

**Report C.001
Leadership Committee
Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
April 28, 2016**

The Leadership Committee met on Thursday, April 28, 2016 in Louisville, KY and forwards the following to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board:

I. For Consent: No items.

II. For Action:

- A. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the following amended comment on Overture 047 (Business Item #09-05) On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si” – From the Presbytery of Santa Fe to the 222nd GA (2016). (C.103) (Addendum 1)**
- B. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the comment on Overture 013 (Business Item #06-03) “Amending G-1.0304, The Ministry Members, by adding “Caring for God’s Creation” – From the Presbytery of New Castle. [\(C.102\)](#)**
- C. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the comment on Overture 050 (Business Item #11-05) “On the Admission of, and Apology for, Harms Done to the LGBTQ/Q Members of the (PC)USA, Family and Friends” – From the Presbytery of Santa Fe. [\(C.104\)](#)**
- D. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the comment on Overture 051 (Business Item #11-06) “On Resources for Learning, Reflection, and Reconciliation”—From the Presbytery of John Knox. [\(C.105\)](#)**
- E. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the amended comment on Overture 060 (Business Item #09-07) “On Approving an ‘Affirmation of Creation’” –From the Presbytery of Boston. (C.106) (Addendum 2)**
- F. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the comment on Overture 064 (Business Item #10-03) “On Taking Specific Action to Address the Worsening Plight of the African American Male” — From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh. [\(C.107\)](#)**
- G. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the amended comment on Overture 065 (Business Item #11-08) “On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians” – From the Presbytery of Baltimore. (C.108) (Addendum 3)**
- H. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the comment on Overture 076 (Business Item #09-08) “On Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources” – From the Presbytery of Seattle. [\(C.109\)](#)**

- I. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the comment on the Report of the Task Force for Korean Speaking Congregations (Business Item 05-11). [\(C.110\)](#)**
- J. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and forward to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the comment on Overture 015 (Business Item #14-01) “On Amending W-4.9000 by Replacing With New Text” – From the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas. [\(C.111\)](#)**

III. For Information:

- A. The Committee reviewed the agenda and voted to **APPROVE**. [\(C.100\)](#)
- B. The Committee received and voted to **APPROVE** the amended February 4, 2016 Leadership Committee Meeting Minutes to include Mark Brainerd as an excused absence. [\(C.101\)](#)
- C. The Leadership Committee approved a motion to facilitate a conversation between COTE and OGA related to item #3 and item #4F and #4G in order to add to the available resources for middle governing bodies as they engage the work of anti-racism training in their presbyteries and synods and that this conversation include one synod leader and presbytery leader. [\(B.104\)](#)
- D. The Committee heard an update on Presbyterian Women from Carol Winkler. [\(C.202\)](#)
- E. The Committee heard an update on Mission Personnel Actions from Rachel Yates. [\(C.203\)](#)
- F. The Committee heard an update on Racial Ethnic Leadership Development from Vince Patton. (verbal)
- G. The Committee heard an update on Theology and Worship from Charles Wiley and Chip Hardwick. (verbal)
- H. The Committee heard an update on Congregational Ministries Publishing from Mark Hinds. (verbal)
- I. The Committee heard an update from conversation regarding Military Chaplain endorsement and education from Larry Greenslit and Michelle Bartel. (verbal)
- J. The Committee heard an update on the Military Chaplains from Larry Greenslit. (verbal)
- K. The Committee heard an update of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) conversation from David Esterline, Nancy Ramsay, Marci Glass, and Michelle Bartel. (verbal)
- L. The Committee heard an update on the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) Minutes from Michelle Bartel. [\(C.204\)](#)
- M. The Committee heard an update on the Committee on Theological (COTE) Agency Report from Michelle Bartel. [\(C.205\)](#)
- N. The Committee heard an update on the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU) from Jeff Arnold. (verbal)
- O. The Committee engaged in generative discussion at the invitation of Melinda Sanders to engage in conversation about likely topics from their committees that could be useful to proposed strategy teams.

**ITEM C.103 Revised
 FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance	E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance	J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
	B. Justice	F. PC(USA), A Corporation	P. Plenary
X	C. Leadership	G. Audit	
	D. Worshiping Communities	H. Executive Committee	

Subject: Comment to the 222nd GA (2016) – Overture 047 (Business Item #09-05) On Communicating Gratitude for the Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si” – Presbytery of Santa Fe

Recommendation:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve the following comment on Overture 047 (Business Item #09-05) On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si”– From the Presbytery of Santa Fe to the 222nd GA (2016).

