) on page A-39 of its own report:

"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>).

Concurrence

Albany

Denver

Grand Canyon

Missouri River Valley

Wabash Valley

de Cristo

Recommendation

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:

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."

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 Disciple, D-12.0200.

Concurrence

Albany

Grand Canyon

Newton

**North Alabama
Tropical Florida
Wabash Valley
de Cristo**

[06-14] **On Amending G-2.0804, “Terms of Call,” to Include Paid Family Leave—from the Presbytery of Boston.**

Recommendation

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
... 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

1. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/5121> also see Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 740, electronic version.
2. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000035> also see Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292, electronic version.
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 and Global Health: The Case of Maternal Leave," *Public Health Reports* 126 (Suppl 3) (2011): 127–134.
5. Christopher J. Ruhm, "Parental Leave and Child Health," *Journal of Health Economics* 19, no. 6 (November 2000): 931–960.
6. Sakiko Tanaka, "Parental Leave and Child Health Across OECD Countries," *The Economic Journal* 115, no. 501 (February 2005): F7–F28.
7. Mauricio Avendano, Lisa F. Berkman, Agar, Brugiavini, and Giacomo Pasini, "The long-run effect of maternity leave benefits on mental health: Evidence from European countries," *Social Science & Medicine* 132 (May 2015): 45–53; Pedro Carneiro, Katrine Løken, and Kjell Salvanes, "A Flying Start? Maternity Leave Benefits and Long Run Outcomes of Children," *IZA Discussion Paper No. 5793*.
8. <http://pres-outlook.org/2017/09/pastoral-pipeline-will-enough-ministers-serve-presbyterian-church/>

9. Arnalds, A., Eydal, G., and Gíslason, I. "Equal rights to paid parental leave and caring fathers—the case of Iceland," *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration* 9, no. 2 (2013): 323–344.

10. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/23/access-to-paid-family-leave-varies-widely-across-employers-industries/>

Concurrence

Albany

Denver

Hudson River

de Cristo

[06-15] **On Amending G-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave—From the Presbytery of Boston.**

Recommendation

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

1. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/5121> also see Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 740, electronic version.

2. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000035> also see Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 292, electronic version.

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 and Global Health: The Case of Maternal Leave," *Public Health Reports* 126 (Suppl 3) (2011): 127–134.

5. Christopher J. Ruhm, "Parental Leave and Child Health," *Journal of Health Economics* 19, no. 6 (November 2000): 931–960.

6. Sakiko Tanaka, "Parental Leave and Child Health Across OECD Countries," *The Economic Journal* 115, no. 501 (February 2005): F7–F28.

7. Mauricio Avendano, Lisa F. Berkman, Agar, Brugiavini, and Giacomo Pasini, "The long-run effect of maternity leave benefits on mental health: Evidence from European countries," *Social Science & Medicine* 132 (May 2015): 45–53; Pedro Carneiro, Katrine Løken, and Kjell Salvanes, "A Flying Start? Maternity Leave Benefits and Long Run Outcomes of Children," IZA Discussion Paper No. 5793.
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10. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/23/access-to-paid-family-leave-varies-widely-across-employers-industries/>

Concurrence

Albany

Denver

Hudson River

de Cristo

[06-17]	On Establishing minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA)
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Recommendation

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 Associated Christian Educators

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 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), only 254 children under age 1 (by birth or adoption) were added to the BOP benefits plan in a five-year period between 2012–2016, so it appears that roughly only fifty people per year in our denomination would need to utilize this benefit to care for a new child.

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,

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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 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

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, 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

1. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/5121>.
2. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000035>.
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 and Global Health: The Case of Maternal Leave," *Public Health Reports* 126 (Suppl. 3) (2011): 127–134.
5. Christopher J. Ruhm, "Parental Leave and Child Health," *Journal of Health Economics* 19, no. 6 (November 2000): 931–960.
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7. Mauricio Avendano, Lisa F. Berkman, Agar, Brugiavini, and Giacomo Pasini, "The long-run effect of maternity leave benefits on mental health: Evidence from European countries," *Social Science & Medicine* 132 (May 2015): 45–53; Pedro Carneiro, Katrine Løken, and Kjell Salvanes, "A Flying Start? Maternity Leave Benefits and Long Run Outcomes of Children," IZA Discussion Paper No. 5793.
8. <http://pres-outlook.org/2017/09/pastoral-pipeline-will-enough-ministers-serve-presbyterian-church/>.
9. Arnalds, A., Eydal, G., and Gíslason, I. "Equal rights to paid parental leave and caring fathers—the case of Iceland," *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration* 9, no. 2 (2013): 323–344.
10. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/23/access-to-paid-family-leave-varies-widely-across-employers-industries/>.

