

Native American Coordinating Council Report

Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)

Recommendations from this Report (00-95)

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

- 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to extend the mandate of the Native American Coordinating Council, which was created by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) by 4 more years, until the 226th General Assembly (2024), providing financial support for meetings and providing staff from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) in coordinating churchwide actions on the Doctrine of Discovery.**
- 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to create webpages on the PC(USA) website with comprehensive educational resources, guidance, news and programming about work addressing the Doctrine of Discovery, as well as an interactive space for questions and responses.**
- 3. Designate 2020-2030 as “The Decade of Confession and Repentance,” in which the PC(USA) “turns around and walks in the other direction” from the Doctrine of Discovery.**
- 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to:**
 - a. Support the efforts of Indigenous Nations to gain local, state and federal recognition as sovereign nations.**
 - b. Encourage the return of Indigenous lands and territories, including access to and protection of sacred areas through denominational property sales including: research of the land’s acquisition from Indigenous nations and consideration of how PC(USA) properties can be returned to Indigenous tribes and return federal, state and local land management to tribal authorities (i.e. Bear’s Ears National Park).**
 - c. Encourage mid-councils to disburse a portion of the proceeds to Native American ministries when buildings or property are sold, symbolic of good stewardship.**
 - d. Continue to support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, supporting Indigenous peoples and nations in exercising their right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development, in coordination with the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations in New York.**
 - e. Support Indigenous Nation’s full expression of their inherent legal sovereignty in civil and criminal spheres, including but not limited to Violence Against Women Act, Indian Child Welfare Act, state and federal actions aimed at abrogating or diminishing Indigenous sovereignty, legislative efforts to support their inherent sovereignty, local, state and federal actions that impact Indigenous peoples protection and control over their environment and sacred places.**
 - f. Support the continuation and revitalization of Indigenous epistemologies and ceremonial ways; cease promotion of proselytizing efforts that denigrate and/or seek to replace Indigenous epistemologies; encourage and support Indigenous peoples in maintaining their Indigenous ceremonies and epistemologies and reconsider theological positions that provoke and demonize Indigenous epistemologies.**
 - g. Invest in the revitalization of Indigenous languages by committing resources to support tribal efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages as they see fit.**
 - h. advocate for the repatriation of Indigenous patrimony and ancestral remains by undertaking a rigorous program to: repatriate sensitive artifacts housed in Presbyterian-run or affiliated institutions;**

appeal to private collectors not under the jurisdiction of The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to repatriate sensitive and ceremonial pieces advocating the return of Indigenous works housed in local, state and national archives and institutions.

- 5. Encourage the congregations, mid councils and other groups in the church to develop partnerships with organizations, universities (including PC(USA) seminaries), and Indigenous leaders, addressing key issues important to Indigenous peoples and nations, including:**
 - **Effects of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous peoples and communities relating to boarding schools and other assimilationist programs with a particular emphasis on children;**
 - **The epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW);**
 - **Indigenous food cultivation, preparation and preservation;**
 - **Indigenous responses to environmental crises and environmental racism;**
 - **Creation of Native American centers, programs and resources outside of reservations, particularly urban centers (Initiatives like Princeton Seminary has taken for students descended of slaves or from underrepresented groups).**
- 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop theology and worship resources raising awareness on how church and society has benefited at the expense of Native American peoples in light of the Doctrine of Discovery, including insight into how that privilege continues informing the denomination. Include current research on intergenerational trauma, toxic stress, and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs), as they apply to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.**
- 7. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create Christian education curriculum, study guides, and audio video resources for congregations, mid councils, and committees, Unmasking the idolatries and violence that emerged from colonial conquest as shaped by the Doctrine of Discovery and to reform structures that grew out of that worldview.**
- 8. Direct the Board of Pensions to develop strategies for pastoral ministry and social advocacy which increase resilience, bringing healing, and changing systems that prolong oppression.**

[Below is text which was redone by the Coordinating Council after they were notified that this Recommendation wording was not something the Board of Pensions is involved with – rather, that this was the work of presbyteries. The text was too late to change #8 prior to the PMAB meeting in February 2020. This was read by Anthony Trujillo to the General Assembly, however.]

“In collaboration with Native congregations and the Native American Consulting Committee, direct the PMA and presbyteries to develop models for providing compensation and benefits to Native American Teaching Elders and Commissioned pastors that meet the basic standards of care for PCUSA ministers. Concurrently, and working with the Office of Native American Intercultural Congregational Support, direct the PMA to develop a comprehensive strategy for attracting educating, compensating and retaining Native Teaching Elders and Commissioned Pastors.”