Comment:

As the General Assembly considers this overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe, the following information may be useful to commissioners:

Laudato Si, Pope Francis’ encyclical “On Care for our Common Home,” outlines the Holy See’s concern for “the environmental challenge that we are undergoing, and its human roots” (p. 5). Pope Francis explores the roots of the problem and he advances proposals for dialogue and action. *Laudato Si* is a long and detailed encyclical at 82 pages.

The most recent General Assembly policy paper is “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming” (218th General Assembly (2008)). The 217th General Assembly (2006), in [Item 07-06](#) commended to the whole church for study, reflection, and action “Covenanting For Justice in the Economy and the Earth” and the [Accra Confession](#), which was approved by the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (now the World Communion of Reformed Churches) in 2004. The PC(USA) continues to lend leadership in this global movement. We commend to the 222nd General Assembly a renewal of commitment to reflection, study, and action to [“Covenanting For Justice in the Economy and the Earth”](#) and the [Accra Confession](#).

The major concerns and calls to action of *Laudato Si* and “Power to Change” are consistent; however, there are some distinctions that should be noted: 1) there is a seven year gap between publications, thus the contexts are not identical; 2) each builds on the their own distinctive theological traditions; 3) each explores the causes and calls to action for the environmental crisis caused by climate change in detail—

the level of detail means that the emphases and specific proposals diverge at points. Pope Francis invites everyone into “a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of the planet” (p.5).

On June 18, 2015, Gradye Parsons, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, wrote a letter (<https://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/6/18/presbyterian-church-us-welcomes-papal-encyclical/>) commending Pope Francis for *Laudato Si'* writing, “We celebrate the faithful witness and words of Pope Francis today as he encourages responsible, loving care for God’s creation in the release of his papal encyclical *Laudato Si'*. We affirm its echo of the great St. Francis’ reverence for nature.” Parsons concludes his letter with these words:

Pope Francis’ leadership, wisdom, and pastoral care are evident in the encyclical, and we deeply appreciate this powerful, faith-filled encouragement for all people to join together to care for God’s creation. We affirm the moral conviction that we must turn from individual and corporate practices that harm the creation and participate in healing, protecting, and caring for the world. We will continue to work in partnerships with other faith communities and in the public sector as we all seek to better care for all people and all creation. Finally, we applaud the inspiring leadership of Pope Francis and look forward to seeing what transformative commitments will result from this ethical mandate to care for creation.

Link to Overture - <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6332>

**ITEM C.106 Revised
 FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance	E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance	J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
	B. Justice	F. PC(USA), A Corporation	P. Plenary
X	C. Leadership	G. Audit	
	D. Worshiping Communities	H. Executive Committee	

Subject: Comment to the 222nd GA (2016) – Overture 060 (Business Item #09-07) On Approving an “Affirmation of Creation” – From the Presbytery of Boston

Recommendation:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve the following comment on Overture 060 (Business Item #09-07) On Approving an “Affirmation of Creation” –From the Presbytery of Boston

Comment:

Overture 60 asks for the Assembly to approve an “Affirmation of Creation” that calls the church to a “credible understanding of nature” without which its ability to “faithfully proclaim the gospel” is compromised.

In 1969 the Presbyterian Church in the United States affirmed “Evolution and the Bible,” the statement on evolution that continues to guide the PCUSA to this day, “Neither Scripture, our Confession of Faith, nor our Catechisms, teach the Creation of man [sic] by the direct and immediate acts of God so as to exclude the possibility of evolution as a scientific theory.” [PCUS Minutes 1969, p. 59]. Adoption of “An Affirmation of Creation” would change the Assembly’s stance on evolution from one of openness and non-contradiction of Christian faith and evolution without favoring any particular account to an affirmation of the current scientific consensus.

Further information on two elements of this Overture may be of help: first, the record of affirmation of scientific insights extending back to the PC (USA)’s predecessor denominations; second, an affirmation from our Book of Confessions regarding revelation in nature and in Scripture.

1. Record of affirmation of scientific insights
 The Presbyterian Church has a long history of affirmation of scientific insights, particularly in “Evolution and the Bible” [PCUS 1969] and “The Dialogue Between Theology and Science [PCUS 1982, pp. 233-261] and in the Study Catechism [PCUSA 1998].

