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Minutes – 6/30/04 - Ecumenical Worship & Business Mtg 4

Wednesday, June 30, 2004, 8:30 A.M.

ECUMENICAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered for an ecumenical service of worship in the Carpenter Center, Richmond, Virginia. The preacher for the morning, Thomas J. Hoyt Jr., Bishop of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and president of the National Council of Churches of Christ (U.S.A.), preached a sermon entitled, A Transformed Non-Conformist. Scripture readings were from Psalm 99 and Romans 12:1-12.

Commissioners and advisory delegates then spent time reading assembly committee reports and preparing for the afternoon business.

Wednesday, June 30, 2004, 2:00 P.M.

The 216th General Assembly reconvened at 2:00 p.m. with Moderator Rick Ufford-Chase presiding. Moderator Ufford-Chase introduced Chip Andrus who, along with other musicians, will be leading the assembly in musical offerings during the 216th General Assembly (2004). Chip Andrus introduced the other musicians.

K. C. Ptomey, commissioner from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, led the assembly in prayer.

Moderator Ufford-Chase recognized Pat Valentine of the Committee on Local Arrangements, who presented the Moderator and Vice-Moderator with a gift of gavels. On behalf of the Committee on Local Arrangements, the Moderator of the 215th General Assembly (2003), Susan Andrews, presented Vice-Moderator Jean Marie Peacock with the gift of a stole

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ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES – Report Two

Moderator Ufford-Chase recognized Nancy Thornton McKenzie, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who presented Bills and Overtures' Report Two.

The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved the following recommendations:

Docket

Wednesday, June 30

2:00pm

Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 4

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Stated Clerk's Orientation II
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination & Budgets (Financial Implications)
- COTE Henry Luce Presentation
- Assembly Committee Reports
 - Assembly Committee on Theological Issues & Institutions (8)
 - Assembly Committee on Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations (6)

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

6:00pm

Dinner Break

7:30pm

Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 5

- Speakout
- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Top Ten Giving Presbyteries
- Memorial Minute for David Stitt
- Assembly Committee Reports
 - Assembly Committee on Pension, Foundation & PILP (14)

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

Thursday, July 1

8:30am

Morning Worship (Plenary)

9:30am

Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 6

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination & Budgets (Financial Implications)
- General Assembly Nominating Committee

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| | |
|---------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decade of the Child• Assembly Committee Reports |
| | Assembly Committee on Health Issues (11) |
| | Announcements |
| | Closing Prayer |
| | Recess |
| 12:30pm | Lunch Break |
| 2:00pm | Opening Prayer |
| | BUSINESS MEETING 7 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speakout• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures• Ecumenical Greeting• Presbyterian Hunger Program• Assembly Committee Reports |
| | Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (3) |
| | Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination & Budgets (7) |
| | Assembly Committee on Evangelism & Higher Education (9) |
| | Announcements |
| | Closing Prayer |
| | Recess |
| 6:00pm | Group Dinner |
| 7:30pm | Opening Prayer |
| | BUSINESS MEETING 8 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speakout• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures• Ecumenical Greeting• Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts and Hands• Assembly Committee Reports |
| | Assembly Committee on National Issues (10) |
| | Assembly Committee on Peacemaking (12) |
| | Announcements |
| | Closing Prayer |
| | Recess |
| | Friday, July 2 |
| 8:30am | Morning Worship (Plenary) |
| 9:30am | Opening Prayer |
| | BUSINESS MEETING 9 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures• Ecumenical Greeting• Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)• Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination & Budgets (Financial Implications)• Stated Clerk's Election• Assembly Committee Reports |
| | Assembly Committee on International Issues (13) |
| | Announcements |
| | Closing Prayer |
| | Recess |
| 12:30pm | Group Lunch |
| 2:00pm | Opening Prayer |
| | BUSINESS MEETING 10 |

