

Report B.001
Justice Committee
Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
September 17, 2014

The Justice Committee met September 17, 2014 at the Brown Hotel in Louisville, KY and forwards the following to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board:

I. Consent Agenda: No items

II. For Action:

- A. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve adding the Half in Ten Campaign to the Approved Affiliates List. That the Office of Public Witness (OPW) and other program areas be given permission to work with this coalition and the related TalkPoverty.org blog on issues of poverty and economic inequality. (Attachment 1 B.102)
- B. That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve adding the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy to the Approved Affiliates List. That the Office of Public Witness (OPW) and other program areas be given permission to work with this coalition on just peace in the Middle East. (Attachment 2 B.103)

III. For Information

- A. Reviewed the agenda of the meeting and VOTED to adopt. (B.100)
- B. Approved the Justice Committee Minutes of April 24, 2014. (B.101)
- C. Received the referrals from the 221st GA (2014) for information. (B. 104)
- D. Received for information:
 - 1. Jinishian Memorial Program United States Advisory Committee Minutes, May 15-16, 2014 (B.200)
 - 2. Jinishian Memorial Program Governance Commission Minutes, May 15-16, 2014 (B.201)
 - 3. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns open letter regarding the 221st General Assembly (2014) Divestment Action
 - 4. Written reports from Presbyterian Hunger Program, Mission Responsibility Through Investment and Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association
- E. Engaged in a generative discussion with the Leadership Committee on the topic of Racism and Poverty.

ITEM B.102
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
X	B. Justice	F. PC(USA), A Corporation	P. Plenary
	C. Leadership	G. Audit	
	D. Worshiping Communities	H. Executive Committee	

Subject: Half in Ten Campaign

Recommendation:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve adding the Half in Ten Campaign to the Approved Affiliates List. That the Office of Public Witness (OPW) and other program areas be given permission to work with this coalition and the related TalkPoverty.org blog on issues of poverty and economic inequality.

Background:

When the Presbyterian Church adopted a contemporary Confession of Faith in 1967, it stated that “reconciliation...through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God’s good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world’s poor is the cause of his disciples... A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God” (*The Confession of 1967*, 9.46).

The Half in Ten campaign is a project of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, the Coalition on Human Needs (of which the PC(USA) is a dues-paying member), and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. It is dedicated to building the political and public will to cut the U.S. poverty rate in half in 10 years.

The campaign builds on the work of the Center for American Progress’s 2007 Task Force on Poverty, combining evidence-based policy recommendations with strategic building of networks, spokespeople, and opinion leaders in communities to amplify the call to reduce poverty in America. Their approach is grounded in four fundamental goals: creating good jobs, promoting economic security, strengthening families, and cutting poverty in half in 10 years.

The Half in Ten campaign recently launched a new #TalkPoverty blog on which are posted regular reflections, analyses, and other information related to poverty and economic inequality. TalkPoverty.org is a bridge between local and national voices, grassroots activism and policy work, and those who are struggling and those who are more economically secure. At TalkPoverty.org, readers are invited to

discover and join a vibrant antipoverty community. TalkPoverty.org intentionally seeks faith voices and has invited Office of Public Witness staff to contribute as guest bloggers.

Many of the Office of Public Witness' partners, both secular and faith-based, are engaged with the Half in Ten campaign and TalkPoverty.org, whose mission is entirely commensurate with PC(USA) public witness on the atrocity of poverty. Engaging with this campaign would put more expert analysis at the fingertips of PMA staff and would allow more public information sharing and promotion of OPW materials and vice versa.

Approving the Half in Ten Campaign as an affiliate does not imply endorsement of the larger Center for American Progress Action Fund and its other policy initiatives and goals.

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FOR ACTION

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

Subject: Faith Forum on Middle East Policy

Recommendation:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve adding the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy to the Approved Affiliates List. That the Office of Public Witness (OPW) and other program areas be given permission to work with this coalition on just peace in the Middle East.

Background:

The Faith Forum on Middle East Policy is a network of Christian denominations and organizations working for a just peace in the Middle East. The Faith Forum is focused primarily on Israel/Palestine but also works on issues in the broader region including Iran and Syria.

Many organizations participating in the Faith Forum are directly engaged in humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development work in partnership with churches and social service agencies in the Middle East. These first-hand connections enable the Faith Forum to advocate policies that promote human welfare, shared security, justice, and peace, and to broaden public support for them.

The Faith Forum represents a diversity of perspectives and provides a table where organizations identify common ground and strategies for common action. Specific initiatives of the group are undertaken where there is significant shared interest, and organizations engaged with the Faith Forum have the freedom to participate or not in any initiative that is undertaken. All communications and actions undertaken through the Faith Forum represent only the positions of those organizations that specifically sign on to that particular initiative, enabling effective and respectful engagement across a range of matters where organizations wish to work together in specific ways on a shared concern.