Concurrence de Cristo

- [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.

Recommendation

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.

Ovt 006

연금국과

미국장로교 재단에게 화석 연료가 아닌 신 재생 에너지에 초점을 둔 주식에 적극적으로 투자하라는 안건
—Hudson River 노회로부터.

허드슨 강 노회는 다음과 같이 제223차 총회(2018)에 헌의합니다:

1. 연금국 및 미국장로교 재단은 참가자들을 위한 비 화석 선택을 만들고, 화석 연료 산업에 종사하는 기업과의 확대된 참여를 위한 투자위원회를 통하여 선교 책임을 권한다—
이는 기후 변화의 파괴적이고 긴급한 현실에 대한 신실한 반응의 시작을 구현하는 행동을 말한다.
2. 기후 위기에 가장 크게 기여한 화석 연료 회사에 투자를 계속함은 미국장로교회가 기후 변화에 의해 불균형적으로 영향을 받는 하나님의 창조물과 "가장 작은 것"에 해를 끼침의 공범임을 인지한다.
3. 연금국과 미국장로교 재단이 화석 연료 산업으로부터 벗어나도록 지시한다.
4. 연금국과 미국장로교 재단이 재생 가능 및/또는 에너지 효율성에 주안점을 두고 있는 회사의 증권을 적극적으로 찾고 투자하도록 지시한다.
5. 연금국과 미국장로교 재단에게 권고문 3번과 4번에 대한 진전 상황을 제224차 총회 (2020)에 보고하도록 지시한다.

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 2014, the Presbytery of Boston sent the overture “On Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies” with eleven presbyteries concurring (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 1013ff, Item 15-01).
- 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.^[1] 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 200^[2] 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

[1] <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/moderators-letter/>

[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

Blackhawk

Boston

Cascades

Charlotte

Chicago

Denver

Des Moines

Geneva

Giddings-Lovejoy

Heartland

Long Island

Mid-Kentucky

Missouri River Valley

National Capital

New Brunswick

New Castle

Newton

Northern New York

Northwest Coast

Pacific

Palisades

Pittsburgh

Redwoods

Sacramento

Salem (with Additional Rationale)

Concurrence to Ovt 006 from the Presbytery of Salem (with Additional Rationale):

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.¹ 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 drought² 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.³ 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,⁴
- Begin drastically reducing GHG emissions no later than 2020,⁵ and
- Shift to a renewable energy economy, mostly by 2050, and completely phase out fossil fuels by 2100.⁶

While the PC(USA) has affirmed lifestyle changes and public policies directed toward achieving such reductions in GHG emissions,⁷ 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 level⁸ and for the United States⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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.”¹² 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

1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group (WG) II. 2014. Summary for Policymakers. In *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability: Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC* [Field et al., (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. Online at: http://ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/ar5_wg2_spm_en.pdf, pp. 6–8, 12–21.

2. NASA Earth Observatory. 2016. Drought and Fire in the Southeast. <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=89103>, 11/Nov/2016.

3. 218th General Assembly (2008) of the PC(USA). "The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming." Online at: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf, p. 3. This policy states: "The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports comprehensive, mandatory, and aggressive emission reductions that aim to limit the increase in Earth's temperature to 2 degrees Celsius or less from pre-industrial levels."
4. Scientists estimate that in order to avoid triggering "slow feedbacks" in the climate system that would lead to more than 2°C of warming, fossil fuel emissions must not exceed ~ 130 GtC (~470 GtCO₂) from 2013–2050. See: Hansen, J., M. Kharecha, M. Sato, V. Masson-Delmotte, F. Ackerman et al. 2013. Assessing "Dangerous Climate Change": Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations and Nature. *PLoS ONE* 8(12): e81648. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0081648. Meanwhile, known fossil fuel reserves in 2013 were ~780 GtC (~2860 GtCO₂), six times the 'carbon budget.' See: Leaton, J., N. Ranger, B. Ward, L. Sussams, and M. Brown. 2013. Unburnable Carbon 2013: Wasted capital and stranded assets. Carbon Tracker and the Grantham Research Institute, LSE. Online at: <http://carbontracker.live.kln.it/Unburnable-Carbon-2-Web-Version.pdf>.
5. IPCC WG I. 2013. Summary for Policymakers. In *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC* [Stocker et al. (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, New York, N.Y., U.S.A. Online at: http://ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WGIAR5_SPM_brochure_en.pdf, p. 21.
6. IPCC WG III. 2014. Summary for Policymakers. In *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change: Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC* [Edenhofer et al. (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. Online at: http://ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg3/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers.pdf, pp. 10–12.
7. See policy cited in Note 2, pp. 1–4.
8. Jacobsen, M.Z. and M.A. Delucchi. A Path to Sustainable Energy by 2030. *Scientific American*, November 2009: 58–65. Online at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles//sad1109Jaco5p.indd.pdf>.
9. Jacobsen, M.Z. et al. 2014. 100% Wind, Water, Sunlight (WWS) All-Sector Energy Plans for the 50 United States. Online at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles//USStatesWWS.pdf>.
10. 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>.
11. On the potential of renewable energy to create good, safe jobs, including for former workers in the fossil fuel industry, see: Bread for the World Institute. 2010. Work in a Sustainable Economy. In *A Just and Sustainable Recovery: Hunger Report 2010*. Available online at: <http://files.bread.org/institute/hr10/2010-hunger-report.pdf>. pp. 20 & 33–46.
- Valentine, K. 2015. The Solar Industry Created More Jobs In 2014 Than Oil and Gas Extraction. Online at: <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/01/15/3611522/solar-jobs-report-2014/>
12. 196th General Assembly of the PC(USA). 1984. The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria. Online at: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment_strategy.pdf.

