Women’s Orientation Breakfast

Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women
In partnership with the
Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Saturday, June 14, 2014 7:00am
Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center

“Standing in Glory” by Rhonda Gray

The Redbook
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The Rev. Dr. Dr. Rhashell D. Hunter is the Director of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/PW in the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). 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 and also a commitment to building bridges in cross-cultural communities. Dr. Hunter was reared in Dallas, Texas, in cross-cultural Presbyterian congregations. She is the daughter of The Rev. Dr. Charles A. Hunter and Mrs. Annie Mary Alexander Hunter.

Sera Chung is the Associate for Gender and Racial Justice in the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She joined the Presbyterian Mission Agency last week, and her first assignment was traveling to Detroit to serve as staff support to the 221st General Assembly (2014). Sera received her Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary with a concentration in religion and culture. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree a. in English from Binghamton University. She speaks Korean and can read, speak and write in Spanish and Japanese. In 2012–2013, Sera served a year-long internship at the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations. She also was a Research Assistant to Professor Robert Wuthnow at Princeton, and assisted in conducting in-depth interviews and research for a national study of religious leaders. She was a student partner with the Office of Multicultural Relations, researching the revitalization of the Asian American Program at Princeton. She is an accomplished musician.

The Rev. Dr. Teresa Chávez Sauceda is a contract staff, pastor and educator—preaching, teaching and writing on issues related to racial justice, building beloved community and Latino/a theology in the United States. Teresa served on the staff of Racial Ethnic Ministries, and then Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries and Presbyterian Women, as Associate for Racial Justice and Advocacy from 2003 to 2008. Since returning to her home in California Teresa has continued to work on several projects, including staff support for the General Assembly Task Force on Creating a Climate for Change (which has a report to this Assembly); Building Beloved Community resources for anti-racism training, and consulting with Presbyterian Women’s anti-racism committee. She is currently working on a new resource Presbyterian Women on leadership, cultural proficiency and the Christian discipline of hospitality. Teresa is a member of San Francisco presbytery and Parish Associate at Community Presbyterian Church in Pittsburg, CA.

Ruling Elder, Jewel McRae has joined the staff of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/PW as the Associate for Women Leadership Development and Young Women’s Ministries. Jewel’s work will include relationship building with women across the church as well as providing support, programming and resources to women along with facilitating leadership development opportunities. She will engage in strategies for addressing issues facing all women in the church including, clergywomen, seminarians, elders and other women leaders along with working in collaboration with mid-councils, congregations and other ministry offices. She will also support the Young Women’s Ministries field staff as they work to provide development opportunities and engage in ministry with 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 also 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.
The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

**Barbara Adams-Smelter:** Barbara is an independent business owner who served as Moderator for the Synod of the Trinity in 2013. She is a church organist who was ordained as a ruling elder in 1985 and as a deacon ten years later. She has served as clerk of session and on several Presbyterian committees. She joined ACWC in 2010, and serves as their liaison to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

**Kerri Allen:**
Rev. Kerri Allen is a PhD Student and hospital chaplain. Prior to responding to a call into ministry, Kerri had a first career as a political appointee at multiple levels of government, including serving as a Legislative Assistant in the United States Senate, with an expertise in healthcare policy. Now, as a student in theology and ethics at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Kerri uses her experiences to focus on disparities in the United States healthcare system. 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 15 nieces or nephews.

**Louise Davidson:**
Louise is an ordained elder and served as the Presbyterian Women (churchwide) vice moderator for Justice and Peace (2006-2009). As such, she served for three years on ACWC. She has served Presbyterian Women in her congregation, presbytery, synod and nationally in various positions. She worked to establish congregational and presbytery Justice and Peace committees and formerly served on the General Assembly's Peacemaking Advisory Committee.

**Mary McClintock Fulkerson:**
An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Mary McClintock Fulkerson is Professor of Theology at Duke University Divinity School. Her first book, Changing the Subject: Women’s Discourses and Feminist Theology, examined the liberating practices of non-feminist church women and feminist academics through the lens of poststructuralism and feminist literary criticism. Her recent book, Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church explores the practices of an interracial church (United Methodist) that includes people with disabilities. In contrast with theology's typical focus on beliefs, this project offers a theory of practices and place that foregrounds the affective bodily reactions and communications that shape all groups, particularly around perceptions of “otherness” related to race and dis-ability. Fulkerson’s book, The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology, co-edited with Sheila Briggs, is a collection of essays on feminist theology organized around the theme of globalization. Currently 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. Her most recent book is Theological Perspectives for Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: Public Intellectuals for the 21st Century, which she co-edited with Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Rosemary Carbine.

**Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty:** The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty is chair of the department of theology at Bellarmine University and professor of theology. The church's role in addressing issues of social and economic justice has long been Hinson-Hasty's concern. She is frequently called upon to preach and speak on faith and public life in a variety of settings. Recently, she served as a research consultant for the World Council of Churches' North American Regional Forum and Hearings on Poverty, Wealth, and Ecology. In addition to numerous articles and other publications, she is author of Beyond the Social Maze: Exploring the Theological Ethics of Vida Dutton Scudder (2006) and co-editor of Prayers for the New Social Awakening (2008) with Christian Iosso and To Do Justice: A Guide for Progressive Christians (2008) with Rebecca Todd Peters. One of Hinson-Hasty’s forthcoming publications is a book on Dorothy Day (forthcoming September 2014). Among other honors, she has distinguished herself as a Fulbright Scholar (Hungary 2010) and received the Wilson Wyatt Faculty Fellowship for excellence in teaching and scholarship (2010). She and her partner, Lee, are both alums of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

**Joann Haejong Lee:**
Joann was ordained as a teaching elder in November 2009. She was born in New York City to Korean immigrant parents and grew up in Houston, TX. She has a Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary.
The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

Joann Metcalfe Mudd: Joann Metcalfe Mudd is in her fourth year serving with ACWC, and is currently serving on Leadership Team. Some of her special interests involve advising churches putting together Youth Protection Policies and also advocating for gender justice in social policy issues. She is a 2012 graduate of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and is currently serving as Solo-Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Perrysburg, Ohio, where she resides with her husband Bill.

Jacob Parsons-Wells: Jacob began serving on ACWC in 2012. He is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist living in Louisville, KY. He has a Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy and a Master of Arts in Religion, both from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He received his undergraduate degree in Psychology from Marshall University in Huntington, WV. He currently works as the Treatment Supervisor for a non-profit agency that provides residential treatment for adolescent girls with a trauma history. When he's not working, he enjoys spending time with his partner, son, and the family beagle.

Courtney J. Hoekstra: Courtney is the Associate for Advocacy Committee Support, working with both ACWC and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC). She has an M.Div. and Th.M. from Louisville Seminary, and has a passion for advocating for social justice. She thoroughly enjoys working with the dedicated, justice-focused people on ACWC!

Jack Hodges and Belinda Rice also served on ACWC for most of the 2012-2014 cycle.
Rev. Kelly Allen

The Rev. Kelly Allen, pastor of University Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, has been endorsed by Mission Presbytery to stand for moderator of the upcoming 221st General Assembly, June 14-21 in Detroit.


Allen has served the 300-member University Presbyterian Church since 2009. She has also served churches in Missouri and in Buckinghamshire, England since her ordination in 1992. She is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and Columbia Theological Seminary. She also holds a degree from the University of Birmingham in England.

She holds degrees from Washington University in St. Louis, Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., and the University of Birmingham in England. She also served as adjunct faculty instructor at Eden Theological Seminary from 2003-2007. Allen and her spouse, John Rezentes, have two children.

In a statement on her web site, Allen wrote, “Through 22 years of pastoral ministry I have found profound joy in sharing leadership and ministry with congregations I have been privileged to serve. I want to share this experience far and wide. Though I am well aware of the polarization and declining membership within the denomination, I am not despondent about the future. I believe a strong witness to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit can give us a witness beyond our numbers.”

Allen listed three leadership commitments she deems necessary for a GA moderator: a commitment to spiritual practices, a desire to build community among strangers and a willingness to be bold and bodily witnesses to Gospel values.

“I believe when these are in balance, there is vibrant humanity at an individual level, and vibrant life at a congregational and denominational level,” Allen wrote. “These three emphases offer the invitation to think, not in terms of the polarities of social justice/evangelism, liberal/conservative, centralized/decentralized, but integrate the best of all of these perspectives, while looking at the fruit of our words and deeds in the world.”
The race is on for moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the announcement by Western North Carolina Presbytery that it has endorsed Heath K. Rada for the denomination’s top elected post.

The moderator of the 2014 General Assembly will be elected on June 14, 2014 on the first day of the Assembly in Detroit. The person elected will moderate the Assembly and then serve as the public face and voice for the PC(USA) for the ensuing two years.

Rada, a native of Richmond, Va., retired to Montreat, N.C., in Western North Carolina Presbytery after retiring as CEO of the Greater Richmond Chapter of the American Red Cross where he served as coordinator for the work of that organization in Virginia and the District of Columbia. He also held the positions of interim CEO of Red Cross Chapters in San Diego, Minneapolis-St.Paul, and Ft.Worth.

Prior to his work with the American Red Cross, Rada served as president of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (PSCE), which is now part of Union Presbyterian Seminary, for 12 years. As such, he was the first layperson to head on of the PC(USA)’s theological schools.

Rada has served at all levels of the PC(USA). He currently serves on the boards of the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the General Assembly, the Montreat Conference Center, and the Presbyterian Homes of North Carolina. He has also been active in community organizations everywhere he has lived and worked.

After graduating from Virginia Commonwealth University and PSCE, Rada embarked on a first career as an educator. He became the first Caucasian public school teacher in Henrico County, Va. to join the faculty of an all African-American school. Since then, he has been a faculty member of several colleges and universities here in the United States as well as visiting scholar on five continents.

He was named North Carolina’s first Community Educator of the Year, recipient of the Margaret Bowen Award in Christian Education, and Humanitarian of the Year by the Richmond chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

“This is a serious commitment,” Rada said of his decision to accept Western North Carolina’s endorsement for moderator. “No one can do it unless they are confident it is something they were meant to do, God willing. I have prayed about it, talked to people I trust, to people who know me, my history and abilities, and I have opened my eyes and ears and heart to God. I am humbled to be asked, even more humbled to say yes. And this I can promise: I will give it my all, should I be chosen.”

At the same time, he added, “Being moderator is not a position you should ‘run for’ or ‘campaign for’ in the aggressive political sense. God is at work in the process. All I can do is to offer myself up to God’s will. I see it as a blessing to be considered by my peers as a candidate for the job.”

Rada is married to his wife of 46 years, Peggy. They have two children and two grandchildren and are members of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Asheville, N.C.
Rev. John Wilkinson

Genesee Valley Presbytery in upstate New York has endorsed the Rev. John Wilkinson, pastor of Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, for moderator of next summer’s 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Wilkinson joins Ruling Elder Heath Rada of Western North Carolina Presbytery as candidates for the PC(USA)’s top elected post. The moderator serves a two-year term, presiding over the weeklong Assembly and then traveling, speaking and representing the church until the following General Assembly.

Wilkinson has been pastor of Third Presbyterian Church since 2001. A second generation Presbyterian minister, he graduated from the College of Wooster in Ohio and McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. He holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in American religious history.

His ministry has focused on urban settings. While at McCormick, he served an internship at Lake View Presbyterian Church on Chicago’s north side, then served pastorates at St. James Presbyterian Church and Fourth Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago before the call to Rochester.

Wilkinson has served at all levels of the PC(USA). Currently moderator of Genesee Valley Presbytery, he has also served on search committees, Committee on Preparation for Ministry and Committee on Ministry.

At the General Assembly level, Wilkinson was a member of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity and Purity of the Church — commonly called “PUP” — and he is currently a member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for which he served as moderator.

Wilkinson has served on the boards of two seminaries — McCormick and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School — and was at the drawing board for the formation of several church-related groups including the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, NEXT Church and the Rochester-based consortium Urban Presbyterians Together.

Following his endorsement, Wilkinson said, “I am humbled, excited and a little daunted to be endorsed by my presbytery colleagues and friends to serve the church in this way at such an important time. The theme for the Detroit General Assembly is “Abound in Hope.” I have embraced a theme for my own efforts based on that: “With an urgency born of this hope...” is not only an affirmation from the Presbyterian Confession of 1967, but it is a theological promise as well. The Presbyterian family is facing change and conflict. Yet we are called to be urgent — not anxious or fearful — as we face our future. The hope we embrace is not our own, but is a gracious gift from God. As we affirm this gift and rely on the presence of the Holy Spirit, we will live into a Presbyterian future filled with possibility and transformation. I hope that my vision, gifts and experiences might serve the church in this important moment, and I am grateful indeed for my presbytery’s affirmation.”

Wilkinson and his spouse, Bonny Claxton, are the parents of Kenneth, a junior at Rochester Institute of Technology, and Ann, a senior at Brighton High School in Rochester. He is an avid fan of baseball, as well as Bruce Springsteen, the Simpsons and all things pop culture.
Stated Clerk’s Three Questions for the 221st General Assembly (2014)

Q1. We all have a story of faith. Where does your story encounter hope?

Q2. The story of the church is following the Lord who journeys before us. What does it mean to follow the Lord?

Q3. How does your church community make room for people to share their stories of faith? How can we listen to the stories of people who are not in the church?
# 221st General Assembly (2014) Committee Leadership Roster

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<th>Vice-Moderator</th>
<th>Committee Assistant</th>
<th>Parliamentarian</th>
<th>Resource Coordinator</th>
<th>Transcriptionist/Recorder</th>
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<td>2 Bills and Overtures</td>
<td>Susan Orr</td>
<td>Raul Santiago-Rivera</td>
<td>Bridget Green</td>
<td>Steve Smith</td>
<td>Gradye Parsons</td>
<td>Kathy Runyeon</td>
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<td>3 GA Procedures</td>
<td>Gene McEvoy</td>
<td>Gun Ho Lee</td>
<td>Kevin Porter</td>
<td>Dan Rogers</td>
<td>Loyda Aja</td>
<td>Chris Lieberman</td>
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<td>4 Middle East Issues</td>
<td>Stephen Choi</td>
<td>Ginny (Virginia) Sheets</td>
<td>Judy Fletcher</td>
<td>Paul Hooker</td>
<td>Mark Koenig</td>
<td>Lacey Gilliam</td>
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<td>5 Mid Council Issues</td>
<td>Courtenay (M.)</td>
<td>Don Frankland</td>
<td>Vanessa Hawkins</td>
<td>Doris Arnett</td>
<td>Kerry Rice</td>
<td>Jerrold Lowry</td>
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<td>6 Church Polity and Ordered Ministry</td>
<td>Judith Ferguson</td>
<td>Kathy Stoner Lasala</td>
<td>Freda Dye</td>
<td>Carson Rhyne</td>
<td>Laurie Griffith</td>
<td>Diane Minter</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations</td>
<td>Jihyun Oh</td>
<td>John Vest</td>
<td>Mary Gene Boteler</td>
<td>Ken Hockenberry</td>
<td>Robina Winbush</td>
<td>Chris Rhodes</td>
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<td>8 Mission Coordination</td>
<td>Linda Scholl</td>
<td>David (James) Ealy</td>
<td>Howard Jackson</td>
<td>Bronwen Boswell</td>
<td>Dottie Smith</td>
<td>Sylvia Carter</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Social Justice Issues</td>
<td>Dan Ponder</td>
<td>Gloria Young</td>
<td>Marci Glass</td>
<td>Sandra Hedrick</td>
<td>Vince Patton</td>
<td>Pamela Burdine</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Civil Union and Marriage Issues</td>
<td>Jeffrey Bridgeman</td>
<td>Rebecca Tollefson</td>
<td>Diana Barber</td>
<td>Terry Epling</td>
<td>Marcia Mount Shoop</td>
<td>Kris Valerius</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Peacemaking and International Issues</td>
<td>Jesus Sanchez</td>
<td>Karen Breckenridge</td>
<td>Arlene Gordon</td>
<td>Bob Conover</td>
<td>Carl Horton</td>
<td>Tricia McReynolds</td>
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<td>12 Board of Pensions, PILP, PPC and Foundation</td>
<td>Jack Shelver</td>
<td>Monica Hall</td>
<td>James Tse</td>
<td>Michael Wilson</td>
<td>Frank Maloney</td>
<td>Alison Seed</td>
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<th>Transcriptionist/Recorder</th>
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<tr>
<td>13 Theological Issues and Institutions</td>
<td>Quinn Fox</td>
<td>Derrick McQueen</td>
<td>Rick Nutt</td>
<td>Pam Prouty</td>
<td>Karen Russell</td>
<td>Caterine Reuning</td>
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<td>14 Congregational Vitality</td>
<td>Robin Lyn Valdez</td>
<td>Veronica Cannon</td>
<td>Jose Gonzalez-Colon</td>
<td>Forrest Claassen</td>
<td>Tim McCallister</td>
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<td>15 Immigration and Environmental Issues</td>
<td>Don Choi</td>
<td>Stephanie Anthony</td>
<td>Oscar McCloud/Kathy McCloud</td>
<td>Ginny (Virginia) Rainey</td>
<td>Rebecca Barnes</td>
<td>Leah Johnson</td>
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<td>Mid Council Issues</td>
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<td>310B</td>
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<td>Peacemaking and International Issues</td>
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<td>Board of Pensions, PILP, PPC and Foundation</td>
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<td>Immigration and Environmental Issues</td>
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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’s leadership team 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 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 women and men.

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/

Don’t forget to “like” us on Facebook!!
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<td>03-06</td>
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<td>04-all</td>
<td>One A&amp;C for all items in Committee 4 (Middle East Issues)</td>
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<td>05-03</td>
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<td>06-01</td>
<td>Adding G-2.0104b by Replacing “Guided by” with “Obedient to” in Reference to Scripture and the Confessions – From the Presbytery of East Tennessee</td>
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<td>06-07</td>
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<td>09-02</td>
<td>On Entering a Two-Year Season of Reflection on the Plight of Unwanted Children, and Appointing a Special Committee on Abortion Review - From the Presbytery of Southern Alabama</td>
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<td>09-04</td>
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<td>On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform – From the Presbytery of Santa Fe</td>
<td>Approve</td>
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<td>10-01</td>
<td>On Amending W-4.9000 Concerning the Church’s Role in Legal Marriage Services of Christian Covenant – From the Presbytery of Lehigh</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
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<td>10-02</td>
<td>On Amending W-4.9000, Marriage - From the Presbytery of the Cascades</td>
<td>Approve</td>
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<td>10-03</td>
<td>On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies – From the Presbytery of Heartland</td>
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<td>10-04</td>
<td>On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies – From the Presbytery of East Iowa</td>
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<td>10-05</td>
<td>On Amending W-4.9001, Christian Marriage – From the Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi</td>
<td>Disapprove</td>
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<td>10-06</td>
<td>On Rescinding the 1991 Authoritative Interpretation Concerning Teaching Elders Performing Marriages for Same-Gender Couples and Sessions Permitting Such Ceremonies in their Facilities – From the Presbytery of New Castle</td>
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<td>10-07</td>
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<td>11-12</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
<td>On Encouraging Use of the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation – From the Presbytery of New York City</td>
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<td>13-01</td>
<td>Report and Recommendations from the General Assembly Special Committee on the Confession of Belhar to the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)</td>
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<td>14-02</td>
<td>Educate a Child, Transform the World</td>
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<td>14-04</td>
<td>Racial Ethnic &amp; New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report</td>
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<td>15-01</td>
<td>On Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies – From the Presbytery of Boston</td>
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<td>15-02</td>
<td>On Affirming the Importance of Sustainable Development and the Precautionary Principle – From the Presbytery of Southern New England</td>
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<td>15-03</td>
<td>On Affirming a Programmatic Review of the Impact of Expanded Coal Export Projects on Human Health and Well Being – From the Presbytery of Seattle</td>
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<td>15-04</td>
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ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-06 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 03-06 A Resolution to Support Hotel and Hospitality Workers Through the Adoption of Just Policies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 03-06, noting the following.

Rationale

As a matter of clarification, ACWC offers the following counsel:

In recommendation number 2, by “give preference,” ACWC does not mean to assert that right-to-work states such as Kentucky cannot be included in consideration for meetings. Rather, the intent is that meeting planners always start with hotels where workers are organized wherever and whenever possible.

Further, ACWC recommends that comments from legal counsel be considered in relation to the theological basis for advocating for hotel workers rights. Stories in the Gospels teach us that Jesus ate with tax collectors, sinners, outcasts, and women and is remembered to have shared parables about treating workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) with fairness. There is no testimony regarding Jesus seeking legal counsel for his own prophetic mission. We recognize that we are living in a different time and age, but the strong theological basis to argue for justice for workers comes through in our tradition and therefore calls the church in certain circumstances to speak prophetically from that tradition.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEMS 04-01, 04-02, 04-03, 04-04, 04-05, 04-06, 04-07, 04-08, 04-09

Advice and Counsel on all Items before Committee 4 (Middle East Issues) – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concern offers the following advice and counsel to the 221st General Assembly (2014) on Item 04-01.

Rationale

Women have long been invested in peacemaking initiatives and cooperative and collaborative leadership. ACWC stands in solidarity with international women's ecumenical and interfaith groups advocating for women's voices to be heard regarding ongoing conflicts in Israel-Palestine and against war and militarism. In addition, ACWC is aware that the current debate among Presbyterians over the best way to speak to the oppression of Palestinians is highly polarized, even among advocates for justice. In light of this fact, ACWC recommends that the committee leadership be asked to use the 1992 statement "Seeking to be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement" as a guide for their discussions. (The statement can be accessed by following this link: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/guidelines.pdf.)
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-01 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 05-01 On Consultation Before Possible Reorganization of Synod and Presbytery Boundaries - From the Presbytery of Homestead

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 05-01.

Rationale

From a theoretical standpoint, valuing the voices and experiences from a “bottom up” approach allows for the voices of those who are at risk of being disenfranchised or oppressed to be given a voice at the table and decreases their vulnerability to being silenced. Often, women’s voices and needs are at the “bottom” in regards to hierarchical decision making and therefore are not heard unless there is an intentional inclusion of them in the process, as is indicated in this overture. In addition, consultation with involved parties will not only benefit the communities that are affected by such reorganization but will also help set up a restructured system that is sustainable.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-03 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 05-03 On Transferring Han Yang Presbyterian Church from Hanmi Presbytery to the Presbytery of San Fernando

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve this overture.

Rationale

We support the request of the Han Yang Presbyterian Church to be transferred from the non geographic Hanmi Presbytery to the geographic San Fernando Presbytery. We believe in the importance of physical community and the support that is enhanced when people have the opportunity to work side by side. In addition, diversity within our churches and Presbyteries is highly valued and important for creating healthy communities and to represent the body of Christ and this move would create more diversity in interactions for both the Presbytery of San Fernando and the Han Yang Presbyterian Church. Diversity in various aspects of leadership allow for women to have more of a voice in systems that have historically silenced them.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-01 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

Item 06-01 On Amending G-2.0104b.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) disapprove Item 06-01.

Rationale

The ACWC recommended to both the 219th General Assembly (2010) and the 220th General Assembly (2012) approval of the amendment of G-6.0106b (Book of Order) regarding ordination standards, and the New Form of Government's language for such (G-2.0104b) clearly articulates the full recognition of a candidate for ministry's gifts and talents for ordination. Historically, the PCUSA has resisted subscription to the confessions, and instead, understands them to instruct and lead us. Such is articulated within the Directory for Worship in the ordination vows (W-4.4003-c). Furthermore, chapter two of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity articulates the purpose of the confessional statements as being "...the guide in its study and interpretation of the Scripture" (F-2.01), and that "Confessional statements are subordinate standards... subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him" (F-2.02).

Through the gender justice lens of the ACWC, ensuring that councils are called to be instructed, led, and guided by Scripture and the confessions, rather than subscribing to them, further ensures the continued ordination of women, who now make up a majority of seminary students, and who are also in the majority with regard to parishioners. To do otherwise places women's ordination in jeopardy.

Our obedience is to Jesus Christ, who modeled for us justice for all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual identity.

Therefore, the ACWC advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) disapprove this overture.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-07 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 06-07 On Amending D-10.0103 - Referral to Investigating Committee - From the Presbytery of Genesee Valley.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 06-07.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns’ understanding of the implications of this overture is that it calls for the breaking of confidentiality in cases of sexual abuse in order for the session of the relevant congregation to make informed decisions regarding safety measures that may need to be put into place regarding the potential victim and/or perpetrator.

Often perpetrators of abuse are able to continue in their behaviors because of the secrecy, denial and shame associated with abuse. Allowing the clerk of session to be forthcoming in disclosing an allegation allows for the community to take measures to safeguard other community members, and it decreases the power of the secrecy and shame that are often key ingredients in perpetuating cycles of abuse. As one victim said in reference to the secrecy that surrounded her sexual abuse, “It made me feel like something was wrong with me, or that I deserved it (the abuse) in some way because no one said anything, so it must have been "okay." Denial is an open door in which the cycle of abuse can go through again and again.”

While children and women are not the only victims of sexual abuse, they are the large majority of the victims. While it is difficult to get an accurate number due to underreporting, as many as 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually abused at some point in their childhood. In addition, according to the 1997 U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics report Sex Offenses and Offenders, girls ages 16-19 are 4 times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.

Allowing sessions to have access to information they need to make informed decisions regarding their community and it’s members would not only protect women and children but also helps maintain a healthy atmosphere within the church and community, one that does not value secrecy, but instead values open dialogue and safe spaces for all its members.

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ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-11 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 06-11 On Amending G-3.0403(c) to Allow Churches to Realign with Other Established Presbyteries within the PC(USA) - From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) disapprove Item 06-11.

Rationale

Overtures that allow churches and presbyteries to choose their membership on the basis of “theological or practical differences” threaten to dissolve the unity of the church as a whole, to diminish financial resources that could be available for joint mission projects, and to create a community of uniformity and like-mindedness as opposed to a community of faith representing the full body of Christ.

In Reformed tradition and the history of Reformed communities of faith, theological disagreements, faithful discussion, diversity of views, and honest debate have provided the occasion for creativity. Think about the reformers, abolitionists, and civil rights activists: What if difference and division had prevailed over the call to live and act as part of Christ’s body? Political and theological issues may be temporarily side-stepped by “allowing realignment” but it will come at the expense of our communal call to live as the body of Christ, each one of us an integral part of it.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-06 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 08-06 A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 08-06.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns fully supports the Advocacy Committee for Racial and Ethnic Concerns “Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy.” One priority of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is considering the intersection of gender and race. We hope that this policy will take into specific account the particular experiences of women of color.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-07 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 08-07 Fairness in Ministerial Compensation: Incentives and Solidarity, a Response to Two Referrals

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 08-07.

Rationale

The recommendations presented within Item 08-07 are brought forth as directed by the 220th General Assembly (2012) following approved referrals from the Report of the Special Committee on the Nature of the Church in the 21st Century. Thus, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s (ACSWP) recommendations come following extensive research and data gathering regarding sustained pay inequality and the need to recognize such as an ongoing issue both in society and within the church. They also acknowledge the need to organize the church along different lines than current societal norms.

ACSWP highlights lack of parity in compensation for teaching elders, as well as for Presbyterian Mission Agency staff, and the need for continued work at all levels of the church until all people receive a "living-wage" income. Cited for further information is the 2014-2015 Compensation Handbook for Church Staff (Richard Hammar), which articulates "Across all paid church positions, men are paid 28 percent more than women."

The concurrence of ACWC with ACSWP's Item 08-07 further emphasizes ACWC's concern for pay equity for all women.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-10 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 08-10 Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 08-10.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends approval of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Report with Recommendations, “Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God.” The Women of Color Consultation is vital in continuing to grow the gender and racial justice awareness of the church through education, training, and support of racial/ethnic women. The recommendations included in the report also provide for needed resources and educational opportunities within the mid councils that address a variety of racial justice concerns.

One correction to the report that ACWC would note: Though the report includes 2008 as a year when a Women of Color Consultation was held, this was actually a meeting of the Task Force on the Women of Color Consultation, who submitted the report, “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies” to the 218th General Assembly (2008).
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-02 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

Item 09-02 On Entering a Two-Year Season of Reflection on the Plight of Unwanted Children, and Appointing a Special Committee on Abortion Review - From the Presbytery of Southern Alabama

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) disapprove Item 09-02.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns concurs with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy's (ACSWP) Advice and Counsel Item 09-02.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-04 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

Item 09-04 Regarding a National Moratorium on the Imposition of the Death Penalty-From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 09-04.

Rationale

As articulated within Item 09-04, General Assemblies from 1959 to 2010 have declared continued opposition to the death penalty, and while six states have abolished the death penalty between 2007 and 2014, for the remaining 32 states, execution is still prevalent. It is recognized that the imposition of the death penalty continues to be "... a moral issue that demands paramount discernment by legislative and judicial bodies" (Rationale for Item 09-04), and that within the judicial system racial disparities in charging, sentencing, and imposition of the death penalty are known (as reported by the United States General Accounting Office and noted within Rationale for Item 09-04).

Furthermore, through the lens of gender justice, an execution, when not affecting a woman herself, affects the remaining family members, e.g. mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, whose loved one lived his final days on death row, and finally, quite possibly, was actually executed. Paradoxically, a sentence of life in prison affords the inmate a greater possibility of rehabilitation and redemption, and affords the inmate's family members to be a part of his life throughout his life in prison. While incarceration is a very difficult reality for family members, it remains the better scenario when the only other option is death by execution.

Through the lens of Christianity, the ACWC concurs with the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, recognizing God as sovereign in all spheres of human life, and that God's commandment against killing is still good law. We are all fallible human beings, dependent upon God, and as such, we make mistakes and we are sinful. And, yet, God is good, forgiving, steadfast, and faithful, and we are called to be as Christ-like as humanly possible, especially when considering those for whom these disparities are reality.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-05 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 09-05 On a Two-Year Study to Discern How to Advocate for Effective Drug Policies

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 09-05.

Rationale

Item 09-05 and concurrences from the Presbyteries of Hudson River and West Virginia ask for a two-year study with the goal of developing action and policy recommendations for 222nd General Assembly (2016) regarding a drug policy for the denomination.

ACWC recognizes the effects on racial ethnic women and their families since the forty-year “war on drugs” has resulted in a disproportionate incarceration of African American males. The result of the incarceration, women who then become single parents, suffer significant financial and care burdens. The costs to society are both financial and social.

As the overture points out, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has addressed related concerns in various statements, but has no comprehensive policy to provide resources for study and advocacy for Presbyterians in congregations. Both policy and resources are needed assist Presbyterians in efforts to reform unjust and socially costly laws and procedures currently designed to deal with the drugs.