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|-----------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speakout• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures• Ecumenical Greeting• Middle East Delegation Report• Memorial Minute for Dorothy Barnard• Assembly Committee Reports<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assembly Committee on Church Orders and Ministry (5)Arrested Reports |
| | Announcements |
| | Closing Prayer |
| | Recess |
| 6:00pm | Dinner Break |
| 7:30pm | Opening Prayer |
| | BUSINESS MEETING 11 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speakout• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures• Ecumenical Greeting• World Prayer Concerns• Assembly Committee Reports<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assembly Committee on Church Polity (4)Arrested Reports |
| [9:50pm] | Announcements |
| | Closing Prayer |
| | Recess |
| Saturday, July 3 | |
| 8:30am | Morning Worship (Plenary) |
| 9:30am | Opening Prayer |
| | BUSINESS MEETING 12 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures• Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)• Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination & Budgets (Financial Implications)• Introduction of Sheppards & Lapsley Committee on Local Arrangements |
| | Closing Prayer |
| Noon | ADJOURN |

Minutes

The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures has examined the *Minutes of the General Assembly* from the time of its convening on Saturday afternoon, June 26, through the end of business Sunday afternoon, and found them in order. All has been done in compliance with the Standing Rules.

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Stated Clerk's Orientation II

Moderator Ufford-Chase recognized Stated Clerk Kirkpatrick who presented a brief orientation of commissioners. This session of the orientation included procedures for conducting business in plenary, for use of microphones and the speaker recognition system, for making a motion, for participation in dialogue, for use of parliamentary procedures (using the most recent version of *Robert's Rules of Order*), for use of protests and dissents, for use of consent motion, for handling of minority reports, for distribution of reports, and for the electronic voting procedures.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES (03)

Moderator Ufford-Chase recognized Judith Hartley, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures for a report on financial implications to the per capita budget of actions taken at this assembly. Hartley announced that the total financial implications of actions recommended by assembly committees would increase the per capita rate by: 0.50 cents. Per capita for the year 2004 is \$5.51/member, which cannot be changed. For the year 2005, per capita would increase by 6.48 cents and for the year 2006, per capita would increase by 6.86 cents. Hartley reported that two alternative proposals for the per capita rate are being considered by the committee:

- 1) approve per capita at \$5.46 which is a reduction of .05 cents,
- 2) approve per capita \$5.51 for 2005 and 2006, which would be the same as in 2004 without change for the next two years.

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The committee will make a recommendation on the last day of the assembly. A brief summary will be presented each day.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE: REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION AND BUDGETS (07)

The report of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets was presented by its moderator, Catewby Woodford. Woodford reported the total financial implications of actions under consideration by the assembly for the mission budgets was: \$0 for 2004; \$155,791 for 2005; and \$101,566 for 2006.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (COTE) HENRY LUCE PRESENTATION

Moderator Ufford-Chase recognized Dottie Hedgepeth, Associate Director for Theological Education, Congregational Ministries Division, who introduced Liza Hendricks, moderator of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE). Hendricks introduced members of COTE who were present. Hendricks then introduced C. Samuel Calian, President of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary who presented the Henry Luce Award to Henry Luce III.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS (08)

Michelle Moe, moderator Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions was presented by its moderator, Michelle Moe.

The assembly approved the consent agenda: Items 08-02, 08-03, 08-04, 08-07, 08-08, and 08-15. The assembly approved item 08-01 with amendment. A statement was approved in response to item 08-05. Item 08-06 was referred to the General Assembly Council, Office of Theology and Worship. Item 08-09 was approved.. Moe recognized Jenny Stoner, co-moderator of the Task Force on the Peace, Unity and Purity of the Church, who offered a preliminary report

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for the task force. Mark Achtemeier, and Stacy Johnson, members of the task force continued the preliminary report. Moe continued the report of the assembly committee. Items 08-10 and 08-11 were approved. Item 08-12 was answered by action taken on Item 08-05 with an additional statement, which was amended from the floor, as follows: “The 216th General Assembly (2004) affirms the primary significant and instructive role of the *Book of Confessions*. . . .” Moe introduced Jorge Cartagena-Cruz, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions, to continue the report. Cartagena-Cruz, introduced Samuel Calian, to recognize Tom Gillespie, President of Princeton Theological Seminary upon his retirement. Gillespie addressed the assembly and then introduced his successor at Princeton Theological Seminary, Iain R. Torrance, who brief spoke to the assembly. Item 08-13 was approved. Cartagena-Cruz presented Liza Hendricks, who introduced Dean K. Thompson as the new President of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Thompson addressed the assembly. Item 08-14 was approved. Moe presented the remainder of the report. The assembly disapproved Item 08-16 with the following amendment: “Strike the comment recommended by the assembly committee.” Item 08-17, was disapproved with comment. Item 08-18 was approved with the following amendment: “Insert the following sentence as the end of the recommendation – ‘This work should be coordinated with the Office of Theology and Worship.’” Item 08-19 was disapproved.

