

**PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD**  
**April 27-29, 2016**  
**Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry Area**

**ITEM C.106**  
**FOR ACTION**

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

**Subject:**            **Comment to the 222<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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

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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>