Concurrences from the Presbyteries make it clear there is agreement among legal and labor organizations and communities the present system needs revision and seek guidance from the church to make this a reality.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-06 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 09-06 On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 09-06.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the Presbytery of Santa Fe on Item 09-06, “On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform.” We believe we are called as a church to stand up and advocate for all who have been marginalized and oppressed by the greed-centered and corrupt political, corporate, and economic structures and systems. The PC(USA) Washington Office of Public Witness would be a good place to begin in this advocacy effort.

We also note as ACWC that many times women have been more heavily affected in these systems of oppression and injustice. We fully support this overture and are particularly concerned with how the corrupt systems and structures that created the economic recession have affected the lives of women.
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 On Amending W-4.9000 Concerning the Church’s Role in Legal Marriage Services of Christian Covenant

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) disapprove Item 10-01.

Rationale

This overture creates a category called Christian Covenant. The duality of Christian Marriage and Christian Covenant results in an inequality in a situation where the commitments and expectations of the union of persons are equal.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-02 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 10-02 On Amending W-4.9000, Marriage

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 10-02.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the rationale given in this overture.

ACWC believes that in withholding the right to marry from same-gender loving people, the church is upholding a patriarchal standard for humanity. Committed to standing against patriarchy and its effects within the world and the church, ACWC advocates giving access to all that Christian marriage provides to same-gender couples in committed and loving relationships who are in the PC(USA).

The proposed amendment is a clear and compelling statement reflecting the gift of God that marriage provides to human beings. It encourages healthy families, congregations and communities.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-03 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 10-03 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 10-03.

Rationale

This overture asks the General Assembly to approve an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 describing the rights and responsibilities of pastors in states in which civil unions or marriages of same sex couples are permitted by law. The overture cites Book of Order statements noting that a marriage ceremony is a type of worship service that a pastor has freedom of conscience to conduct. Pastors, after examination of the couple, guided by scripture and with agreement of session (if the ceremony were to be held in the church), have the discretion and freedom to conduct any service of marriage.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is committed to eliminating the patriarchy that persists today within the church and society. God’s justice, as we have come to understand it through the teachings of Jesus Christ, recognizes the equality of all God’s children, each of whom is made in God’s image. Patriarchal views define those not conforming to certain gender roles as somehow less than human and therefore not worthy of the pastoral care that Christian marriage provides to heterosexual committed and loving couples.

Providing this Authoritative Interpretation will effectively grant pastors and sessions the freedom of conscience to care for couples of like gender who desire the affirmation of the church and commitments required of Christian marriage, treating them as the equals they are in God’s eyes.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-04 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 10-04 On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 10-04.

Rationale

Please see the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns Advice and Counsel on Item 10-03:

This overture asks the General Assembly to approve an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 describing the rights and responsibilities of pastors in states in which civil unions or marriages of same sex couples are permitted by law. The overture cites Book of Order statements noting that a marriage ceremony is a type of worship service that a pastor has freedom of conscience to conduct. Pastors, after examination of the couple, guided by scripture and with agreement of session (if the ceremony were to be held in the church), have the discretion and freedom to conduct any service of marriage.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is committed to eliminating the patriarchy that persists today within equality of all God’s children, each of whom is made in God’s image. Patriarchal views define those not conforming to certain gender roles as somehow less than human and therefore not worthy of the pastoral care that Christian marriage provides to heterosexual committed and loving couples.

Providing this Authoritative Interpretation will effectively grant pastors and sessions the freedom of conscience to care for couples of like gender who desire the affirmation of the church and commitments required of Christian marriage, treating them as the equals they are in God’s eyes.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-05 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 10-05 On Amending W-4.9001, Christian Marriage

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends that the 221st General Assembly disapprove Item 10-05.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends the approval of Item 10-03, a more comprehensive solution to the issue raised in this overture.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-06 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 10-06 On Rescinding the 1991 Authoritative Interpretation Concerning Teaching Elders Performing Marriages for Same-Gender Couples and Sessions Permitting Such Ceremonies in their Facilities

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve this item.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is committed to eliminating the patriarchy that persists today within the church and society. God’s justice, as we have come to understand it through the teachings of Jesus Christ, recognizes the equality of all God’s children, each of whom is made in God’s image. Patriarchal views define those not conforming to certain gender roles as somehow less than human and therefore not worthy of the pastoral care that Christian marriage provides to heterosexual committed and loving couples.

Rescinding this Authoritative Interpretation will effectively grant pastors and sessions the freedom of conscience to care for couples of like gender who desire the affirmation of the church and commitments required of Christian marriage, treating them as the equals they are in God’s eyes.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-07 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 10-07 On Creating a Task Force to Identify Common Ground and Reconcilable Differences with Respect to Same-Gender Marriage

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) disapprove Item 10-07.

Rationale

This overture proposes a four-year study of same-gender marriage by a task force with twelve theologically diverse elders. The task force would report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

While the intent is seeking unity on this topic, the ACWC does not believe theological diversity is all that is needed to resolve this issue within the church. Specific skills for evaluating gender concerns, theological issues, social and psychological costs, legal implications and the nature of church membership are required.

As the rationale for this overture notes, cultural norms, civil society’s laws and even church practice have been changing rapidly with regards to the rights of same gender couples. At this rate, the completion of an exhaustive and expensive four year study may find the results and recommendations are no longer an issue for church and society. In addition, such a study only prolongs the inequities and pastoral struggle created by our current policies.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns therefore recommends the overture be disapproved.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-12 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 11-12 On Helping to Remedy the Tragic Conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—From the Presbytery of Boston.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 11-12.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns supports this overture that recognizes the vulnerability of women and children as a result of the lawlessness in the eastern area of the DRC. Gangs and militia continue to fight over valuable “conflict” minerals. They abduct girls and boys to fight in these gangs and the reality is that girls are used as sex slaves as well as combatants. Rape of women and girls is a reality and is used as a weapon of war.

We commend the 220th General Assembly (2012) for its recommendation to include women in any peacemaking process in the DRC. However, the combatants are far from efforts to resolve the situation peacefully. The kind of international pressure both diplomatically and financially this overture suggests have the potential to create conditions that would be compelling enough to bring all parties to the table.

By ending the violence, bringing justice and assistance to those whose basic human rights have been violated and eliminating lawlessness, the DRC can begin to provide the kinds of services and education women and girls need to be productive members of their communities.

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4 See 220th General Assembly (2012) Item 14-02 On Support for the People of the Democratic Republic of Congo <http://pc-biz.org/MeetingPapers%28S%28tz5zyk1gn3a5wqikftv4zk%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=4051>
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-15

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-15 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 11-15 On Encouraging Use of the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 09-03.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns fully supports the overture from the Presbytery of New York City, “On Encouraging Use of the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation.” Advocating, educating, and working to end human trafficking has long been close to the heart of the PC(USA), as exemplified in the many reports, statements, and resources cited in the overture. We also have a long held concern for the child and how we are called as the church to nurture and protect the child. This overture combines these two longstanding concerns of the PC(USA) and also reflects the ethos of ACWC’s Resolution at this General Assembly on “Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue,” (Item 11-13). Both as individuals and as the church, patronizing companies that honor “The Code,” and encouraging others to join them, are concrete ways by which Presbyterians can combat this abuse of children.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 13-01 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 13-01 Report and Recommendations from the General Assembly Special Committee on the Confession of Belhar to the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 13-01.

Rationale

ACWC strongly supports the adoption of Belhar as a testimony to the church’s solidarity with South Africa’s struggle against apartheid and a reflection of the church's contemporary awareness of the ongoing struggles for justice in our world. The confession is timely and an essential witness against the evils of race hatred that still plague our world. The church has been called to advocate and stand in solidarity with all who are affected by marginalization and oppression for whatever reason. The Belhar Confession is a confession that perfectly reflects this concern of the church and how we have been called to be the church in the world of diversity.

The ACWC recognizes that the South African church context in which Belhar was written has differences from the context of discussions in the United States; however, the truth of this Confession stretches across all contexts of race, culture, gender, and ethnicity. We agree that the citations of Scripture should be included as well as the attached letters. We also concur for the request of dismissal from the Special Committee with much thanks, noting their incredible work and dedication in this ministry.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-02 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 14-02 Educate a Child, Transform the World

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 14-02.

Rationale

As articulated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency in Item 14-02, "the Presbyterian church has served as one of the greatest forces for education in the world for 176 years, helping hundreds of thousands of children to learn to read and write, to think critically, and to understand their work as their Christian vocation."

Endorsing in totality Item 14-02, the ACWC adds the acknowledgment of the need to educate girls in this country and around the world. Organizations like "Girl Rising" (www.girlrising.org) provide excellent educational, as well as informational insight into the necessity to continue to lift up and support the education of girls, articulating, "We know that educating girls is the smartest investment of our time. When girls are educated, communities thrive and economies grow. Yet 66 million girls are missing from classrooms worldwide, and tremendous opportunities are lost" (www.girlrising.org)

Hence, as the PMAB "directs the PMA to shape and guide this initiative ... and to report back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) strategies identified," partnering with organizations like "Girl Rising" that are presently doing the hard work of furthering the education of girls may prove beneficial. On that note, "Girl Rising" says, "We use the power of storytelling, leveraged through partnerships, to share the simple truth that educating girls can transform societies," and notes that "educating girls is the smartest investment opportunity in the world today," and yet, 65 million girls are missing from classrooms worldwide." Much work is yet to be done, and time’s a-wasting! Now is the time. Educate Girls, Change the World!
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-04 - From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 14-04 Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 14-04.

Rationale

Many of the recommendations in this report also appeared in the report of the Special Committee on the Nature of the Church for the 21st Century (Item 16-07 of the 220th General Assembly (2012) as well as the other citations contained in the rationale.).

ACWC recognizes PC(USA) goals for the development of new congregations in the 21st century. Racial ethnic, new immigrant and multi-cultural new churches depend on the ability of presbyteries to embrace these congregations, supporting them with new definitions of “church” and flexibility in ordination requirements. The denomination can be supportive by designing resources in languages other than English that are culturally appropriate. Seminaries can provide courses in languages other than English so new immigrant pastors can receive training in polity and reformed theology.

ACWC also recognizes that many of these new churches retain the patriarchy of the cultures from which they have come. It is the ACWC’s hope that gender justice will be at the forefront as various structural areas of the PC(USA) pursue the work assigned to them with General Assembly approval. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns offers to consult and to review new material with an eye toward removing gender biases from new resources.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-01 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 15-01 On Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concern advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 15-01.

Rationale

ACWC is painfully aware of the ways in which the exploitation of the nature has been supported by philosophies and ideologies that have also informed discrimination against and the abuse of women. Therefore we support overtures which advocate for public policies intended to change the course of climate change and the recommendation to divest from fossil fuels.
ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-02 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 15-02 On Affirming the Importance of Sustainable Development and the Precautionary Principle

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concern advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 15-02.

Rationale

ACWC is painfully aware of the ways in which the exploitation of the nature has been supported by philosophies and ideologies that have also informed discrimination against and the abuse of women. Therefore we support overtures which advocate for public policies intended to change the course of climate change and the recommendation to divest from fossil fuels.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-03 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 15-03 On Affirming a Programmatic Review of the Impact of Expanded Coal Export Projects on Human Health and Well Being

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concern advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 15-03.

Rationale

ACWC is painfully aware of the ways in which the exploitation of the nature has been supported by philosophies and ideologies that have also informed discrimination against and the abuse of women. Therefore we support overtures which advocate for public policies intended to change the course of climate change and the recommendation to divest from fossil fuels.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 15-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 15-04 – From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

Item 15-04 On Recognizing the Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to Affirm, Promote the Civil and Human Rights of Immigrants in Our Communities

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concern advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 15-04.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the Presbytery of Central Florida’s Overture, “On Recognizing the Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to Affirm and Promote the Civil and Human Rights of Immigrants in Our Communities.” This overture represents a call to action to the entire church from a grassroots level. For many years, the PC(USA) has been committed to creating safe and nurturing communities that reflect our deepest values as a people of faith. These communities include our immigrant communities who are often times adversely affected by corrupt and defective immigration policies, laws, and attitudes that violate basic human and civil rights. Immigrant women, in particular, also face unique human rights issues including denial of access to education and women’s health care services, and barriers to justice for victims of crimes like human trafficking and domestic violence. Although ACWC supports this Overture, we also were left asking how this initiative will take form and what financial implications will be involved.
The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014) do the following:

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of General Assembly to include protective language in every hotel contract so that if there is a labor dispute at the contracted hotel, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can pull out of the contract without penalty.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of General Assembly to adopt a policy that gives preference to hotels where workers are organized and commits to honoring and upholding boycotts that are directly related to workers’ wages and working conditions.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk to write a pastoral letter, to be distributed electronically, to every presbytery and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) interest group, encouraging adoption of a similar policy that includes incorporating protective language in every hotel contract, giving preference to hotels where workers are organized, and committing to honoring and upholding boycotts that are directly related to workers’ wages and working conditions.

Rationale

The Scriptures and our confessional standards uphold Christians to just compensation for workers and fair working conditions. As such, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long-standing commitment to workers’ rights, fair wages, and humane working conditions, affirming that, “All conditions of paid employment, including compensation and working conditions, should sustain and nurture the dignity of individuals, the well-being of households and families, the social cohesiveness of communities, and the integrity of the global environment.” Currently, however, the PC(USA) does not have a policy that helps us support and stand with hotel and hospitality workers when their rights are being violated by their employers.

In 2013, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) had a contract with the Hyatt Hotel for the Big Tent gathering in Louisville, Ky. When leaders of the PC(USA) learned that Hyatt workers, in collaboration with the organization Unite Here, had called for a global boycott of the Hyatt due to their unjust practices, they decided to break the contract for all common space (such as meeting, meal, and workshop space) in order that those Presbyterians who desired to observe the global boycott could do so without missing any events at Big Tent. Sleeping rooms that had been contracted were retained, but attendees could choose alternate hotels for their accommodations. Unfortunately, breaking this contract cost the church financially. It was the right thing to do, and the church should be proud of the sacrifice it made for the sake of justice. The reality is, however, if protective language had been included in the contract, there would not have been a cost.

This incident revealed that no policy is currently in place to help guide our leaders and conference-planners through the process of formulating contracts with hotels and other vendors with the rights of workers in mind. This recommendation seeks to provide that kind of guidance through the following three steps:

1. Including protective language into every hotel contract will ensure that we can break a contract if necessary without the financial loss we incurred in 2013. Protective language allows an organization to break contracts without penalty, including reasons involving labor disputes. Not only will this protect the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it will send a message to hoteliers that our church supports and cares about hotel and hospitality workers. The PC(USA) can also include language that requires hoteliers to disclose any labor disputes that arise, so that the church is duly informed and able to make these decisions when necessary. Resources on how to include such language are available at the website of Interfaith Worker Justice, and could be utilized by the legal counsel of the PC(USA).

2. Officially stating that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “gives preference to hotels where workers are organized and commits to honoring and upholding boycotts that are directly related to workers’ wages and working conditions” would provide clear guidelines for which hotels will be considered first when booking meetings and rooms and would enable conference planning teams to make sound logistical decisions that adhere to the church’s commitment to justice.
3. Directing the Stated Clerk to communicate and encourage adoption of our denominational policies to the presbyteries and the church’s interest groups ensures that the whole church is aware of this commitment and has the tools to go and do likewise.

We are called as a church to advocate and stand for worker justice. Our theology of work and labor must be reflected in how we make financial decisions and which businesses we choose to support. We have already clearly stated with our words and our actions that the church values the dignity of workers, and this resolution helps us to do so more efficiently and strategically. Doing so also contributes toward reaching the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s directional goal of compassionate prophetic discipleship, demonstrating and proclaiming God’s justice, peace, and love.


[3] “Faith Community Guide to Supporting Hospitality Workers,” Interfaith Worker Justice,<http://www.iwj.org/resources/hospitality-workers-guide#protectivelanguage> (23 January 2014) provides guidelines on language that can be used in contracts for this purpose. The following is a sample of Protective Language:

Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary, if performance hereunder would foreseeably involve [Group] in or subject it to the effects of a boycott, strike, lockout, picketing or other labor dispute and [Group] therefore withholds, delays or cancels performance, it shall have no liability there from, provided that [Group] may not withhold, delay or cancel performance based upon a labor dispute involving its own employees. In the event of a cancellation under this Section, neither [Group] nor its members shall have any future obligation under this Agreement, and any deposits or other payments made to the Hotel by [Group] or its members to reserve rooms or other space for use, and/or for services to be provided, shall promptly be refunded to [Group] or its members. This Section shall supersede all other provisions of this Agreement and shall be construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of [Group’s home state here].

The following is a sample of language for a Notification of a Labor Dispute:

The Hotel agrees to notify [your Group] in writing within ten (10) days after it becomes aware of any labor relations dispute involving the Hotel and its employees including, but not limited to, union picketing, the filing of an Unfair Labor Practice charge by a union, the expiration of a negotiated labor contract, an existing or impending strike or lockout or any other matter which could reasonably be construed as a labor-management relations dispute.

Comment

ACREC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 03-06.

As Reformed Christians, in the light of the Bible and our confessional standards, we believe in just compensation for workers and fair working conditions for all human beings. For many years, the PC(USA) has been committed to supporting the rights of workers, fair wages, and decent working conditions.

As a denomination we cannot be co-participants of unjust situations by supporting hotels that are violating the rights of their employees.

This resolution will help us avoid penalties by being good stewards of our resources while at the same time being consistent with what we believe, preach, and do. We cannot host meetings that talk about justice while still reinforcing unworthy work conditions.

We can preach, with our example, that we care about other human beings, loving them as ourselves, and that we are a church committed to justice and peace.

ACWC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 03-06, noting the following.

As a matter of clarification, ACWC offers the following counsel:

In Recommendation 2, by “give preference,” ACWC does not mean to assert that right-to-work states such as Kentucky cannot be included in consideration for meetings. Rather, the intent is that meeting planners always start with hotels where workers are organized wherever and whenever possible.

Further, ACWC recommends that comments from legal counsel be considered in relation to the theological basis for advocating for hotel workers rights. Stories in the Gospels teach us that Jesus ate with tax collectors, sinners, outcasts, and women and is remembered to have shared parables about treating workers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1–16) with fairness. There is no testimony regarding Jesus seeking legal counsel for his own prophetic mission. We recognize that we are living in a different time and age, but the strong theological basis to argue for justice for workers comes through in our tradition and therefore calls the church in certain circumstances to speak prophetically from that tradition.
OGA and PMA Comment

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ("PMAB") and the Office of the General Assembly ("OGA") stand strongly behind the values for fair employment practices expressed by the ACWC but hold reservations about the details required by this recommendation. Speaking up for just compensation and reasonable working conditions is a part of our scriptural and confessional mandate and true to our historical witness.

Our concern is that, as currently presented, the resolution does not take into account the comprehensive ministry of the church and prior actions of the assembly.

Recommendation 1 directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency ("PMA") and OGA to include protective language in every hotel contract. Any contract in the hospitality industry is a negotiation between skilled meeting planners and hotel managers who give and take to create an agreement that is beneficial to both. It is already practice of the OGA and the PMA to insert language very similar to that proposed in the recommendation into any contract at the beginning of negotiations. In the course of negotiation, this contractual language may prove to be unworkable or other reassurances take on greater relevance. It is sometimes the judgment of the agency to drop the protective language in lieu of other considerations in order to complete the contract. To require every contract to include specific language puts those who confer on our behalf in a bind that may not meet our judgment of the agency to drop the protective language in lieu of other considerations in order to complete the contract. To require every contract to include specific language puts those who confer on our behalf in a bind that may not meet our comprehensive missional and justice goals.

We would propose that if the General Assembly approves this recommendation, it consider inserting language such as "attempts to" before the words "include protective language ..." in order to encourage meeting planners in the negotiation stages.

Recommendation 1 also makes reference to "a labor dispute at the contracted hotel" without defining what constitutes a labor dispute. Such general language is not useful when it comes as a directive from the General Assembly. Staff is left parsing what constitutes a labor dispute and who qualifies as a party in the dispute.

We would propose that, if the General Assembly approves this recommendation, it might be more helpful for the recommendation to use language such as "... so that if the contracting entity of the PC(USA) determined that the hotel violated the missional goals of the church, it could pull out of the contract."

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

"1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of General Assembly to [attempt to] include protective language in every hotel contract so that if [there is a labor dispute at the contracted hotel, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can] [the contracting entity of the PC(USA) determined that the hotel violated the missional goals of the church, it could] pull out of the contract without penalty."

Of greatest concern are the implications of Recommendation 2, which "commits [the PMA and OGA] to honoring and upholding boycotts ..." Such a policy abdicates to other bodies (such as Unite Here) our missional responsibility to engage in a prayerful, thoughtful process of engagement before initiating a boycott. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a vital history, going back almost a century, of joining strategically in boycotts. In 1979, the church established eight criteria before entering into a boycott. Among those criteria is to ask if "... other approaches to correcting the injustice [have] been seriously undertaken?" Furthermore the assembly instructed: "There are many methods of seeking social change, and boycott should rarely, if ever, be the strategy of first resort. Discussion and persuasion, exposure to public opinion, legislative remedy, and legal action are only a few of the options." (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1979, Part I, p. 253, "Boycotts: Policy Analysis and Criteria").

As currently written, the PMA and OGA would be required to respect a boycott declared by other institutions without engaging in our own process of study, persuasion, negotiation, or witness. We would be relinquishing our own policies and the discernment of our councils to bodies with no connection or responsibility to our membership. The final conclusion of these boycotts would not be determined by the church, but by other entities for us.

One of the strengths of our Mission Responsibility Through Investment ("MRTI") program is the way it opens avenues for the church to engage businesses in concrete, thoughtful conversations before moving toward any consideration of divestment. A boycott should be the end of the conversation between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and an institution, not the beginning.

Different language would instruct all the agencies of the church, when made aware that a hotel has been targeted for boycott by some organization, to initiate an investigation of the issues, conversation with the parties, and determination of how the PC(USA) might best contribute to the issues of justice before entering into a contract.

Recommendation 2 also instructs the PMA and OGA to "adopt a policy that gives preference to hotels where workers are organized ..." without recognizing the many hotels whose workers are treated with justice but are not currently organized. Are good managers and the workers employed by them to be bypassed for preferential treatment for unions? This standard would imply that all of the hotels in Louisville and in many whole states (and all of our conference centers) do not meet the justice goals of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) because their workers are not organized.
08-14 A Resolution to Address Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Source: Committee Sponsor: Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns

Committee: [08-14] Mission Coordination Type: General Assembly Full Consideration

Topic: Unassigned


Recommendation

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014) do the following:

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, with the aid of the Child Advocacy Office, to create new/updated resources concerning Child/Youth Protection measures in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that can be available for synods, presbyteries, and individual churches. (We request that these resources be from the PC(USA) and not just direction to other denominational resources.)

2. Direct the Stated Clerk to send proposed amendments to the Book of Order regarding the requirement of all councils of the PC(USA) to adopt and implement a child/youth protection policy [to be determined by the 221st General Assembly (2014)] to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes.

Rationale

Currently the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and Child Advocacy Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has provided some extremely helpful resources regarding Child/Youth Protection measures and policies, which are available online. One such resource can be found under Creating Safe Ministries through pcusa.org.[1] However, many of these resources are focused primarily on sexual harassment policies and procedures and not adequately on the broad scope of child/youth protection. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) asks that the Presbyterian Mission Agency direct that new/updated resources be created for synods, presbyteries, and particular church use that are from the PC(USA) and address child youth protection measures and policies – including and expanding beyond the focus of sexual harassment. There are many issues that have evolved with working with children/youth which need to be addressed in the work of the church.

The focus of child/youth protection policies is to ensure a safe, thriving, and nurturing environment for children and youth in our churches and church-sponsored events. These policies address screening child and youth workers and volunteers, how to implement mandatory training, simple rules involving transportation, adult/youth/child ratios, minimum age requirement of volunteers, facility security and safety, etc. It is important to understand in developing these policies that these policies and procedures are completely separate from sexual misconduct policies, and there is a need to differentiate between these resources and policies. That is why we request an amendment in the Book of Order to require all councils of the PC(USA) to make this differentiation and adopt and implement a child/youth protection policy alongside a separate sexual harassment policy.

It is the church’s responsibility to provide a safe, thriving, and nurturing environment for children and youth, and we must take seriously how our faith informs this responsibility. Our theology of the child is reflected in how we care and nurture children and youth who are under the care of the church. This theology must reflect the love, care, and high regard for the humanity and dignity of the child reflected in the Gospels.


Comment

Advice from the ACC

Advice on 08-14—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

If it is the intent of the assembly to require each council to adopt and implement a child protection policy, the ACC believes the language of the proposed amendment, as shown in the OGA comment, is clear and concise.
The Stated Clerk advises that Recommendation 2 of Item 08-14 could be accomplished as follows:

The 221st General Assembly (2014) directs the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106 as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child protection policy.”
11-13 A Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

Source: Committee Sponsor: Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns

Committee: [11-13] Peacemaking and International Issues Type: General Assembly Full Consideration

Topic: Unassigned


Recommendation

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014):

1. Direct the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns to appoint four members to a Reference and Study Task Group, with staff for the committee to be appointed by the PC(USA) Human Trafficking Roundtable.

2. Direct this Reference and Study Task Group, with the help of a consultant, to review the current PC(USA) policy regarding human trafficking and propose comprehensive human trafficking policy grounded in a human rights based approach for the denomination, by:
   a. Examining the ways in which poverty, lack of or under-employment, and discrimination make women, men, and children vulnerable to traffickers;
   b. Considering all types of modern day slavery (on a global and national level) including forced labor, sex trafficking, bonded labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, child sex trafficking, and organ harvesting;
   c. Consulting with a variety of groups working on the issue of trafficking, including Freedom Network, U.S.A.; the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, and End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT), and General Assembly programs and ministries;
   d. Defining the human rights violations such slavery creates, and
   e. Reporting its findings to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

3. Direct the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, the Office of Public Witness, and members of the PC(USA) Human Trafficking Roundtable to assist in the research process.


Rationale

Matthew 25:40—The ruler will answer them, “The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me.”[1]

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) submits this resolution in light of the continuing and large scale tragedy of trafficked and forced labor of adults and children, and in order to provide guidance for the church’s advocacy and ministries with those affected.

The ACWC brought a resolution to the 218th General Assembly (2008) entitled “A Resolution to Expand the Church’s Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking.” Though prior to this the General Assembly had made policy statements regarding human rights, slavery, and sex and child trafficking specifically (2001, 2003, 2006), ACWC sought to continue to raise awareness amongst Presbyterians and to inspire the church to action, focusing primarily on the plight of women who are trafficked.

Since 2006, though the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has included human trafficking in its Human Rights Report, the General Assembly has not passed any official policy on human trafficking. The policy that exists currently does not begin to address the scope and breadth of human trafficking. While important education and advocacy work continues to be done by such groups as the PC(USA) Human Trafficking Roundtable, the policy grounding in which such groups root their work is currently sparse. The denomination-wide demand for this group’s work and resources is steady, but the solid policy commitment of the denomination to working against human trafficking is lacking.

The United Nations’ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 and entered into force on 25 December 2003. As of October 2013 it has been ratified by 158 states.[2]

The protocol states trafficking in persons:

"shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs ... The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth [above] shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth [above] have been used."[3]

**The Act (What is done)**

Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons

**The Means (How it is done)**

Threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim

**The Purpose (Why it is done)**

For the purpose of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs.[4]

A report released in 2013 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime offered a breakdown of victims of human trafficking activities worldwide:

- Trafficking victims have been rescued in 118 countries and represent 136 different nationalities, according to the UNODC.
- Sex trafficking accounts for 58 percent of all human trafficking cases that are investigated around the world. Labor trafficking accounts for 36 percent of the cases.
- Women account for 55 to 60 percent of the victims, and women and girls account for 75 percent of trafficking victims.
- Children account for 27 percent of victims during the 2007 to 2010 time period, up from 20 percent between 2003–2006. Two out of every three child trafficking victims were girls.

In total, there are an estimated 20.9 million people around the world who are victims of human trafficking.[5]

Although the PC(USA) has social witness policy addressing forms of sexual exploitation and slavery, none addresses forced labor in agriculture, domestic service, and services offered by nail and beauty salons, the removal of organs or child slavery in combat. Clearly, the widely accepted definition above makes it clear that the PC(USA) needs more breadth and depth in our policy on human trafficking. The church is called to articulate and have a clear policy on this issue. The demand from congregations and the ecumenical community for resources and support addressing the breadth of modern day slavery must be met with an expanded and clear statement of policy.

11-14 Resolution on Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update

Source: Committee
Sponsor: Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy
Committee: [11-14] Peacemaking and International Issues
Type: General Assembly Full Consideration
Topic: Unassigned

Recommendation

Seeking to support efforts to end the continuing problem of sexual assault within the U.S. military, the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommend that the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the following measures:

1. Support efforts of Presbyterian and other military chaplains to provide pastoral care and advocacy for members of the military who have experienced any form of abuse, including sexual harassment or worse.
2. Commend legislative and military leaders involved in developing policies to eliminate sexual violence within the armed services, including:
   a. Comprehensive mental health evaluation of inductees and periodic mental health assessment of service personnel for risk of sexual violence;
   b. Authorization and funding of research on military sexual trauma, the contexts and conditions for its occurrence, and its clinical treatment;
   c. Removal of court-martial discretion from the chain-of-command, giving it instead to military prosecutors (and removing the ability of a single officer to invalidate the judgment of a military court or block its enforcement);
   d. Reform of the Veterans Administration (VA) system in relation to treatment of service men and women who have suffered military sexual trauma;
   e. Establishing “best practices” for the treatment of military sexual trauma Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder;
   f. Coordination of research and implementation with the militaries of allied nations and international treaty organizations; and
   g. Develop, implement, and institutionalize policies within military training for education and open discussion of sexual violence, dangers associated with hyper-masculinity and challenges to maintaining healthy relationships in high stress contexts.
3. Direct the Office of Public Witness and encourage Presbyterians generally to support the development of preventive, restorative, and where necessary punitive measures to end the problem of sexual abuse in the U.S. military.
4. Direct the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and encourage Presbyterians generally, to support the implementation of policies to prevent sexual violence by U.S. and other military personnel engaged in joint jurisdictions such as United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping and North American Treaty Organization (NATO), both within these forces and among vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeking civilian populations.

Rationale

Sexual violence is one of the oldest, most pervasive, and most dehumanizing of sins. From the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34 to the one in four women today who will experience sexual violence in their lifetimes, sexual violence leaves a lamentable mark on our culture and faith narrative.