Rationale

These recommendations are in responses to the following referral: *2018 Referral: Item 10-12. Overture on Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery. Recommendation 5. Direct the PMA to Form a Coordinating Council for the Purpose of Encouraging, Monitoring, and Sharing the Ongoing Responses by the National Church, Mid Councils, and Congregations to the Call to Action Issued by the Stated Clerk, as Listed in Recommendation 4, Above. The Council Will Also Have the Purpose of Making Recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on How the National*

Church, Mid Councils, and Congregations Can Support Native Americans in Their Ongoing Efforts for Sovereignty and Fundamental Human Rights—From the Presbytery of Yukon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32–33, 293–95 of the print copy, pp, 838–41 of the electronic copy).

Background

This report is in response to 2018 Referral: Item 10-12: Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery, Recommendation 5, directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to form a Native American Coordinating Council for the purpose of encouraging, monitoring, and sharing the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk on the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. The action reads, “The council will also have the purpose of making recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on how the national church, mid councils, and congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.”

The Native American Coordinating Council members are: Fern Cloud (Sisseton-Wahpeton, Sioux) and Ron McKinney (Choctaw) of the Native American Consulting Committee; June L. Lorenzo (Laguna Pueblo/Diné) and Custer Lowe (Diné/Ute) at-large members; Elona Street Stewart (Delaware), Synod of Lakes & Prairies and Anthony Trujillo, seminarian, (Okhay Owingeh) mid council representatives; and Lucy Apataki (Yupik) representative from a congregation.

The task of the coordinating council is twofold:

- encouraging, monitoring, and sharing the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk, and
- making recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on how the national church, mid councils, and congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.

Issues that the council discussed included:

- Understanding all the subtleties in which the doctrine of discovery has impacted Native American congregations and all Native peoples. Policies and laws that do not on their face appear to be related to the doctrine, in fact, are part of its enduring legacy.
- Publicizing the work of the Native American Coordinating Council in print, through Native American congregations, the Native American Consulting Committee, and organizations of the church and through their publications.
- Resource development—Native American Day downloads, information about the Doctrine of Discovery, Native American boarding school history, and the Church and Native American issues.
- Helping the denomination understand the Presbyterian missions with Native American people, its part in the boarding school era, and work toward reconciliation.
- Discussions about a confession being added to the *Book of Confessions* that speaks of the denomination’s relationship with indigenous peoples in North America and around the world, especially as it relates to “mission.” It should offer confession and repentance for assisting attempts to eradicate Native American culture, languages, and lifeways from existence, for a “more civilized way.”
- Helping PC(USA) congregations become aware of, and accountable for its relationship with Indigenous people in the past, present, and future.

An additional action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is Item 10-13: Doctrine of Discovery Report, Recommendation 5 directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create a speaker’s bureau on indigenous issues and publicize the list to the church. The listing has twenty-three names of Native American leaders who are available to serve as speakers, resources, and leadership for the church in various geographical areas where they reside. Issues include but not limited to:

- Water Rights
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- Boarding School era—history, intergenerational trauma
- Doctrine of Discovery

- Native American ministry
- Health concerns
- Stereotypes, mascots and other mythology about Native Americans
- Environmental and land issues

The coordinating council was supported by Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) staff: the Reverend Irvin Porter, associate for Native American Intercultural Congregational Support, Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries; the Reverend Shanea Leonard, associate for Gender & Racial Justice, Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries; and the Reverend Denise Anderson, coordinator for Racial & Intercultural Justice, joint ministry office in Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries and Compassion, Peace and Justice. Given the great scope of the coordinating council's task, it may be necessary to consider additional Office of the General Assembly staff to complete our work to share "the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk."

Much of our work depends upon partnership between the office of the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. We emphasize the preparatory work that needs to be done in advance of such a "Call to Action," so there will be greater potential for that "Call" to land like seed in good soil. We have been in communication with Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, to initiate this action in 2020.

Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries staff have been instrumental in the planning and work for meetings of the council in Minneapolis during 2019 and their final meeting before the 224th General Assembly (2020) held at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville.

The General Assembly Task Force on Native American Ministries presented a report to the 212th General Assembly (2000) on the historic relationship between the Presbyterian church and Native American peoples. A key conclusion was that many of the, at that time, 110 Native American congregations in the PC(USA) had difficulty in forging relationships with mid councils, especially presbyteries, after Native American ministries was transferred from the Presbyterian national jurisdiction to presbyteries in the 1970s. These congregations, for most of their existence, had a direct relationship with the Board of National Missions. This ended abruptly with the transfer to local presbyteries. Except for Dakota Presbytery, it has not been a smooth transition for Native American congregations to coordinate with mid councils.

