

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON  
*INTERNATIONAL ISSUES*

13

*PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)  
216TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2004)*

[The full text of the items referred to this committee may be found in the Reports to the General Assembly under tab 13.]

*Moderator: Justin M. Johnson  
Vice Moderator: Marcia Borgeson*

There are recommendations contained in this report that have financial implications and are indicated with a “\$” sign next to the item. The details of the financial implication are provided with the item in the context of the report, and are so indicated in the Table of Contents below.

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**The Assembly Committee on International Issues recommends that the 216th General Assembly (2004) approve the following recommendations:**

**Taiwan**

**Item 13-01. On Expressing our Solidarity with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and with the Taiwanese People—From the Presbytery of New Covenant. +ACSWP, ACREC**

**That the recommendation be answered by the action taken on Item 13-07 of this report.**

**Vote: 54/0/3**

**Item 13-07. On Expressing Our Solidarity with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and with the Taiwanese People—From the Presbytery of the Pacific. +ACSWP, ACREC**

**In response to this recommendation, that the 216th General Assembly (2004) approve the following:**

**June 30, 2004, 10:10 PM**

The 216th General Assembly (2004), recognizing and honoring the feelings about national identity expressed on both sides of the Taiwan Straits, reaffirms the action of the 208th General Assembly (1996) in both its “Resolution: Taiwan Monitoring” (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, pp. 522–23, paragraphs 36.443–.456) and the ‘affirmations concerning partnership in mission with Christians in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China’ (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, pp. 381–82, paragraphs 34.019–.027). In addition, the 216th General Assembly (2004) does the following:

1. Directs the Stated Clerk to commend both the Taiwan Center for Disease Control for its prompt and thorough action in addressing the outbreak and management of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the United States of America Center for Disease Control and Prevention for its mission and continuing commitment to engage in the international public health community and, particularly, for its involvement with Taiwan during the SARS outbreak.

2. Directs the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), in consultation with the General Assembly Council (GAC) and the National Taiwanese Presbyterian Council (NTPC), to continue its monitoring of the mainland China/Taiwan relationship as an emerging issue fraught with danger and to consider providing study materials on the situation.

3. Calls on Presbyterians and General Assembly entities to advocate for access that permits direct interaction and provision of services in the World Health Organization for Taiwan and other peoples and places in times of health crisis.

4. Encourages all Presbyterians to become familiar with issues and concerns of the East Asia region and the United States foreign policy in regards to the United States-Taiwan-mainland China triangular relationship.

5. Invites all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-related media outlets and publications, such as *Presbyterians Today*, Stewardship for Public Life (Washington Office), and *Church & Society* magazine to devote one publication on the human rights and democracy development in Taiwan.

Vote: 53/0/4

#### Other

**\$ Item 13-03. On Authorizing the Inclusion of a Fund to Combat HIV/AIDS and Diseases of Poverty in Africa in the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering—From the Presbytery of New Castle. +GAC +ACREC, ACWC**

In response to this recommendation, that the 216th General Assembly (2004) approve the following resolution:

The 216th General Assembly (2004) directs the General Assembly Council, Worldwide Ministries Division, of the PC(USA) to make a concerted, coordinated effort to lift up and publicize the existing Extra Commitment Opportunities pertaining to HIV/AIDS issues.

June 30, 2004, 10:10 PM

**There is no question that there is an overwhelming need for funds to address this crisis in Africa and around the world.**

**Vote: 55/0/2**

**[Original Financial Implication: 2005: \$2,230,000; 2006: \$2,206,250 (Mission-Restricted)]**

**[Committee Action: 2005: \$33,500; 2006: \$22,500 (Mission-Unrestricted)]**

**Item 13-04. On Global Population Stabilization and Reduction—From the Presbytery of Lackawanna. +ACWC**

**That the recommendations be disapproved.**

**Vote: 35/18/5**

**Item 13-05. Human Rights Update.**

**That the recommendations be approved with comment.**

**Comment: The “Human Rights Update 2003–2004” should not be construed by the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as the definitive statement of all the human rights violations received by the General Assembly Council during the course of the year.**