The PC(USA) condemns sexual violence in all its forms and, along with its predecessors, has a long history of advocacy for the rights of women and against sexual violence. This history is evidenced from the Westminster Larger Catechism’s prohibition of rape (Book of Confessions, 7.249) to the 1971 General Assembly of the UPCUSA’s affirmation that “men and women must act as equal partners and contribute to the ministry of the church” to the 219th General Assembly (2008) of the PC(USA)’s study on pay equity and gender.

The PC(USA) has approved several resolutions regarding sexual violence in a military context, where the chain of command creates particular vulnerability for those lower in rank. In 1975, the General Assembly of the UPCUSA declared that “sexism and rigid sex-stereotyping [in the military] ... should be vigorously eliminated.” In 1986, the 198th General Assembly of the unified PC(USA) denounced sex tourism and prostitution around military bases and installations. Most recently, the 210th General Assembly (1998) approved a “Resolution on the Military and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women” denouncing rape used as a weapon of war as a human rights violation, a form of torture, and a war crime.

This resolution focuses on a particular context of vulnerability but does not ignore other contexts, including prisons, hospitals, and migrant labor, where such dangers have been addressed.

Sexual violence is not a crime of passion but an abuse of power. The 1998 resolution calls rape “a form of torture ... that seeks to degrade and destroy. ... Its goal is domination and dehumanization.” Furthermore, sexual violence grows from a distorted understanding of masculinity common to the rhetoric of military training camps: “Military training and socialization often send confusing messages about gender relations. Slogans and other expressions of aggression often equate sexual prowess with dominance and military strength.” Our church in the past has boldly proclaimed, “that which degrades women and which equates maleness with violence and conquest is contrary to the development of a whole, mature person.”

Within the power hierarchy of the military chain-of-command, justice in situations of sexual violence is often obscured. It was in the context of war that King David sexually commandeered Bathsheba and ordered her husband Uriah killed to cover his crime (see 2 Sam. 11, 12). As God called the prophet Nathan then, so the Spirit calls the Church today to witness to this abuse of power, calling for an end to sexual violence in the military and a system of justice for its victims removed from the power structure in which the abuse took place.

Historical Overview:

Issues of sexual assault in the military came into public awareness with the U.S. Navy Tailhook scandal of 1991. Today, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (Articles 120–120c) explicitly identifies various forms of sexual assault as legally actionable and punishable crimes under military law. In spite of this, sexual assaults within the U.S. military continue to rise. In 2005, the Department of Defense established the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program intended to promote prevention, encourage increased reporting of sexual assault, and improve the military services’ response capabilities for victims. There are five priorities of the SAPR Office (SAPRO). They are:

1. Institutionalize prevention strategies in the military community;
2. Increase the climate of victim confidence associated with reporting;
3. Improve sexual assault response;
4. Improve system accountability; and
5. Improve stakeholder knowledge and understanding of SAPR.1

Yet, in 2012 there were 3,374 reports of sexual assault, a 6 percent increase over the prior year.1 However, the FY2012 SAPRO report released by the Department of Defense (DoD) in May estimated actual instances of sexual assault to number 26,000 cases in fiscal year 2012, a 37 percent increase from 2011, indicating that such cases are massively underreported. In a separate survey, 23 percent of female and 4 percent of male service members reported unwanted sexual contact (USC)—ranging from groping to rape—since enlistment. Even though women in the military experience a markedly higher incidence of sexual assault, because women comprise only approximately 14 percent of the military, the total number of males who have experienced unwanted sexual contact is estimated to be equal to or greater than the number of females who have experienced USC.15 Of the 575 cases that were eventually processed, only 96 resulted in court-martial proceedings, and substantially fewer in conviction.16

The 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, recently signed into law by President Obama, represents a significant attempt to address sexual assault in the military. (See appendix for full list of relevant provisions.) While these provisions are significant and helpful in addressing matters of internal military culture and legal process, they fall short of what is needed. They are (a) not comprehensive, focusing instead on regulatory, legal, and procedural issues; and (b) they do not remove the decision of whether or not to take reported cases to court martial completely out of the chain-of-command and give that decision to military prosecutors. (This matter of judicial independence would affect the accountability of each command jurisdiction and, in turn, would reinforce the accountability of military prosecutors to legal standards within their own chain of command.) The reasons for emphasizing the relative independence of the military’s judiciary have to do with the characteristics of organizations in which abuse occurs.

The World Health Organization’s Guidelines for Medico-Legal Care for Victims of Sexual Violence17 identifies four categories of factors associated with men committing rape. These are characteristics of the following: society, community, relationship, and individual perpetrator. The factors include:

- Society: Norms granting men control over female behavior; acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict; notions of masculinity linked to dominance, honor, or aggression; norms supportive of sexual violence; norms supportive of male superiority and sexual entitlement; weak laws and policies related to sexual violence and gender equality; high levels of crime and other forms of violence.
- Community: Poverty, low socioeconomic status, unemployment, associating with sexually aggressive or delinquent peers, lack of institutional support from police and judicial system, general tolerance of sexual assault within the community, weak community sanctions against perpetrators of sexual violence.
- Relationship: Associates with sexually aggressive or delinquent peers, family environment: characterized by physical violence and few resources, strongly patriarchal relationship or family environment: characterized by physical violence and few resources, emotionally unsupportive family environment, family honor considered more important than the health and safety of the victim.
- Individual Perpetrator: Alcohol and drug use, coercive sexual fantasies, attitudes supportive of sexual violence, impulsive and antisocial tendencies, preference for impersonal sex, hostility towards women, history of sexual abuse as a child, witnessed family violence as a child.

While these factors arise from research in civilian, not military, contexts they nonetheless pertain to recruits and inductees from the civilian sector who would pursue military induction. There are two issues here: First, recruits should undergo a full mental health screening prior to induction that encompasses these factors to assess for level of risk for perpetrating sexual assault. Second, the new law does not contain a provision for (or funding of) research on sexual assault in the military, more specifically a mental health and sociological analysis of the conditions and personality factors that might be predictive of propensities for sexual assault in a military context, the evidence-based efficacy of treatment modalities for victims, and evaluation research for programs of prevention through intervention.

In addition, the new law ignores the discrimination that occurs within the Veterans Affairs hospital system against victims of sexual violence.

... veterans struggling with the devastating mental health effects of military sexual violence who turn to the Department of Veterans Affairs for help will instead find discrimination. Their claims for disability compensation will turn out differently depending on their gender and where they live. And the VA will expect survivors to submit documentation that often does not exist—like official reports of rape or the results of pregnancy or STD tests—while taking veterans who claim benefits for many other forms of trauma at their word.18

The Service Women’s Action Network, in conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), has made a series of recommendations that redress the issues within the Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital system. In eighteen specific recommendations, they call upon Congress to:

- act swiftly to pass a body of important legislation that reforms VA regulations regarding disability claims based on PTSD for in-service personal assault, improves training and oversight of [VA Regional Offices] with poor records in granting MST [Military Sexual Trauma]-related claims, and improves VA transparency and record-keeping in its treatment of MST-based claims.19

Adequate remediation of the escalating sexual violence within the U.S. military against its own personnel requires a comprehensive and aggressive legislative approach that addresses (a) regulatory and legal parameters, (b) comprehensive mental health assessment of inductees, (c) ongoing risk evaluation of military personnel, (d) adequate clinical treatment of victims of military sexual trauma, (e) vigorous research on sexual assault within the military to establish predictive markers and preventive interventions, and (f) evaluation research of programs to identify best clinical practices in the treatment of military sexual trauma.

Again, this resolution should not be taken to imply that the U.S. military suffers from a unique problem or danger. While some militaries do not report significant levels of sexual violence, others are known even to practice rape as a form of military strategy to demoralize civilian populations. The U.S. military should not be afraid to learn from other militaries, as well as to share its own knowledge of how to “raise the bar” for protection of service members and civilians.

In summary, the core justification of military establishments is to provide protection and security, a mission that is compromised when violence and sexual abuse occur within the military itself. Without addressing larger questions of militarism and the need for other methods of conflict resolution, this statement by the Assembly addresses practical measures to reform a problem that affects millions of U.S. citizens and others exposed to the U.S. military.

Appendix

Recent legislative efforts to address sexual assault in the military from the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, Section D: "Military Justice, Including Sexual Assault Prevention and Response”:

Sec. 531. Limitations on convening authority discretion regarding court-martial findings and sentence.
Sec. 532. Elimination of five-year statute of limitations on trial by court-martial for additional offenses involving sex-related crimes.
Sec. 533. Discharge or dismissal for certain sex-related offenses and trial of offenses by general courts-martial.
Sec. 534. Regulations regarding consideration of application for permanent change of station or unit transfer by victims of sexual assault.
Sec. 535. Consideration of need for, and authority to provide for, temporary administrative reassignment or removal of a member on active duty who is accused of committing a sexual assault or related offense.

Sec. 536. Victims' Counsel for victims of sex-related offenses and related provisions.

Sec. 537. Inspector General investigation of allegations of retaliatory personnel actions taken in response to making protected communications regarding sexual assault.

Sec. 538. Secretary of Defense report on role of commanders in military justice process.

Sec. 539. Review and policy regarding Department of Defense investigative practices in response to allegations of sex-related offenses.

Sec. 540. Uniform training and education programs for sexual assault prevention and response program.

Sec. 541. Development of selection criteria for assignment as Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Program Managers, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Sexual Assault Victim Advocates, and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners-Adult/Adolescent.

Sec. 542. Extension of crime victims’ rights to victims of offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Sec. 543. Defense counsel interview of complaining witnesses in presence of counsel for the complaining witness or a Sexual Assault Victim Advocate.

Sec. 544. Participation by complaining witnesses in clemency phase of courts-martial process.

Sec. 545. Eight-day incident reporting requirement in response to unrestricted report of sexual assault in which the victim is a member of the Armed Forces.

Sec. 546. Amendment to Manual for Courts-Martial to eliminate considerations relating to character and military service of accused in initial disposition of sex-related offenses.

Sec. 547. Inclusion of letter of reprimands, nonpunitive letter of reprimands and counseling statements.

Sec. 548. Enhanced protections for prospective members and new members of the Armed Forces during entry-level processing and training.

Sec. 549. Independent reviews and assessments of Uniform Code of Military Justice and judicial proceedings of sexual assault cases.


Sec. 550A. Discharge or dismissal, and confinement required for certain sex-related offenses committed by members of the Armed Forces.

Sec. 550B. Enhancement to requirements for availability of information on sexual assault prevention and response resources.

Sec. 550C. Military Hazing Prevention Oversight Panel.

Sec. 550D. Prevention of sexual assault at military service academies.

Sec. 550E. Ensuring awareness of policy to instruct victims of sexual assault seeking security clearance to answer no to question 21.

Sec. 550F. Report on policies and regulations regarding service members living with or at risk of contracting HIV.

Sec. 550G. Additional modification of annual Department of Defense reporting requirements regarding sexual assaults and prevention and response program.

Endnotes


2 Minutes, UPCUSA, Part I, 1971, p. 299. In 1972, the PCUS issued a similar call to "end discrimination on the basis of sex" (Minutes, PCUS, 1972, Part I, p. 178).


5 Minutes, PC(USA), 1986, Part I, p. 645.


7 Minutes, PC(USA), 1998, Part I, p. 517.

8 Minutes, PC(USA), 1998, Part I, p. 517.


12 U.S. Code, Title 10, chapter 47, Articles of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Subchapter X, Article 120 through 120c.


14 Ibid, p. 57


Comment

PMA Comment

The Office of Public Witness has engaged in advocacy that seeks to reduce violence against women and girls, provide increased support and services for victims of relationship violence, and various other measures that will primarily benefit civilian victims of crime. In particular, the Office of Public Witness has been active in advocating for the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWAA). In the context of recent congressional debates, PC(USA) General Assembly did not have policy that adequately speaks to the role of the military chain of command in the prosecution of military sexual assault. Consequently, the Office of Public Witness remained silent on the bill. If approved, this resolution would speak to that gap in policy.
The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014):

1. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) to engage, communicate, and collaborate with all areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on matters of gender justice advocacy.

2. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) to ask members of ACWC to communicate the work of ACWC to their home synods, presbyteries, congregations, and other PC(USA) constituencies in which they participate and to bring back to ACWC local gender justice concerns from these groups in order to increase the knowledge of ACWC around the church and to inform ACWC’s work with the broader concerns of the church.

3. Urge the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns to use the summary report from the survey conducted by the PC(USA) Research Services to inform its work priorities for the next four years. [1]

4. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns to continue to advocate for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s commitment to an intersectional perspective and approach to gender and racial justice issues, as described in the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved document, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God, including advocating for robust action lifting up and celebrating the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God and monitoring the fulfillment of all recommendations made by past and future Women of Color Consultations. [2]

5. Incorporate the review of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns’ Manual of Operations and meeting minutes as a part of ACWC’s regular Six-Year Self-Study Review process with the General Assembly, removing this responsibility from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to comply with the current (November 2013) Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual in maintaining the dual-member relationship with ACWC, in accordance with the instruction that the advocacy committees “shall” have a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and in light of the particular nature of the advocacy committee’s mandate to “advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of women’s concerns” and to “monitor the implementation of women’s policies and programs relative to women’s concerns.” [3]

7. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women to uphold the instruction given by the 205th General Assembly (1993) to ensure programmatic advocacy: “Under the leadership of those working in the areas of racial ethnic ministries and women’s ministries, ... ensure advocacy and monitoring functions ... throughout the ministries and agencies of the General Assembly.” [4]


commitment to gender and racial justice. The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) was created by the General Assembly to:

- assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole. [1]

The committee was created to ensure the PC(USA) is faithful to its commitment to gender justice—both internally and in its witness to the wider world. [2] Unfortunately, left in the wake of the creation of ACWC was a major downsizing of the church’s programmatic gender justice work. What was once a full Women’s Ministry Unit became a program area within the National Ministries Division. [3] Four committees—The Women’s Ministry Unit Committee, the Women Employed by the Church Committee, the Justice for Women Committee, and the Committee of Women of Color—were all eliminated just prior to the creation of ACWC. [4] So while the creation of the advocacy committee represents a commitment of the church to maintain some element of monitoring its practices with regards to gender justice, it also represented a major reduction in the priority given to gender justice issues within the PC(USA).

With this noted, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns exists because as a church coming out of the Reformed tradition, the PC(USA) acknowledges that sin is real and that the system will necessarily need tuning and prompting, prodding and adjusting. In a world where people are still mistreated, silenced, and ignored because of their gender, the voice of advocacy for women is still necessary. The denomination was intentional about ensuring resourcing and support to encourage gender justice within the PC(USA), because that voice helps to continually re-create the church to be a better reflection of God’s realm on earth. Sometimes the voice of advocacy calls for looking internally and making some changes within. Other times it challenges the church to be to the world a bold voice and strong example of what is just.

While categorized as a committee of the General Assembly, ACWC’s staff person is lodged in the Executive Director’s Office of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [5] The current requirements for the makeup of the membership of the committee are found in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations:

C. Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

This advocacy committee shall consist of:

2 clergy women
1 woman church lay employee
1 Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace
7 members at-large, chosen to balance the committee geographically, racially and ethnically, and with consideration to age and expertise.

1 Presbyterian Mission Agency Board [member] nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Nominating Committee and elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to serve a four-year non-renewable term. This voting member fulfills the responsibility of liaison between the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the advocacy committee.

At least four members of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall be racial ethnic women. At least two members of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns will be men, but no more than three members may be men. [6]

The intentionally diverse composition of ACWC results in varied experiences, knowledge, and expertise around the table. In addition to the direct membership connections to Presbyterian Women and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, ACWC sends and receives liaison members to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). The ACWC also has one member who holds dual membership with ACWC and the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), a position that allows this person voice and vote on both committees. Two members of ACWC also serve as members of the Women of Color Joint Working Group. Throughout the years, ACWC has invited liaisons from the National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen (NAPC), Racial Ethnic Young Women Together (REYWT), the National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW), World Mission, and the communications department of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, with varying levels of presence by these representatives. During any meetings that occur in Louisville, ACWC is intentional about connecting with various staff people from the Presbyterian Mission Agency, including staff from Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women, Compassion, Peace and Justice, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

B. Assigned Functions for ACWC

The ACWC has direct access to both the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, meaning it can bring policy statements, resolutions, study papers, and advice and counsel memoranda or other correspondence to either body. [7] The ACWC also has a corresponding member with each group who has voice but no vote.
The particular functions assigned to the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns are as follows[8]:

a. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.

b. Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues the Board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.

c. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women's concerns.

d. Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and provide information to the church as requested.

e. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns.

f. Monitor the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns.

g. Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

In the section directly following this, we will address in detail some of the ways in which ACWC fulfills the functions to which it has been assigned.

As a committee of the General Assembly, ACWC is a policy entity—meaning it doesn't do any programmatic work. In the fall of 2008, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (then General Assembly Council) underwent a restructuring process that moved the staff for the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) entirely outside of the program area of Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women and into the Executive Director's Office. Along with this structural change came a new emphasis on keeping the policy work of ACWC entirely separate from the programmatic work done in Women's Ministries. For example, ACWC (outside of its ability to bring resolutions and suggestions to General Assembly) no longer has a direct connection to the production of resources, educational presentations, training opportunities, or determining the direction and foci of gender justice work at the national level of the denomination. As this 2008 restructuring also meant the elimination of their former staff person's job, ACWC received a new part-time staff person in the winter of 2009. Unlike the previous staff person, this person was responsible for resourcing the work of the advocacy committee alone and would not have related programmatic responsibilities, as was previously the case.[9] Given the new structure, for the purposes of this self-study, we will focus more intently on the work of ACWC after the 2008 restructuring, but will address some of the challenges of the current staffing model further on in the report.[10]

C. How ACWC Fulfills Its Assigned Functions

ACWC Meetings:

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns generally meets face-to-face three times per year for 2–2.5 days. During General Assembly years, there is an additional meeting devoted to working on advice and counsel memoranda for the overtures that come in from the presbyteries and the reports coming out of various task forces and commissions of the General Assembly. The ACWC in some ways functions on the same two-year cycle as the General Assembly. New members are elected onto the committee at each assembly, with other members rotating off. Every late summer or fall after General Assembly, a good portion of ACWC's first meeting is devoted to orientation of new members. From there, the group assesses that which may have been assigned to them by General Assembly and looks at the work related to gender justice that the assembly may have assigned to various program areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agencies. At this initial meeting, the group sets its goals and priorities for the next two-year cycle leading into General Assembly, focusing on gender justice issues that are particularly relevant in the church and the world at that time. The group then creates working groups as a means of completing the work of the committee. During this last cycle, ACWC functioned with two working groups: (1) Gender, Power and Privilege (focused on issues such as violence against women and reproductive health) and (2) God's Household (focused on issues such as clergywomen support and theologies emerging from women's experiences).

The ACWC perpetually keeps the GA-assigned deadlines for responding to referrals and submitting resolutions before them. Over the last six years, all General Assembly deadlines for work have been met by ACWC. As time creeps nearer to the next assembly (usually beginning in the fall of non-GA years), ACWC starts to pull together any work that it determines should be brought to the attention of the General Assembly in the form of a resolution. Of course, there is always the chance that something essential will come up between that time and the winter deadline, at which point one of the working groups generally jumps into action to get work completed in time to be submitted to the General Assembly.

Meeting agendas are created by ACWC’s three-person leadership team and staff and are focused around whatever work the General Assembly may have assigned to the committee, as well as any current issues in the church and
society that ACWC may be monitoring. Each meeting begins and ends with worship, and the group is intentional about re-connecting with one another's lives before launching into work. For the last two years, the committee spends some time near the beginning of each meeting answering the question: “How can ACWC be the best ACWC in the world?” This allows the group to assess the progress of their work, to evaluate their faithfulness to the task they've been assigned by the PC(USA), and to consider whether the vision they have for their work within this context is being realized.

As an extended part of this conversation, ACWC also does a check-in at each meeting to see whether their commitment to holding an intersectional perspective and approach to gender justice issues is indeed being upheld. While the focus of the committee is gender, over the years ACWC has sought to be intentional about taking into account the realities of women who find themselves at the intersection of other social or cultural identities that affect the way they live and move in the world, whether that identity is shaped by race, ethnicity, class, physical ability, etc. Understanding these intersections is essential for understanding what it means to work for justice for all women. For this reason, ACWC has written this practice of checking-in on this commitment into each meeting of the committee.

Outside of the full-group check-in, the leadership team as well as each of the working groups give reports back to the full committee as to what work has been done between meetings. Also, members of the committee who have participated in any events or served as liaisons to meetings on behalf of ACWC between ACWC meetings are held accountable by being asked to give reports, which often lead into discussion about follow-up action or suggestions for collaboration with other groups.

There is effort put into providing an educational component to each meeting, whether that is a presentation by an expert within the committee, a workshop by an expert outside the committee, or a book discussion of something ACWC committed to read to inform their work. Within the last few years, however, ACWC has heard presentations from numerous experts, including: Dr. Gay Byron on Womanist theology and her book, Symbolic Blackness in Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature, Dr. Kate Ott on her work with the report, Sex and the Seminary, Nicolette Paterson of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and Reverend Noelle Damico with Elena Stein of Interfaith Action and Gerardo Reyes Cháves from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers on the gender justice issues that the Coalition of Immokalee Workers address, to name just a few of the guests ACWC has hosted. The group has also spent time studying books like Katharine Rhodes Henderson's God's Troublemakers: How Women of Faith Are Changing the World and Letty Russell's Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference.

The group meets in various locations around the country, depending on what focus the group currently has and what resources ACWC seeks for its work. At times, the group meets in a particular location so as to be able to participate in relevant events, such as the Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference in Washington, D.C., the Commission on the Status of Women in New York City, or the National Council of Churches General Assembly held in New Orleans, La. Other times, meetings are in Louisville with a concerted effort to make connections and collaborate with staff people at the Presbyterian Center.

Between meetings, countless email communications fly through cyberspace, and untold hours are clocked on conference calls by the subcommittees/working groups of ACWC. As the world moves, ACWC members are constantly tracking those movements that have a particular and direct impact on women specifically. Further, as the denomination makes decisions and implements policy, ACWC members monitor actions taken by the church that may unknowingly challenge or compromise the PC(USA)'s commitment to gender justice.

D. Challenges as a Policy Committee

After the restructuring that occurred in the Presbyterian Mission Agency in 2008, maintaining visibility of ACWC's work has been somewhat challenging. No longer connected to any program area, ACWC relies on its website, Facebook page, articles in the online journal, Unbound, and word of mouth to share the work that it is doing. The committee has made an effort over the last two years to seek out connection with their local congregations and worshiping communities to not only spread the word about ACWC's work, but to gather information and input about what those around the church see as the most pressing gender justice issues. Even so, the results of the survey conducted by PC(USA) Research Services in conjunction with this self-study revealed that fewer than half (46 percent) of those surveyed reported being very or somewhat familiar with ACWC, while over a quarter (26 percent) reported that they are not familiar with ACWC.[11]

Given ACWC's assigned functions as a policy committee, it is unclear how heavily the responsibility of making ACWC's work known lies with ACWC itself. The committee is called to "through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church," yet the work to which it has been assigned is clearly policy-based, limiting the committee when it comes to producing materials, giving workshops, or taking other actions that might naturally spread the word about ACWC's work. The committee believes it is important that a wider group of Presbyterians know about and feel some connection to ACWC's work, but the path toward increasing recognition and connection has become more difficult with the removal of ACWC from the programmatic side of gender justice advocacy work within the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This is an ongoing conversation within the committee, and one of the actions to which the group would like to commit is to individually take ACWC home with them to educate and connect those in their personal Presbyterian circles, as well as to bring back to ACWC the hopes or concerns of those in their local presbyteries, congregations, etc. The ACWC takes seriously the charge to be a prophetic voice for the church, which requires not only solid knowledge of the church's policy, but also understanding of the connection of those around the church to how that policy might be used as an advocacy tool beyond the church.

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This conversation further connects to ACWC’s concerns about the lack of advocacy work happening in the program area of gender justice in Women’s Ministries. The staff who at one time was responsible for programmatic gender justice advocacy had the ability to better connect the wider church to critical issues and work that could be done to move toward gender justice and was in turn able to make the connection between ACWC’s work and the people in the pews. After the 2008 restructuring of the Presbyterian Mission Agency that separated the programmatic gender justice staffing from the policy staffing, ACWC has been informed that they are the only ones responsible for advocacy at this point. This is not how ACWC understands the intentions of the 205th General Assembly (1993), the same assembly that approved the creation of ACWC. That assembly stated regarding the Presbyterian Mission Agency (then General Assembly Council) that, “Under the leadership of those working in the areas of racial ethnic and women’s ministries, it will ensure advocacy and monitoring functions for these areas throughout the ministries and agencies of the General Assemblies.”[12] There is currently not a staff position dedicated to programmatic advocacy, though it seems to be a natural fit within the position of the associate for Gender and Racial Justice. Gender justice work inherently requires advocacy, as equality for women and men in the church and in the world is not yet a reality.

E. Relationship with the General Assembly (Assigned Functions A&C):

One of the assigned functions of ACWC is to prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on gender justice to the General Assembly.[13] This preparation and writing occurs over a two-year cycle and is directly influenced by current events in the church and in the world. It is work often done in collaboration—in particular, with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) or the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and/or other entities with particular expertise both inside and outside of the PC(USA).

Reports and resolutions vary from year to year—some focusing internally, and others looking beyond the boundaries of the committee to any issue is always grounded in scripture, responsive to the witness of reformed theology, and emerging from “the voices of people long silenced.”[14] Nothing ACWC suggests to the General Assembly goes into effect unless the General Assembly commits to it by approving it. Here we’ll offer just a few examples of how ACWC has fulfilled this function:

In 2006, ACWC brought a resolution to the 217th General Assembly (2006) calling for a study on the Status of Women in the PCUSA.[15] Among other things, this resolution required ACWC to assess the status of women in elected and staff positions, in decision-making and leadership positions in the PC(USA) at all levels through surveys and other data collection methods. After two years, ACWC came back to the 218th General Assembly (2008) and called for a task force to be created to continue this work in a more comprehensive fashion by creating a methodology to access the status of women at all levels in the church.[16] The task force designed the methodology for the research as asked and presented it to the 220th General Assembly (2012).[17] It passed in committee but failed on the floor. A representative of ACWC is now working with the director of Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women to advance in the study by using the PC(USA)’s Research Services and seeking grants to fund it. As of the writing of this report, ACWC intends to submit the study to be considered again by the General Assembly, in case that should be necessary.

In 2008, ACWC recognized the growing awareness of and focus on the eradication of human trafficking. For this reason, they brought a resolution to the 218th General Assembly (2008).[18] This resolution passed, and since that time, a Human Trafficking Roundtable has been formed amongst PC(USA) staff people working at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville. This year, ACWC has again raised the issue of human trafficking to the attention of the General Assembly, calling for the creation of comprehensive PC(USA) policy surrounding this topic.

In 2010, in collaboration with the National Presbyterian Hispanic Caucus, ACWC brought a resolution addressing the situation of violence against women on the U.S./Mexico border.[19] Out of this resolution came a team that traveled to Juarez, Mexico, to learn more and to come home and educate Presbyterians by sharing their experiences and the resources created.[20] At the 220th General Assembly (2012), ACWC member, Belinda Rice, shared her experiences as a member of the team that traveled to Mexico, along with some of the online resources created by the group with attendees of the Women’s Orientation Breakfast. The word about issues of femicide in the border region continues to spread through the work of that team created as a result of ACWC’s resolution.

In 2012, ACWC was required by the General Assembly to respond to two referrals. One of those referrals was to “make recommendations that contribute to a proactive, health-giving ministry to and relationship with our clergywomen” following a review of resources currently available that was to have been done primarily via the Office of Committee on Ministry.[21] Unfortunately, before such a review could occur, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (then the General Assembly Mission Council) restructured, and the Office of Committee on Ministry was dissolved. Since ACWC had been in regular communication with the coordinator of Women’s Leadership Development at the time, ACWC knew of the important work she was doing via a program called Deborah’s Daughters. Through visits around the church, this staff person was gathering information from women clergy about their experiences. Instead of pushing for the original review of resources to be completed, ACWC saw this as an opportunity to support an already functioning, successful ministry and suggested to the 220th General Assembly (2012) that ACWC make its recommendations about clergywomen after reviewing the information gathered in the Deborah’s Daughters visits. The assembly agreed, and ACWC will make recommendations to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) after receiving information from staff in Women’s Ministries.

In the meantime, ACWC has received information via the survey conducted by Research Services in conjunction with this self-study and would call to the attention of the assembly the responses regarding the situation of clergywomen in
Aside from self-initiated reports and resolutions and General Assembly assigned referrals, ACWC carefully reviews all of the overtures and reports coming to the General Assembly from presbyteries and other entities. In response to some of these, ACWC attaches an advice and counsel memoranda to the General Assembly, recommending approval or disapproval, often informing commissioners of particular relevant gender justice issues connected to the overtures or reports, or making specific recommendations of edits to the overture before approval. This function of ACWC is also included in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.[22] One example of this is ACWC’s frequent recommendation to incorporate United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 into various overtures addressing situations of violence and war around the globe. The UNSCR 1325 urges the participation of women and the incorporation of gender perspectives into all peace and security efforts and highlights the essential role that women play in peacemaking efforts.[23] This is a perspective often left out of overtures addressing situations of violence and war, but on occasion it has been added by the General Assembly as a result of ACWC’s advice and counsel.[24]

Even while at the meeting of the General Assembly, ACWC is constantly monitoring any new business or commissioners’ resolutions that come in. At the 219th General Assembly (2010), a commissioners’ resolution calling for a renewed commitment to using expansive and inclusive language for God and the people of God was submitted. The ACWC drafted an advice and counsel memorandum for the resolution, advising approval but with a suggested addition, which ultimately became a part of the final, passed resolution.[25]

F. Relationship with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Assigned Functions A&B):

As a part of their prescribed composition, ACWC has one full, voting member who is also a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Board).[26] As the size of the Board has decreased, it has become increasingly more difficult to find members willing and able to serve in this capacity. Unfortunately, at the time of the writing of this report, ACWC has been informed that they will have a former member of the Board serving as their dual member for at least the next two years (2014–2016). This will clearly diminish the tie between the Board and ACWC and make it more difficult for ACWC to keep informed of the work of the Board in order to do its advocacy work in the context of the Board. This relationship was created as one of mutuality, to both maintain the Board’s connection to ACWC and ACWC’s to the Board. Further, ACWC has a particular need to have this strong connection, as part of its assigned functioning is to advise the Board and monitor the implementation of gender justice related policies and programs.[27]

In fact, the Board itself (then called the General Assembly Mission Council) stressed the important role of the advocacy committees’ dual Board member when it commented on the Report of the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee:

Even though there might be meetings in the future that do not include corresponding members, the [Presbyterian Mission Agency Board] would have the benefit of the perspective of the advisory and advocacy committees through these members of the [Presbyterian Mission Agency Board] who also serve on those committees...[28]

The dual Board/ACWC member has voice and vote on the Board to serve as a voice representing the perspective of ACWC in the deliberations of the Board. Ultimately, the Board has written this essential relationship into the requirements it has for itself in its manual, stating that the advisory and advocacy committees “shall” have members as detailed (including one Board member).[29] This is stronger language than that which is used for other Board-related committees. For these reasons, ACWC has submitted Recommendation 6 at the beginning of this report.