Moreover, Native American congregations historically had virtually no role in decisions regarding the structure of the Presbyterian church, and very limited roles in policies affecting Native American ministry. This means that an important part of the denomination's work will be examining structures and policies that ignored the world views of Native peoples.

A Call to Examine Presbyterian Theology/Theologies; Confession and Repentance

Theological understandings are central to any understanding of a denomination's repudiating of the doctrine of discovery. The coordinating council felt it important to offer some preliminary observations about theological understandings in this report. While the larger tasks have been assigned to the PMA and the rest of the church, we wish to highlight some guiding principles moving forward.

2018 Referral: Item 10-12: Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery, Recommendation 1 directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to

develop resources that aid members, congregations, mid councils, and the national church on the following areas of theological understanding:

1. Describe the Christian ethic presented by Scripture and the PC(USA) confessions for properly respecting people and communities from different cultures and worldviews,
2. Present framework for understanding how the PC(USA) strayed from those understandings such that it became complicit in a prevailing worldview of oppression and collusion through policies based on the doctrine of discovery, and
3. Describe the potential challenges and promises this theological exploration presents as we consider a multicultural church in a multicultural world that includes Indigenous peoples.

This is a monumental task for the PMA's Theology, Worship and Evangelism area, and not in the purview of this report. However, the coordinating council believes it can serve a very useful role as consultant in the process of developing these resources.

Item 10-12, Recommendation 4, directs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to issue a call for the engagement of mid councils and their congregational members to start a flow of ideas and information back and forth between mid councils and congregational members, directed at understanding how the Doctrine of Discovery has been present in our history and our theological positions, and continues to be present today.

The action suggests the following two-step process of confession and repentance, concepts that have always been central to Presbyterian theology:

1. Confession:

- a. An exploration of the local history of how the land was acquired from Indigenous residents, and
- b. The local history of how the community and the church formed, and how that community or church pursued relationships with the Indigenous people of the region.

2. Repentance:

- a. Development and implementation of a beginning strategy for entering into dialogue and action with relevant local communities, and
- b. Planned reflection over time on how on those efforts, to discern what God is revealing through these relationships, and what next steps are needed in this work.

Confession: In the Reformed Tradition, confessions of faith may result from a sense of urgent need to correct some distortion of the truth and claim of the gospel that threatens the integrity of the church's faith and life from within the church. Sometimes the urgency to confess comes from the church's conviction that it has a great new insight into the promises and demands of the gospel that is desperately needed by both church and world. The church writes confessions of faith when it faces a situation of life or a situation of death so urgent that it cannot remain silent but must speak, even at the cost of its own security, popularity, and success. All of these factors would describe the urgency for *confessing the sin* of embracing the Doctrine of Discovery and also developing a *confession of faith* that offers a different path forward.

1. Item 10-12, Recommendation 4: A call to action of this scope must be much more than a perfunctory statement; it must be made with great care and a tremendous appreciation for both the diagnostic power and immense gravity of such a statement. Such a call requires probing deep into the history, theology, and present life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
2. One of the primary actions a call must initiate is a call to intense self-examination. It must be clearly and emphatically stated here that, as in recovery programs, it is the church's responsibility to undertake this deep soul work for itself; the burden of healing the church should not be shifted to Indigenous peoples.
3. Item 10-12, Recommendation 1: A robust theological and methodological framework is necessary to guide the church. We all wait with great eagerness and interest the report from the PMA describing the resources it has developed in response to General Assembly action on Item 10-12, Recommendation 1, so that we can offer a coordinated and conscientious call and response.
4. The PC(USA) continues to work in partnership with other denominations and organizations allied in the cause of redressing the wrongs caused by the Doctrine of Discovery. Forging alliances and partnerships in this effort is important, as any call to action reflects that the PC(USA) is not alone in undertaking an assessment of this magnitude. A call to action should show that it has made a commitment to developing strong external allies and partners who can come alongside the church as it follows the path of repentance and recovery.
5. The PC(USA) also is undertaking a study on relationships within our own denomination and describing the "acts of repentance, reconciliation, and justice" needed to improve relationships between the PC(USA) councils above the congregation level and the Native American congregations and tribal nations within the PC(USA). In order for a call to action to be meaningful, there must be both a critical evaluation of relationships between the PC (USA) and Indigenous peoples and nations within the church. The long-term aim is to initiate

a process that lays the groundwork for reimagining and enacting healthy relationships with Indigenous peoples and nations.