**Vote: 58/0/0**

**Item 13-06. Remove Talisman Energy from the GA Divestment List.**

**That the recommendation be approved.**

**Vote: 49/4/3**

### **Commissioners’ Resolutions**

**Item 13-08. On the Murders of Women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.**

**That the recommendations be approved with amendment.**

**1. Amend Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]**

**“1. Instruct the Stated Clerk to express the concern, dismay, and grief of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to [President Vicente Fox and] Governor Patricio Martinez Garcia, State of Chihuahua, Mexico, over the systematic murder and disappearance of large numbers of young women in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, over the last eleven years.”**

**June 30, 2004, 10:10 PM**

2. Amend Recommendation 4. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“4. Direct the General Assembly Council to participate in[, and request the Moderator of the 216th General Assembly (2004) to represent the PC(USA) in,] a service to be planned by [~~Pesos~~] [Pasos] *de Fe*, the presbyteries of Sierra Blanca and Tres Rios, in dialogue with the church in Mexico and other ecumenical partners to join in public witness and worship that cries out for justice and claims the promise of the Resurrection.”

Vote: 55/0/0

**\$ Item 13-09. On Opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).**

That the recommendations be approved with amendment. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“That the 216<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

“1. Declare our opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) [in its current form, as it fails to adequately protect workers’ rights, human rights, food security, and environmental standards, and it limits the ability of governments and sovereign indigenous peoples to regulate corporations to protect the common good].

“2. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate with the president of the United States and members of Congress the opposition of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the Central American Free Trade Agreement [and other free trade agreements].

“3. Direct the General Assembly Council, ~~[in consultation with borderlands synods and presbyteries, to prepare a study document on the Central America Free Trade Agreement,]~~ [through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) programs dealing with economic justice, hunger, and advocacy, to promptly communicate the General Assembly position to the U.S. trade representative, U.S. senators and representatives, congressional committees with trade jurisdiction, and state legislators,] with emphasis on those sections [of CAFTA and other free trade agreements] that negatively affect our partners ~~[in Central America].~~

“4. ~~[Urge synods, presbyteries, and congregations to study the impact of the Central America Free Trade Agreement on our]~~ [Request the General Assembly Council to identify] sisters and brothers [and institutional partners] [in Central America and to communicate their concerns to members of Congress.] [who have been impacted by free trade policies, and help interpret these stories and effects to church members through itineration in the U.S. and inclusion of these into a congregational study guide on trade issues and economic globalization.]

**“5. Direct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment [(MRTI)] to explore the implications of CAFTA [and other free trade agreements] and advise the General Assembly.**

**“6. Call on presbyteries, churches, and church members to do the following:**

**“a. Become educated about how CAFTA, and other free trade agreements, can further economic globalization policies that are unsustainable and unjust, by drawing on the resources of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Presbyterian Washington Office, and other offices of the National and Congregational Ministries Divisions.**

**“b. Advocate with state legislators and U.S. senators and representatives, urging them to oppose CAFTA and other free trade agreements in their current form.**

**“c. Join in coalitions with community and nonprofit groups, including other Christian denominations, which are organizing opposition to CAFTA and other free trade agreements with similar provisions.”**

**Vote: 42/15/1**

**[Original Financial Implication: 2005: \$19,437; 2006: \$17,366 (Per Capita-GAC)]**

**[Committee Action: 2005: \$0; 2006: \$0]**

**Item 13-10. On Rescinding Policies Regarding Cuba That Cause Hardship to Families.**

**That the recommendation be approved with amendment. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]**

**Strike the existing language and insert the following:**

**“[That the 216th General Assembly (2004) call upon the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Treasury Department to rescind new regulations published in the June 16, 2004, *Federal Register* and permit travel to Cuba.]”**

**Vote: 55/0/1**

**Item 13-11. Regarding Adult Basic Education.**

**That the recommendation be referred to the General Assembly Council, Global Education and International Leadership Development Office and the International Presbyterian Education Network, with the encouragement that issues of adult basic education be raised with partners as plans are made for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) involvement with and support of international church partners' educational ministries.**