One of ACWC’s co-chairs also serves as a corresponding member to the Board. This member has voice but not vote in the committee and plenary deliberations of the Board. This has also been an important connecting relationship between ACWC and the Board, though this person is not welcome in closed meetings unless specifically invited and so cannot speak on behalf of the committee in such instances where no invitation is extended. Unfortunately, with the removal of a current voting Board member as one of ACWC’s members, ACWC will no longer have a voice at the Board table in any closed meetings to which the member is not invited.

Though they’ve not been approached by the Board, ACWC could potentially serve as a tremendous resource to the Board and would gladly connect with the Board to either give clear gender analysis on various issues, or to prepare something related to gender justice for the General Assembly. In fact, members of ACWC have participated in the creation of a tool that can be used for gender analysis. The tool was created as part of the work of the National Council of Churches Justice for Women Working Group, and can be accessed free of charge online.[30] This is just one example of a place where ACWC’s expertise could connect with and enrich the work of the Board. While according to the functions assigned to ACWC, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may request that ACWC prepare policy statements, resolutions, etc. However, the Board has not made any requests of this nature to ACWC in at least the past six years.
Even so, there has been some effort from both the Board and ACWC to increase collaboration. The special review conducted in 2010 by the General Assembly appointed Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee noted strain in the relationship between the Board and the advocacy and advisory committees.\[^{31}\] One result of this review was to put in place a regular check-in between the committees and the Board, which is now reflected in the Manual of Operations of the Board. The nature of this check-in has been to inform the Executive Committee of the Board of the current work of ACWC and to answer any questions about that work. While this ensures a connection is made once every couple of years at least, ACWC would love to see a more collegial and reciprocal relationship develop as partners in ministry with the Board.

Between General Assemblies, ACWC advocates to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of gender justice. An example of this work is ACWC’s collaboration with ACSWP in raising concerns to the Board about equity in the implementation of the new (2013) compensation model of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The committee had a conference call and expressed in a joint letter with ACSWP its concerns to the Personnel Subcommittee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, advocating for the consideration of some alternative approaches that might more effectively ensure just treatment for all and the avoidance of unintentional bias. Ultimately, the Board chose to make no changes to the compensation model as a result of the suggestions made by the committees.

G. Monitoring and Maintaining PC(USA) Policy (Assigned Functions D, E&F)

Whether General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are meeting or not, at all times, ACWC monitors the implementation of PC(USA) policies and programs relative to gender justice. Much of this is done via conversation with various staff people responsible for programs related to gender justice. The ACWC makes a point of checking in with relevant staff in Louisville on a regular basis to hear what work is being done.

Over the last six years (which mirror the past twenty years[^32]), there has been a drastic staffing reduction in the Women’s Ministries area, which is (as of the writing of this study) down to one full-time staff person and two deployed, part-time field staff because of staff vacancies and general reductions in this area. Within the past five years, staff positions and staff people have come and gone in Women’s Ministries. The coordinator for Women’s Leadership Development and staff person holding that position was eliminated, and the position was downgraded to associate level. That associate position was never filled and has since been eliminated. There have been two different people who have come and then left the position of associate for Gender and Racial Justice, neither holding that position for more than a year. The position of Young Women’s Leadership Development has been held by three people in the last five years and has now been reconfigured into the position of mission associate for Women’s Leadership Development and Young Women’s Ministries. This position has recently been filled. Women’s Ministries is now down to two full-time associate-level positions (only one of which is staffed at the writing of this report) and two part-time, deployed field staff for Racial Ethnic Young Women Together and the National Network of Presbyterian College Women.

The lack of staffing and the general trend that continues to slash programming for women is of great concern to ACWC. While ACWC monitors the work being done and makes recommendations to General Assembly for potential new work, ACWC also recognizes the reality is that with such limited staffing, there is only so much that can be done. Short of recommending that hiring happen more expeditiously and that positions no longer get reduced or eliminated, there is little ACWC can do to positively affect the programmatic side of gender justice work within the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

And yet, ACWC regularly brings to GA recommendations with the goal of ensuring implementation of gender justice programming, particularly that to which previous assemblies have committed. Leading into the 220th General Assembly (2012), and after being in conversation with the Women of Color Joint Working Group, ACWC was concerned that few people in the PC(USA) knew about the **Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God**—the decade we’re currently celebrating in which the PC(USA), as a result of a decision of the 218th General Assembly (2008), has committed to lifting up and celebrating the gifts of women of color. For this reason, ACWC brought it to the attention of the General Assembly via a resolution with recommendations to work to make this important decade more widely known, celebrated, and ultimately put into action. The General Assembly voted to approve these important recommendations. You can see that resolution [here](#), or in Appendix 5 of this report.

Looking at the results of the self-study survey conducted by the PC(USA) Research Services Department, there continues to be a disconnect between the importance expressed by the respondents regarding participation and inclusion of women of color and their familiarity with the report, “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and sharing New Harmonies.” As mentioned above, ACWC has continually worked to lift this 2008 report up and celebrate in which the PC(USA), as a result of a decision of the 218th General Assembly (2008), has committed to lifting up and celebrating the gifts of women of color. For this reason, ACWC brought it to the attention of the General Assembly via a resolution with recommendations to work to make this important decade more widely known, celebrated, and ultimately put into action. The General Assembly voted to approve these important recommendations. You can see that resolution [here](#), or in Appendix 5 of this report.

There have been two Women of Color Consultations since the report was submitted to the General Assembly in 2008. A full report with recommendations from the consultation in 2013 is included in the reports to the 221st General Assembly (2014). However, until these reports are given the priority that was called for by previous General Assemblies and articulated in ACWC’s Self Study Survey Report, it will continue to remain another report gathering dust on the shelves of the denomination. Many Presbyterians have been quick to give lip service to participation and inclusion of all people, but very slow in acting on it. There must be a concerted effort on the part of everyone. In conjunction with this report, ACWC requests that you also read the Women of Color Consultation Report submitted to
Another important gender justice issue and PC(USA) policy whose implementation ACWC saw falling by the wayside (which was also lifted up in a commissioners’ resolution at the 219th General Assembly (2010)) was that of using inclusive and expansive language for God and God’s people. Our language shapes the way we think about things, and the way we think about things shapes the way we speak. Limiting our language about God to masculine pronouns and images limits our understanding of God and aligns maleness with God while distinguishing femaleness as wholly other from God. While most would agree that God is not male, often the language used to refer to God falls into a masculine rut that fails to reflect the expansiveness of the God we serve. Words hold power, and defining God as male perpetuates the imbalance of power men have over women in the church and in the world. This issue continues to be a priority for ACWC.

A specific instance where ACWC chose to be in conversation with staff of the PC(USA) was following the 2010 Youth Triennium Gathering. A member of ACWC was in attendance at the gathering and noted the language used for God lacked the expansive nature reflective of our expansive God, relying heavily on male terms and pronouns for God throughout the gathering. In response, ACWC wrote a letter and had conversation with staff leading this effort to make suggestions for future planning efforts for that gathering in order to be more faithful to the PC(USA) policy on inclusive and expansive language. The staff was very open to having this conversation, and part of the issue was that some of the speakers were guests who were not necessarily Presbyterian. It is clear that the denomination as a whole could use more education on the importance and value of expansive language, and ideally we could come to a point where even outside speakers agree to honor the denomination’s commitment on language. Until this point, this issue has only been lifted up by ACWC or by programmatic staff in the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministry in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is important that intentionality surrounding language be taken up by all of the program areas in the Mission Agency, shaping the work, worship and print/web materials from areas like Theology, Worship and Education, World Mission, just to name a few.

A more recent example of policy monitoring as well as providing policy information to the Stated Clerk and Executive Director is ACWC’s collaboration with ACREC and ACSWP surrounding the contract made with the Hyatt Hotel in Louisville for the 2013 Big Tent. When it was brought to ACWC’s attention that there was a global boycott of Hyatt lacking the expansive nature reflective of our expansive God, relying heavily on male terms and pronouns for God throughout the gathering. In response, ACWC wrote a letter and had conversation with staff leading this effort to make suggestions for future planning efforts for that gathering in order to be more faithful to the PC(USA) policy on inclusive and expansive language. The staff was very open to having this conversation, and part of the issue was that some of the speakers were guests who were not necessarily Presbyterian. It is clear that the denomination as a whole could use more education on the importance and value of expansive language, and ideally we could come to a point where even outside speakers agree to honor the denomination’s commitment on language. Until this point, this issue has only been lifted up by ACWC or by programmatic staff in the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministry in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is important that intentionality surrounding language be taken up by all of the program areas in the Mission Agency, shaping the work, worship and print/web materials from areas like Theology, Worship and Education, World Mission, just to name a few.

The ACWC is also assigned to “maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of gender justice.”

What unites the members of ACWC always is their commitment to their faith in Jesus Christ and the justice for which that calls, as well as a deep loyalty and love for this church and the commitments for which it stands. Jesus is recorded to have said something about prophets not being accepted in their hometowns. What motivated the committees to action was their sense that using the Hyatt would contradict PC(USA) policy on workers’ rights, which has historically stood for the fair and just treatment of all workers. After discussion, those responsible for planning the Big Tent did ultimately break the contract for meeting space with the Hyatt. The best news coming out of this is that an agreement has been reached between the workers and Hyatt. The PC(USA) was a part of the movement for justice in a case that will ideally result in fair treatment for the workers.

H. Prophetic Witness (Assigned Function G)

The ACWC is also assigned to “maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of gender justice.”

What unites the members of ACWC always is their commitment to their faith in Jesus Christ and the justice for which that calls, as well as a deep loyalty and love for this church and the commitments for which it stands. Jesus is recorded to have said something about prophets not being accepted in their hometowns. This is sometimes the case for ACWC, as the call for justice is not always one that is easy to hear. For this reason, the committee often faces challenges and roadblocks to the work it is called to do, some which have been named already, and others which will be named below.

The work of gender justice advocacy is incredibly challenging, but ACWC remains committed to this essential task of calling the church and the world to be a better reflection of the realm of God. May it one day be so.

I. Internal Committee Challenges and Goals

The process of self-evaluation and study through this report has allowed ACWC to discern the following challenges and to set goals for addressing these challenges:

1. Time-commitment of serving on the committee, particularly for young women and men.

As is clear from this report, serving on ACWC requires a time commitment that can be challenging, particularly for those in school, in new jobs, or with small children. The contribution of younger members to the work of the committee has proven invaluable, and serving on ACWC is also a leadership learning opportunity for younger Presbyterians.

GOAL: The ACWC is committed to continuing to seek out methods whereby younger members can fulfill their responsibilities to the committee without excessive strain on their lives. This includes using electronic means of connecting and sharing information (i.e. Skype, Go-To Meeting, email, conference calls), negotiating meeting times, duration and location, and being flexible with regards to how work is accomplished.

2. Getting the word out about ACWC’s work.

As referenced in this report, after the restructuring in the Presbyterian Mission Agency that separated gender justice advocacy policy work from gender justice advocacy programmatic work, sharing the work of ACWC has become a
challenge. As a committee called to be a prophetic witness to and for the church, ACWC believes their connection to the denomination to be important.

GOAL: The committee will continue to consider best practices for getting the word out to the church with regards to ACWC’s work, including being intentional about connecting with local presbyteries, committee members’ congregations, and other PC(USA) constituencies. (See recommendation 2. at the beginning of this report.)

3. Expanding our vision for gender justice advocacy work within the PC(USA).

As is a challenge for the denomination as a whole, ACWC has also sometimes fallen into a pattern of focusing solely on the work of Women’s Ministries as the place where gender justice work needs to be done. While this is certainly an essential starting place in many ways, the commitment to gender justice should shape and influence the work of all areas of the PC(USA). The ACWC should serve as a model to the rest of the denomination in how to integrate the work of gender justice in various ways into all that the church does.

GOAL: The ACWC will engage, communicate and collaborate with all areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on matters of gender justice advocacy. (See recommendation one at the beginning of this report.)

J. External Challenges and Hopes

Some of the challenges ACWC recognized in the process of self-study and evaluation can be addressed at least in part by the committee itself. Others, like some named in the body of this report and the following examples, are equally or more disconcerting to ACWC, but are ultimately outside the purview of ACWC’s work and control. Even so, ACWC hopes that these challenges can also be addressed:

1. Too much time is spent by ACWC and staff accounting for the work and existence of ACWC.

The ACWC has appreciated this opportunity for self-study, review, and reflection and expects to be reviewed regularly by the General Assembly. However, within the past six years, ACWC has found itself undergoing multiple forms of review. After the normal General Assembly review in 2006, in 2008, ACWC underwent a two-year review as a part of the special review committee formed by the General Assembly as a result of a request by the General Assembly Council (now Presbyterian Mission Agency Board) to review the advisory and advocacy committees. [37] This current two-year cycle (2012–2014) has once again required time spent on the normal General Assembly review. Throughout this entire eight-year period, there have been struggles with individual members of the Board questioning the committee, as well as with subcommittees of the Board challenging the committees’ work. Aside from the distraction and additional work this creates for ACWC on an informal basis, ACWC is also required to submit their minutes and their Manual of Operations to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for regular review. The often difficult relationship ACWC has with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has in part developed as a result of time spent throughout the years defending why ACWC was created and articulating repeatedly the role of the committee as prophetic witness called to monitor policy and program implementation. Underlying all of this seems to be some general confusion regarding the nature of the relationship of the committee to the Board. Review by a body for which ACWC has monitoring responsibilities is a set up for difficulty and ineffectiveness.

The General Assembly has a system of regular, comprehensive review in place for holding ACWC accountable to the work to which it is called, and the committee believes this system to be effective. Aside from the regular six-year review cycle, ACWC is required to submit an agency review of the work the committee has completed in each two-year cycle for review by the assembly. The challenge every six years of comprehensively studying oneself results in understanding best practices, setting new goals, and making adjustments to be as effective as possible in fulfilling the church’s calling for the committee. For this reason, ACWC is submitting Recommendation 5 at the beginning of this report. Since the General Assembly is the parent body to which ACWC is accountable, it makes sense to incorporate the review of ACWC’s meeting minutes and Manual of Operations into the regular review process. This would also be a step toward alleviating the constant review of ACWC, but would still hold ACWC accountable to the regular review process.

2. Collection of data at all levels of the church in a format disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, and age.

There is a tremendous need for disaggregated information concerning women’s participation and experiences at all levels of the church. The 218th General Assembly (2008) directed all six of the PC(USA) agencies to:

- collect, organize, and report data for all research in the church (such as comparative statistics, Presbyterian Panel, data gathered by the Vocation’s office on inquirers, candidates and clergy, the Stated Clerk’s annual statistical report, etc.) in a disaggregated form by race, ethnicity, gender, and age, so that data on women of color and young adult women of color may be identified separately for analysis, where possible and as permissible by law.[38]

Many requests for such data (from ACWC, the Women of Color Joint Working Group, ACREC, and possibly others have come through the past six years, but to no avail. There is often information available about how many men, how many women, and how many racial ethnic people serve, but data is never disaggregated by age and often the various races and ethnicities are left clumped together into one large category. Breaking down the information more extensively is necessary to get accurate data on women of color and young women, for example.

Advocacy requires having accurate information. Accurate data would provide the ability to inform strategies and
decision-making, moving the church beyond bold declarations about justice and equality into effective action that makes such declarations a reality.

3. Vacancies in the Women's Ministries Program area and time spent advocating for advocacy within the Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women program area.

As lifted up in the body of this report, over the past six years, the position of associate for Gender and Racial Justice (the programmatic side of gender justice advocacy work) has been vacant more time than it has been filled. The inconsistency of staffing in this position has created a void where programmatic gender justice advocacy is concerned. It is already problematic that there is only one staff person assigned to do advocacy work for two of the most marginalized groups in the church, women and people of color, but the fact of that position being so often vacant compounds the issue.

Further, ACWC has had disagreement with staff from that ministry area regarding the necessity of advocacy work being done from a programmatic angle. As ACWC understands it, the General Assembly required that advocacy work be done from the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/PW area, which is why ACWC is making Recommendation 7 at the beginning of this report. The only way to work toward justice is to advocate for it, and ACWC would like to see this approach embraced once again by programmatic staff working on gender and racial justice.

4. Meaningful follow-through by the Presbyterian Mission Agency on items assigned by the General Assembly.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for ACWC to have to advocate for that which the General Assembly has assigned to be completed. In fact, after each General Assembly, ACWC makes a point of monitoring the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as it has been assigned by the assembly.

Recommendation 4 at the beginning of this report represents one such place of frustration for ACWC. Much of the follow-through on the directives from the Women of Color Consultations has been ineffective or seemingly done just to say it was done. The fact of the lack of knowledge of the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God speaks to this.

5. Part-time staffing for ACWC

The time covered by this self-study has been a period of adjustment to the challenges of having a staff person who is less available to the committee, due to the restructuring that occurred in 2008. While the staff person prior to this restructuring had responsibilities other than ACWC, that person was only working on gender justice issues. The current staffing model requires that ACWC’s staff spend half of her time on gender justice and half on racial justice, with help from an administrative assistant who also has responsibilities for assisting other staff in Louisville. While the issues of gender and racial justice certainly intersect, they are also very much their own, vast areas of work. Expecting one staff person to have the expertise and ability to serve both advocacy committees simultaneously is hardly feasible.

The infeasibility of the staffing situation becomes most apparent as General Assembly approaches. Covering the work of both advocacy committees leading into the assembly, staffing combined meetings, and attempting to be present to support both committees at the assembly have been nearly impossible tasks. Recognizing that extra staffing is not an option, ACWC hopes to continue to struggle collaboratively to consider creative solutions to this situation.

K. Conclusion

As articulated in several places throughout this report, ACWC has gained much from the experience of self-review and study, and is grateful to have had this opportunity. The committee would like to express gratitude to Andrew Whitehead of the PC(USA) Research Services for his help in creating, distributing, and summarizing the results of the survey. Many thanks also to all those who made the time to respond to the survey.

The period of time covered by this review cycle has been one of adjustment for ACWC, particularly as its staffing model has shifted. The ACWC continues to be committed to growing and learning how to be the best ACWC in the world and looks forward to continued conversation on the work of ACWC with commissioners of the 221st General Assembly (2014) in Detroit.

Appendix 1

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN’S CONCERNS

I. Narrative Report to the 217th General Assembly (2006)

“The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Psalm 9:9)

“The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.” (Acts 11:12)

“...[B]e doers of the word, and not merely hearers...” (James 1:22)

1. Agency Description

The context of women’s advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women.
Grounded in communal faith in "God [who] liberated the people of Israel from oppression ... [and] covenanted with Israel ... that they might do justice ..." (Book of Order, G-3.0101b) and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, 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 commitment. Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to "... give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, G-4.0403 ... monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church...and advocate[ing] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society [as a whole]" (Minutes, 1994, Part I, p. 262).

The ACWC's assigned functions are delineated in the GAC Manual of Operations (Appendix I, EV, Section VIII.B.), and they include:

1. Preparing policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Council, or on its own initiative.
2. Advising the General Assembly Council on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
3. Providing advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioner's resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women's concerns.
4. Assisting the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and provide information to the church as requested.
5. Providing the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns.
6. Monitoring the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns.
7. Through advocacy maintaining a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

The ACWC is a function of the Office of the Deputy Executive Director, General Assembly Council, although staffing is provided by the Women's Ministries program area, National Ministries Division. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and the ACWC chair has corresponding member status with GAC and with the General Assembly.

The ACWC has ten members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. Current members are Karen Breckenridge (co-chair), Sarah A. Colwill (co-chair beginning in August 2005), Adeline S. deCastro, Dean E. Foose, Jerri Rodewald, Aleida Jernigan, R. Ann (Ani) Lelea, F. William (Bill) Gray, Terry Alexander, and Nancy Neal (co-chair until August 2005). In addition, Lillian Oats (co-chair) is a full voting member of the committee, representing Presbyterian Women. Allison Seed is a full voting member elected to the advocacy committee by the General Assembly Council and also sits on the GAC Executive Committee.

Recognizing the complex ways in which gender inequality manifests itself differently because of class, race, ethnicity, education, age, status in employment, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, and culture, ACWC invites liaisons from other entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to sit with the committee at its regularly scheduled meetings. Those entities are the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), the National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW), the Racial Ethnic Women Together (REYWT), the Presbyterian Health, Education, & Welfare Association (PHEWA), the Congregational Ministries Division (CMD), the Presbyterian United Nations Office (PUNO), and the Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD). In turn, liaisons from the ACWC attend the meetings of the ACSWP, ACREC and the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). In 1999, the ACWC began to work with the Board of Pensions (BOP) and, in 2002, with the Presbyterian Health, Education, & Welfare Association (PHEWA).

2. Accomplishments


3. Meeting Summary—2004

January 22-24, 2004, in St. Petersburg, Fla.: The January meeting included guests Vernon Carroll (chair of General Assembly Council), Mary Elva Smith (associate director, Women's Ministries and Collegiate Ministries, National Ministries Division), and guest speaker, Dianne Tennis (author of "Is God the Only Reliable Father?"). Considerable working time was spent preparing advice and counsel for issues before and referral items to the 216th General Assembly (2004). The site visit for the January meeting was to the Beth-El Farmworkers Mission, serving the rural populations of Hillsborough, Manatee, and Sarasota counties in Florida. Beth-El helps farm workers move toward self-sufficiency through education, worship, and outreach. It is a coordinated ministry of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At this meeting the committee approved (by consensus) the following mission statement:
"The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) is called by [the] General Assembly to be a voice of justice and advocacy for women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and around the world; in order to give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership (Book of Order, G-4.0403). To this end, we advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of life and work in the Church and society. "Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?" Proverbs 8:1”

July 22-24, 2004, in Seattle, Wash.: When the committee met in July 2004, guests included Kathy Lueckert, Deputy Executive Director, General Assembly Council (GAC); Flora Wilson Bridges, Seattle University professor and pastor of Madrona Presbyterian Church; and Elizabeth Stanhope, student, Fuller Theological Seminary (and intern working with Rev. Bridges). Work of this meeting centered on discussing the Mission Work Plan (2005-2006), the effects of downsizing national staff especially in Women’s Ministries (2004), a restructuring of ACWC to a non-hierarchical structure where leadership duties are shared among three co-chairs serving different functions (described below), and a guided discussion with the guests from Seattle Pacific University around issues for women clergy in the church.

The leadership will be a leadership team made up of three co-chairs with differing functions, as follows:

- Co-chair for General Assembly Relations and that person would be identified as the corresponding member to General Assembly and serve as Advice and Counsel chair;
- Co-chair for General Assembly Council Relations and that person would have corresponding member status; and,
- Co-chair for Committee Relations and that person would oversee the internal work group relations and ACWC’s relationships with other committees, particularly where we have liaisons.

The three co-chairs would share moderating duties during regular meetings. This model was chosen after several meetings consideration because it encourage participation of all ACWC members; allows work to be completed without a hierarchy of leadership; and, provides leadership development for members. Liaisons from the committee were designated for Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), Board of Pensions (BOP), Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen (NAPC), National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW), and Presbyterian Health, Education, & Welfare Association (PHEWA). A final edit of the clergywomen report was completed and approved for printing (in 2005). The committee generated a list for new work of ACWC and the following were accepted and assigned working groups (recognizing the 216th General Assembly (2004) would generate additional work for the committee): human sexuality, violence (Juarez murders/border issues), status of women in PC(USA), including immigrant churches, and, ordination of Christian educators. The site visit in Seattle was to the Church of Mary Magdalene, a program for women who are struggling to be free from multiple difficulties including homelessness, poverty, and abuse. It is for women who have been robbed and raped emotionally, spiritually, and physically. The Church of Mary Magdalene was founded in 1991 by Presbyterian clergywoman, Jean Kim, who was called in a dream to “plant the cross” for homeless women of Seattle.

October 14-16, 2004, in Princeton, N.J.: The October meeting was situated at the seminary to continue responding to the concerns of clergywomen and female seminarians in the process of ordination. Guests to this meeting were Abigail Rian Evans and Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, professors at Princeton Theological Seminary and fifteen Princeton Seminary female students. The speakers, Professor Evans and Professor Sakenfeld, talked about the experiences of Princeton Theological Seminary in graduating women interested in pastoral leadership. In a later session, the Princeton students and ACWC members had an informal discussion about the students’ experiences with the use of inclusive and expansive language at the seminary. An informational exchange took place regarding pastors’ first calls and moving from seminary to a church. Current campus concerns include: sexual harassment, networking, and social justice issues. In addition to the working groups and assigned topics, a draft of the ACWC Manual of Operations was reviewed by the committee and accepted by consensus. The status of women working group presented five issues before women in leadership positions. They are: leadership¾lay pastors; pay equity/benefits¾staff, clergy, full-time, part-time; power to influence or make decisions (authority); perceptions of women (attention to or criticism of their speaking manner, appearance, etc.); and, mission priorities (sexual harassment, inclusive/expansive language, etc.). The working group on inclusive/expansive language distributed a draft of the Trinity report being written by a task group in collaboration with the Office of Theology and Worship to the entire committee for consideration and feedback at a future meeting.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) fulfilled the responsibility to prepare statements, reports, recommendations, and advice to the General Assembly on issues that impact the status and well being of women in the following ways:

- Prepared thirty-two advice and counsel memoranda on nineteen overtures, two commissioner resolutions, and one report, affecting women and their children coming before the 216th General Assembly (2004). Several were written in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Additionally, ACWC resourced six committees. The ACWC also participated in the Women’s Orientation Breakfast and in the Women’s Ministries Luncheon.

• Continued, in partnership with others, an ongoing review of the church's policies on sexual misconduct by the clergy.

• Continued work assisting the church in use of inclusive and expansive language.

• Adopted a continual process for discerning future work for the committee.

• Led the effort to produce a post-abortion pastoral resource and published the resource, Problem Pregnancy: When Pregnancy Involves Loss (2004). This series provides support to those providing spiritual guidance and counseling to women and men who are dealing with issues of problem pregnancy in their lives. The brochure was received by the 216th General Assembly (2004).

• Delivered an advice and counsel memorandum to the Executive Committee of the General Assembly Council regarding the then proposed changes to the Women's Ministries program area (May 2004).

• Addressed all referrals from previous General Assemblies (individual reports contained in the following section of this document); submitted ACWC's narrative report to the 216th General Assembly (2004).

• Received the Mission Work Plan (2005-2006) approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004) and began to describe committee work in compliance with the goal areas and objectives.

Networking, Monitoring and Communication
In addition to the exposure to local advocates in areas where ACWC’s regular meetings are held, the very make-up of the ACWC allows for networking, monitoring, and evaluating procedures, policies, and programs among General Assembly entities and program areas. Through staff to the ACWC, networking around public policy issues is carried out through the Public Policy Advocate Team (PPAT) made up of GAC staff, representing several program areas; the Cross-Caucus meetings of the Racial Ethnic Ministries; and through involvement in issue oriented inter-staff meetings and conferences. The ACWC moved toward stronger partnership and more open communication with ACSWP and ACREC in planning joint meetings in January 2005.

In these ways a monitoring of broad concerns related to women of color, immigrant women, and working parents (child care) can be more efficiently affected. Likewise, such issues as domestic violence and other examples of violence against women, sexual misconduct policies, economic concerns as pay equity, women and health, and many other gender-related concerns can be lifted up and addressed in concert with other program entities of the church, making new partnerships possible.

The ACWC was invited to be a consulting partner to listen and be a resource for participants at the National Consultation of Racial Ethnic Women in the PC(USA) in October 15-17, 2004. The consulting partners, in partnership with the consultation organizers, developed a strategic plan (released in 2005) to address issues identified by the women of color. This event is recognized later in this report as the Women of Color Consultation. Appropriate issues will be considered by ACWC for future advocacy work. [See Other Actions section for information regarding the joint resolution from ACWC and ACREC.]

4. Meeting Summary

January 22–24, San Francisco, Calif.: The ACWC, ACSWP, and ACREC all convened in San Francisco for their meetings. All three committees spent January 21 (before their meeting) in a joint education session about cultural proficiency led by the Reverend Kikanza Nuri Robins. The next day, ACWC and ACREC met jointly and focused on immigration issues in the California context. The speaker was Betty Canton-Self, executive director for the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (ICIR). Discussing issues of citizenship, farm workers, home services, and federal issues, the committees explored ways they can continue working in a coordinated way on their mutual concerns and identified important areas of potential collaboration. As a result, ACWC and ACREC acted on items to increase their future collaboration on issues of mutual concern, intentionally meeting together once a year, and have their leadership and liaisons meet by conference call twice a year. Helen Locklear, Deputy Executive Director, GAC, met with the ACWC to discuss the Mission Work Plan and its critical role in directing the committee's work. Work groups discussed continuing issues from the 216th General Assembly (2004) and projected projects. The ACWC wrote a letter to the GAC personnel committee regarding the dismissal of two employees in late 2004 and elected the Reverend Sarah Colwill as a member of the Leadership Team replacing Nancy Neal beginning at the August 2005 meeting.