From “The Dialogue Between Theology and Science”: "Thus, from the very beginning, theology, which speaks of God and creation, and science, which knows the creation and must know it if

humankind is to "have dominion over it," would seem necessary if not indispensable to one another. Such being the case, we might expect that the theological side of us, which understands God's command, and the scientific side of us, which knows something about birds and fishes and living things and the kind of earth that keeps them alive and keeps us alive by keeping them alive, would have the greatest interest in one another."

From "The Study Catechism – Full Version": **Question 27. Does your confession of God as Creator contradict the findings of modern science?** No. My confession of God as Creator answers three questions: Who? How? and Why? It affirms that (a) the triune God, who is self-sufficient, (b) called the world into being out of nothing by the creative power of God's Word (c) for the sake of sharing love and freedom. Natural science has much to teach us about the particular mechanisms and processes of nature, but it is not in a position to answer these questions about ultimate reality, which point to mysteries that science as such is not equipped to explore. Nothing basic to the Christian faith contradicts the findings of modern science, nor does anything essential to modern science contradict the Christian faith. John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being."

2. Revelation in nature and in Scripture

The "Affirmation of Creation" reads that "God is the author of two books of revelation: the Book of Scripture (the Old and New Testaments) and the Book of Nature." The Westminster Confession opens with these words, "Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased." [6.001]

Link to Overture - <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6345>

**ITEM C.108 Revised
 FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance	E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance	J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
	B. Justice	F. PC(USA), A Corporation	P. Plenary
X	C. Leadership	G. Audit	
	D. Worshiping Communities	H. Executive Committee	

Subject: Comment to the 222nd GA (2016) – Overture 065 (Business Item #11-08) On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians – From the Presbytery of Baltimore

Recommendation:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve the following comment on Overture 65 (Business Item #11-08) On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians – From the Presbytery of Baltimore

Comment:

There has been a Presbyterian presence in Native American communities and reservations in the United States since the late 1600's. When the first presbytery in this country was formed in 1706, it is believed that there were thirty-seven Native American Protestant ministers in Eastern America. While the history is complex as well as long, one thing is clear: Presbyterians have had a long connection to Native American ministry, and Native Americans have long identified as Presbyterians.

In this history, ~~there have been wrongs~~ **the PC(USA) and its predecessors have committed wrongs** against Native Americans. Church leaders from ~~different ecumenical groups have apologized~~ **the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) apologize** to Native Americans for its participation in removing traditional ceremonies, rituals and language from Native communities. ~~We have not valued not valuing~~ **We have not valued** the personhood and spirituality of Native peoples and ~~we have neglected neglecting~~ **we have neglected** to recognize and affirm the great gifts that Native peoples offer to the church and society.

In the period following World War II, Presbyterian General Assemblies consistently took positions supportive of Native American land rights and by 1983, the reunited Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supported the concept of self-determination, as well as freedom for Native Americans to practice traditional religion. The Native American Consulting Committee (NACC) was formally established in 1977 to provide counsel to national church agencies and mid councils on matters affecting Native peoples. And, the 1983 reunion resulted in a total of 109 Native congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Office of Native American Congregational Support in the Presbyterian Mission Agency has assisted the PC (USA) to respond to Native American congregational issues and to enable Native American

Presbyterians to participate actively and effectively within the PC (USA) at all levels. The office also serves as an important source of information and orientation for national church agency and mid council staff in the PC (USA).

This overture calls for an apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians and to United States citizens of Native American ancestry, both those within and beyond our denomination. However, the content of the apology seems to be directed toward one group. Much of the content does not apply to Native Hawaiians, for instance. Thus, the apology should be revised, so that it is broad enough to apply to each of the groups listed in the overture, **and should include a repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.**

We commend for study and reflection to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the “Statement on Relationship with First Nations Peoples, Native American Peoples, and Inuit and Metis Peoples in North America,” page 123, approved by the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in 2010.

A number of groups have issued apologies and letters to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and have committed to support Native peoples in the righting of previous wrongs. The language of these apologies could be reviewed in order to help perfect the apology, as it is difficult to address each specific situation and circumstance, which is so varied. The spirit of the overture is helpful, however, the apology requires editing, in order to speak more broadly on behalf of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and their experiences in the church and in their communities. Thus, it may be helpful to look at apologies that have been issued by other groups to find wording that provides clarity, addresses different Native communities, and affirms the PC (USA)'s support of members of its Native American family.

Link to Overture - <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6350>