**Vote: 54/0/0**

**Item 13-12. On Commissioning 2005 Mission Co-Workers During the 100th New Wilmington Missionary Conference.**

**That the recommendation be approved with amendment. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]**

**“That the 216th General Assembly (2004), meeting in Richmond, Virginia, from June 26-July 3, 2004, direct that the commissioning of mission [~~co-workers~~] [personnel and volunteers] in 2005 shall take place during the meeting of the 100th New Wilmington Missionary Conference, July 23-30, 2005.”**

**Vote: 55/0/0**

Ecumenical Greetings

On behalf of the General Assembly, the committee received ecumenical greetings from the following ecumenical delegates, representatives, and guests:

Bishop Munjita Kamuya, Moderator, the United Church of Zambia

The Reverend Dr. Dieudonne Massi Gams, General Executive Society of the Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise and President of the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa

The Reverend Antonio Neves Mussaqui, Moderator, the Presbyterian Church of Angola

The Reverend Dr. Jean Emile Ngue, General Scty, Federation of Evangelical Churches of Cameroon

The Reverend Wilbert Sayimani, Clerk of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

The Reverend Paul Neshangwe, pastor in the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

The Reverend John P. Chalmers, The Church of Scotland

The Reverend Dr. Soon Kwon Kim, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Korea

The Reverend Ok Nam Kim, Moderator, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

Minority Report

Assembly Committee on International Issues (13)

Refer to Item 13-04, on page 3 of the report of the Assembly Committee on International Issues.

**In response to Item 13-04, that the 216th General Assembly (2004) reaffirm the statement on Population Stability (*Minutes, 1996, Part I, pp. 533-34, paragraphs 36.544-.556*) from the document “Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development” approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996).**

*Rationale*

The issues of seeking a just and sustainable future continue to be a concern around the world. This paper, approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996) is a source document by which our social witness policy is established. Its introduction states: “[this paper] will determine procedures and program for the units and staff of the General Assembly.” As we consider the issue of population stabilization and as a response to Item 13-04 from the Presbytery of Lackawanna, we in this minority report feel some statement needs to be made from this General Assembly. The 1996 action is seen to be a meaningful place from which to reaffirm our concern and continue our efforts to create a sustainable future into the 21st century.

World population continues to increase rapidly while resources decline. In the face of this reality and in response to Item 13-04 from the Presbytery of Lackawanna, this action to reaffirm current policy will refocus and revitalize our commitment to the issues of overpopulation that bring suffering to people and planet.

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks just and sustainable human development because the church believes that God wills the fullness of life for all people.” (*Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation*, p. 136).

The relevant text of the 1996 report follows:

E. POPULATION STABILITY

PRINCIPLE: Overpopulation is neither just nor sustainable. Procreation is a deeply felt human right that must be balanced with the responsibility to preserve environmental quality and long-term sustainability and to make sufficient sustenance available to all.

Every part of creation is related to the rest. The Psalmists understood this. Long before there was any formal science of ecology, they were implicit ecologists as well as explicit champions of justice. “You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal... You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use... The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that [God] planted. In them the birds build their nests ... The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the coney ... O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Ps. 104:10, 11, 14, 16–18, 24 NRSV).

The human creatures, with all their God-given distinctiveness and dignity, remain creatures within the created order, sharing the Creator’s love and care with other creatures, dependent upon the natural sys-

tems ordained by God. The health of the created order, in the wisdom of God, is a matter of stability and balance, encompassing marvelous, intricate interdependencies that God alone can number and fathom.