August 10-14, Sioux Falls, S.Dak.: The meeting was delayed until August to accommodate the harvest season and to make meeting in Sioux Falls with farmers possible. The ACWC went to Sioux Falls to discuss the We Are What We Eat report with the persons involved in its prompting and writing and to explore issues for rural churches and women in farming communities around globalization and food security. Guest speakers included: Kathryn Baker, Presbyterian Women (PW); Jerilynn Bakken; Bernetta and Dick Burghardt; Holly Butrum; Kathy Callies; Marion Cramer; Wendy Figland; the Reverend Peter Funch; Cal Hansen; Florence Hoff; Marian Judy; Dianne Larson; Paula Larson; Vi Leonard; Crystal Page; Julie Pearson; Carolyn Petik; the Reverend Tom Pickles; the Reverend Richard (Dick), Linda, and Ann Poppen; Diana Stephen, associate, Network Support/Rural and Small Church Ministries, NMD; the Reverend Carolyn Visser; Vicky Wahl; and Delores Walter. Diana Stephen highlighted in her presentation that "there is an economic crisis within rural communities and thought must be given to how policies affect these rural communities. There is a deep hurt¾this (farming/ranching) is a vocation that is becoming industrialized. Large companies are exhausting the land, the animals, the water, etc. and accepting no responsibility for the damage they do. This is a global issue." She went on to note that women serve as pastor for many small and rural churches. The salaries are very low, however, there are many opportunities. She and Kathryn Baker raised other issues in the area: domestic...
Presbyterian Women, especially the Justice and Peace committee of the Churchwide Coordinating Committee (CCT) Misconduct table; and the Cross-Caucus meetings of the Racial Ethnic Ministries. Staff also collaborates strongly with Assembly Council staff, representing several program areas; the Immigration Table made up of GAC staff; the Sexual around public policy issues is carried out through the Public Policy Advocate Team (PPAT) made up of General Assembly entities and program areas. Through staff of ACWC and of the Women's Advocacy Office, networking Networking, Monitoring and Communication¾The very make-up of the ACWC allows for networking with General

October 6–8, Tempe, Ariz.: The ACWC located their October meeting at Cook College and Theological School, a Presbyterian racial ethnic school, in Tempe, Arizona, to re-familiarize themselves with concerns regarding Presbyterian racial ethnic schools. The committee stayed in the conference center and met on-campus for all their meetings. The ACWC spoke with Larry R. Norris, president; Vivian Winter Chaser, director of Public Relations; Minta McIntosh, volunteer in mission and coordinator for the Conference Center; and Maramlyen Tokeak, student body president. Our hosts shared cultural stories, songs, and hospitality in addition to explaining history, describing the student body, and financial/survival concerns of racial ethnic schools, in general, and Cook College, in particular. Racial ethnic schools was a topic of concern raised at the 216th General Assembly (2004).

The ACWC fulfilled the responsibility to prepare statements, reports, recommendations, and advice and counsel to the General Assembly on issues that impact the status and well-being of women in the following ways:

- Prepared advice and counsel memoranda regarding draft reports, policies and staffing concerns, and/or delivered letters of concerns with GAC entities.
- Delivered a letter to the Office of General Assembly recommending to all General Assembly entities, presbyteries, and synods that 10 percent of what people spend on meetings should be spent locally.
- Delivered an advice and counsel memoranda to the Governance Task Force, GAC, expressing concerns over the proposed changes in the structure of the General Assembly Council.
- Delivered two letters, raising the committee’s concerns with the Office of Theology and Worship regarding staffing/hiring and in response to a draft of the Trinity report and inclusive/expansive language.
- Delivered a letter enclosing the brochure, Well Chosen Words (2005), to all Presbyterian seminaries to promote the importance of using inclusive/expansive language in theological education.
- Monitored issues and concerns before the PC(USA) in reports from ACSWP, ACREC, Working Group on the Trinity, Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, Presbyterian Washington Office, Presbyterian United Nations Office, and other entities that address women’s concerns.
- Delivered a letter to the GAC personnel committee regarding employee dismissals in late 2004.
- Continued, in partnership with others, a review of the church’s policies on sexual misconduct by the clergy.
- Received a report from ACWC staff who attended the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, through the Office of Women’s Advocacy.
- Moved to a non-hierarchical structure of having a leadership team of three co-chairs with differing functions.
- Produced, through collaboration with Women’s Ministries and the Women’s Advocacy Office, an updated version of Well Chosen Words (2005 revised document, PDS #72-839-05-003) and the Clergywomen’s Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges 2003 (revised document 2005 available online at www.pcusa.org/womensadvocacy/clergywomen/clergywomen-report05.pdf).
- Submitted the ACWC Manual of Operations for approval and comment by the GAC.
- Collaborated with the Stated Clerk and Moderator in writing a letter to all presbyteries and synods in response to the referral item from 216th General Assembly (2004) in regard to problem pregnancies.
- Received and endorsed the report (2005) from the Women of Color Consultation(2004).
- Formed a working group with ACREC that will work on responding to the recommendations from the consultation and monitor the church’s response to the report. The full report is included in the ACREC report as Appendix A: Report and Recommendations from the Women of Color Consultation.
- Designated two members and two former members to serve on a self-study committee and began the process of preparing for ACWC to be reviewed at the 217th General Assembly (2006).
- Submitted ACWC’s annual narrative report to the General Assembly Council (March 2005).

Networking, Monitoring and Communication¾The very make-up of the ACWC allows for networking with General Assembly entities and program areas. Through staff of ACWC and of the Women’s Advocacy Office, networking around public policy issues is carried out through the Public Policy Advocate Team (PPAT) made up of General Assembly Council staff, representing several program areas; the Immigration Table made up of GAC staff; the Sexual Misconduct table; and the Cross-Caucus meetings of the Racial Ethnic Ministries. Staff also collaborates strongly with Presbyterian Women, especially the Justice and Peace committee of the Churchwide Coordinating Committee (CCT)
The ACWC issue reports, approved by past General Assemblies, are made available through the Office of Women’s Advocacy in the Women’s Ministries program area. These reports serve as a means of communicating with the larger church and are available through the Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS). Report information is also available on the web at [www.pcusa.org/womensadvocacy/acwc/reports](http://www.pcusa.org/womensadvocacy/acwc/reports). Recent reports include:

- Clergywomen’s Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges (available from the Office of Women’s Advocacy) 2003 (revised 2005).
- Women & AIDS: A Global Crisis (PDS #72 710 01 003) 2001 (made available online in January 2006).

### 5. Mission Work Plan

The 2005 work of ACWC reflects the following Goals and Objectives of the Mission Work plan 2005-2006:

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<thead>
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<th>Goal/Objective</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evangelism &amp; Witness</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Create a PC(USA) awareness campaign to make the PC(USA) more visible &amp; attractive to</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>・Collaborated with Office of Young Women’s Ministries</td>
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<td>・Extended invitations to ACWC liaison status to NNPCW and REYWT</td>
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<td>・NNPCW has a liaison to ACWC</td>
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<td>・Renewed support of a Spring Break, education travel seminar to U.S. Border to focus on Juarez and violence against women issues for college aged women.</td>
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<td><strong>3/4 young adults</strong></td>
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<td>・Received the report and strategic plans from the National Consultation of Racial Ethnic Women in the PC(USA).</td>
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<td>・Attended the Women of Color Consultation and participated as a partner.</td>
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<td>・Endorsed the Women of Color Consultation report and formed of a joint task force with ACREC to support next steps and act on the recommendations.</td>
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<td><strong>3/4 racial ethnic persons</strong></td>
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<td>・The joint working group, formed with ACREC, prepared the joint resolution included in this report to the 217th General Assembly (2006).</td>
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<td>・Extended an invitation to REYWT for a liaison position to ACWC, which was accepted in January 2006.</td>
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• Had representation at the PW Racial Ethnic Dialogue.
• Met with farm-worker ministry in California to explore related issues.
• Met at Cook College and Theological School, to study issues regarding racial ethnic schools in the PC(USA).

Justice & Compassion

1. Respond to poverty, disasters and the impact of economic globalization through

| ¾ compassionate ministries | • Advocated for women in border industries.  
|                           | • Focused a meeting on globalization effects on rural communities.  
|                           | • Collaborated with PDA, Hunger Program, and other responders to the disaster areas.  
|                           | • Collaborated with Presbyterian Women, especially the Justice and Peace committee.  

2. Advocate for social, environmental, and economic justice in accordance with General Assembly policy and direction and assist other governing bodies in advocacy efforts.

|                           | • Provided resources for addressing problem pregnancies.  
|                           | • Provided resources for handling sexual misconduct  
|                           | • Collaborated with ACSWP and ACREC on issues regarding immigration, globalization, private for-profit prisons, food security and rural issues, and emerging issues related.  
|                           | • Met in South Dakota to give further study to the issues in the We Are What We Eat report and developed letter to recommend local purchasing recommendation for all PC(USA) meetings.  

## Leadership & Vocation

### 1. Provide and promote resources for leadership development of ministers of Word and Sacrament

- Published Clergywomen’s Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges (revised) and executive summary.

- Continued consultation process at General Assemblies soliciting clergywomen to share their stories.

- Advocated for presbyteries and seminaries to support clergywomen in ministries in PC(USA).

- Advocated for use of inclusive/expansive language in all PC(USA) resources.

### 2. Provide and promote resources for leadership development of church officers

- Encouraged all COMs to train PNCs on gender, racial ethnic, and disabilities concerns.

- Participated in celebration events for women’s ordination and collaborated with NAPC (National Association for Presbyterian Clergywomen).

### 3. Provide support for congregations and governing bodies in the identification and placement of church educators.

- Explored ordination of Christians educators issues.

- Corresponded with the Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators (APCE).

### 4. Develop &

- Provided inclusive/expansive language resources on the web.

- Provided Clergywomen’s Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges resources on the web.
maintain an internet clearinghouse for best practices and shared ministries.

Ministry: Realities and Challenges report and Executive Summary on the web.

- Provided Women and AIDS: A Global Crisis report on the web at www.pcusa.org/womensadvocacy/resources

5. Collaborate with other GA entities in providing assistance to congregations and governing bodies finding it difficult to call (obtain) pastoral leadership.

- Worked with the Office of Vocations and staff for committees on ministry to review resources available to meet the needs of clergywomen in the call process.
- With ACREC, encouraged all COMs to train PNCs on gender, racial ethnic, and disabilities concerns.

7. Engage with seminaries in a two-year period of discernment & discussion about strengthening the relationship between the GAC and the PC(USA) seminaries.

- Developed liaison relationships with seminaries.
- Provided inclusive/expansive language resources information to seminary students.

6. Other Action Items

The ACWC received the report from the Women of Color Consultation (WoCC) and formed a joint working group with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to review the recommendations of the consultation. The ACWC and ACREC have submitted a joint resolution to the 217th General Assembly (2006) to create a joint task force to respond to the recommendations of the report and monitor its implementation throughout the church. The full report is included in ACREC’s report under Appendix A: Report and Recommendations from the Women of Color Consultation.

¾Report submitted by the Reverend Karen Breckenridge, the Reverend Sarah Colwill, and Lillian Oats, co-chairs, Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

II. Ongoing Response to Referrals

1. 2004 Referral: Item 05-03. Recommendation 4. That the General Assembly Request the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, Following Review of Resources Currently Available to Meet the Needs of Clergywomen in the Call Process and in Pastorates, to Make Recommendations That Contribute to a Pro-active, Health-giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2004, Part I., pp. 77, 389-90).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) continues to review available resources and is researching recommendations that will be reported to the 218th General Assembly (2008).

III. Recommendations

A Recommendation to Study the Status of Women in the PC(USA)

ACWC recommends that the 217th General Assembly (2006):

1. Request ACWC to assess the status of women, in elected and staff positions, in decision-making and leadership positions in the PC(USA) at all levels through surveys and other data collection and evaluation;
2. Report progress and initial findings to the 218th General Assembly (2008) to measure the extent to which gender justice has been achieved in the church, measuring presence and acceptance of women, to get the facts on the current status of women in leadership positions in an effort to support and further the inclusion of women in leadership positions in the PC(USA), at all levels. The primary areas of this first ever such survey
for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will focus on:

a. The extent of women in leadership positions at all levels of the PC(USA) in elected
and staff positions, in decision-making and leadership positions.

b. Attitudes about women in leadership – including how women in leadership positions
are perceived and accepted, by both members and staff.

1. Describing how women in leadership positions are treated, including compensation, in
comparison with male colleagues, by both members and staff.

3. Prepare a final report to the 219th General Assembly (2010) to include recommendations for action,
qualitative and quantitative data describing women in the various decision-making and leadership positions, and
identifying patterns of women's participation in the church and factors influencing positively and/or negatively upon
their participation.

4. Direct the GAC to provide sufficient funding and staff support to ensure the research and analysis for a complete
measurement of the status of women in the PC(USA).

5. Equip all GAC staff and members to be responsive to the needs of all women as part of their continuing
commitment to valuing the gifts that all people bring to the PC(USA). GAC staff and members should continue to be
encouraged to reflect on and incorporate the values articulated in the Report on Creating a Climate for Change Within
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004).

Rationale

This year marks three significant anniversaries for women in ordained leadership within the Presbyterian Church
(U.S.A.). Therefore, the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) believes this requested study to be
particularly timely. There has not been a comprehensive study of the status of women within the denomination. ACWC
is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to live out its commitment to justice for women by "monitoring
and evaluating policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and
position of women in the church, . . . and advocating for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work
of the church in society."[40]

This survey will be a way for the Committee to carry out its mandate, provided on its creation by the 205th General
Assembly (1993), to ensure advocacy and monitoring of justice for women throughout the church. Describing the
qualitative and quantitative realities of women leaders in all levels of the church, the report will set the context of
ACWC's work for years to come.

It is especially important to know the extent to which the church is responding to the following two sections of the
Book of Order:

G-40403 which states that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its
membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life.
Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes . . . shall be guaranteed full participation and access to
representation in the decision making of the church.

G-9.0104 a, which states that governing bodies of the church shall be responsible for implementing the church's
commitment to inclusiveness and participation as stated in G-4.0403. All governing bodies shall work to become more
open and inclusive and shall pursue affirmative action hiring procedures aiming at correcting patterns of discrimination
on the basis of the categories listed in G-4.0403.

This study will reaffirm past General Assemblies' commitments to the inclusion of women in decision-making and
leadership in all levels of the church and their equitable treatment. It will also show how far we have come and how far
we have left to go in fully realizing and reflecting that " . . . In sovereign love God created the world good and makes
everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community."[41]

The reports will show areas for celebration. It is also expected to identify specific areas needing more attention,
including identifying specific barriers that need to be addressed to bring about the full acceptance and equitable
treatment of women in the PC(USA)'s leadership. The final report will contain recommendations for action.

The value of "including the rich diversity of God's people in the leadership" of the PC(USA) at all levels was the subject
of (2005) "Open Letter to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding "Creating A Climate for Change Within the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." The signers included the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Executive
Director of the General Assembly Council. This survey will further the acceptance and support of women in the
decision-making and leadership positions of the PC(USA).

Funds Requested—see attached Financial Implications form to the report.
IV. Other Action Items

ACWC received the report from the Women of Color Consultation (WoCC) and formed a joint working group with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to review the recommendations of the consultation. ACWC and ACREC have submitted a joint resolution to the 217th General Assembly (2006) to create a Joint Task Force to respond to the recommendations of the report and monitor its implementation throughout the church. The full report is included in ACREC’s report under Appendix A: Report and Recommendations from the Women of Color Consultation.

—Report submitted by the Reverend Karen Breckenridge, the Reverend Sarah Colwill, and Lillian Oats, co-chairs, Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Appendix 2

2008 Agency Summary—Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

"The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Psalms 9:9)

"The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.” (Acts 11:12)

...[Be] doers of the word, and not merely hearers…” (James 1:22)

1. Introduction

The context of women’s advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in “God [who] liberated the people of Israel from oppression … [and] covenanted with Israel … that they might do justice …” (Book of Order, G-3.0101b) and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, the Presbyterian 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 promise. Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, G-4.0403 . . . monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church … and advocate[ing] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society [as a whole]. (Minutes, 1994, Part I, p. 262)

2. Assigned Responsibilities

The ACWC’s assigned functions are delineated in the GAC Manual of Operations (Appendix I, EV, Section VIII.B.), and they include:

• Preparing policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on women’s concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Council, or on its own initiative;

• Advising the General Assembly Council on matters of women’s concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly;

• Providing advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women’s concerns;

• Assisting the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women’s concerns and provide information to the church as requested;

• Providing the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women’s concerns;

• Monitoring the implementation of women’s policies and programs relative to women’s concerns; and,

• Through advocacy maintaining a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women’s concerns.

The ACWC is a function of the Office of the Executive Director, General Assembly Council, and connects to it through the executive administrator, though its direct staffing is provided by the associate of women’s advocacy in the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/PW ministry area. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly. The ACWC has organized itself with a leadership team of three co-chairs: two serve as corresponding members to the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council respectively. A member of ACWC is a voting member of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee (MRTI). There are twelve members of the committee, ten members are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. Members who left the committee in June 2006 were: Allison Seed (General Assembly Council), Dean Foose, Lillian Oats (Presbyterian Women), Ani Lelea,
and Aleida Jernigan. Members who joined the committee in June 2006 were Mary Carter, Maria Cardenas Baez, Aisha Brooks-Lytle, Louise Davidson (Presbyterian Women), and Manley Olson (General Assembly Council). Two members resigned during this reporting period—Aisha Brooks-Lytle, in late 2006, citing life circumstances that did not allow her to fully participate (in her letter she cited a lack of understanding what the time requirements of the committee were before her election from the floor); and Mary Carter, in early 2007, due to a diagnosis that prevented her from completing her term. In November 2007, two members were appointed by the Reverend Joan Gray, Moderator of the 217th General Assembly (2006), as recommended by the General Assembly Nominating Committee—the Reverend Dr. Gay Byron and Belinda Rice. Their first meeting with ACWC was January 2008.

3. Accomplishments

a. 2006-2007: ACWC Met Three Times

(1) August 3-6, 2006, in Boise, Idaho

- Visits were made throughout southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon, addressing healthcare, mental health and social services, domestic violence services, and banking as it affects family farms;
- Member orientation, website updates, and generative conversations about the work of the committee;
- Emerging issues were discussed and prioritized for work during the two years between General Assemblies and three workgroups were formed: Health and Human Sexuality, Rural/Urban Issues, and Status of Women/Language;
- Jerri Rodewald was elected as co-moderator to fill the one year unexpired vacancy left when Lillian Oats was not re-elected; and,
- Adeline DeCastro and Jerri Rodewald were elected to the Women of Color Consultation Task Force.

(2) October 26-28, 2006, in Washington, DC

- Met with the Reverend Elenora Giddings Ivory and other members of the staff of the Washington Office, addressing criminal justice, domestic violence prevention and education, school crisis response programs, empowering victims of crime, and reproductive health issues;
- Health and Human Sexuality workgroup distributed a letter to all Presbyterian members of Congress stating PC(USA)’s policy on women’s reproductive rights and health care;
- Absentee policy was adopted by ACWC;
- Agreed to work with ACSWP in developing the pay equity resolution; and,
- Jerri Rodewald, Terry Alexander, Rebecca Harrison, and Jack Terry were appointed to a communication subcommittee.

(3) February 15-17, 2007, in Louisville Kentucky;

- Elder Jerri Rodewald elected to serve a full term as co-chair, term to begin in August 2007;
- Staff guests: Peggie Blenman, HR director, and the Reverend Dr. Marcia Myers, director, Office of Vocation;
- Forum presented jointly to ACWC and ACREC focused on post-Katrina issues;
- Communications subcommittee met with designer, Dana McMahan, to scope the new Website;
- Health and Human Sexuality workgroup held three-part educational session with guest speaker, the Reverend Dee Dale (MCC);
- Status/Language workgroup met with Research Services; and
- ACSWP coordinator, the Reverend Dr. Christian Iosso, updated ACWC on work currently being done by them.

b. 2007-2008: ACWC Met Three Times

(1) June 6-8, 2007, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- Met with the Reverend Joan Gray, Moderator, 217th General Assembly (2006); the Reverend Curtis Kearns, executive administrator (GAC), Board of Pensions executives and appropriate staff, and a Presbyterian Historical Society representative who provided an educational session;
- Consulted with the General Assembly Nominating Committee: the Reverend Cindy Edwards, GANC member and contact for ACWC; and Valerie Small, staff;
- Attorney Julia Thorne, manager of Immigration Services (PC(USA)) provided information and continuing education regarding immigration issues in preparation for the October meeting;
Health and Human Sexuality working group hosted an education program on gender with guest speaker, Chris Paige;

Consulted with Joel Hanisek, UN representative, and Jonathan Crooms, young adult intern, Presbyterian United Nations Office, about international gender justice issues; and,

Met with the Reverend Dr. Joseph Small, director, Theology, Worship, and Education ministry to receive an update on several items coming to that office out of the 217th General Assembly (2006).

(2) October 18-22, 2007, in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico;

Met jointly with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) for large sections of the educational and cultural portions of the meeting—focus of these sessions to examine what pushes immigration to the US, the effects on communities in Mexico and the Presbyterian Church of Mexico;

Visited San Pablo Presbyterian Theological Seminary and Chichen Itza;

Participated in a listening tour of Dzan, Yucatan, Mexico, a primarily Mayan community where we interacted with villagers and were hosted by municipal leaders and the nonprofit organization, IndeMaya;

Approved the new logo for ACWC;

Jointly reviewed the revised Form of Government, drafted letter for FOG Task Force, and appointed joint working group with ACREC to schedule a follow-up conversation; and,

Approved the ongoing work of the working groups to develop final proposals for action at the 218th General Assembly (2008).

(3) January 24-26, 2008 in Louisville, Kentucky

Leadership Team: representatives from ACWC and ACREC leadership met with Karen Schmidt, deputy executive director for Communications and Funds Development, and Dianna Ott, coordinator, Creative Services;

Met jointly with ACREC and Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) in two sessions;

Discussion with the Reverend Dr. Cliff Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk, regarding denominational issues and celebrated his service;

Joint committee work also saw discussion about the assembly with guests Vernon Broyles, Office of the General Assembly, and Nancy Hamilton, GAC executive associate; and,

Extensive review of actions being taken by the three committees to the 218th General Assembly (2008);

Working Groups perfected recommendations for ACWC report to General Assembly regarding:

Immigration Detention; Trafficking of women; Beginning process for extensive research project on the status of women in the PC(USA); and, persons to recommend as committee resource people to the 218th General Assembly (2008);

Reviewed and adopted narrative report and the pay equity resolution to be jointly submitted with ACSWP to the 218th General Assembly (2008);

Selection of the Advice and Counsel team and resource persons;

Welcomed newly appointed ACWC members, the Reverend Dr. Gay Byron and Belinda Rice, to fill vacancies in the class of 2010;

Elected Elder Adeline DeCastro as co-chair to a two-year term to begin August 2008;

Recognized outgoing elected members with thanks, to Karen Breckenridge, Nancy Neal, and Manley Olsen (GAC); and,

Participated in Presbyterian Center worship celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King.

4. Highlights
a. Status of Women/Language

The work group focusing on the Status of Women and Language had many ongoing projects this year. We have monitored the work being done by different entities as instructed by the 217th General Assembly (2006), including the creation of an E-hymnal and the report concerning ordination of Christian educators. We communicated with PC(USA) seminaries and leaders to encourage the use of inclusive and expansive language. We commissioned the Presbyterian Panel, in November 2007 (see www.pcusa.org/research/panel), to gather information regarding the attitudes and assumptions toward women’s leadership in the church. We also reviewed this data and concluded that an extensive
study on women in the church would be beneficial to our work of advocating for justice within the church. The study will benefit the whole church as it will set a baseline for comparisons, reveal where women are and are not in the structures and measure the quality of their participation at all levels of the church. A portion of this work may be accomplished in approving the joint resolution from ACSWP and ACWC for a study of pay equity within the PC(USA). This comes in response to the referred action of the 200th General Assembly (1999).

b. Rural/Urban Affairs

The Rural and Urban Affairs work group is charged with monitoring Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policies and work regarding immigration/detention, homelessness, hurricane/disaster relief, trafficking in persons, globalization, and gender-based violence. The work group followed up on work assigned to it by ACWC, partners, and the 217th General Assembly (2006). A study of church policies and current realities regarding trafficking in women/adults led to the conclusion that the General Assembly must encourage congregations and presbyteries to engage in stronger outreach to and advocacy for trafficked persons. In partnership with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, the a/effects of globalization were examined while in the Yucatan of Mexico. A review of denominational policies on for-profit prisons and just immigration, as well as practices of for-profit detention centers and conversations and observations in Mexico resulted in the conviction that PC(USA) policy statements did not address serious concerns about immigrant detention practices in the United States. Two actions came out of this work: one expanding the concern and work against human trafficking and one seeking action regarding immigration detention in the United States.

c. Health and Human Sexuality

The Health and Human Sexuality Work Group has focused on emerging issues relating to women's health; access to medical care, pharmaceuticals and counseling (including availability, affordability, and accuracy); and gender and sexuality information, education, and equity. We have prepared for proposed overtures to General Assembly through an education program for ACWC members with the help of experienced educators and pastors. Recognizing the sexualization of women in culture and in the conversations of the church about reproductive health, the work continues.

d. Women of Color Consultation Task Force and Joint Working Group

The 217th General Assembly (2006) recommended the creation of a task force on the Women of Color Consultation. Made up of seven persons, this task force was launched in October 2006, completing its work and reporting to the 218th General Assembly (2008) in a separate report. Constituted jointly by ACWC and ACREC, in consultation with Presbyterian Women and the National Cross Caucus, the task force studied the recommendations, which came from the Women of Color Consultation in 2004. In addition to analyzing and determining what progress had been made, the task force designed and recommended a mechanism for monitoring future progress by the denomination. The task force modeled cultural proficiency and antiracism models in its work together. The joint working group for ACWC and ACREC continues to review this work and looks forward to implementing and monitoring their suggested actions.

e. Communications Subcommittee

A subcommittee on communications was also established by ACWC shortly after the 217th General Assembly (2006) in response to the review. The ACWC Website has been separated from the women's advocacy Website for clarity and easier access and has been redesigned. A new logo was commissioned and an informational brochure will be ready for the 218th General Assembly (2008).

5. Actions of the Committee for Consideration of the 218th General Assembly (2008)

• Resolution to Study Immigration Detention in the United States
• Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking
• Resolution to Explore the Study of the Status of Women at All Levels in the PC(USA)

6. Other Actions

• God's Work in Women's Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation, jointly submitted with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

7. Appreciation

The Reverend Molly Casteel became associate for Women's Advocacy and staff for ACWC in September 2005. With her arrival, and the continuing administrative support of Leigh Harper, senior administrative assistant, ACWC has functioned well with a large portfolio of work. The co-chairs and committee express their sincere and deepest appreciation.

—Report Submitted by the Reverend Sarah Colwill, F. William (Bill) Gray, and Jerri Rodewald, co-chairs, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

Appendix 3
Agency Summary—Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) 2010

"The Holy One is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Psalms 9:9)

"The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.” (Acts 11:12)

...[Be] doers of the word, and not merely hearers...” (James 1:22)

1. Introduction

The context of women's advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in "God [who] liberated the people of Israel from oppression ... [and] covenanted with Israel ... that they might do justice ..." (Book of Order, G-3.0101b) and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, the Presbyterian 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 promise. Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to ...

... give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, G-4.0403 ... monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church ... and advocate[ing] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society [as a whole]. (Minutes, 1994, Part I, p. 262)

2. Assigned Responsibilities

The ACWC's assigned functions are delineated in the GAMC Manual of Operations (Appendix 1, Section VII.C.4.), and they include:

a. Prepar[ing] policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and Advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, or on its own initiative.

b. Advis[ing] the General Assembly Mission Council on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.

c. Provid[ing] advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners’ resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women’s concerns.

d. Assist[ing] the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and provide information to the church as requested.

e. Provid[ing] the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns.

f. Monitor[ing] the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns.

g. Through advocacy maintain[ing] a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

The ACWC is housed in the Office of the Executive Director, General Assembly Mission Council. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly. ACWC has organized itself with a leadership team of three co-chairs: two serve as corresponding members to the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council respectively. A member of ACWC is a voting member of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). There are twelve members of the committee; ten members are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. Members who left the committee in June 2008 were Karen Breckenridge, Nancy Neal, Manley Olsen (GAMC), Louise Davidson (PW). Members who joined the committee in June 2008 were Darcy Lynn Metcalfe, N'Yisrela Watts Afriyie, Chris Wolfe (PW), and Jan Martin (GAMC). Sarah Colwill resigned at the close of General Assembly 2008 due to family obligations. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty was elected to complete her two year term.

3. Accomplishments

a. 2009–10: ACWC Met Four Times

(1) March 13–16, 2009, in New York, New York

- The committee met at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) United Nations Office just following the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting. Joel Hanisek, U.N. Representative for the PC(USA) hosted the group.
• Dr. Serene Jones, President of Union Theological Seminary, spoke to ACWC about women as political agents within religious contexts.

• Catherine Bordeau, intern with Ecumenical Women at the United Nations, spoke to the group about faith at the U.N. and gender in the church.

• Sister Marie Bernard Alima Mbalula, Secretary, Democratic Republic of the Congo, addressed the committee on the use of rape as a weapon of war in the DRC.

• Committee member, Dr. Gay L. Byron, Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, spoke with ACWC about Womanist Theology and her latest academic work.

• Linda Valentine, GAMC Executive Director and Michael Kruse, GAMC Vice-chair, had a conversation with the group in response to the most recent GAMC restructuring.

• The committee had the opportunity to travel to Newark for a port tour and visitation of the Elizabeth, New Jersey Immigrant Detention Center.

(2) July 16–18, 2009, in Louisville, Kentucky

• The committee discussed the GAMC Employee Handbook changes at length.

• The committee spent extensive amounts of time responding to inquiries from the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee.

• The Health, Sexuality, and Faith work group of ACWC met with Martha Bettis Gee, GAMC Associate for Child Advocacy, to discuss pornography and its connections with human trafficking.

• The Thea-ologies work group of ACWC met with Dr. Johanna van Wijk-Bos and Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty to discuss women’s theologies being taught in Presbyterian seminaries.

• Marissa Castellanos, Project Manager, Kentucky Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking, spoke to the entire committee about human trafficking.

• Pat Hendrix, GAMC Sexual Misconduct Ombudsperson, informed ACWC about the sexual misconduct policy in the PC(USA).

• Valerie Small, Office of the General Assembly Manager of General Assembly Nominations and Moderatorial Staff Services, explained the nomination process for members of ACWC.

• Curtis Kearns, GAMC Executive Administrator, addressed the new ACWC staff position description with the committee.

• The committee had a conversation with two representatives from the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee, Doug Megill and Sylvia Washer.

(3) October 29–31, 2009, in Pasadena, California

• The committee had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Kate Ott of the Religious Institute, who spoke to them about the study she directed, entitled, Sex and the Seminary, looking at what seminaries are doing to cultivate sexually healthy religious professionals.

• The group continued discussion with Curtis Kearns, GAMC Executive Administrator, about their new staff person.

• Marsha Fowler and Ann Hayman educated ACWC about the PC(USA) report on HIV/AIDS.

• Ron Kernaghan, Chair, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), informed ACWC of what ACSWP is taking to General Assembly this year.

• Rev. Carol Tomkins led the group in a discussion on the new Form of Government.