Repentance: The Reformed motto, “the church reformed, always to be reformed in accord with the Word of God” commits the contemporary church to ask of itself whether we provide cheap grace, or “cut-rate forgiveness.” Jesus said “Repent” [Mt. 4:17]. He also gave indications of what repentance was. Matthew follows Jesus’ call for repentance with the Sermon on the Mount—a clear indication of the life of repentance that produces an outwardly different way of life. Repentance is the proper response to recognizing that one body/institution has sinned against another. *Metanoia*, the New Testament Greek word for repentance, is defined as “turning around and walking in a new direction.” Therefore, repentance must be understood as a journey. The renunciation of any wrong act is a very good first step of repentance, but cannot be considered as adequate. The PC(USA)’s repentance from the Doctrine of Discovery must not be written or verbal statements that are forgotten or filed away after being issued, but must be demonstrated through ongoing, intentional, and tangible acts.

1. All levels of the PC(USA) need to explore what next steps might be taken in the provinces of their work as a part of the repentance of the whole church. This will require recognizing some injustices within the church that need to be rectified, whether it is as personal as discouraging ordination to a Native seminarian who professes to adhere to Indigenous epistemologies or redirecting funds intended for Native ministries.

2. Repentance also calls us to listen to the voices of Indigenous peoples worldwide. The PC(USA) has a presence in a number of continents. Indigenous peoples in every continent have articulated their concerns before the United Nations for decades. Perhaps we need to heed the words of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in calling for redress. For both Indigenous peoples and States, there are compelling reasons to go beyond repudiation. It is essential to replace the colonial Doctrine of Discovery with contemporary international human rights standards and engage in just and collaborative processes of redress.¹

3. It is time to recognize that our baptismal vows call us to move beyond studying oppression and take action to dismantle oppression (see Mt. 25:37–40 and Jas. 2:14–18). Indeed, since the PC(USA) has admitted its complicity with the larger Western society in perpetrating the Doctrine of Discovery, it should be clear to us that acts of justice and wholeness are needed both within the church, and across the wider society. This will include joining with Indigenous peoples in their movements for justice, as well as clarifying our role as allies in this ongoing work.

4. Jesus made clear that healing is always integral to God’s salvation; healing ministries are an important part of the ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it is time to explore new approaches for healing ministry as a part of redressing the wrongs of the past. One of the most prominent legacies of colonial oppression is that of intergenerational trauma. This sociological awareness could help inspire new ministries of healing, in obedience to the biblical mandate to spread the Gospel in deed, as well as in word.

Related PC(USA) Policies and Actions Regarding Native Americans

The Native American Presbyterian community has worked within the denomination to advocate for the needs of Native peoples, as evidenced by the following documents:

1. *We May Be Brothers After All*, A Position Paper of the Presbyterian Indian Consulting Panel (1972)
2. Native American Ministry Churchwide Policy Statement, General Assembly (1979)
3. *Comprehensive Strategy for Ministry with Native Americans*, General Assembly (2000)
4. *Mission and Ministry with Native American Peoples: A Historical Survey of the Last Three Centuries*, 2000, General Assembly Task Force on Native American Ministries
5. 2002 Referral: Item 11:02, Report: *A Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans: 2002 Supplemental Recommendations of the General Assembly Special Task Force on Native American Ministries*, Recommendation 4.
6. Follow-Up Implementation Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Previous Reports deriving from this referral included:
 - a. A report on the Native American Churchwide Consultation—Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2005, and

- b. Report from the Office of Native American Congregational Enhancement focused on pertinent statistics regarding Native Americans from PC(USA) and 2000 Census—both presented to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

Related PCUSA Policies and Actions

Social Witness policies—The PC(USA) has approved a social witness policy to support “Land based religions.” While Indigenous peoples do not refer to their religions as land-based religions, this policy understands the intimate relationship with place for many Indigenous peoples in their beliefs and very survival. Thus, land repatriation is intimately connected to the repatriation and protection of sacred sites.

Churchwide Antiracism Policy—The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on behalf of the Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team, recommended revisions to the Churchwide Antiracism Policy at the 222nd General Assembly (2016), which included recommendations that could both support and complement the denomination’s work on the Doctrine of Discovery. Some of them include the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to challenge the church through a direct communication to do a personal self-examination of its participation in structures that support and maintain racism regardless of the good intentions of individual Presbyterians.
2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to make the revised policy and accompanying study guides available to congregations for study and discussion.
3. Direct the national church agencies to jointly formulate a communications plan to share antiracism resources and create an electronic campaign to send information on antiracism resources and trainings to mid councils, congregations, and Presbyterian-affiliated institutions.
4. Urge the Committee on Theological Education to encourage its affiliated seminaries to provide regular antiracism trainings for students, faculty, and staff, to integrate racially and culturally diverse voices in the curriculum, and to revisit hiring policies to ensure the faculty and staff are racially diverse.
5. Commend the various mission program areas that made antiracism a consistent part of their programming and encourage them to continue their efforts as a model to the church.