San Francisco

San Jose

Seattle

Shenandoah

Southeastern Illinois

Southern New England

Susquehanna

Upper Ohio Valley

Wabash Valley

de Cristo

Recommendation

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.

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.

Concurrence

Abingdon

Cimarron

Detroit

Giddings-Lovejoy

Grace

Grand Canyon

Huntingdon

Mission

Missouri River Valley

New Covenant

San Fernando

Sun (S)

Upper Ohio Valley

Wabash Valley

de Cristo

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

Recommendation

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 <http://www.pcbiz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=1537&promoid=10>).

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

**Sun (S)
de Cristo**

Recommendation

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

1. Take action to respond to environmental racism in all its forms.
2. Listen to the perspectives and voices of people most impacted by environmental racism.
3. 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 minimalized, 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 from the U.S. helping the island, reported that 62 percent of the applications submitted to FEMA have been denied.³ 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 2016.⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

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.
2. https://www.democracynow.org/2017/9/7/invisible_houston_full_interview_with_dr.
3. <https://notiuno.com/reportan-que-miles-se-quedan-sin-ayuda.../>.
4. <http://www.latinorebels.com/2018/02/11/suicides-in-puerto-rico-increased-55-last-four-months-of-2017-when-compared-to-same-time-period-in-2016/>.
5. <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/files/gubernatorial-ports-briefing-coalition-healthy-ports-nynj-june2017pdf-0>.
6. <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>.

Concurrence

Boston

Hudson River

de Cristo

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

Recommendation

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+ 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+;**
 - c. Reviewing the history of PC(USA) policies and actions impacting LGBTQ+ people directly, and ultimately the entire denomination; and**
 - d. Reviewing the scope of the history of ACWC’s advocacy work on behalf of LGBTQ+ 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.**

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

1. 219th General Assembly (2010), "On Amending G-6.0106b," <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/2309>>.
2. 221st General Assembly (2014), "On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies," <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/4599>>.
3. 221st General Assembly (2014), "On Amending W-4.9000, Marriage," <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/4593>>.

[10-B] **Women of Faith Award Recipients.**

Recommendation

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) recognize the following 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 Rarumangkay, 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).

Recommendation

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

1. 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.
2. 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:

2016 Referral: Item 11-24. Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentrism, Recommendation 2. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to Work with the Office of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Determine More Appropriate Terminology Than “Racial Ethnic” within Official Documents, Parlance, and Programs of the PC(USA) (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 46, 57, 299–302 of the print copy, 787–801 of the electronic copy).

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.

[11-07] A Resolution to Respond to Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Recommendation

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*”¹ published by the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality with the intention of intersecting 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 Group² to supplement costs of meeting and necessary resourcing.