The astounding surge of human numbers—more than a tripling in one century—upsets the balance. No other creature could undergo a similar upsurge of population without overshooting ecological limits followed by precipitous decline. Science and technology have allowed humans to extend the limits spectacularly, but in doing so, humans have degraded the habitats of other creatures, in many cases to the point of their extinction. Further, they have begun to undermine the stability of the life-support systems upon which both population and economic growth are utterly dependent. Complacency about continued population growth now constitutes defiance of the wisdom of God. Our time is very different from that in which it was needful for human beings to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28, NRSV). The failure to accept responsibility for stabilizing and eventually reducing the human population amounts to the ultimate anthropocentric presumption that human creatures alone are forever exempt from the ecological laws by which God governs complex processes and the interaction of living creatures.

Overpopulation is unjust because it exacerbates the problems of poverty and hunger. It is unsustainable because it undercuts the tasks of responsible earth keeping. High fertility rates are now contributing to both poverty and unsustainability in many nations. But the problem is not merely one of fertility rates. The total human ecological and social impact depends not only on the number of people but on their impact per capita. The problems of population press us to face also the problems of unnecessary and wasteful production and consumption. The United States and other countries of the north bear a far greater responsibility for environmental degradation and economic maldistribution than the countries of the south. The north, with its enormous use of all resources, cannot escape its own responsibility by pointing to southern fertility rates. At the same time, the south must acknowledge that population growth (like overconsumption) is unsustainable and will become even more so as the south rightfully increases its production and consumption.

A just and effective international strategy for reducing fertility rates and preventing overpopulation must emphasize at least the following elements: (1) strengthening the family as the basic social unit; (2) universal accessibility to safe, effective, simple, convenient, diverse, reversible, and inexpensive contraception for both men and women; (3) increased research on contraceptive means for men and women; (4) equality for women in social status, political and economic rights, education, income-earning employment, health care, and nutrition; (5) a dramatic rise in the level of female literacy; (6) a broad range of primary health services for women, including prenatal and postnatal care, treatment of genital diseases, birth control education and counseling; (7) improved social support systems to reduce the need for large families; and (8) elimination of the poverty that breeds overpopulation.

A major issue in controversies over contraception is power: the power of men and institutions to control the reproductive destinies of women. This fact has to give way to the power of women to assert their own full identity (beyond being only spouses and son-bearers). Women are entitled to exercise freedom of choice and the right of full human development.

Another major issue in controversies over contraception is responsibility: the responsibility of men, women, and cultures to act appropriately with their sexual lives. We seek that men in the United States and throughout the world be educated in sexual responsibilities and their role as active parents of their children. We need to seek ways to help men and women look upon their children as gifts of God and a strengthening of their communities.

The United Nations Population Fund and some proponents at the United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (September 1994) have established a goal of stabilizing the human population at 7.28 billion by 2050. Achieving this goal will require major initiatives grounded on the elements listed above. It also will require considerable financial assistance as part of development aid.

Therefore the 208th General Assembly (1996)

1. reminds Presbyterians and other citizens of the United States that the population problem is here, not just in countries with higher fertility rates, and therefore that they too have the responsibility to prayerfully consider the size of their families and to moderate consumption.
2. encourages the assistance agencies of the United States government to extend their support for the key factors that bring about the transition to fewer births: an emphasis on social and economic progress, with enhanced social security to reduce the need for large families; the reduction of infant mortality; improvements in the status of women; and the availability of family planning services.
3. urges all governments together with donor agencies to broaden the availability and the scope of family planning services. These services must provide a wide enough choice of contraceptive methods to ensure women an acceptable balance of personal needs, preference, and risks; and they require adequate counseling and follow-up care to assure women the options suited to their situation. This emphasis on contraceptive services is the most important factor in making abortions unnecessary.
4. urges governments and assistance agencies to consider not only the total population of a country but also the distribution of the population and to adopt policies to effect a more sustainable distribution—specifically, policies to decentralize the availability of social services, education, health care, and economic opportunity so that rural life is enhanced and the pressure on urban centers is relieved.
5. opposes policies that restrict information about and availability of contraceptive and reproductive health measures for religious or political reasons, as well as programs that use coercive measures such as compulsory abortion or involuntary sterilization.

In accordance with Standing Rule C.5.d., I affirm that the above positions expressed as recommendations for action by the assembly were presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter.