

**ITEM B.202  
FOR INFORMATION**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WITNESS POLICY  
REPORTS GOING TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The following reports have been prepared by study teams authorized by last year's General Assembly in response to presbytery overtures:

1. **Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions**  
This is a report in the form of a handbook for advance directive planning and bedside decision-making, plus recommendations for congregational use and public policies to support the deliberations and care-giving encouraged.
2. **Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs**  
In the place of the punitive strategies and violence that have led to mass imprisonment, narco-state corruption, and an underground drug economy, this report advocates a basic shift in how Christians should approach a drug-abundant society and its addictive appetites.
3. **Prospects for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine: The Limits of Solutions-Thinking.**  
A "two-state solution" continues to reflect the hopes of international treaties yet the profound and—in the current period—politically insurmountable obstacles to feasibility require approaches that increase human rights for all in the absence of state-level solutions.
4. **Trafficking and Forced Labor: Next Steps for Concerned Churches**  
Across-border prostitution receives much attention, but there are many other ways that adults and children, men and women, are exploited in a globalized economy also marked by wars, climate related migration, and nations with weakened powers to protect their citizens.
5. **Cuban and United States Relations: For a New and Better Chapter**  
Based on overtures from presbyteries with some of the many congregations partnered with Cuban congregations, the Assembly's referral requested the Cuba Partners and ACSWP to draw on the lessons from throughout the prolonged Cold War with Cuba and lift up values needed during the coming period of political and economic change, and in the broader Caribbean context.

Shorter resolutions requested by the General Assembly:

1. **Unrigging Elections: An Update to "Lift Every Voice: Voting Rights and Electoral Reform"**  
This update covers impacts of the Supreme Court decisions removing limits on money in campaigns and the many efforts to make voting more difficult, some by states once covered by "pre-clearance review" under the Voting Rights Act, a provision also ended by the Court.
2. **From Detroit to Portland and St. Louis: Recommendations to Support Urban Ministry**  
The 2014 Assembly referred The Gospel from Detroit, a call for renewing urban mission in Detroit and other cities, to an "urban ministry roundtable," and requested the Advisory Committee to prepare resources to strengthen both congregations and their communities. This brief resolution draws on last year's report and looks toward the next two cities where General Assemblies will be held, following suggestions from urban roundtable members. See: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/gospel-detroit-renewing-churchs-urban-vision/>

**PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD**

**February 3-5, 2016**

**Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry Area**

**B.202**

The final Report of the 6-year Peace Discernment process begun by the 2010 General Assembly:

1. Risking Peace in A Violent World: Despite War, Five Peacemaking Affirmations

The 2012 General Assembly approved a congregational study for discerning new approaches to peacemaking, 32 years after Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling created the Peacemaking Program and three-part Peacemaking Offering. Drawing on congregational and individual responses and consultations with seminary and college/university faculty, chaplains, and students, a Steering Team appointed by Peacemaking Program and ACSWP developed the report, Risking Peace in a Violent World. The 2014 Assembly approved sending this out with Five Affirmations for advisory votes by the presbyteries. Of the approximately 40 presbyteries responding, more than 30 have approved all five, though with differing levels of support. The vote tallies, revisions, and comments have lead to revisions of the five and the Risking Peace statement for the 2016 Assembly, while confirming most of the framework approved by the last Assembly.

Note: The title, Risking Peace in a Violent World, draws on phrases from the Confession of 1967 and the Brief Statement of Faith. The revisions include references to the Belhar Confession.

One recommendation for study extension:

1. The Precautionary Approach, New Technologies, and Sustainable Development

The study approved by the 2014 General Assembly addresses the dangers of introducing new biological technologies, chemical agents, and nano-particles and machines into our changing environment. A group of Presbyterian scientists (both academic and corporate), ethicists, and experts in regulation has met to organize the very broad scope of the task and identify key roles for churches to play, given the original overture's request for both an assessment of "the precautionary principle" itself and its application to new technologies in the context of increasing climate change. The team requests additional time to develop ecumenical partnerships familiar with the religion and science dimension and able to increase the public value of its analysis and recommendations. No additional funding is requested, but funds allotted by the Assembly for 2015 would be used in 2016.

Resources requested by the General Assembly:

In the cases of the Drug Policy Reform Task Force and Resolution for Equal Rights in Israel and Palestine, resources have been posted on the ACSWP website

(<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/acswp/>) and in the online journal, Unbound ([www.justiceUnbound.org](http://www.justiceUnbound.org)) in fulfillment of some of the recommendations.

Final Note: All titles for 2016 Assembly submissions are tentative until submission to the Office of the General Assembly in February.