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.”³

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.”⁴

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.⁵ 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.⁶ 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.⁷

Endnotes

1. Rebecca Epstein, Jamilia J. Blake, and Thalia González, *Girlhood Interrupted: The Eraser of Black Girls' Childhood* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2012) <<http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/centers-institutes/poverty-inequality/upload/girlhood-interrupted.pdf>> (15 February 2018).
2. Women of Color Consultation Report, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God, approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), 10. <<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/wocctaskforcereport02-22-081.pdf>>; A Resolution to Recommit to Celebrating the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God, Item 10-20 from the 220th General Assembly (2012) <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3933>> Recommendation 3.
3. Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community Churchwide Antiracism Policy: <https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/>.
4. Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/wocctaskforcereport02-22-081.pdf>; Decade extended by the 220th General Assembly (2012): A Resolution to Recommit to Celebrating the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God, <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3933>>.
5. Every Black Girl, Inc., <<http://everyblackgirlinc.com/>>.
6. African American Policy Forum, <<http://www.aapf.org/sayhername/>>.
7. Rebecca Epstein, Jamilia J. Blake, and Thalia González, *Girlhood Interrupted: The Eraser of Black Girls' Childhood* <<http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/centers-institutes/poverty-inequality/upload/girlhood-interrupted.pdf>> (15 February 2018).

[11-09] A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

Recommendation

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 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 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;
 - congregations and presbyteries.
 - b. Theological resources for healing the faith of primary and secondary victims 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) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to form a five-member task force composed of victims and advocates for victims 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."^[1] 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 impugn 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.^[2]

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... [G]ender 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.^[3]

The #MeToo/#TimesUp movements have shaken our social institutions with their revelations. With the exception of a response from our PC(USA) Co-Moderators,^[4] 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.^[5] 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.^[6]

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 meant 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^[2]

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.

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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, xix. <<https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA14-4816/SMA14-4816.pdf>> (15 February 2018).
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[11-11] “Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era.”

Recommendation

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. 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-bodied-ness, 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. **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. 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.]

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 antiracism 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.

(Source: See “One Body, Many Members: Living faith and life cross culturally,” Uniting Church in Australia, <https://assembly.uca.org.au/obmm>).

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.revnibstractoupe.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 Group: A group of people that share certain characteristics such as mannerisms, beliefs (religious and other), language, values, and usually a common history, real or fictitious. See Ethnic Group.

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))

Recommendation

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 LGBTQ+ 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:

- More Light Presbyterians’ transgender inclusion resource page: <https://mlp.org/trans-inclusion> and teach-in video series on [Gender Justice and Trans Inclusion](#).
- 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>.

Concurrence

Covenant (S)

**Mission
de Cristo**

[11-13] **On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church**

Recommendation

On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church

The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve the following resolution:

- I. 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 LGBTQ+ people for ministry and celebrates their service in the church and in the world.**
- 2. 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.**
- 3. The assembly laments the ways that the policies and actions of the PC(USA) have caused gifted, faithful, LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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.

Concurrence

Covenant (S)

Mission

de Cristo

[11-14] **On Praying for a Movement of the Spirit to Engage Presbyterian Congregations in nation-Wide Action to Prevent Gun Violence**

Recommendation

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 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. Command:

- 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.

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.).

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.

Concurrence

Eastminster

Hudson River

Riverside

Stockton

de Cristo

[14-03] **On Amending W-4.0202 Concerning Participation in the Lord's Supper by Baptized Children—
From the Presbytery of Grace.**

Recommendation

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."

Concurrence

Grand Canyon

Huntingdon

Newton

de Cristo



ACWC A&Cs/Reports
223rd General Assembly
June 16-23, 2018
St. Louis, MO

Item	Description	ACWC Recommending	Committee Recommendation	Plenary
03-09	Session Annual Statistical Report	Disapprove		
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	Approve		
04-02	A Resolution on Prioritizing Translation and Accessibility in PC(USA)-From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns	Approve		
04-03	Way Forward Commission Report	Approve with Amendment		
04-09	Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Manual of Operations	Approve with Amendment		
06-03	On Adding G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA)-From the Presbytery Central Nebraska	Approve		
06-04	On Amending D-2.0203b Regarding the Definition of "Offense"-From the Presbytery of North Alabama	Approve		
06-06	On Amending G-6.04e to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote to Amend the Constitution-From the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest	Disapprove		
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	Approve with Amendment and Comment		
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-From the Presbytery of Monmouth	Approve		
06-09	On Amending G-2.0509 Regarding the Renunciation of Jurisdiction-From the Presbytery of Central Florida	Approve		
06-10	On Adding a New Section G-2.1104, "Administrative Personnel Association"-From the Presbytery of New Castle	Approve		

