

APPROVED: February 4, 2016

**Minutes
Justice Committee of the
Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
The Crown Plaza Louisville Airport Expo Center
September 23, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER AND
WORSHIP**

The meeting of the Justice Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board was called to order by the Chair, James R. Ephraim, Jr. at 3:00 PM and led in the opening worship and prayer.

ATTENDANCE

Those present for all or a portion of the meeting were:

Elected Members

James R. Ephraim, Jr. – Chair, Justice Committee
Susan H. Osoinach – Vice Chair, Leadership Committee
Cecil Corbett
Carol Winkler
Lindsay Harren-Lewis
Noelle Royer
Kathy Terpstra
Joseph Morrow
Ray Roberts
Flo Watkins

EXCUSED

James E. Foucher Jr.
Kears Pollock

Corresponding Members

Raafat Zaki

Others

Sara Lisherness – Director, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Bill Somplatsky-Jarman – Coordinator, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Tonia Trice – Mission Specialist, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Ruth Farrell – Associate Mission Director, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Laurie Kraus – Associate Mission Director, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Chris Iosso – Coordinator, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Rebecca Barnes – Associate for Environmental Ministries, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Mark Koenig – Director, Compassion, Peace and Justice
J. Herbert Nelson II – Director, Compassion, Peace and Justice
Shannon Beck – Violence and Reconciliation Network Catalyst, World Mission
Cristina Pitts – Mission Specialist, World Mission
Greg Allen-Pickett – General Manager, World Mission
Sera Chung – Associate for Gender & Racial Justice, Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries
Joseph L. Johnson – National Committee, Self Development of People
Selma Jackson – National Committee, Self Development of People
Rob Bullock – Marketing & Communications, Presbyterian Foundation
Barry Creech – Director of Policy, Administration and Board Support, Executive Director's Office

Marilyn Gamm – Chair, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee

Christine Perc – Presbytery of the Western Reserve

Ellen Pearre Cason – Audit Committee Member, New York

REPORT B.100 - AGENDA

James R. Ephraim, Jr. reviewed the agenda and the Justice Committee **VOTED to adopt** it.

REPORT B.101 -MINUTES

The Justice Committee **VOTED to approve** the Justice Committee Minutes of April 16, 2015.

**REPORT B.102
ADDITION TO THE
PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE
(PDA) MANUAL OF
OPERATION**

The Justice Committee **VOTED to approve the following recommendation:**

An important element of PDA national response protocols involves PDA National Response Team members and/or staff offering ministry of presence by worshipping with affected congregations the first Sunday following a disaster.

On occasion, a disaster occurs at such a time that Teaching Elders are required to be part of the response. When Teaching Elders who belong to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance National Volunteer/Response Team (NRT), are needed to deploy at a time that would require them not being able to fulfill their pulpit obligations at their home church, PDA will, if requested, reimburse the NRT member's church for pulpit supply expenses (honorarium for substitute preacher) up to an amount defined in that church's presbytery policy. If there is no presbytery policy in place to cover such honoraria, PDA will reimburse up to \$200.00 upon request of the church.

Discussion: Laurie Kraus presented the recommendation to the Justice Committee. The addition of this language is meant to clarify PDA practice within PDA and across the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The funding for these requests comes from generally restricted funds that are part of the National Response Team budget line.

**REPORT B.103
COLLABORATIVE
AGENDA ON
ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARSHIP**

The Justice Committee **VOTED to approve the following recommendations:**

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in reference to the Six Agency “Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship.”

- 1. Endorse the attached Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship.**
- 2. Commit to the Common Activities to Care for God’s Creation described in section II of the Collaborative Agenda, and**
- 3. Recommend to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) its endorsement of the Collaborative Agenda for Environmental**

Stewardship.

Discussion: Rebecca Barnes and Rob Bullock presented the recommendation to the Justice Committee. They are members of the task force from the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that put together the “Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship.”

The task force asked to each of the agency boards to endorse the document as a whole and recommend the General Assembly also endorse it. This document will be an addition to the current policy on Environmental issues.

Bill Somplatsky-Jarman added some comments regarding concerns around fossil fuel divestment, peace, and larger justice.

Some members of the Justice Committee asked how this document can be accessed at the local level.

REPORT B.200 INFORMATION JINISHIAN MEMORIAL PROGRAM UNITED STATES ADVISORY COUNCIL AND GOVERNANCE COMMISSION MINUTES, JUNE 8, 2015

Greg Allen-Pickett highlighted the work of the Jinishian Memorial Program with the refugees, particularly in Syria. A fund raising for the program was organized at the Bel Air Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, California in June 2015 due to the large Armenian population concentrated in the West Coast. The report ended with a prayer for the people of Syria.

REPORT B.201 INFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (PDA) ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES, JULY 29, 2015

Laurie Kraus gave an update on how the \$1.4 million grant received from the American Red Cross has been used and distributed.

REPORT B.202 INFORMATION MISSIONAL RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NATIONAL BLACK PRESBYTERIAN CAUCUS AND WORLD MISSION

Greg Allen-Pickett presented with celebration the recently signed Missional Relationship Agreement between the National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC) and World Mission with the purpose of recruiting more African-American Presbyterians for service as mission co-workers and Young Adult Volunteers around the world.

Arlene Gordon, past president and David Wallace, current elected president of NBPC were invited to celebrate this agreement at the September 2015 Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting.

Members of the Justice Committee asked what the next steps for the recruitment process are. It was responded that working with the leaders of the NBPC to promote the vacant positions is the first step in that direction.

GENERATIVE

With the vision to begin an initiative around racial justice, the Justice

DISCUSSION ON THE BOOK TITLED, “THE NEW JIM CROW, MASS INCARCERATION IN THE AGE OF COLORBLINDNESS” BY MICHELLE ALEXANDER

Committee discussed the book, “The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness” written by Michelle Alexander.

J Herbert Nelson II introduced the book and gave some highlights. The book discusses race-related issues specific to African-American males and mass incarceration in the United States and how our current system of mass incarceration maintains a racial caste system. Due to the War on Drugs Criminal Justice system, United States has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world. A system without rehabilitation, post-prison joblessness, and loss of voting rights.

Some members of the Justice Committee asked what the denomination is doing on this issue at the national level, what can be done, and what policies are in place. Chris Iosso commented on the 1993 PC(USA) policy on substance abuse and freedom and Sera Chung shared other racial justice work done on this topic, particularly on anti-racism policy and resources.

The discussion ended with the following actions taken by the Justice Committee:

- 1. A recommendation to make a phone call to Congressional leaders to vote for a reform on this issue.**
- 2. The creation of a Facebook page for further discussions on this topic:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/521991287957932/>.
- 3. Members of the Justice Committee received a hardback copy of the book. Monthly conference calls will be planned for further discussions on the book.**

ADJOURN WITH APPRECIATION AND PRAYERS

Chair, James R. Ephraim, Jr. expressed thanks and appreciation for each one of the Justice Committee members. Flo Watkins led the Committee in closing prayer and adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James R. Ephraim Jr.
Chair

Shannon Beck or Bill Somplatsky-Jarman
Lead Resource Staff

Tonia Trice or Cristina Pitts
Recorder