(4) January 21–23, 2010, in Louisville, Kentucky

• The ACWC member, Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, spoke to the group about the Advisory and Advocacy Review Committee’s final report.

• The work groups finalized what they will take to the General Assembly.

• The ACWC met jointly with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and ACSWP.

• Julia Thorne, Attorney in the Office of Immigration Issues, OGA, spoke to the group about immigration and detention and her work with the PC(USA).

• The ACWC elected a new leadership team that will take over after the 219th General Assembly (2010) in
The ACWC, along with ACREC, had the opportunity to meet with Michael Kruse, GAMC Vice-chair, and Sue Ezell, GAMC Justice Mission Committee Chair, over dinner and discussed the relationship between the advocacy committees and the GAMC.

Laurie Griffith, Manager of Judicial Process, OGA, addressed the group on sexual misconduct, particularly in the context of clergy and internet pornography.

Cynthia Holder Rich from ACREC had a discussion with the group about the Belhar Confession.

Curtis Kearns, GAMC Executive Administrator, gave the group some GAMC updates.

4. Highlights

a. Women of Color Joint Working Group

The 217th General Assembly (2006) recommended the creation of a Task Force on the Women of Color Consultation. Made up of seven persons, this task force was launched in October 2006, completing its work and reporting to the 218th General Assembly (2008) in a separate report. Constituted jointly by ACWC and ACREC, in consultation with Presbyterian Women and the National Cross Caucus, the task force studied the recommendations, which came from the Women of Color Consultation in 2004. In addition to analyzing and determining what progress had been made, the task force designed and recommended a mechanism for monitoring future progress by the denomination. The Women of Color Joint Working Group was created by the 218th General Assembly (2008) as a permanent monitoring committee. The Women of Color Joint Working Group, a combined committee of ACREC and ACWC, continues to work to monitor all General Assembly referrals assigned to them pertaining to concerns of women of color in the PC(USA). ACWC will bring some of their recommendations to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

b. Status of Women Task Force

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved ACWC’s recommendation to study the status of women at all levels of the church, calling for the creation of the Status of Women Task Force. While restructuring slowed the initiation of this group and its work, the Status of Women Task Force has been created and met once in January 2010. The task force will continue its assigned function and report back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

c. Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus

The Hispanic-Latino National Presbyterian Caucus contacted ACWC in September 2009 asking for assistance in advocating on behalf of the women of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. In conjunction with the caucus, ACWC wrote a letter to the Stated Clerk and Moderator of the General Assembly requesting they send a letter to the president of Mexico and the governor of Chihuahua asking them to tend to the violence being done against women and their families. Beyond this, ACWC will bring a recommendation to the 219th General Assembly (2010) to form a study group on the situation in Juárez and provide bilingual study materials to churches on the border.

d. Youth, Technology, and Pornography

The Health, Sexuality, and Faith work group of ACWC spent much of its time working in conjunction with Martha Bettis Gee, Associate for Child Advocacy, GAMC, on issues of pornography and youth. They are currently examining the need for updates to the 1983 report on pornography which contains no relevant discussion of the impact of technology on the pornography industry. Included in the group’s discussion have been the issues of clergy abuse of pornography and pornography as a vehicle for the trafficking of children. The work group intends to keep this issue at the fore of its work.

e. Sex and the Seminary

During the October 2009 meeting of ACWC in Pasadena, California, the group had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Kate Ott of the Religious Institute and director of the study, Sex and the Seminary. Dr. Ott presented the group with some of her work regarding the importance of religious professionals having been educated in sex and sexuality. The Thea-logies work group of ACWC is continuing to work with Dr. Ott and consider ways in which the PC(USA) might improve the sex/sexuality education of those preparing to lead the denomination.

f. Rachel Sabbath Initiative

During their October 2009 meeting, ACWC also learned from Dr. Kate Ott about the Rachel Sabbath Initiative. Through this initiative, the Religious Institute is calling denominations and congregations to raise awareness and support the U.N.’s goals of reducing maternal mortality rates and improving access to reproductive health care around the globe. As more than half a million women in the world die each year and more than one million children are left motherless because of the lack of proper health care for pregnant women, ACWC hopes to connect the PC(USA) with this project in the near future, see <http://www.religiousinstitute.org/initiative/rachel-sabbath-initiative-saving-womens-lives-0> for more information.

g. A Time of Transition
The great majority of time the past two years has been focused on internal matters for ACWC—restructure and review. In November, 2008, three positions in the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/PW Area were eliminated as a result of restructuring in that ministry area. The positions eliminated were: Office of Women's Advocacy, Office of the National Network of Presbyterian College Women, and the Office of Racial Ethnic and Young Women Together. The women were terminated from their positions and escorted out the same day. This greatly impacted the work of ACWC, particularly since the October 2008 meeting had been cancelled due to budget restrictions. There was no opportunity for consultation regarding the status of projects, nor, after working with staff for three years, any closure allowed.

The ACWC requested time on the agenda of the General Assembly Council at its March meeting to discuss the manner in which staff was dismissed, and the restructuring. Earlier in March, however, Executive Director Linda Valentine and Michael Kruse, Vice-chair of the General Assembly Mission Council, came to the ACWC meeting for that purpose. One conclusion resulted in ACWC participating in a discussion about the rewrite of the GAMC Personnel Policies. This is being done with ACREC and ACSWP, and is continuing. Although GAMC approved the personnel policies at their September 2009 meeting, assurance has been given to the three committees that changes can be made following further consultation. The primary issue for ACWC is that of same-day separations.

After the restructuring, ACWC was no longer connected in any way with Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/PW. There is no longer an Office of Women's Advocacy (OWA) within REWM/PW. The senior administrative assistant for OWA and ACWC was promoted to another position within REWM/PW, eliminating any staff support for ACWC. A temporary, part-time staff was hired February 15, 2009. Her one-year contract has been extended through General Assembly of this year.

h. Actions of the Committee for Consideration by the 219th General Assembly (2010)

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

Resolution to Reaffirm Support for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Resolution to Ensure Staffing for Women's Advocacy in the PC(USA)

Resolution to Explore the Intersection of Gender and Race

Resolution to Adapt the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR)

Response to Referral Item 09-12 with Recommendation to Extend the Work of the Status of Women Task Force


Appendix 4

Agency Summary—Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) 2012

“The Holy One is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Psalms 9:9)

“The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.” (Acts 11:12)

...[Be] doers of the word, and not merely hearers...” (James 1:22)

1. Introduction

The context of women’s advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in God who liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted with Israel that they might do justice, and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) explicitly articulated in the Articles of Agreement its commitment to work against gender-based discrimination. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) is a contemporary fulfillment of this promise. The new Book of Order continues to uphold this commitment: “In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person” (Book of Order, F-1.0403). Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to:

give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the Book of Order, G-4.0403 ...
monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church...and advocate[ing] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society [as a whole]. (Minutes, 1994, Part I, p. 262)

2. Assigned Responsibilities

The ACWC's assigned functions are delineated in the GAMC Manual of Operations (Appendix I, VII.C., p. 23).

They include:

a. Prepar[ing] policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and Advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the General Assembly Mission Council, or on its own initiative.

b. Advis[ing] the General Assembly Mission Council on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.

c. Provid[ing] advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women's concerns.

d. Assist[ing] the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and provide information to the church as requested.

e. Provid[ing] the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns.

f. Monitor[ing] the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns.

g. Through advocacy maintain[ing] a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

The ACWC is housed in the Office of the Executive Director, General Assembly Mission Council. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC). The ACWC has organized itself with a leadership team of three co-chairs: two serve as corresponding members to the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council respectively. One member of ACWC is a voting member of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). There are twelve voting members of the committee; ten members are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. One member is the current moderator for Justice and Peace of Presbyterian Women and one member is a member of the General Assembly Mission Council, chosen and sent by that body. The committee also has a number of liaison members: Carmen Rosario from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), Erica Harley from the National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen (NAPC), KT Ockels from World Mission of the General Assembly Mission Council, and Margryette Boyd from Racial Ethnic Young Women Together (REYWT), who joined the committee as liaison in 2011. During this term, the committee had representation from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) through Marsha Fowler, Gloria Albrecht, and Eric Mount, who each attended one or more meetings in that role. Members who rotated off the committee in July 2010 are Gay Byron, Adeline de Castro, and Maria Cardenes-Baez. Members who were elected to the committee in July 2010 were Barbara Adams Smelter, Samuel Chung, and Joann Haejong Lee. Samuel Chung's position was declared vacant after two unexcused absences and has not yet been filled. Voting members who continued on from the previous term were Terry Alexander (MRTI), Jerri Rodewald, Jan Martin (GAMC), N'Yisrela Watts-Afriyie, Bill Gray, Darcy Metcalfe, and Chris Wolf (PW).


The ACWC met five times:

a. September 9–11, 2010, in Louisville, Kentucky

• The committee spent a significant amount of time on introductions as this was the first meeting for those elected at the 219th General Assembly (2010).

• The committee reviewed their work at General Assembly and looked ahead to what items they would need to monitor in the coming years.

• Nancy Young, coordinator for Racial Ethnic & Women's Leadership Development Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges, met with the group to share her vision for her work and to hear about the work of ACWC.

• Vince Patton, who was soon to be Executive Administrator, joined the group for lunch and conversation.

• Unzu Lee, Presbyterian Women associate, reported to the group about the National Council of Churches’ project
“Language Matters,” (later to be called “Words Matter”).

- Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) shared some of the work of the GAMC with the committee.

- The committee spent significant time determining how to divide their work into smaller working groups, and then spent time in those groups to determine work for the next two years. The committee organized themselves into three working groups: Health and Sexuality, Women and the Church, and Violence Against Women.


- The committee’s focus in this meeting was ecumenical and interfaith relations, which influenced their decision to meet in New Orleans, where the National Council of Churches (NCC) was holding their general assembly.

- The committee heard from Meagan Manas and Ann Tiemeyer of the NCC on the many ecumenical projects of the NCC related to gender justice. In particular, they heard about the beginnings of the project, “Words Matter,” as well as the Fistula Stories Project. They also learned about the NCC’s Justice for Women Working Group, a group of ecumenical women who focus on partnering to work on various gender justice issues. One member of ACWC, as well as ACWC’s staff person, participate in the work of this group. This keeps ACWC connected to the work of other denominations, which often serve as good resources in a time when resources are limited.

- The committee participated in a group-building session as part of bringing on the new members and strengthening the work relationships of those who had been on ACWC for a time.

- The committee heard Cecilia Casal’s report of the ecumenical trip she participated in to Columbia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

- The committee working groups decided which issues they would focus on for this two-year cycle.

- The committee was able to attend a portion of the NCC’s general assembly.


- The committee met in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with the Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference, which was focused on gender justice issues. Following their meeting, the committee attended the conference.

- The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson met with the committee to share some of the work of the Office of Public Witness.

- Committee member, Darcy Metcalfe, reported on her experience at the United Methodist Church’s Sexual Misconduct Conference and expressed her interest in looking further into the Safe Child policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

- Committee member, Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, reported on her time in Hungary.

- Committee member, Belinda Rice, reported on her work with the General Assembly committee assigned to study the situation of violence on the Mexico-U.S. border.

- Committee member, Jerri Rodewald, reported on her time in New York at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

- Glenn Northern of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Nicolette Paterson of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice met with the committee to discuss reproductive justice in the current context of the United States.

- Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council, met with the committee to hear more about their work.

d. September 15–17, 2011, in Louisville, Kentucky

- The committee worked on updating the ACWC manual of operations.

- SanDawna Ashley, associate for Gender and Racial Justice, met with the committee and shared some of her work with them.

- Tom Hay, director of operations, Office of the General Assembly, came to have a conversation with the group about the lack of childcare provided at General Assembly.

- The committee spent time discussing the importance of the ACCRA confession and the Bible study written by Dr. Margaret Aymer and published by Presbyterian Women.

- Committee member, Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, gave an update of the work of the Status of Women Task Force.

- Lisa Robbins and Ruth Gardner from the General Assembly Mission Council’s Human Resources department shared...
with the group the gender equity audit they are preparing for the next General Assembly.

- Valerie Small, manager of General Assembly Nominations, met with the group to discuss best ways to include and encourage the participation of younger women on the advocacy committee.

- Vince Patton, Executive Administrator of the General Assembly Mission Council, discussed the staffing for the committee.

- The Health and Sexuality working group met with Claire Lewis and Michael Harper to discuss the church’s new online adolescent development curriculum.

e. January 17–19, 2012, in Louisville, Kentucky

- The committee met to finalize its work going into the 220th General Assembly (2012).

- Valerie Small, manager of General Assembly Nominations, and Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks of the General Assembly Nominating Committee met with ACWC to discuss nominations to ACWC going to General Assembly.

- Patrick Heery, managing editor for Unbound, met with the committee to discuss his work with this interactive, online journal of social witness.

- The committee met jointly with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to discuss their work for General Assembly.

- Three members of ACWC had attended the Women of Color Consultation in October of 2011, and Joann Lee led a discussion on her experiences at that event and on the consultation report going to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

4. Highlights

a. Status of Women Task Force

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns continued to stay connected to and support the work of the Status of Women Task Force, and is looking forward to the potential acceptance of the task force’s recommendations. The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved ACWC’s recommendation to study the status of women at all levels of the church, calling for the creation of the Status of Women Task Force. While restructuring slowed the initiation of this group and its work, the Status of Women Task Force has been created and met once in January 2010. The task force will continue its assigned function and report back to the 220th General Assembly (2012).

b. Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Services

The Health and Sexuality working group of ACWC monitored the development of legislative limitations on the availability of and access to reproductive health services for men and women in the United States and internationally. They studied “truth in advertising” issues related to self-described “abortion counseling clinics,” and questioned the availability of adequate scientific sexuality education. Further, they examined the inactivity by the PC(USA) in advocating for existing church policies and reviewed new PC(USA) materials and policy regarding sexual misconduct.

c. Ecumenical Focus

The committee has found that connections made through various ecumenical channels have provided resources and information for the committee that would otherwise have not been possible. Connections to the National Council of Churches’ Justice for Women’s Working Group and intentional participation in conferences like Ecumenical Advocacy Days and in groups like Ecumenical Women at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women have deeply benefitted and informed the work of ACWC. The committee values ecumenical partnerships, particularly in a time when resources are limited in all denominations.

d. Young Women

The committee continues to be committed to working toward intentional inclusion of younger women in the work of the committee, and has spent considerable time considering the ways in which it could be more welcoming to younger women. Some of the younger members currently on ACWC have been instrumental in considering ways in which serving on the committee could be made more accessible to young women.

e. Intersectionality

The committee has worked to become more aware of and intentional about the places where women’s issues intersect with those of race, class, disability, etc., recognizing that most women find themselves at the intersection of more than one social identity marker that may influence the way they are treated and experience the world.

f. Partnering with Programmatic Staff of the GAMC

The committee is still working to adjust to the still relatively new separation of gender justice policy and program work. They have been intentional about staying connected with the staff of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/ Presbyterian
Women, and look forward to continuing to build their relationships with these women in order to make the work of
gender justice in the church as effective as possible.

g. Staffing Shifts

As of shortly following the 219th General Assembly (2010), ACWC has begun sharing their staff person with the
Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC). This provides a definite challenge to both committees in
having adequate access to the resources staff provides and in finding meeting times that don’t overlap or occur too
close together. The committee is concerned about how staff will manage at the General Assembly, when demands of
both committees will be extremely high.

5. Actions of the Committee for Consideration of the 220th General Assembly (2012)

a. Resolutions in Response to Assigned Referrals

• A Resolution to Continue the Work of Deborah’s Daughters (Response to 2004 Referral: Item 05-03)

• A Resolution to Recommit to Celebrating the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God (Response to
2008 Referral: Item 09-13)

6. ACWC’s 2012 Resolutions

• A Resolution to Encourage Participation in the Words Matter Project

• A Resolution on Justice for Survivors of Sexual Assault

• A Resolution to Ensure Implementation of Updated and Detailed Safe Child Policy in the Presbyterian Church
(U.S.A.)

• A Resolution Commending Study of the 2011–2012 Horizons Bible Study and the Accra Confession.

Appendix 5

[Taken from the Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 871–72, electronic version.]

Item 10-20

A Resolution to Recommit to Celebrating the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God—From the Advocacy
Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 220th General Assembly (2012) do the
following:

1. Call on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to recommit to honoring and celebrating women of color, extending
the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God to 2022.

2. Direct the Moderator, Stated Clerk and Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council (soon to
be Presbyterian Mission Agency) to communicate by the end of 2012 with congregations, presbyteries and
synods, seminaries, campus ministries and conference centers asking them to recognize the Decade of
Hearing and Singing New Songs to God and incorporate it in worship, conferences, training events and other
activities.

3. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (soon to be Presbyterian Mission Agency) to provide annual
funding in the amount of $7000 for the Joint Working Group (up to eight members) to meet independently of
the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns once
each year, to be incorporated into the per capita budget every year.

4. Direct the General Assembly Mission Council (soon to be Presbyterian Mission Agency) to include the Joint
Working Group in the planning of future Women of Color Consultations.

5. Direct General Assembly Mission Council (soon to be Presbyterian Mission Agency) to lift up the Decade of
Hearing and Singing New Songs to God in its web-based and print publications periodically throughout the
decade.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2008 Referral: Item 09-13. Report, Hearing and
Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies, Recommendation 3. Direct the
Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns
(ACWC) to Create a Permanent Joint Working Group on Women of Color in the Church, to Be Made Up of Two
Members of ACREC and Two Members of ACWC, Appointed by the Leadership of Each Committee—From the Women

The Joint Working Group was formed as a permanent committee as a result of the recommendations that came from
the Women of Color Consultation Task Force, which were approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), (Minutes,
2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 964–77). They had their first meeting in July of 2009 in conjunction with a joint meeting of
the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns
(ACREC). They met again in January 2010, doing the work of monitoring the church’s response to issues and concerns raised in the initial Women of Color Consultation. They brought to the attention of both advocacy committees a number of issues directly affecting women of color. The Joint Working Group has not met since, due to the inability of the group to currently function under the parameters originally established for them. The ACWC is recommending new provisions for the Joint Working Group in order that this permanent monitoring committee established by the 218th General Assembly (2008) can continue to carry out its mandated work.

As reported to the 219th General Assembly (2010), the Women of Color Joint Working Group along with ACWC and ACREC have been discouraged by the lack of or inadequate responses to their referral monitoring inquiries. By the 219th General Assembly (2010), two years of the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God had gone by largely unrecognized. While the referrals from the 218th General Assembly (2008) called for the Decade to be communicated widely, requests from the Joint Working Group and the advocacy committees asking for such promotion were largely unrecognized. While the referrals from the 218th General Assembly (2008) called for the Decade to be communicated widely, requests from the Joint Working Group and the advocacy committees asking for such promotion and education resulted in no action. This decade (2009-2019) was intended to call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to hear and sing new songs—those of women of color—in order to more faithfully represent and reflect all people of God, celebrating in particular the lives and gifts of women of color. (See Hearing and Singing New Songs To God: http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acrec/pdf/wocctaskforcereport.pdf) Clearly, the Joint Working Group has found this lack of response discouraging and disheartening. While some effort has recently come from the General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to acknowledge the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God, these efforts to publicize the Decade have come almost three years after it was supposed to have begun. The Joint Working Group suspects this sudden action is in direct correlation with the need to report to the 220th General Assembly (2012) on what has been done, and would draw the assembly’s attention to the late date at which this minimal action has been taken.

In passing the recommendations from the Women of Color Consultation Task Force, the 219th General Assembly (2010) reaffirmed the commitment of the PC(USA) to be a community of “full participation and representation” of every member of the body of Christ (Book of Order, F.1.0403), while also acknowledging that this commitment still requires a tremendous amount of intentionality and work—especially when it comes to the genuine and equitable inclusion of women of color in the life and decision making of the church. Sadly, in 2012, three years after the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God was to have begun, very few people in the denomination know what it is.

Restructuring within the GAMC (soon to be Presbyterian Mission Agency) has also had a direct effect on the Joint Working Group. When the Joint Working Group was formed, the advocacy committee staffing situation was of a different model from what exists now. This has direct bearing on the Joint Working Group’s ability to come together to meet. When the Joint Working Group was formed, each advocacy committee had their own staff person to resource them with expertise in their particular area of advocacy and to assist them in completing their work. This allowed the two committees to meet once a year at the same time in the same place, where they would use a portion of their time to come together to share their work with one another and often work together on intersecting issues. Due to restructuring of the GAMC (soon to be Presbyterian Mission Agency), since 2010, the two advocacy committees have shared one staff person. Since one person cannot resource and assist two groups at one time, the advocacy committees can no longer meet simultaneously. The Joint Working Group (who also share the same staff person as the advocacy committees) is thus unable fulfill the directive from the 218th General Assembly (2008) to meet when the advocacy committees meet together.

When they were able to meet directly following those simultaneous advocacy committee meetings, the Joint Working Group (four of whose members are on the advocacy committees) was able to save tremendously on travel cost. Four of their (up to) eight members were able to have their travel covered by the advocacy committees, with whom those four were already meeting anyway. Neither advocacy committee incurred any extra cost, as this was one of their regularly scheduled meetings. The only travel cost the Joint Working Group had to pay was for their two to four at-large members. Given the structure of the current staffing situation, this scenario is no longer possible, meaning that in order for the Joint Working Group to continue to meet once a year as mandated by the 218th General Assembly (2008), their budget must be increased. They have to this point only been allotted only $3060 a year, which cannot cover travel and meeting expenses for six to eight people.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) has the opportunity to recommitt to our call to be a church that more faithfully and fairly reflects the diversity of the body of Christ. Given that the 218th General Assembly (2008) saw fit to create the permanent Joint Working Group, the church has a responsibility to continue to support this group. The booklet describing the history, context and mandate of the Joint Working Group, called Hearing and Singing New Songs to God (http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acrec/pdf/wocctaskforcereport.pdf), is available online, so making this resource and the context of the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God known would cost little to nothing. To begin the Decade again would serve to show our willingness to admit that we haven’t yet done what we committed to do, but that from this point we will indeed lift new songs to God and in our actions reflect our commitment to celebrating the lives and gifts of women of color in this denomination.

Appendix 6

(See Appendix 6 under “Additional Resources.”)

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

(See ACWC Self-Study Survey Questions and Responses under “Additional Rationale.”)
This was in adherence to the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at reunion: "The General Assembly Council in its development of a design for the work of the General Assembly shall also ensure the continuance of the advocacy and monitoring functions of the existing Councils on Church and Race (both denominations), Committee on Women’s Concerns (Presbyterian Church in the United States) and Council on Women and the Church (The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America) Until such time as the design for work of the General Assembly is completed and these functions are ensured, the existing structures and functions of these bodies shall be maintained" (Article 5.6)


According to the Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2012, "The Executive Director has the responsibility for the advocacy and advisory committees" (21).

Agency summaries submitted to General Assembly recounting ACWC’s work going back to 2006 can be found in Appendices 1–4, if more detailed information is desired.

Review of General Assembly Permanent Committee: Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, 3. Full survey results report is attached to this report as Appendix 6 for your information.


Item 08-07 from the 217th General Assembly (2006), A Recommendation to Study the Status of Women in the PC(USA): http://pc-biz.org/MeetingPapers/285%28mHugiq0evku2fcOxhQztj2cf%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=903 .

Item 09-12 from the 218th General Assembly (2008), Resolution to Explore the Study of the Status of Women at All Levels in the PC(USA): http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=1543&promoId=9 .


Item 11-13 from the 218th General Assembly (2008), A Resolution to Expand the Church’s Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking: http://pc-biz.org/MeetingPapers/285%28mHugiq0evku2fcOxhQztj2cf%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=1539&promoId=7 .


Several free, online video resources and study guides can be found here: http://www.pcusa.org/browse/resources-resource/ministries/hispanic/ .

Item 11-12 from the 220th General Assembly (2012), A Resolution to Continue the Work of Deborah’s Daughters: http://pc-biz.org/MeetingPapers/285%28mHugiq0evku2fcOxhQztj2cf%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=3931&promoId=232 .

"Advice and counsel memoranda are resources prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns for the purpose of providing information about existing policy, current work on specific topics, recent developments, and other factors useful to commissioners as they consider issues before the assembly" (Standing Rules of the General Assembly, 1426).


[26] According to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (November 2013), ACWC "shall have members as detailed below ..." including "One Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Member nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Nominating and Governance Subcommittee and elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to serve a four-year non-renewable term. The voting member fulfills the responsibility of liaison between the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Advocacy Committee" (Appendix 1F, p. 35, 40).


[34] You can learn more about the struggle against workers' rights violations at Hyatt here: http://www.hyatthurts.org/.


[41] A Brief Statement of Faith, lines 29–32

Comment

PMA Comment

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is in compliance with the appendix to its Manual of Operations, cited by the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns. The language in the appendix reads: "This Advocacy Committee shall consist of ... one Presbyterian Mission Agency Board nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Nominating and Governance Subcommittee and elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to serve a four-year non-renewable term. This voting member fulfills the responsibility of liaison between the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Advocacy Committee." The Manual of Operations also includes this provision: "When no current member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has the gifts or abilities required to serve on particular boards or entities that require Board representation, the Board Nominating Committee may select nominees from past Board members."

At its February 2012 meeting, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board elected a voting member to serve a four-year, nonrenewable term (expiring in 2016) on the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns. This member completes his service on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board at the conclusion of the 221st General Assembly (2014), having served since 2008. However, his term on the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns is not complete until 2016, creating the concern raised by
This concern was raised by staff in February and options have been relayed to the advocacy committee, including asking the duly-elected board member to resign from the advocacy committee before the end of his term (so that a current board member might be elected), and considering a shortening of the length of the term of service on the advocacy committee (if the member must be a board member for all four years on the advocacy committee, then this shortens the list of eligible members by one third, and finding members with sufficient time to serve on all the required additional committees has become quite a challenge.) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board advises the General Assembly to disapprove Recommendation 6 since the Manual of Operations is being followed, and alternate solutions are being discussed.

Additional Resources
Appendix 6

ACWC Self-Study Appendix 6.pdf
Self-Study Questions and Responses

ACWC Self-Study Questions and Responses.pdf
**Recommendation**

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on behalf of the Women of Color Consultation team, recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014):

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to plan a Women of Color Consultation (WoCC) that focuses on the inclusion of women of color of all ages in leadership and decision-making in presbyteries and synods and/or their successor bodies. The next WoCC shall be held no later than the fall of 2015 and be reported to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) with recommendation for further action and study.

2. Direct the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/PW ministry area to make available print and electronic resources on cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism to mid councils and the larger church.

3. Direct mid councils to provide training and education on cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism to its committees on ministry and committees on preparation with an expectation that issues which are addressed in this training will be disseminated throughout the presbytery at least once every three years beginning in 2015.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to collect information from mid councils on the implementation of cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism training for committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry and to report its findings to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

5. Direct mid councils to promote gathering opportunities for women of color within synods and presbyteries for prayer, study, fellowship, and networking by providing financial, technological, space, and other support.

**Rationale**

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: 2012 Referral: Item 10-16. Women of Color Consultation Committee Report. Recommendation 4. Direct the Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries/PW Ministry Areas, in Consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, to Plan a Women of Color Consultation (WoCC) That Focuses on the Inclusion of Women of Color of All Ages in Leadership and Decision-Making in Presbyteries and Synods, and/or Their Successor Bodies. the Next WoCC Shall Be Held No Later Than the Fall of 2013 and Be Reported on to the 221st General Assembly (2014) From the General Assembly Mission Council (Minutes, Part I, pp. 61, 75-76, 854-57 of the CD; p. 230 of the printed copy).

**Women of Color Consultation Committee Report**

"Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of ‘Hearing and Singing New Songs to God’" was the theme of the 2013 Women of Color Consultation held at the Presbyterian Center and the SpringHill Suites/Fairfield Inn Hotel in Louisville, Ky., on Friday, October 11, to Sunday, October 13. The consultation fulfilled the action of the 220th General Assembly (2012) to call for the creation of a fourth Women of Color Consultation to “be held no later than the fall of 2013” (Minutes, 2012, Part I, p. 854, electronic copy), and was conducted through the Office of Gender and Racial Justice in the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministry Area in consultation with the Joint Working Group of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Racial and Ethnic Concerns.

The goals of the consultation were:

- To lift up and affirm the voices, vision, and leadership of women of color in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as the church celebrates the 2009–2022 season of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Singing New Harmonies, which calls for the transformation of the church by focusing on the intersections of race, gender, and class in its common witness;
- To identify both areas of progress and continuing challenges in the transformation of the church as a beloved community that models equity, mutuality, justice, and accountability;
- To build community, promote healing and wholeness, and foster professional, spiritual, and personal networks among women of color.

These goals supported the objectives of developing a report to the 221st General Assembly (2014) that would include recommendations for furthering the work of equipping the church at all levels to fulfill its gospel witness of equity and...
Thirty-four women of color served as participants in the consultation. Participants represented a nearly equal representation of African American, Asian American, Latina/Chicana, and Native American individuals from all regions of the United States. Roughly ten participants represented first- and second-generation immigrant groups, and more than half were fluent in languages other than English including Korean, Spanish, Mandarin, and Portuguese. They included teaching elders, ruling elders, deacons, leaders in mid council/national Presbyterian Women, seminarians, and lay leaders of caucuses and councils. Twelve attendees were young adult women ages 21–40; two were teaching elders honorably retired. Another twelve participants were first-time attendees; the remaining number participated in previous General Assembly-sponsored Women of Color Consultations in 2004, 2008, and/or 2011. Additional personnel included four keynote presenters, a consultation chaplain, two preachers for opening and closing worship, a staff consultation coordinator, and an administrative assistant.

The format of the consultation embodied four key elements: worship, presentations, dialogue, and fellowship. Opening worship Friday evening featured the Word proclaimed by the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett; Saturday and Sunday opened with devotions shared by participants Mary Jane Miles and Danielle Palomino, and a closing worship service marked the end of work completed by the consultation and included a sermon delivered by the Reverend Dr. Rhashell Hunter. The Lord's Supper was celebrated on each day of the consultation. Contributing a ministry of presence and counsel was the role of a chaplain for the event, fulfilled by the Reverend Un Joo Kim.

