

Item 10-01. On Directing the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Develop a New Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Policy for the Church-From the Presbytery of New Castle.

Recommendation

[The assembly answered Item 10-01 by the action taken on Item 10-02. See p. [59](#).]

On Directing the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Develop a New Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Policy for the Church—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

The Presbytery of New Castle, recognizing that the HIV and AIDS pandemic is a critical matter of social justice, overtures the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic by directing the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in consultation with appropriate PC(USA) staff, networks, and church partners, to develop a comprehensive HIV and AIDS policy for the PC(USA), recommending compassionate action and giving prophetic witness regarding issues related to people living with HIV and AIDS in the U.S.A. and around the world, and report that policy to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

Rationale

For more than twenty years the Presbyterian General Assembly has spoken on issues regarding HIV and AIDS. Our resolutions, however, have not been matched with a denominational resolve to commit significant finances and programmatic resources for education, advocacy, prevention, treatment, and cure in the global struggle against HIV and AIDS.

Among our many resolutions and overtures in the twenty-six years of HIV and AIDS pandemic:

- We have confessed “That our own church’s response to AIDS has been tardy” ([Minutes , 1998, Part I, p. 362](#) , To Meet AIDS with Grace and Truth) and, noted the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) considers the AIDS/ HIV crisis to be of utmost importance and urgency.”
- We have called the church to love, to compassionate care, to witness for justice, for the promotion of prevention, to deplore bigotry and intolerance. (206th General Assembly (1994), [Minutes , 1994, Part I, p. 507](#))
- We have called the church to become advocates for persons living with HIV and AIDS ...” (210th General Assembly (1998), [Minutes, 1998, Part I, p. 690 -91](#)), and to become an advocate of God’s justice.

As we pass overtures, the HIV/ AIDS pandemic is unrelenting:

- 39.5 million people are living with HIV worldwide, 95 percent in low- or middle-income countries;
- 2.9 million people died of AIDS during 2006—nearly 8,000 every day;
- 4.3 million people were newly infected with HIV in 2006—almost 12,000 every day;
- worldwide, less than 20 percent of people at risk of HIV infection have access to basic prevention services;
- at least 25 million people have died of AIDS since the disease was recognized in 1981.

A total of \$10 billion is expected to be available for AIDS funding in 2007—just 55 percent of the \$18.1 billion that will be needed to provide comprehensive prevention, treatment, and care worldwide (all figures from UNAIDS report, December 2006).

And the face of AIDS is changing, especially in the U.S.A., where:

- In 2004, African Americans accounted for 43 percent of all AIDS cases reported during the year, even though they make up just 12 percent of the population.
- AIDS is the number one cause of death for African Americans aged 25 to 44, before heart disease, cancer, and homicide (figures from Balm In Gilead or Kaiser Foundation).

The devastating pandemic of HIV/ AIDS in the U.S.A. and around the world confronts the PC(USA) and the Church of Jesus Christ with an urgent challenge and a great opportunity to be both compassionate and prophetic as we live out our call to more fully realize the healing ministry of our Risen Lord. The PC(USA) needs a new comprehensive policy and programmatic emphasis.

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ACREC Advice and Counsel on ITEM 10-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC)

Item 10-01 directs the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to develop a new comprehensive HIV and AIDS policy for the church.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises that this item be approved.

Rationale

The rate of growth of HIV/ AIDS numbers in racial ethnic communities is higher than in society at large, which makes them more vulnerable and susceptible. A successful policy needs to address this difference.

Racial ethnic communities have specific cultural needs when it comes to HIV/ AIDS education and awareness.

Distinct strategies need to be developed for these communities.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Item 10-01 urges the 218th General Assembly (2008) to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic by directing the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in consultation with appropriate PC(USA) staff, networks, and church partners, to develop a comprehensive HIV and AIDS policy for the PC(USA), recommending compassionate action and giving prophetic witness regarding issues related to people living with HIV and AIDS in the U.S.A. and around the world, and report that policy to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) concurs with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)’s advice and counsel and advises that Item 10-01 be answered by the action taken on Item 10-02.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 10-01 from the Presbytery of New Castle calls on the 218th General Assembly (2008) to direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to develop a new comprehensive HIV and AIDS policy for the church.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 10-01 be answered by the action taken on Item 10-02.

Rationale

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) notes that the concerns cited in Item 10-01 are similar to the concerns raised in Item 10-02. In Item 10-02, however, ACSWP

notes that the rationale addresses the impact of HIV/ AIDS on both the African American and Hispanic/Latino populations. Therefore, ACSWP advises that Item 10-01 be answered by the action taken on Item 10-02.