Item	Description	ACWC Recommending	Committee Recommendation	Plenary
06-13	On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as a Part of the Benefits Package-From the Presbytery of Boston	Approve		
06-14	On Amending G-2.0804, "Terms of Call," to Include Paid Family Leave-from the Presbytery of Boston	Approve		
06-15	On Amending g-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave-From the Presbytery of Boston	Approve		
06-17	On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)	Approve		
07-02	Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 224 th General Assembly (2020)-From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations	Approve with Comment		
08-01	On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel	Disapprove		
08-02	On Adding to the GA Divestment List All Companies That Meet Specific Listed Criteria-From the Presbytery of East Tennessee	Disapprove		
08-08	Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report	Approve		
09-02	On Support and Prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan-From the Presbytery of Shenango	Approve		
09-05	A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen-From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns	Approve		
10-04	Presbyterian Mission Agency 2019-20 Mission Work Plan	Approve		
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.)	Approve		
10-09	Concerning Small Churches	Approve		
10-11	On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues-From the Presbytery of Mission	Approve		

Item	Description	ACWC Recommending	Committee Recommendation	Plenary
10-13	The Doctrine of Discovery	Approve		
11-02	On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions-From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta	Approve		
11-04	On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty-From the Presbytery of Boise	Approve		
11-08	A Report with Recommendations on Drug Policy: Putting Healing Before Punishment-From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy	Approve		
11-10	A Gospel from St. Louis: Lessons from Congregations Seeking Racial and Economic Justice-From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy	Approve		
11-11	“Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era.”	Approve		
11-12	On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities	Approve		
11-13	On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church	Approve		
11-14	On Praying for a Movement of the Spirit to Engage Presbyterian Congregations in Nation-Wide Action to Prevent Gun Violence	Approve		
11-15	A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination-From the Advisory Committee of Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)	Approve		
13-10	Living by the Gospel: A guide to structuring ministers' terms of call	Approve with Comment		

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL TO THE 223RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ITEM 03-09

Session Annual Statistical Report Update

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **disapprove** Item 03-09.

Rationale

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.¹

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 and Counsel, as well as any comments submitted directly by the GACOR.

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### **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.**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 04-01.