Keynote presentations focused on each of the four themes lifted up in 2008 report, Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies. The themes and keynote speakers included:

- Gender Lens and Intersectionality—understanding gender-specific needs and realities as they intersect with race, class, and other social realities by Laura Cheifez
- Making Visible the Leadership of Women of Color—developing, nurturing, and supporting the leadership and gifts of women of color within the church—beyond token representation by Elona Street-Stewart
- Church as a System of Privilege and Discrimination—recognizing and dismantling the ways that the church perpetuates systems of privilege within its own structures and ethos by Gloria Tate
- Commitment to Inclusivity with Justice—promoting equity and mutuality as elements of a whole and welcoming beloved community that fosters shared power and access to opportunity by Magdalena García

Each 45-minute presentation was followed immediately by hour-long roundtable dialogues that explored the keynote themes in depth. The dialogues centered on a series of two-to-three questions developed by the keynote presenters, and the substance of these dialogues was recorded by note-takers identified among participants at each roundtable.

Questions explored at roundtable discussions included:

- On Intersectionality:
  - How does it transform your relationships to see others and ask to be seen in the fullness of all your identities?
  - What kinds of coalitions/collaborations would women of color be able to build if we were moving forward out of an understanding of the mutual constitution of oppression?
  - What are concrete recommendations for action?
- On Making Visible the Leadership of Women of Color:
  - Recognize your own expertise: Where have you been able to use it in the Church? Where has it been denied?
- On Church as a System of Privilege and Discrimination:
  - What forums have been created or exist in your area (presbytery/synod) that provide an opportunity for interaction of women of color? How are you involved? If not, why not?
  - If there are not any forums for women of color, in or near the location of your ministry, what barriers have created this void?
  - Are there remedies that can be employed, individually, collectively, via middle governing bodies or General Assembly?
- On Commitment to Inclusivity with Justice:
  - How can we practice truth telling without losing hope? What are some truths that the church resists? What are some illusions that need to be destroyed?
  - How can we build a church that is a beloved community: divested from greed and invested in the common good?
  - How can the church foster cultural transformation through its leadership, policies, structures, and processes?
The roundtable dialogues generated valuable responses and insights. The content was both descriptive, in the form of sharing stories and illustrations drawn from personal experiences, and prescriptive, calling for the transformation of church and society to dismantle systems of oppression and to support systems of and efforts toward inclusion.

The following themes emerged as sources of positivity, transformation, and hope for women of color—as individuals, in relationships with others, and within the structures and systems of church and society:

"When We Are Telling the Truth, We Are Keeping Hope:"
The Value of Sharing Our Stories

Participants overwhelmingly celebrated the opportunity to tell their stories, hopes, fears, and joys, unencumbered by concerns for “politeness,” yet committed to the preservation of a “safe space” in which they could “speak the truth in love.” In the words of one participant, “Truth-telling isn’t losing hope. When we keep truth silent then we are dead inside. If we don’t share it, our bodies spoil inside. When we are telling the truth, we are keeping hope.” Of particular significance was the positive effect of intergenerational dialogue. Young adult women expressed appreciation for hearing the wisdom and experience of older participants, while women of advanced ages treasured the perspectives and commitment of younger women to the church. That each roundtable was comprised of women from different racial and ethnic backgrounds made for meaningful cross-cultural exchanges. On the community-building nature of telling and listening to stories, one participant remarked, “I do feel that people call me back to ‘home.’”

Though truth-telling often involved sharing painful stories, it also fostered jubilation over the progress and accomplishments made within the life of the church since the ordinations of the first African American woman, Katie Geneva Cannon, in 1974; the first Latina clergywoman, Blanqui Ontario-Rivera, (1975); the first Asian American clergywoman whose ordination was received by the denomination (1979), Elizabeth Kwon, and the first Native American clergywoman, Holly Haile-Davis (1986).

"I Empty Myself Before I Relate With Others, So That I May See Them More Fully:"
The Value of Authenticity and Trust

Along with worshiping the divinity of Jesus Christ, participants drew inspiration for developing trust-based, authentic relationships with one another from the personhood of Jesus. "Jesus had real relationships with real people, but [the church] often removes Jesus from his incarnation," shared one participant. To be transformed by the personhood of Jesus Christ was seen as a model for the power of Jesus to transform human relationships with one another, as people recognize and regard their authentic selves. "Being authentic is risky," was a sentiment acknowledged among many participants, but the risk of vulnerability was regarded overall as valuable in building community, especially among women of color. The processes of truth-telling and story-sharing required participants to demonstrate courage in speaking out, as well as energy and commitment through listening actively to one another. As one Native American participant observed, "I draw strength from being here. All of our stories are so different yet we’re [persevering]. We laugh, we cry, and we know the Indians have different ways of doing things. This type of getting together is curious for me; I want to know what my sisters are going through. We are telling our story. We need to understand ourselves. We don’t need to be paid for our home. We need to let people know who we are. We need to be proud of how we are. We are proud of our descendants.”

To the extent that trust-based, authentic relationships foster solidarity, one participant remarked, “mutual support and love is what will make things transformed, and transformative love is the most compelling thing. Full support of one another makes it possible for love to win.” In the words of another participant, “our common humanity is our call.”

"Seeing Life Through Various Lenses:"
The Value of Differences

Opportunities to learn more about other cultures and to celebrate their contributions to the church were considered major benefits to consultation participants. Unity, as opposed to uniformity, emerged as a desirable goal, not only as the bedrock of solidarity among women of color, but also for the church as a whole. The concept of intersectionality, deepened to explore the notion of mutual constituencies, added to the ways in which participants perceived and understood aspects of their identities. Many participants recognized the value of differences, both among groups of people and contained within individuals, given that individual identities are made up of many parts that include such things as race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, class, and physical and mental ability. Said one participant, "I value the lenses through which others perceive themselves and my own lenses of self-perception; we gain much when we see one another as multi-dimensional beings.”

The mutual support required for valuing differences was affirmed in another’s reflection: “to be asked to be seen in my fullness requires of others to be accepting of the “other” on all levels and dynamics of social constructionism… it would require them to accept me as an equal, created in the image of God, no less, no more, than another. …”

The following themes emerged as pernicious sources of challenge and opposition for women of color—as individuals, in relationships with others, and within the structures and systems of church and society:

"I Don’t Know What I Don’t Know:"
Sources of Non-Disclosure and Lack of Guidance

Many participants illuminated personal experiences of receiving incomplete, incorrect, or even no information about navigating the systems and structures within the church. This was most often experienced at every stage of
preparation for and engagement in ministries as teaching elders, though this was also true for those involved in other leadership capacities. "There seems to be this 'hidden' network of 'secret' knowledge about being mentored to move through processes that my white male colleagues somehow receive to which I've never been exposed," expressed one participant, a sentiment reiterated by many others.

For women who worship and/or serve in predominately nonwhite congregations, the impact of the disconnection between some presbyteries and some racial ethnic congregations compounds this "knowledge vacuum." While a number of programs and initiatives exist throughout the church that lift up opportunities for mission and service that may be of particular interest to women of color, many women lamented the fact that they are rarely mentioned, advertised, or promoted within their contexts.

"We Are Always Forced to Compete for the Crumbs Under the Table:"
The Fear of Scarcity of Resources

Nearly all participants lamented the lack of support networks, particularly within presbyteries. More than a few participants recalled networks, groups, organizations, and programs that existed previously for and were created by women of color, but noted that with shrinking budgets and frequent restructurings, many of those opportunities and initiatives disappeared. Mid councils have experienced difficulties in recent years in maintaining and/or supporting ministries that equip women of color in overcoming isolation and marginalization within the systemic structures of the church. What little financial or other resources that are allocated often position marginalized groups in competition with one another for limited offerings.

On the notion of dwindling resources, one participant voiced dismay that the problem, as she experienced it in her context, was not that resources were scarce within her mid council, but that the way in which it manages resources was what was crippling its witness among marginalized people. Similarly, one seminary student cited "how we distribute scholarship money in seminars—[I'm] always amazed by the fact that my really wealthy friends get the same financial aid as friends who have to work two full-time jobs and be full-time students to attend seminary." A sentiment expressed by more than a few participants was concern about what they perceived as the "corporatization" of the church, in that it appears to rely too heavily on corporate models for direction (with "the bottom line," so to speak) instead of a sense of an ecclesiastical mission rooted in the promotion of the realm of God.

Yet another perspective that resonated among many was the impact of shifting demographics within the United States on the "culture of fear" perceived among those in the church who belong to the dominant culture. Many sensed a reaction of panic, anxiety, jealousy, and fear among some in the dominant culture as the country becomes populated increasingly by Latino, Chicano, Asian, Black, and other nonwhite groups, as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is currently 91.8 percent White. These reactions are seen as fueling a "hoarder" mentality that, as one participant observed, "reinforces a myth of scarcity instead of recognizing the God of abundance. God's love and grace are sufficient."

Scarcity of material resources was not the only plague identified by participants. Tremendous strains on their time and energy were also identified as barriers to promoting networks and connections among women of color: "In my context in which I am over-worked and over-committed, especially as I am one of the only people of color in my mid council region, I have no extra time or energy free to give to building new networks." Burnout was cited as a significant burden among many.

"I'm Done Making Tacos for Christ:"
Tokenism and the Lack of Accountability for Inclusion and Equity

"...I don't mind, but I refuse to [make tacos at diversity potlucks] if we won't have serious dialogue," insisted one participant, speaking to the inclination of her worshipping community to strive simply for symbolic diversity instead of systemic transformation for the achievement of inclusivity and equity. Much frustration was expressed by participants over the disturbing trend among many structures within the life of the church to solicit one or two participants of color to serve, only to ignore their perspectives or fail to utilize their gifts or skills. In some cases, the opposite danger of under-utilization was over-burdening of the few women of color in predominately white contexts with multiple responsibilities for addressing "all things diversity-related."

Another frustration voiced by participants was their invisibility within mid councils in the processes of nomination to committees and task forces dealing with mission and ministry not related to diversity: "I have an accounting degree and work in financial services and I've not once been asked to serve on the presbytery's budget committee," one participant expressed. Many others noted that Committees on Ministry and other "power" committees within presbyteries were not swift to include their participation.

One of the most prevalent sources of discontent among participants was the lack of accountability within the systems of the church for upholding actions, policies, and commitments related to inclusivity and equity. While the denomination has denounced the sins of racism and sexism through various confessions and resolutions, some question to what extent the church recognizes the pain, violence, and harm that these "isms" inflict: "[Mid councils] have not neglected to implement mandatory trainings on clergy sexual abuse and child abuse policies, for fear that not doing so would make them liable to lawsuits. Isn't discrimination abuse? Why hasn't the church upheld trainings to prevent the abuses of racism and sexism? Is it that there hasn't yet been a lawsuit that might cause worry? Is it only then that it will become a priority?"
Comment
ACREC Advice and Counsel
The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) to approve Item 08-10.

ACWC Advice and Counsel
The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concern advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) to approve Item 08-10.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises approval of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board's Report with Recommendations, "Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God." The Women of Color Consultation is vital in continuing to grow the gender and racial justice awareness of the church through education, training, and support of racial ethnic women. The recommendations included in the report also provide for needed resources and educational opportunities within the mid councils that address a variety of racial justice concerns.

One correction to the report that ACWC would note: Though the report includes 2008 as a year when a Women of Color Consultation was held, this was actually a meeting of the Task Force on the Women of Color Consultation, who submitted the report, "Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies" to the 218th General Assembly (2008).

Additional Resources
Language - Korean

Measure for Measure.pdf
The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014):

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop a churchwide antiracism policy similar to the existing antidiscrimination policies.
2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop procedures and evaluation criteria for the implementation of a churchwide antiracism training program. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will report back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) regarding actions taken and results achieved.
3. Consistent with the 220th General Assembly (2012) mandate regarding mandatory antiracism training (Climate for Change Task Force Report[1]), recommend that all mid-level councils and congregations provide antiracism training and dialogue.
4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop tools, assessment instruments, and training materials for the presbyteries and congregations in order to develop clear and effective understanding of systemic racism, including white privilege, power, and prejudice in relation to race.

Rationale

Racism and white privilege exist in the church and in society. Racism is the "interlocking systems of advantage (as well as disadvantage) based on race. Unless we learn to recognize the interlocking effects of privilege at these levels we will not recognize how easily some of us enjoy privileges because of our racial identity that are not equally available to all our neighbors."[1]

Systemic racism has significantly impacted our society and our church for many years in the ways we gather for worship, the ways we function and relate as the Body of Christ, and the ways we build trust and engage individually with one another. Racism has directly or indirectly influenced the allocation of our limited resources for mission, the staffing of leadership positions within our church, the calling of leaders to serve in local congregations, as well as the process of ordination and preparation towards our ordered ministry.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) received and approved the Climate for Change Task Force report and approved the recommendation made that "cultural proficiency and anti-racism training be mandatory for all employees of all six agencies, and provide periodic or continuing education courses or training in this area, which will be monitored by ACREC."[2]

As a country, we have made progress regarding the understanding of race and the reality of racism. However, there is still staggering evidence of the continuing reality of white privilege—as seen in comparisons of wealth, education, health care, and mortality rates between the so-called races in the United States.[3] As long as this disparity exists, the church must continue antiracism training and so bear witness to the conviction that all people are made in God's good image.

While some progress has been made in society at large, the church continues to struggle. In some locations within the church there is little evidence that the sin of racism has been identified or that privilege and power are appropriately shared between people of different "races."

Over the years, segments of the PC(USA) have made conscious efforts in addressing such concerns. ACREC believes that an overarching church-wide policy is now needed in order to effectively address systemic racism in the church and live as faithful, accountable witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the spirit of the Confession of Belhar, we believe that "the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the
church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged;
that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own
interests and thus control and harm others.\[4\]


Comment

ACWC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) to approve Item 08-06.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns fully supports the Advocacy Committee for Racial and Ethnic Concerns "Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy." One priority of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns is considering the intersection of gender and race. We hope that this policy will take into specific account the particular experiences of women of color.

GACOR Comment

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve this resolution to develop a churchwide antiracism policy.

This resolution would have an important positive impact on the work committees on representation do both at the mid council and general assembly levels.

The Book of Order in F-1.0403 sets forth principles of unity and diversity. Race and ethnicity are identified categories of persons or groups for which there is no place for discrimination in the life of the church. It states, "The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution."

The development of a wide antiracism policy will help the church in its expressed concern about understanding and practices across race and ethnicity. Having wide antiracist conversations help equip all bodies in the church to improve our work across racial and ethnic divides and to live more faithfully what we confess in A Brief Statement of Faith, the Spirit helps us "to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, [and] to hear the voices of peoples long silenced" (Book of Confessions, 10.4, Lines 69–70).

Committees on representation are concerned about racism and its impact in the church. And they have skilled persons at mid council and national levels to serve as resources in creating this antiracism policy.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of 16 persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from ruling and teaching elders from across the church. Its mandate and functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

PMA Comment

Comment on Recommendation 1


The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly distributed the comprehensive policy document churchwide.

As policy already exists, the Presbyterian Mission Agency calls for more action to implement the vision of the beloved community as set forth in the existing policy.
Since 1999, Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/PW has provided antiracism training at General Assemblies. Antiracism training has also been offered at The Big Tent, National Presbyterian Multicultural Church Conferences, Multicultural Church Institutes, and in presbyteries and congregations, as requested.

Comment on Recommendation 2

Churchwide antiracism trainings are offered by the office of Gender and Racial Justice in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/PW. Racial justice training opportunities include:

http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racialjustice/training/

Building the Beloved Community—Understanding the dynamics of privilege and systemic racism.

Faces of the Enemy—A guided discussion based upon the documentary “Faces of the Enemy.” This course explores enemy making, the media, propaganda, racism, and war.

Gender, Race and Class: Exploring Intersectionality—How class and gender intersect with systemic racism in social organizations and institutions.

Internalized Oppression—This course uses biblical characters to explore the effects of internalized oppression.

Power and Privilege—This workshop explores the issues of power and privilege and creates a safe place to discuss how they affect our lives and church.

Worship Where Faith and Culture Meet—This workshop includes an introduction to African American, Latino/Latina, Asian, Middle Eastern, Native American, and Euro-American cultures in the United States.

Cultural Proficiency 101—An overview of the gender and racial justice components: anti-racism, anti-sexism and power and privilege.

Equipping the Church for Ministry with God's Diverse Family—This conversation focuses on the tools and resources available for Presbyterians who seek to face and dismantle racism.

A Conversation on Inclusive and Expansive Language and Cultural Diversity—This conversation focuses on utilizing bias-free and culturally-responsive communication, for the purpose of promoting transformation in individuals and in the larger church.

Comment on Recommendation 4

The office of Gender and Racial Justice provides antiracism training materials, tools, and resources for Presbyterians who seek to continue the Presbyterian Church’s long-standing commitment to face and dismantle racism. This training is designed to assist individuals, mid councils, agencies, and worshiping communities with their efforts to understand the dynamics of privilege and systemic racism.

The Antiracism Manual, as well as a roster of antiracism trainers, is located in the office of Gender and Racial Justice. The practice is to provide the antiracism manual to nationally trained facilitators and to send the facilitator with training materials to mid councils, congregations, General Assembly, the Big Tent, General Assembly agencies, and to other groups, as training is requested.

The Antiracism Manual was recently expanded. New modules include:

- The Intersectionality of Race, Gender and Class (completed in 2010),
- a module on Internalized Oppression (Race & Gender) (completed in 2011), and
- a module on White Privilege and Male Privilege (coming in 2014).

Additional Resources

Language - Korean

ACREC Anti Racism Resolution.pdf
Recommendation

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve the Institutional Relationship Agreement between Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., and the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

I. Preface

This agreement expresses the partnership in mission among Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). PW and the PMA have had a longstanding partnership based upon shared beliefs, complementary visions and commitments, common history, and a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation. While this covenant is specifically for the relationship between PW and the PMA, it is commended as a model for Presbyterian Women in relation to other corresponding governing bodies and councils.

II. The Covenant-Based Relationship

A covenant is essentially an agreement between two or more parties committing themselves to certain responsibilities. The idea of covenant is at the heart of the biblical story and is generally understood as different from a contract. A contract is about legal and economic transactions while a covenant depends on trust and fidelity and focuses more on the quality of the relationship. It is agreed that PW and the PMA will each assume responsibility for their actions, and the signing of the Institutional Relationship Agreement does not hold any party liable for the actions of another party. As reflected in this covenant, the PMA does provide various services to PW. PW supports the mission of the PMA, especially the directional goals to inspire, equip, and connect the church through transformational leadership, compassionate and prophetic discipleship, new worshiping communities, and young adult participation.

A. Background

PW is a tax-exempt national women’s organization related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), hereinafter PC(USA). Its members are, first and foremost, members of the PC(USA).

Presbyterian Women came into being in 1988, five years after the reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. PW incorporated in 2009 as a mission entity related to the PC(USA) as an integrated auxiliary. PW’s bylaws link PW closely to the Constitution of the PC(USA). PW’s members participate in leadership coordinating teams at all governing body levels from the congregation to the General Assembly.

From reunion in 1983 until the organizing Business Meeting of Presbyterian Women in 1988, a working team of Women of the Church (WOC) and United Presbyterian Women (UPW) proposed designs to their constituencies that culminated in the approval of the present structure. The 198th General Assembly (1986) received the Presbyterian Women Purpose and Principles of Organization as information only, pending approval by the uniting constituencies. The General Assembly action affirmed the independence and responsibility of Presbyterian Women to make its own decisions concerning leadership, program, and budget. Membership in Presbyterian Women is open to all women who choose to participate in or be supportive of the PW organization in any way. The PW Purpose states: “Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom.” In 1986, UPW and WOC, as they looked ahead to becoming Presbyterian Women (PW), willingly became a part of the Women’s Ministry Unit where they were in partnership with Justice for Women, Women Employed by the Church, and the Committee of Women of Color. In 1993, the Women’s Ministry Unit was reorganized into the Women’s Ministries program area of the National Ministries Division.

In 2007, the Women’s Ministries program area was reorganized into Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries (RE&WM). PW continues to be in programmatic partnership with RE&W. PW supports the PC(USA) ministries that advance the role of women in the church and society. With each restructure or reorganization of the denominational staff, the PW organization has made the decision to be lodged with women’s constituency groups and emphases. In April 2014, PW staff is no longer lodged with Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which removed the need for ministry area lodging. PW continues to be in partnership with the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries ministry area.
B. The Covenant Responsibilities of Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women will

1. conduct all mission and ministry according to the PW Purpose:
   a. nurture [their] faith through prayer and Bible study,
   b. support the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (which includes the Presbyterian Mission Agency),
   c. work for justice and peace,
   d. build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

2. work cooperatively with Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries as a whole and with other offices and areas within the PMA and other related entities;

3. be an active presence on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board through the PW Moderator's membership, voice and vote, and vice moderators' attendance at Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) meetings as observers;

4. be faithful stewards of the money given by Presbyterian women from throughout the church, whether that money is given for the general mission of the church, for ongoing work of PW, or for projects of Creative Ministries offerings;

5. ensure editorial autonomy for Horizons magazine, the annual Bible study, and all other publications of PW;

6. be guided by the general policies of the PMA (for example: contract procedures, minority vendor policies, and travel and meeting policies).

C. Covenant Responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency

The PMA will

1. support the Purpose of Presbyterian Women;

2. recognize and respect PW's autonomy and status as a separate corporation, self-determining in its leadership, budget, and program;

3. provide support to PW;
   a. honor the relationships as stated in the PMA Manual of Operations, recognizing the full membership, with voice and vote, on the PMAB, of the moderator of PW Churchwide;
   b. appoint a member of the PMAB to serve with full voice and vote on the Corporate Board (CCT) of PW;
   c. acknowledge and ensure editorial autonomy for all PW publications, including Horizons magazine and the annual Bible study;

4. seek ways to build tangible partnerships and share resources with PW for joint programming with various mission areas of the PMA in which the mission priorities of the church are served;

5. through the RE&WM ministry area director, maintain close connections with PW and the PW staff and be responsive to changes, new developments and program options;

6. ensure that collaborative women's ministries work remains a focus of PMA and ongoing work is supported.

III. Accountability

In the following ways, PW and PMA will stay in communication, as each party attempts to be faithful to the covenant promise:

A. PW will provide an annual report to the PMAB, through RE&WM, of its programs, services, and policies, and PW's mission giving will appear in the General Mission Budget.

B. A member of the PMAB will sit with full voice and vote on the CCT of PW and report on the policies and activities of the PMA at the triennial Churchwide Gathering Business Meeting of PW.

C. A representative group from each body will meet on a two-year cycle to review the Institutional Relationship Agreement and propose any changes. The term of this agreement will be four years, commencing June 30, 2014, and expiring June 30, 2018.

Any party may propose changes in the Institutional Relationship Agreement at any time upon prior written notice to the other party.

Rationale

Over the years it became apparent that a clear understanding about the relationship between Presbyterian Women and the national church structure needed to be articulated. The Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian
Women (CCT) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Council, now known as the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, approved the original covenant in August 2001.
On Taking Meaningful Action to Reduce Gun Violence—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

Source: Presbytery             Sponsor: National Capital Presbytery
Committee: [09-01] Social Justice Issues      Type: General Assembly Full Consideration
Topic: Unassigned


Recommendation

The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 221st General Assembly (2014) to approve the following resolution:

The PC(USA) and its constituent parts recommits itself to work with federal, state, and local legislators to pass laws that will:

- require licensing, registration, and waiting periods to allow comprehensive background checks, and cooling-off periods;
- close the “gun show loophole” by requiring background checks for all gun buyers;
- ban semiautomatic assault weapons, armor piercing handgun ammunition, and .50 caliber sniper rifles;
- advocate for new technologies to aid law-enforcement agencies to trace crime guns and promote public safety;
- raise the age for handgun ownership to the age of twenty-one;
- following the recommendation of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, support laws to “require judges and law enforcement to remove guns from situations of domestic violence, as well as from people whose adjudicated mental illness, drug use, or previous criminal record suggests the possibility of violence,” and to increase police training in nonviolent proactive intervention.”

Rationale

The entire nation is mourning the senseless loss of human life in Newtown, Connecticut; in Blacksburg, Virginia; in Portland, Oregon; in Aurora, Colorado; in Tucson, Arizona; in Tulsa, Oklahoma; in Oak Creek, Wisconsin; and elsewhere caused by gun violence.

Our president asked God “to honor the memory of the victims and, in the words of scripture, to heal the brokenhearted and bind up their wounds” and implored the nation to “take meaningful action to prevent this from happening again, regardless of the politics.”

In 2010, the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a recommendation that all PC(USA) congregations take seriously the pervasive use of gun violence in our country and take various measures to educate our membership and our public officials. (See Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 39, 41–42, 830ff.)

As a church, we, the PC(USA), confess that we have not responded strongly enough to the continuing number of killings and repent our failure to demand more of ourselves to ensure that adequate laws are passed to reduce gun violence.

Comment

ACREC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) to approve Item 09-01.
It is an irrefutable fact that gun violence of all kinds occurs more frequently, and has an unbridled and devastating impact on racial ethnic families and communities than any others—particularly the African American and Hispanic communities in our country. For the PC(USA) not to overwhelmingly approve and support this overture would reflect a dispassionate and perceptibly aggressively insensitive attitude toward “the least of these ...” constitute a default on our obligation to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the Gospel mandate. If the PC(USA), one of the “White Mainline Denominations,” remains, perceptibly, and by people of color, conspicuously silent on an issue that screams out in racial overtones, that silence would represent a totally illogical and deceptive position coming for a church that imposed a decade-long mandate (2000–2010) to increase racial ethnic membership by 20 percent while simultaneously shifting its focus from a mono-cultural to an arguably ambiguous “multicultural” emphasis.

The ACREC would like to draw attention to the need to expand the list of locations affected by gun violence offered in the rationale to include cities and states such as Los Angeles and Oakland, Calif., Jacksonville and Sanford, Fla., Chicago, Ill., Detroit, Mich., Newark, N.J., New York, and Philadelphia, Pa., just to name a few. With the amount of worldwide notoriety each has gained in its own right with regard to gun violence, the mere omission of each place, again, speaks volumes about the church’s lack awareness or its gross insensitivity towards the people of color most victimized by gun violence. A church espousing a genuine desire for diversity and inclusiveness can ill afford this characterization.

PMA Comment

Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries are engaged in addressing the issues related to eradicating gun violence in the United States in response to the 219th General Assembly (2010): http://www.pcusa.org/resource/gun-violence-gospel-values-mobilizing-response-god/. The Presbyterian Mission Agency has developed numerous resources to equip congregations to respond to concerns about gun violence (http://www.presbyterianmission.org/gunviolence/).

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Peacemaking Program, and the Office of Public Witness are working collaboratively to both raise awareness and promote the passing of commonsense gun laws in local communities, states, and the U.S. Congress. The promotion of effective advocacy strategies and ways that congregations can become involved in reducing gun violence are being promoted through the collaborative efforts of these three programs. The PC(USA) documentary, Trigger, is being promoted through mid councils, local congregations, and community-based organizations across the country (http://triggerdoc.com/). A petition drive calling for commonsense gun laws is continuing until national legislators pass commonsense gun laws.

Concurrence
Presbytery of Chicago
Presbytery of Detroit

Additional Resources
Language - Korean
Ovt 007.pdf

Language-Spanish

007 NatCap-Gun Violence (3).pdf
Recommendation

The Presbytery of South Alabama overtures the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to do the following:

1. Call for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and member congregations to enter a two-year season of reflection upon the plight of children unwanted by human society, both born and not-yet born, and to purposefully seek to enter the pure worship of God by offering aid, comfort, and the Gospel to those responsible for the care of our most desperate orphans (including those who survive abortion procedures): parents, siblings, church and community leaders, and the medical profession.

2. Direct the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk to issue statements that denounce the practice of killing babies born live following an abortion procedure, such as was revealed in the Dr. Kermit Gosnell clinic in Philadelphia.

3. Direct the Moderator to appoint a Special Committee on Abortion Review, carefully balanced with members representing both pro-life and pro-choice viewpoints, to
   a. Conduct a thorough assessment of the financial, in-kind, lodging, publicity, and staff support that the PC(USA) provides to organizations such as Planned Parenthood, Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Options, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and other abortion providers or pro-choice organizations. A similar review should be made of denominational support provided for pro-life organizations and pro-life crisis-pregnancy support centers.
   b. Review existing policies and, if needed, propose new policies that will more accurately represent the PC(USA) in its breadth of conviction about abortion, taking into account our churches' desire to worship God in purest form (Jas. 1:27). Any new policies shall incorporate more fully the voices of pro-life Presbyterians, who have to this point largely been kept silent in denominational advocacy.

Most, if not all, of the special committee meetings should be conducted in virtual conferences using appropriate audio-visual technology. The Special Committee on Abortion Review shall report its findings and recommendations to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Rationale

The blood of little children cries out to God and to Christ's Church for protection and justice.

The 2013 trial and conviction of Philadelphia abortion doctor Kermit Gosnell has placed Planned Parenthood abortion clinics and similar organizations under suspicion for tolerating medical abuse of both mothers and infants (see http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/wp/2013/05/30/nurses-describe-unsafe-conditions-at-delaware-abortion-clinic/).

Neither the PC(USA) Stated Clerk in Louisville nor the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office have called for corrective medical regulations (federal or state) for Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers, nor have our denominational representatives offered a single word of protest against the taking of innocent life at Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinics.

The clear teaching of Scriptures reveals that human life is sacred to God primarily because human life is created in God's image (Gen. 1:27). Ancient Israel was taught to value life while it was still in the womb (Ex. 21: 22–23); the glory of the Creator's handiwork in the womb is profoundly revealed by the Psalmist (Psalm 139); Jesus taught God's especially tender love for innocent and defenseless children (Mk. 10:14–16; Mt. 19:13–15; Lk. 18: 15–17). Numerous Old Testament passages (Lev. 18:21; Jer. 19:4 and 32:35; Ps, 106: 37–39) clearly warn against offering children as sacrifices to please the god(s) of pagan culture (today, the gods of convenience and pleasure).

The New Testament scriptures clearly teach that the purest expression of religion in the sight of our God and heavenly Father is to care particularly for orphans and widows during their times of distress, and to keep ourselves unstained by the world (Jas. 1:27).

The Presbytery of South Alabama recognizes the spiritual duty of church councils to be faithful in carrying out their
Comment

ACWC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) to disapprove Item 09-02.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns concurs with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s (ACSWP) Advice and Counsel Item 09-02.

OGA Comment

The Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly requests that commissioners and advisory delegates carefully consider any items of business that would raise the per capita rate. The COGA made a commitment to bring no increase to the per capita rate to the 221st General Assembly (2014) by making significant reductions in the per capita budgets, which included reductions in staff. We would ask that other means be found within existing committee structures to accomplish the same task.