On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians was an action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The boarding school system, in which the denomination participated, was part of an assimilation agenda for Native Americans. Native languages, traditions, cultures, and religions were discouraged and even prohibited by these schools that took some children as young as four and five-years of age, boarding them up to the age of eighteen-years old. For the Presbyterian church’s participation in this harmful policy, the General Assembly in 2016 issued an apology.

PCUSA Structures/ Entities That Address Native American Issues

The Native American Coordinating Council also examined present PC(USA) structures that focus on Native American congregations and concerns as it is important to assess their respective roles in the work on the doctrine of discovery.

1. Office of Native American Intercultural Congregational Support: The job of the associate in this position, a thirty-hour a week position, is to develop leadership in Native American congregations, assist with Native American evangelism and church growth, and be a voice for Native American Presbyterians in the larger church. Given these responsibilities, among others, it may be unreasonable to expect that the associate would oversee a project of this scope while also providing the necessary support to Native congregations. The coordinating council is not a project management team with supervisory authority over PC(USA) staff; it is a volunteer body with a mandate to “encourage, monitor, and share” ongoing responses to the Stated Clerks’ call to action and to provide an evaluative/recommendation function.
2. Native American Consulting Committee (NACC): The Native American Consulting Committee (NACC) is one of the consulting bodies serving communities of color in the PC(USA). It was originally created with programming authority and so has a different history than other caucuses and councils serving communities of color. The by-laws of NACC provide that NACC is to do the following:
 - a. Provide an effective Native American leadership role in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the General Assembly level;

- b. Be primarily responsible for the implementation of the Native American Ministry Churchwide Policy Statement including additions of October 1991 for use by General Assembly Council [now the Presbyterian Mission Agency] and related bodies, synods, and presbyteries;
- c. Work with mid councils in the development and implementation of ministry efforts: and to address the issues and needs of concern within the broader Native American community, such as treaty rights, human and civil rights, the protection of land, water, and other natural resources, and the promotion of economic development.

While NACC is a key stakeholder in this work and should be involved in its development and implementation, NACC is not a project management body overseeing and implementing the work of the Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery.

Endnote

1. Note 1, supra, para 4. UNPFII, “Study on the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on Indigenous peoples, including mechanisms, processes and instruments of redress,” February 20, 2014 (E/C.19/2014/3).

Attachment

Other Comments

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-95—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-95.

REAC affirms “... directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency to extend the mandate of the Native American Coordinating Council ... for four more years until the 226th General Assembly, (2024).”

There remains a great need for the PC(USA) to take an adequate look at the Doctrine of Discovery because of the ongoing racial, genocidal, economic, environmental, and theological violence that it allows, perpetuates. and justifies in our society, in this nation, and in the world.

Various American Christian denominations as well as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples have been vocal about the Doctrine of Discovery being the basis for the violation of human rights of Indigenous peoples, seizure of their land, exercising conquest, colonization, exploitation, physical, cultural, and spiritual genocide with impunity.

The PC(USA) must not only learn its own part and participation in the letter and in the spirit of this particular Christian Doctrine, it must decide whether or not to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and whether or not to begin honest confession and repentance for its participation in this violence.

As the Doctrine of Discovery is known to have become a rationale not only for ecclesiastical practices and traditions, it is also, dangerously, the basis for American law that relates to Native Americans in the United States.

As our own PC(USA) seeks to faithfully follow Jesus of Nazareth—The Prince of Peace—honest self-reflection must include hearing from Native people, as attested in our own 1983 A Brief Statement of Faith: “... the Spirit gives us courage ... to hear the voices of peoples long silenced ...”

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-95. Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

This item has been recommended to be referred to [the 225th General Assembly \(2022\)](#). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

These recommendations from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are aimed to expand the response of the PC(USA) in its renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to include not only responses by congregations, but also responses from mid councils and the national church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) seeks to help the church understand the inequitable impact of its actions on marginalized communities and its responsibilities for repair. Maturity in community is coming to a clear-eyed understanding of the good, bad, and ugly of life together.

When inequities are faced, the church is freed to unmask idolatries and listen to voices long silenced. The impact of the ongoing sin of operating in the doctrine of discovery still is present among us. Conscientizing all bodies in the PC(USA) efforts to address these long-ignored harms and peoples would be helpful and healing.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen 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).