#### **Rationale**

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 recommends that the two advocacy committees, ACWC and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), also be included as consultants in the conversation.

~~~~~

ITEM 04-02

A Resolution Prioritizing Translation and Accessibility in the PC(USA)

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 04-02.

Rationale

¹ *Gender and Leadership In the PCUSA*, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>. Note: Gender data from the SASR was used throughout this report.

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.

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### **ITEM 04-03**

#### **The Way Forward Commission Report**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 04 -03 **with amendment**.

#### **Rationale**

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 PCUSA forward in a new direction. As a critical voice of accountability in the PCUSA, ACWC has significant insight into the ongoing dysfunction that exists in various corners of the denomination. We agree with WTF/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 PCUSA 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 in 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 PCUSA 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.

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ITEM 04-09 PMA MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 04-09 with the following amendment:

Endnotes:

~~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).~~

Rationale

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 06-03 On Adding G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA)**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 06-03.

#### **Rationale**

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, p.7-8)

As of May 2017, a polity course must be taken once every 3 years to maintain current certification. ([pcusa-apa.org](http://pcusa-apa.org))

According to information provided by APA their membership is 98.1% 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 insure that Certified Church Administrators will be compensated to insure they are receiving a living wage.

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ITEM 06-04

On Amending D-2.0203b Regarding the Definition of “Offense”—From the Presbytery of North Alabama

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 06-04.

Rationale

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.

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#### **ON ITEM 06-06**

#### **On Amending G-6.04e to Require Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote to Amend the Constitution – *From the Presbytery of Inland Northwest***

The ACWC advises that the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) **disapprove** Item 06-06.

### Rationale

The Presbytery of the Foothills brought this same (04-03) and multiple other overtures to GA222 (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 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 more 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 GA222 (2016) to disapprove the overtures named above, including 04-03;

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advised GA222 (2016) to disapprove the overtures named above, including 04-03;

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly advised GA222 (2016) to disapprove the overtures named above, including 04-03;

And, the General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully reminded the GA222 (2016) assembly 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, GA222 (2016) voted 505-35 to disapprove the overtures named above, including 04-03 regarding required two-thirds majority vote to amend the constitution.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns thereby advises that the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) **disapprove** Item 06-06.

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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

The ACWC advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-07 with amendment and comment:

- 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

~~*suites to the work proposed to be undertaken, and received concurrence from the next higher council.”*~~

Answer with Item 06-09.

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.”

Rationale

Two resolutions before the 223rd General Assembly (2018), 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) recommends approval of Item 06-09 for its greater clarity of language in amending Book of Order G-2.0509. Additionally, ACWC recommends approval of the changes to Book of Order D-10.0401d in #2 of 06-07. ACWC also calls attention to Item 06-19, which amends 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%, to be true).

In reviewing these and other related items of business brought before the Assembly, ACWC has found this time-consuming, piece-meal and confusing approach to Book of Order changes regarding sexual misconduct problematic. ACWC therefore strongly recommends 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 which 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 counter-attack,” 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 which 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 to go back to the original body of jurisdiction or is it possible to re-enter 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.

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#### **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**

The ACWC Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to **approve** Item 06-08

#### **Rationale**

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 PCUSA research services, women currently make up approximately 57% 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 PCUSA number just under 9,500. As the Presbyterian church 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.

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ITEM 06-09

On Amending G-2.0509 Regarding Renunciation of Jurisdiction

The ACWC advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to **approve** Item 06-09.

Rationale

Two resolutions before the 223rd General Assembly (2018), 06-07and 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) recommends approval of Item 06-09 for its greater clarity of language in amending Book of Order G-2.0509. Additionally, ACWC recommends approval of the changes to Book of Order D-10.0401d in #2 of 06-07. ACWC also calls attention to Item 06-19, which amends 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%, to be true).

In reviewing these and other related items of business brought before the Assembly, ACWC has found this time-consuming, piece-meal and confusing approach to Book of Order changes regarding sexual misconduct problematic. ACWC therefore strongly recommends 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 which 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 counter-attack,” 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 which 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 to go back to the original body of jurisdiction or is it possible to re-enter 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.

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#### **ITEM 06-10**

#### **On Amending G-2.1104, “Administrative Personnel Association”**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 06-10.

### **Rationale**

See ACWC's Advice and Counsel Rationale for Item 06-03.

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ITEM 06-13

On Instructing the Board of Pensions to Include Twelve Weeks of Parental Leave as Part of the Benefits Package

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 06-13.

Rationale

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 PCUSA. 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.

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### **ITEM 06-14**

#### **On Amending G-2.0804, "Terms of Call," to Include Paid Family Leave—from the Presbytery of Boston**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 06-14.

### **Rationale**

See rationale for Item 06-13.

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ITEM 06-15

On Amending G-3.0303 to Include BOP Participation and Paid Family Leave

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 06-15.

Rationale

See rationale for Item 06-13.

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### **ITEM 06-17**

#### **On Establishing Minimum Guidelines for Paid Parental Leave for All Staff Throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA)**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 06-17.

#### **Rationale**

See rationale for Item 06-13.

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ITEM 07-02

Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 224th General Assembly (2020)

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 07-02 with comment.

Rationale

ACWC recommends 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 PCUSA 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 had 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).ⁱ

Many of the PCUSA'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 PCUSA, 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.

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### **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.**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **disapprove** Item 08-01.

#### **Rationale**

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 recommends disapproval of this item and requests that the committee see ACWC's Advice and Counsel on Item 08-08.

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ITEM 08-02

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

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **disapprove** Item 08- 02.

Rationale

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 recommends disapproval of this item and requests that the committee see ACWC's Advice and Counsel on Item 08-08.

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**ITEM 08-08**

**Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 08-08.

**Rationale**

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 our seat on MRTI and recommends approval of MRTI's recommendations.

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ITEM 09-02

On Support and Prayer for the church and People of South Sudan – *From the Presbytery of Shenango.*

The ACWC Concerns advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 09-02.

Rationale

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."ⁱⁱ

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."ⁱⁱⁱ

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.

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**ITEM 09-05**

**A Resolution to Advocate for the Rights of Citizens of Yemen – *From ACREC***

The ACWC advises that the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 09-05.

### **Rationale**

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."<sup>iv v</sup>

**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."<sup>vi</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (adopted at the 2008 General Assembly 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."<sup>vii</sup>

Therefore, the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 09-05.

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### **ITEM 10-04**

#### **Presbyterian Mission Agency 2019-20 Mission Work Plan**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 10-04 with comment.

### **Rationale**

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 PCUSA 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.<sup>viii</sup>

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.

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ITEM 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.)

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 10-06.

Rationale

- 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).
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ITEM 10-09

Concerning Small Churches

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 10-09.

Rationale

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 which 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.

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## ITEM 10-11

### **On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues – *From the Presbytery of Mission.***

The ACWC advises that the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 10-11.

#### **Rationale**

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.”<sup>ix</sup>

#### **In a nutshell: Women's Mental Health: The Facts:**

- Depressive disorders account for close to 41.9% of the disability from neuropsychiatric disorders among women compared to 29.3% among men.
- Leading mental health problems of the older adults are depression, organic brain syndromes and dementias. A majority are women.
- An estimated 80% 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% to 50%.
- At least one in five women suffer rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.<sup>x</sup>

#### *References:*

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Mental Health Foundation: Mental health statistics - Men and women.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-men-and-women>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Women, trauma and PTSD. <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/women/women-trauma-and-ptsd.asp>

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](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/66539/WHO_MSD_MDP_00.1.pdf?sequence=1)



### ITEM 10-13

#### The Doctrine of Discovery

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 10-13.

#### Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) recommends approval of 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 US law regarding tribal lands, which has led to the oppression of Native Americans and the denial of their fundamental civil rights.

Historically, the US 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 life forms 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 US 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

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<sup>2</sup> See Jeanne Choy Tate, *Something Greater: Culture, Family, and Community as Living Story*, Wipf and Stock, 2013.

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 mind-sets. This overture represents one small step towards reforming our tradition and living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in new ways.

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ITEM - 11-02

On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions - *From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.*

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-02.

Rationale

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*:

- 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% of co-victims reported achieving closure as a result of capital punishment, while 20.1% 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.
- 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.'"^{xi}

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, "states, "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."^{xii}

And, published in *The National Institute of Health*, Lee, CB, Sansone, FA, Swanson, C, and Tatum, KM examined the relationships of incarcerated fathers with their children while in a maximum security prison. The abstract for their study reads in part: "Demographic, sentence, child-related, and program participation factors were investigated for their influence on father-child relationships. Multiple regression analyses indicated race and sentence contributed to the father's positive perceptions of contacts with their children. Most important, many, though serving lengthy sentences, valued and perceived a positive father-child relationship. Results are discussed in light of implications for future research and social policy."^{xiii} 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 11-04**

#### **On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty— From the Presbytery of Boise.**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-04.

#### **Rationale**

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.<sup>3</sup>

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ITEM - 11-08

³ 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>

A Report with Recommendations on Drug Policy: Putting Healing Before Punishment - From The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the PC(USA).

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item – 11-08.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has clearly articulated its well-researched policy paper with recommendations for the PC(USA) at all levels. The ACWC advocates for its approval and recommends a thorough reading by all Presbyterians.

In looking at the need for the approval of Item 11-08 and the adoption of its recommendations, the ACWC did so through the lens of women and families. That is, how have punitive approaches to drug use in our country adversely affected women and families through the decades? And conversely, how might a healing mode positively affect women and families in the decades yet to come?

The paper states that the punitive model has contributed, and continues to contribute to mass incarceration, and that the human cost of such is exasperated by “diminished employment opportunities, earning potential, and marriage possibilities” (p. 8).

In other words people convicted of a drug offense lose the opportunity to fully develop as human beings and become contributing members of society. When thought of in terms of how this affects women and families, consider two scenarios: (1) women who are convicted of a drug offense and, if when released, they then are faced with these realities themselves; or (2) the partner or husband of a woman is the one convicted who faces these realities if, and when, they are released, and /or they aren't released, whereby families are torn apart.