PMA Comment

The 217th General Assembly (2006) affirmed the monitoring report from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), which reviews the implementation of problem pregnancies and abortion policies. Presbyterian Mission Agency ministries preparing resources on problem pregnancies and abortion strive to reflect a diversity of opinion in the resources that are produced. Resources revised in 2010 prepared by Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries cover the range of faithful responses in these difficult situations, and they include: Problem Pregnancy: When No Choice Is Easy—For the Pregnant Woman; There’s Always A Father—Does the Father Have a Problem, Too?; When Pregnancy Involves Loss—Helping Others Face Pregnancy Loss; When You Need Wisdom—Helping Others Face Problem Pregnancy.

The 217th General Assembly (2006) reiterated the role of the church in individual and families’ lives as they face problem pregnancy issues:

The church has a responsibility to provide public witness and to offer guidance, counsel, and support to those who make or interpret laws and public policies about abortion and problem pregnancies. Pastors have a duty to counsel with and pray for those who face decisions about problem pregnancies. Congregations have a duty to pray for and support those who face these choices, to offer support for women and families to help make unwanted pregnancies less likely to occur, and to provide practical support for those facing the birth of a child with medical anomalies, birth after rape or incest, or those who face health, economic, or other stresses. (Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 905)

The 1992 policy states,

Problem pregnancies are the result of, and influenced by, so many complicated and insolvable circumstances that we have neither the wisdom nor the authority to address or decide each situation. Christians seek the guidance of Scripture in the midst of relationships and circumstances of awesome proportions that affect their interpretation and decision making.

We affirm the ability and responsibility of women, guided by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, in the context of their communities of faith, to make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies.

We call upon Presbyterians to work for a decrease in the number of problem pregnancies, thereby decreasing the number of abortions.

The considered decision of a woman to terminate a pregnancy can be a morally acceptable, though certainly not the only or required, decision. Possible justifying circumstances would include medical indications of severe physical or mental deformity, conception as a result of rape or incest, or conditions under which the physical or mental health of either woman or child would be gravely threatened.

The Christian community must be concerned about and address the circumstances that bring a woman to consider abortion as the best available option. Poverty, unjust societal realities, sexism, racism, and inadequate supportive relationships may render a woman virtually powerless to choose freely. (Minutes, 1992, Part I, p. 368)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) continues to be guided by the 204th General Assembly (1992) policy on abortion and problem pregnancies and encourages the church to continue to approach this challenging issue with the atmosphere of “open debate and mutual respect” for a variety of opinions (Minutes, 1992, Part I, p. 374).

In 2014, there were no funds budgeted in the form of grants from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to any of the ten networks of Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association, including Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Options (PARO). No funds from the PMA were given to Planned Parenthood or the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).

Concurrence

Presbytery of Pittsburgh
The Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to call for a two-year study by the governing bodies and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to discern how to advocate for effective drug policies grounded in science, compassion, and human rights, and to this end, do the following:

1. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministry area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to appoint a Drug Policy Task Force to promote study, discussion, and engagement among church members and congregants and develop a plan of concrete actions and policy recommendations for the 222nd General Assembly (2016).
   a. The task force shall consist of seven to nine selected volunteer members representing the following stakeholders/disciplines: policy analyst/advocate; subject matter specialists in addiction science, criminal justice, and international relations; law enforcement; judicial representative; formerly incarcerated drug offender/drug user activist; defense counsel/community litigator; theologian.
   b. The task force will serve as a clearinghouse for information and discussion of relevant issues; it will create an online presence with diverse, creative, and fact-based information in support of local church study groups.
   c. The task force shall conduct four hearings in different parts of the country (rural, urban, suburban, border) in collaboration with presbyteries to receive a broad range of perspective and stimulate dialogue.
   d. As opportunities for policy reform may arise before possible General Assembly action, the task force will keep individual members, churches, and presbyteries within the PC(USA) informed of relevant policy reform initiatives or action for which they may want to exercise democratic advocacy on their own.

2. Urge all publications and other communication vehicles of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to develop articles, reports, and other materials designed to educate, motivate, and activate church members and congregants to learn about the history, development, and implementation of U.S. drug policies.

3. Recommend that the Criminal Justice Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association, within Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries, focus Criminal Justice Sunday in 2015 on issues related to the impact of drug prohibition.

4. Urge Presbyterian Women (PW) to make drug policy education and reform part of their ongoing work.

5. Urge Presbyterians who are ecumenical staff to advocate for making the impact of punitive drug policies a critical focus of the Summer 2015 meeting of the National Association of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Staff.

6. Recommend that congregations and councils of the church, as well as the task force designated above, consider the following questions and concerns:
   a. What are the roles, responsibilities, and limits of the state and citizenry in relation to our bodies, particularly with respect to what we market and sell for consumption and what we consume? What does Christian theology suggest about current drug policies, and our social responsibility to ensure health for members of our communities? What are the spiritual and ethical implications of: massive and disproportionate incarceration of drug offenders, especially people of color, and of the militarization of relations with the nations involved in illicit drug cultivation and/or trafficking?
   b. Does current U.S. drug policy achieve its stated goal to reduce production and consumption of illegal drugs, or does it serve other policy goals, institutional interests, societal norms, or systemic forces? If so, how do we define those other goals, interests, norms, and forces?
   c. What laws, policies, programs, and treaties currently govern our nation’s responses to the production, transit, and use of illicit drugs?
d. What are the consequences of maintaining current punitive drug policies? What might more effective and humane drug policies look like, with regards to the following:

(1) militarization of law enforcement and the erosion of distinctions between civilian police and military, especially with respect to drug law enforcement;

(2) relationship between prohibition of drugs and organized crime;

(3) communities’ use of illegal drugs and the disparate impact that enforcement of drug prohibition has on poor people and racial minorities;

(4) distinction between harmfulness, addictiveness, and illegality as it relates to use of psychoactive and/or addictive substances;

(5) allocation of public resources required to enforce current drug policies and effectiveness in addressing underlying problems relating to substance abuse and addiction while programs for social needs such as health, education, and community development are underfunded;

(6) rates of illicit drug use, abuse, and addiction; health effects and impacts on special populations—e.g. mentally ill, homeless, ‘at-risk’ youth, immigrants, victims of sexual violence.

Rationale

At the heart of Jesus’ mission is the proclamation of restoration, liberation, and new beginnings. Jesus began his ministry by reading from the prophet Isaiah (Lk. 4:18–19) and identifying his life’s work with transforming the situation of the poor, the oppressed, and the outcast. Following his mission entails participation in very concrete actions of social renewal. Drug prohibition has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable members of society—particularly poor blacks and Hispanics. Even though whites outnumber blacks five to one and both groups use and sell drugs at similar rates, African Americans comprise 35 percent of those arrested for drug possession; 55 percent of those convicted for drug possession; and 74 percent of those imprisoned for drug possession. As a result of the more than forty-year-long “war on drugs,” the United States has become the world’s greatest incarcerator—with 5 percent of the global population, we imprison 25 percent of the world’s prisoners, almost half of these are for drug-related crimes. Drug prohibition also has been the primary rationale as well for more than $20 billion spent in the last decade on U.S. military operations and aid in Latin America, where related violence has caused devastating human damage.

Prior General Assemblies have sought to speak to many of these issues, such as the 1971 statement by the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) on drug use; the 1993 statement on Freedom and Substance Abuse (Minutes, 1993, Part I, p. 758); the 2002 Resolution on Restorative Justice (Minutes, 2002, Part I, p. 576); the 2003 Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Prisons (Minutes, 2003, Part I, p. 439); the action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) calling for withdrawing military support to the government of Colombia (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 1180); the Resolution on Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call of 2010 (Minutes, 2010, part I, p. 334 of the printed copy, p. 830 of the electronic copy), and the Resolution on Racism, Incarceration, and Restoration of 2012 (Minutes, 2012, Part I, p. 32 of the printed copy, p. 1053 of the electronic copy). Our recognition of the institutional racism in how our drug laws are written, administrated, enforced is a continuation of the need for racial reconciliation identified in the Confession of 1967.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has clearly recognized the moral mandate to reexamine our nation’s current approach to substance abuse and drug-related crime with all its consequences. However, we have not yet dealt directly with our policy of prohibition of, and criminalization for, drug use. Unexamined assumptions in drug policy and in many people’s responses to drugs, as well as the extensive institutional structures and incentives that support current drug policies, mean that efforts to modify or transform policy can be controversial and difficult. The issues are complex, and serious change pushes us into unknown territory. Therefore, we call for a broad-based, all-church study that explores what is practically possible while holding up that which still needs the light of the Gospel.

Comment

ACREC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) to approve Item 09-05.

The establishment of a two-year study and dissemination of information about the impact of U.S. drug policy are important steps in exposing how society has continued to maintain a perpetual second-class citizenry among people of color, especially Blacks and Hispanics. Michelle Alexander, in her seminal book, The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, describes how this has happened. [1] Despite the passages of civil rights legislation, the "War on Drugs"—which was introduced under the Reagan Administration and institutionalized by legislation under the Clinton Administration—has resulted in the arrest, conviction, and incarceration of more blacks and Hispanics than in any other period of time in U.S. history. As a result, the U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world. According to the Sentencing Project, as of 2012, 2.2 million people are incarcerated in the U.S., a 500 percent increase over the past thirty years. [2] The second-class citizen label is no longer couched in openly racial terms, but by use of allegedly racial-neutral terms such as "convict," "prisoner," or "offender." When these words, however, are used in public discourse, the media and other institutions generally show the face of a black or Hispanic person, such that the public equates criminals with persons of color. Moreover, after these persons served their prison sentences and paid their debt to society, many are prohibited from living in public housing or from obtaining honest work. Many also are barred from applying for
scholarships or public benefits and very few are ever allowed to vote. With the intentional refusal to or neglect in reintegrating these persons into society, it is no surprise that many return to jail.

Establishing a study group that encompasses all of the major stakeholders—from law enforcement to the formerly incarcerated offender—will stimulate honest and transparent discussion in the church, in areas such as: (1) what each stakeholder’s role has been—whether intentional or unintentional—in supporting or continuing to support institutional racism; (2) how the “War on Drugs” used and continues to use fear and race to pit Whites and Blacks/Hispanics/people of color against other blacks/Hispanics/other people of color; and, (3) developing strategies to deconstruct institutionalized behavior and policies that are the underpinnings of perpetuating the second-class citizenship of what is now called the “New Jim Crow.” The Obama Administration recently supported and/or initiated some changes such as a reduction in sentencing disparities between crack cocaine and powder cocaine, to not prosecute persons for simple possession of marijuana, and to consider parole for prisoners convicted of nonviolent drug offenses. While these actions are commendable and deserve the support of the church, they do not completely dismantle a system that has been entrenched for decades nor do they address reentry into society of our returning citizens. The church and society must do more. The ACREC advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 09-05.


ACWC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 09-05.

Item 09-05 and concurrences from the Presbyteries of Cimarron, Hudson River, New York City, Sacramento, Santa Fe, and West Virginia ask for a two-year study with the goal of developing action and policy recommendations for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) regarding a drug policy for the denomination.

The ACWC recognizes the effects on racial ethnic women and their families since the forty-year “war on drugs” has resulted in a disproportionate incarceration of African American males. The result of the incarceration, women who then become single parents, suffer significant financial and care burdens. The costs to society are both financial and social.

As the overture points out, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has addressed related concerns in various statements, but has no comprehensive policy to provide resources for study and advocacy for Presbyterians in congregations. Both policy and resources are needed to assist Presbyterians in efforts to reform unjust and socially costly laws and procedures currently designed to deal with the drugs.

Concurrences from the presbyteries make it clear there is agreement among legal and labor organizations and communities that the present system needs revision and seek guidance from the church to make this a reality.

OGA Comment

The Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly requests that commissioners and advisory delegates carefully consider any items of business that would raise the per capita rate. The COGA made a commitment to bring no increase to the per capita rate to the 221st General Assembly (2014) by making significant reductions in the per capita budgets, which included reductions in staff. We would ask that other means be found within existing committee structures to accomplish the same task.

Concurrence

Presbytery of Cimarron

Presbytery of Hudson River (with Additional Rationale)

This is supported by the below references:

The Attorney General, Eric Holder, The Guardian, August 12, 2023:

- Our system is in many ways broken.
- We cannot simply prosecute or incarcerate our way to becoming a safer nation.
- Since the War on Drugs, there have been huge developments in drug courts and drug treatment but mandatory sentencing has acted against those.
- In the Christian Science Monitor of September 2, 2013, Mr. Holder is quoted calling for sentencing and other reforms, particularly for those convicted of drug-related crime.

The AFL-CIO at its 2013 convention:

- “We cannot organize a society that provide shared prosperity if we don’t also end mass incarceration.”
- “[We] support treating drug use as a public health issue and focus on treatment of users.”
• "Impoverish neighborhoods loose thousands of working-age men, families become strained, income streams are lost and families are broken up."

Michelle Alexander, in The New Jim Crow:

• "There are more African American adults under correctional control today than were enslaved in 1850."

• "The impact of the drug war has been astounding. In less than thirty years, the U.S. penal population exploded from around 300,000 to more than 2 million, with drug convictions accounting for the majority of the increase."

The Harvard Magazine, 201/03, "The Prison Problem":

• Bruce Western, faculty professor says: "A crime-control strategy of locking up more people, and keeping them locked up longer, isn't working." He is determined to help the American public understand how crime is shaped by poverty, addiction, and histories of family violence, in an effort to promote a more humane—and more effective—prison policy.

Jesus of Nazareth: "... He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives" (Lk. 4:18).

Presbytery of New York City
Presbytery of Sacramento
Presbytery of Santa Fe
Presbytery of West Virginia (with Additional Rationale)

The reasons and statistics in the overture rationale are equally, if not more, pronounced in West Virginia.

West Virginia is in the top three for per capita use of prescription painkillers and other addictive drugs. Statewide, nearly one-fourth of the newborns whose umbilical cords have been tested for the presence of un-prescribed drugs test positive for drug exposure. Some are permanently injured. Many experience difficult withdrawal symptoms. Well over 90 percent of the crimes handled in West Virginia courts have significant drug and alcohol components. The state has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of children who are victims of abuse and neglect due to substance abuse by their custodians. The majority of the school truancy and dropout cases handled by the courts have substance abuse as one of the root causes.

Research demonstrates the impact of substance abuse on public safety, personal health, and health-care costs, the spread of communicable disease, educational performance and attainment, workforce reliability and productivity, family safety, and financial stability. We are therefore called to engage in study, discussion, and action among church members and church bodies to formulate action and policy recommendations for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and public policy makers.

Additional Resources
Language - Korean

Ovt 029.pdf
The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 221st General Assembly (2014) to:

1. Affirm the importance of maternal and child nutrition in the 1,000 days between the beginning of a woman's pregnancy and her child’s second birthday, reaffirming “that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God’s good creation (Book of Confessions, Confession of 1967, 9.46).”

2. Recognize the importance of the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children in the United States and the role of U.S. foreign assistance in supporting governments of developing countries in improving maternal and child nutrition.

3. Call on Presbyterians to pray for and minister to women and children in the United States and around the world who are in the 1,000-day window.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian United Nations Office, the Office of Public Witness, and other programs of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with Presbyterian Women in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., to identify resources for Presbyterians to learn more about maternal and child nutrition.

5. Call on Presbyterians to learn more about the importance of nutrition for women and children in the critical 1,000-day window and preventing children from experiencing cognitive and physical delays.

6. Direct the Office of Public Witness and Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations to advocate for policies that promote good nutrition in the 1,000 days window.

7. Direct the Stated Clerk to write to the president of the United Nations General Assembly urging that the post-2015 development agenda include a stand-alone goal addressing hunger and under-nutrition, and that a set of nutrition targets should be included that reflect the World Health Assembly targets released in 2012, which include a goal of reducing under-nutrition which causes stunting by 40 percent by 2025.i

8. Direct the Stated Clerk to write to the U.S. Congress and to the president of the United States asking them to work together to lay the groundwork for ending hunger in the United States by 2023, ending hunger around the world in 2030, and to affirm the importance of addressing maternal and child nutrition in the critical 1,000-day window in reaching those goals.

9. Affirm the relationship between the PC(USA), the Hunger Program, and Bread for the World, and to endorse the Women of Faith for the 1,000 Days Movement, a campaign of Bread for the World.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long been a leader in the anti-hunger movement and has strong policy and program support for such a movement. New research shows that by targeting efforts to end hunger by improving nutrition for women and children in the critical 1,000-day window between the beginning of a woman’s pregnancy and her child's second birthday, these efforts can be more effective.

Reducing maternal and child malnutrition, especially in the 1,000-day window, is critical to increasing child survival, improving cognitive and physical development, strengthening the immune system to bolster resistance to disease, and breaking the cycle of poverty.

Under-nutrition is an underlying cause of nearly 45 percent of the 6.9 million deaths among children under five every year.ii Under-nutrition causes stunting, which leads to long-term poor health, impaired brain development, and decreased immunity. One in four children in the world is stunted, a number that can rise to one in three in developing countries.

Leading Nobel Laureateiii economists have recommended that addressing hunger and malnutrition among young children should be a top priority for policymakers. The economists identified nutrition as the smartest investment, with every $1 invested in nutrition generating as much as $138 in better health and increased productivity.

Bread for the World, a partner of the PC(USA) in working to end hunger, has affirmed a goal to end hunger in the United States by 2023 and around the world by 2030. While government action alone cannot end hunger, it is critical
for the U.S. government to take a leadership role.

The PC(USA) joins denominations such as The Episcopal Church and organizations like the National Latino Evangelical Coalition to endorse the Women of Faith for the 1,000 Days Movement. Other partners include Presbyterian Women, the Women’s Missionary Society of the AME Church, the National Council of Catholic Women, and the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, among others. (For a full list and more information visit www.bread.org/go/1000days.)

Endnotes

Comment
PMA Comment

Recognizing the importance of this campaign and the impact it has on improving the lives of women and children around the world, Presbyterian Mission Agency has formed a “1000 Days Roundtable” that includes representatives from World Mission, Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries, Presbyterian Women, and Compassion, Peace, and Justice to encourage congregations to get involved in the campaign.

The 1000 Day Campaign reinforces and strengthens the poverty alleviation work that the PC(USA) is engaged in through long-term mission partnerships in Bangladesh, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Peru, Haiti, Ethiopia, Malawi, Southern Sudan, and Zimbabwe, http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/pw/justice/.

Concurrence
Presbytery of Chicago

Additional Resources
Language - Korean

Ovt 065.pdf
Recommendation

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014):

1. Acknowledge and celebrate the deep and rich history of Presbyterian church's role in transforming society by providing access to quality education for children in this country and around the world.

2. Recommit itself to education as a core focus of mission in this nation and with our global partners.

3. Launch a churchwide initiative that will inspire, equip, and connect our congregations, mid councils, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to improve the quality of education for 1,000,000 children in the U.S. and globally over the next four years.

4. Encourage and support global partners and leaders here in the United States who have made a vocational commitment to provide a quality education to children in their communities.

5. In all of these efforts, place particular emphasis on children in poverty or otherwise at risk.

6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to shape and guide this initiative, developing tangible metrics to determine success and impact, and to report back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), sharing progress made and identifying strategies for deeper engagement in 2016-18.

Rationale

For 176 years, the Presbyterian church has served as one of the greatest forces for education in the world, helping hundreds of thousands of children to learn to read and write, to think critically, and to understand their work as their Christian vocation. Our church's core belief that every child is created in the image of God motivated our early mission workers to reach out to new communities with the offer of a quality education. In hundreds of communities, Presbyterians were the first to open up opportunities for formal education for girls.

The Presbyterian church has a deep and rich commitment to providing access to education as a part of its core Missional identity. Our church is a church of educators, school administrators, PTA members, school board members, and school volunteers, and we believe God is calling our church to collectively impact the quality of education for children in this country and around the world.

The World Bank and other international organizations have shown that primary education for young children reduces poverty, improves health, and improves the distribution of income. Globally, the recent U.N. Development Goals have helped many communities in the Global South to bring previously uneducated children into the classroom. However, the sad reality is that in South Sudan, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, and many other countries, the combination of overcrowded classrooms, poorly trained teachers, and inadequate infrastructure prevent students from receiving the quality education they need.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency's Mission Work Plan identifies "addressing the root causes of poverty, particularly as they impact women and children" as a priority focus of its work. The intersection of this critical need for children around the world today and our church's commitment to education constitutes a clear calling to challenge the church to engage in mission together.

This initiative will support PC(USA) global partners and education leaders in the United States as they address persistent poverty through critical investments in quality education of young children. The goal is to reach 1 million children in the next four years, inspiring, equipping, and connecting hundreds of congregations and mid councils to focus a portion of their mission efforts in support of the following activities:

- Train teachers, develop curricula, and help partners adopt "best practices" in education;
- Help global partners build or refurbish school buildings;
- Financially support mission workers in education and specific education projects;
- Advocate for better funding in public education in the U.S., particularly for children at risk;
- Pray for educators, students and administrators, as well as this education initiative;
• Get involved in "Adopt a School" programs, offering tutoring and other forms of support for local schools, focusing on children at risk; and,
• Open the doors of the church during the week to offer afterschool programs that include tutoring, mentoring, and other enrichment opportunities.

Following the movement of the Holy Spirit and working together with our global partners, mid councils, congregations, and other leaders in education, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will transform the world, one child, one educator, one school at a time, collectively impacting more than one million children over the next four years.

Comment

ACSWP Advice and Counsel

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) approve Item 14-02 with amendment by adding two new recommendations as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

"7. Urge those developing this initiative and its metrics to build upon values, traditions, and analysis embodied in previous General Assembly policy on public education and the impacts of poverty, and to consider ways that this initiative continues the work of child advocacy approved by previous assemblies.

"8. Commend the initiative for including domestic as well as international dimensions as the pattern of public education funding and effects of economically and racially segregated housing continue to restrict the aspirations of many children in the United States."

The ACSWP believes that this recommendation may provide an opportune time to encourage the church to recover and lift up the high calling of the teacher and the public school. Children are born unfinished. Teachers and the educational institutions in which they serve (along with parents and the broader community) participate with God in forming and equipping mature adults who are able to participate faithfully in the world. Certainly the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the larger Reformed tradition have benefitted from and helped create an educated laity.


Among other dynamics, this study looked at trends toward re-segregation and privatization in the United States, trends reinforced by inequities in funding and in some measures by testing-based curricula. Arguments over charter schools and national standards were also examined, and a holistic learning model, including learning about religion in older grades, was affirmed. A basic approach: "this report is founded on the assumption that every child has the right to equity and quality in education and that it is the responsibility of the whole church to protect and preserve this right for all children, in accordance with Jesus’ call to us to understand all in need as our neighbors, and in support of Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child."

This report also refers to prior work of the church and ecumenical cooperation in this area, all of which might benefit those developing a new program.

ACWC Advice and Counsel

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 221st General Assembly (2014) to approve Item 14-02.

As articulated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency in Item 14-02, “the Presbyterian church has served as one of the greatest forces for education in the world for 176 years, helping hundreds of thousands of children to learn to read and write, to think critically, and to understand their work as their Christian vocation.”

Endorsing in totality Item 14-02, the ACWC adds the acknowledgment of the need to educate girls in this country and around the world. Organizations like “Girl Rising” (www.girlrising.org) provide excellent educational, as well as informational insight into the necessity to continue to lift up and support the education of girls, articulating, “We know that educating girls is the smartest investment of our time. When girls are educated, communities thrive and economies grow. Yet 66 million girls are missing from classrooms worldwide, and tremendous opportunities are lost” (www.girlrising.org).

Hence, as the PMAB "directs the PMA to shape and guide this initiative … and to report back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) strategies identified,” partnering with organizations like “Girl Rising” that are presently doing the hard work of furthering the education of girls may prove beneficial. On that note, “Girl Rising” says, "We use the power of storytelling, leveraged through partnerships, to share the simple truth that educating girls can transform societies,” and notes that "educating girls is the smartest investment opportunity in the world today,” and yet, “65 million girls are missing from classrooms worldwide.” Much work is yet to be done, and time’s a-wasting! Now is the time. Educate Girls, Change the World!
Recommendation

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014):

1. Acknowledge the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s historic commitment to joining Christ’s mission in local and global communities.

2. Encourage congregations, mid councils, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to join intentionally in God’s mission to transform our world and address root causes of societal injustices by following Christ’s example of service through faith, hope, love, and witness.

3. Launch a churchwide initiative that will inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterians to continue to go beyond the walls of their congregations and increase their engagement in service to their communities and the world.


Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a historical commitment to joining Christ’s mission in local and global communities and many have discussed and written about the concept of the missional church in recent years. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, in its 2013–2016 Mission Work Plan, has made engaging young adults through mission and volunteer service a priority and believes shaping multigenerational, faith-based relationships dedicated to service in local communities and the world will help the church better follow Christ’s mission.

For nearly 200 years, the Presbyterian church has served as one of the greatest forces for mission in the world. The church is called to minister to the immediate needs and hurts of people. The Book of Order states: "In the life of the congregation, individual believers are equipped for the ministry of witness to the love and grace of God in and for the world. The congregation reaches out to people, communities, and the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to gather for worship to offer care and nurture to God’s children, to speak for social justice and righteousness, and to bear witness to the truth and to the reign of God that is coming into the world" (G-1.0101).

Presbyterians have sought to be a mission-centered church from their inception and have a strong, unwavering belief that there is no other way truly to be the church. Many have discussed and written about the concept of the missional church in recent years. One Presbyterian scholar, Darrell Guder, has written on this vital topic for the church today. In his book, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, Guder and his colleagues provide key insights into the recent missional church movement.

Guder and his colleagues discuss three themes that are important to this proposal: the shift the church must make, the purpose of the church, and the role of denominational structures. Guder argues that to be missional the church must "move from church with mission to missional church." Most churches articulate a commitment to mission and have a mission program. If they are large enough, they likely will have a specific pastor devoted to mission. Many churches support several overseas missionaries and are probably contributing money and service to a local mission, homeless shelter, or food bank. In this construct, mission is seen as one of the many activities and programs of the church. The purpose of the local church is not to be what Guder calls "vendors of religious services and goods," with mission merely being one of a myriad of programs. Rather, doing mission is central to what it means to be the church. This is the shift that the church must make.

The second major theme in Guder’s work challenges the very definition of what it means to be the church. Guder argues that it is "a new understanding of the church as a body of people sent on a mission." The church is thus not only a body that gathers for a worship service. The church is also a group of people organizing together so they can serve the community around them most effectively. The purpose of gathering is to be sent. Guder states, "The public worship of the mission community always leads to the pivotal act of sending. The community that is called together is the community that is sent. Every occasion of public worship is a sending event." To be a missional church, worship is driven more by what must happen after the service.

What it truly means to be the church, according to Guder, is "the people of God who are called and sent to re-present the reign of God. This vocation is rooted in the good news, the gospel: in Jesus Christ the reign of God is at hand and
is now breaking in.\(^5\) For Guder, the focus of the staff and the commitment of the resources are directed toward helping people to re-present Christ to their neighbors in their everyday lives. They do this through normal, day-to-day interactions with friends, family members, and colleagues. The activities of the church should model these forms of everyday interactions. Guder writes: "The ecclesial practices are never esoteric or supernatural but involve ordinary human behavior: joining and sharing, eating and drinking, listening and caring, testing and deciding, welcoming and befriending."\(^6\) To do this effectively, the church must know its neighbors and understand what things they care about, so as to cultivate authentic, genuine friendships.

This initiative seeks to inspire Presbyterian congregations to reach out to their communities through acts of service that lead to connectivity with local communities and demonstrates the love of Christ to their neighbors such as:

- Every congregation would determine a number of volunteers and volunteer hours they would commit to their community and fulfill that commitment for the year.
- Adopt a community in need of refurbishing in the U.S.
- Actively engage youth and young adults in volunteer opportunities.
- Support young adults and others called to serve in God's mission in the U.S. and abroad.
- "Re-presenting" Christ in their everyday lives through normal, day-to-day interactions with friends, family members, and colleagues.
- Support the Living Missionally initiative in prayer.
- Actively engaging at least 1,000 PC(USA) congregations each year (2014–2016) to focus on becoming "Missional Churches" through acts of service in communities around the world.

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\(^2\) George R. Hunsberger, "Missional Vocation: Called and Sent to Represent the Reign of God," in Missional Church, 108.

\(^3\) Ibid., 81.

\(^4\) Guder, "Missional Structures: The Particular Community," in Missional Church, 243.

\(^5\) Guder, "Missional Church," in Missional Church, 15.

\(^6\) Inagrace T. Dietterich, "Missional Community: Cultivating Communities of the Holy Spirit," in Missional Church, 181.
Women of Faith Award Nominees to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

Source: Agencies

Committee: [14-A] Congregational Vitality

Type: Final Action by Committee


Recommendation

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014) recognize the following Women of Faith award recipients at the 221th General Assembly (2014):

Ruling Elder Joanie Lukins,

Ruling Elder Helen Morrison,

The Reverend Joyce Shin.

Rationale

Women of Faith Awards

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 "Prophetic Women of Faith" and it honors women who are part of the prophetic tradition in the church who are following the examples of prophets and apostles who came before them.

The 2014 selection committee included Carol Hylkema, moderator; Mary "Molly" Baskin, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board; Louise Davidson, Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns; Janice Dorbu, Racial Ethnic Young Women Together; Hannah Schorr, National Network of Presbyterian College Women; and Susan Skoglund, Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team.

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 prophetic?
- How has she demonstrated her gift of prophesy?
- 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 selection 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:

1. Ruling Elder Joanie Lukins—Danville, Ky., in the Presbytery of Transylvania and the Synod of Living Waters.

Ruling Elder Joanie Lukins has served Living Waters for the World in almost every capacity of the organization. She is a lead instructor for the training school, Clean Water U, and created the Health, Hygiene, and Spiritual teachings

Ruling Elder Helen Morrison has contributed to the Presbyterian church’s ministries on aging almost since its beginnings. She has served as a ruling elder for multiple terms; as a presbytery vice moderator, moderator, and staff person and as a two-term member of the General Assembly Council (now the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board). In addition, she chaired one of the General Assembly Council Divisions and served on several of its committees and task forces. Morrison also has served as a member of countless boards and agencies, including the Presbyterian Association of Homes and Services to the Aging, and as a delegate to the 1981 White House Conference on Aging.


The Reverend Joyce Shin is the associate pastor for Congregational Life at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, a congregation with a long history of prophetic ministry, where she serves as the staff liaison to the Congregational Life Committee of the Session. Under her leadership, the Interfaith Resource Committee at Fourth Presbyterian developed a close relationship with the local Muslim community, including the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, as well as maintaining a strong relationship with the Chicago Sinai Congregation. She is an elected member of the Presbytery of Chicago’s Ecumenical and Interreligious Work Group, which cares for the presbytery’s relationships with other Christian denominations, other spiritual and religious communities, and ecumenical and interreligious organizations and bodies.