As further evidence, the *Review of Policy Research (RPR)* has published the work of Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, and Stephanie Covington, titled “Women Offenders and the Gendered Effects of Public Policy,” which states “...public policy has ignored the context of women’s lives and that women offenders have disproportionately suffered from the impact of ill-informed public policy. Building on the pathway theoretical perspective, we find that in addition to the gendered impact of the war on drugs, policy changes in welfare reform, housing, and other social policy arenas combine to create a disparate impact on drug abusing women and women of color. Key policy areas affecting the lives of women offenders and their children include welfare benefits, drug treatment, housing, education, employment, and reunification with children. We conclude that addressing the realities of women’s lives through gender-responsive policy and programs is fundamental to improved outcomes at all criminal justice phases. A blueprint for gender-responsive policy development is described through six guiding principles and their policy implications.”^{xiv} Consider then, how an approach to drug policies in our country that has at its core a healing model that comes out of a theology of grace and an understanding that we are all created in God’s Holy image, might positively affect all people, but most specifically to the rationale of the ACWC, women and families. As the paper articulates, the pathway towards such a model includes prevention, education, research, decriminalization, harm reduction, drug policies which are equitable with regard to race, income, and gender, and alternatives to incarceration (p. 1-6). Thus, the pathway towards wholeness has been researched, documented, and is provided. It is now ours to walk upon, carry forth, and bring to fruition. Certainly, the ACWC asks that you approve Item 11-08 as it applies to all people, but most specifically as it applies to women and families, the least among us time and time again.

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**ITEM 11-10**

**A Gospel from St. Louis: Lessons from Congregations Seeking Racial and Economic Justice**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-10.

**Rationale**

We commend ACSWAP on the detailed call to action. Since the formation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) 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+ and 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 more significant health disparities (including infant mortality and breast cancer) and are disproportionately affected by the overall economic conditions.<sup>4</sup>

ACWC recommends approval and requests that issues of gender are lifted up and recognized as an ongoing social justice issue.

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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.

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-11.

Rationale

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 (USA) 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 recommends approval of 11—11.

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#### **ITEM 11-12**

#### **On Affirming and Celebrating the Humanity and Dignity of People of All Gender Identities**

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-12.

#### **Rationale**

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 cis-gender 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 (USA) but within our communities.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.flourishstlouis.org/flourish-commits-to-zero-racial-disparities-in-infant-mortality/>

ACWC also recognizes that not only is education necessary, but also action supporting legislative and policy change, both in our nation and our denomination.

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ITEM 11-13

On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-13.

Rationale

With passage of this overture this GA 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 GA 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, Rev. 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)

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### **ITEM - 11-14**

#### **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 ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-14 **with comment**.

#### **Rationale**

Item 11-14 calls for GA223 (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 a piece titled “Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy,”<sup>xv</sup> 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. Youths 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 GA223 (2018), the ACWC refers Committee 11 to resources previously prepared by the PC(USA), including but not limited to:

- "Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit," published by Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, and accessible at: <http://presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/resources#.WueKuljwY2w>. This toolkit includes 70 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 over 160 links to educational resources and action ideas, including gun violence prevention national groups and local contacts in all 50 states.
- "Engaging in the holy work of gun violence prevention: Practical resources for congregations and their leaders for education and action," a webinar published by *Presbyterian Outlook*, March 22, 2018, and accessible at: <http://pres-outlook.org/2018/03/engaging-in-the-holy-work-of-gun-violence-prevention-practical-resources-for-congregations-and-their-leaders-for-education-and-action/>.
  - 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 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.

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ITEM 11-15

A Resolution on Religious Freedom without Discrimination

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 11-15.

Rationale

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.⁵

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### ITEM 13-10

#### ***Living By The Gospel: A Guide to Structuring Ministers' Terms of Call***

The ACWC advises that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) **approve** Item 13-10 **with comment.**

#### **Rationale**

ACWC is grateful to the Board of Pensions for explicitly naming the realities of gender disparity in this document:

Over the last 10 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.

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<sup>i</sup> *Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA)*, p. 4. (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>)

<sup>ii</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). ([http://www.un.org/events/res\\_1325e.pdf](http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf))

<sup>iii</sup> News Deeply: "Women of Peace;" <https://www.newsdeeply.com/womenandgirls/articles/2017/08/31/south-sudans-women-peacekeepers-tackle-the-problems-that-men-cant>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://womenswatch.unwomen.org/country/yemen>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/news/two-year-mark-yemens-conflict-takes-heavy-toll-women-and-girls>

<sup>vi</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), [http://www.un.org/events/res\\_1325e.pdf](http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/socialcreedposter.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> *Gender and Leadership in the PCUSA*, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>, 4.

<sup>ix</sup> Joel Young, M.D., *Psychology Today*: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/when-your-adult-child-breaks-your-heart/201504/women-and-mental-illness>

<sup>x</sup> World Health Organization: [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/)

<sup>xi</sup> 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>

<sup>xii</sup> 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](http://nofsw.org/wp-content/.../11/THE-IMPORTANCE-OF-FAMILY-VISITATION.docx)

<sup>xiii</sup> Lee, CB, Sansone, FA, Swanson, C, and Tatum, KM, "Incarcerated fathers and parenting: importance of the relationship with their children, *The National Institute of Health*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22239384>

<sup>xiv</sup> Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, Stephanie Covington, "Women Offenders and the Gendered Effects of Public Policy," *Review of Policy Research*, Published January 7, 2004. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1541-1338.2004.00056.x>.

<sup>xv</sup> "Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy," American Psychological Association, <http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/gun-violence-prevention.aspx>.

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<sup>5</sup> 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 & Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women, 2010. (pp. 7-10). Available free here: <http://store.pcusa.org/2752610004?sc=10&category=16403>

# Office of Gender and Racial Justice



223rd General Assembly (2018)

## *Women's Orientation Breakfast*

Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries in partnership with  
Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

Saturday, June 16, 2018 (7:00 AM)

Grand Marriott, St. Louis, MO



## The Redbook