**The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved the following recommendations:
[Consent agenda items are indicated by an asterisk (*).]**

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Item 08-01. Regarding Production of New Presbyterian Hymnal

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That the recommendation is 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.]

“The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) recommends that the 216th General Assembly (2004) authorize the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the Office of Theology and Worship, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians to begin research into the feasibility of a new Presbyterian hymnal, [that the feasibility report be given to the 217th General Assembly (2006).] and further that, subject to action of a future General Assembly upon presentation and approval of a comprehensive publication plan, the 216th General Assembly (2004) designate the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation as the prospective publisher of the next Presbyterian hymnal, which would be developed in partnership with the Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians.”

*Item 08-02. PPC Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Organization for Mission Changes.

That the recommendation is approved.

Lord's Supper

*Item 08-03. Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord's Supper.

That the recommendation is approved.

*Item 08-04. Authorize the Celebration of the Lord's Supper at Listed Conference Centers and at Listed Events.

That the recommendation is approved.

Book of Order

Item 08-05. On Reorganizing and Improving the Presentation of G-2.0300, G-2.0400, and G-2.0500 Without Material Alteration to its Actual Content—From the Presbytery of John Calvin. *ACC +OGA +GAC

In response to this recommendation, that the 216th General Assembly (2004) approved the following statement with amendment: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

The 216th General Assembly (2004) [~~affirms~~] [significant and instructive] the right and responsibility of presbyteries to determine whether candidates and ministers “sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as

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expressed in the confessions of our church,” together with all other matters expressed in ordination and installation vows.

Ordination vows and essential tenets have a long and complex history in the Presbyterian church. The church has worked through the issue of “essential tenets” many times before, so attention to that history is essential.

From the beginning, the church has lived in the space between two tendencies. One stressed the more “objective” aspects of Christian faith such as theological precision, the distinct character of the ministry, and ordered church government. The other placed more emphasis on spontaneity, vital experience, and adaptability. In 1729, division was averted by recognizing the concerns of both groups in the “Adopting Act.” The Adopting Act required:

1. That all ministers and candidates accept the Westminster Confession, together with the Larger and Shorter catechisms . . .
2. . . . but not categorically.
3. That all ministers and candidates must declare “agreement in and approbation of” the confessional standards “as being in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine.”
4. That any minister who did not accept any particular part of the Confession or catechisms should state his scruple concerning that part, and the presbytery should then decide whether or not the scruple involved “essential and necessary articles of faith.”

The Adopting Act regularized confessional standards, but it did not require adherence to every confessional articulation. “Essential and necessary articles” were not identified. The Adopting Act was refined in 1758 at the repair of the Old Side/New Side schism:

1. With respect to any action deemed essential and necessary by the church, “every member shall actively concur . . . or passively submit . . . or peaceably withdraw.”
2. It became a censurable offense irresponsibly to accuse other ministers.
3. Presbyteries were to examine candidates on “religious experience” as well as doctrine.
4. Five questions were to be asked at ordinations and installations, including, “Do you sincerely receive and adopt the confession of faith of this church as contained in the system of doctrine taught in the holy Scriptures?” The “system of doctrine” was interpreted in the spirit of “essential and necessary.”

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The 1910 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America declared that the Adopting Act of 1729 called upon judicatories to determine which articles of faith are “essential and necessary.” The assembly then identified five doctrines as “essential” (although the assembly added, “others are equally so.”) (1) inerrancy of Scripture, (2) virgin birth, (3) sacrificial atonement, (4) bodily resurrection, (5) Christ’s miracles.

Although the 1910 deliverance was challenged repeatedly, it was not repealed. Following the 1923 General Assembly, and in reaction against the 1910/1916/1923 doctrinal deliverance, more than 1,200 ministers signed the “Auburn Affirmation” declaring that the five-point deliverance

attempts to commit our church to certain theories concerning the Inspiration of the Bible, and the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the Continuing Life and Supernatural Power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We all hold most earnestly to these great facts and doctrines... Some of us regard the particular themes contained in the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923 as satisfactory explanations of these facts and doctrines. But we are united in believing that these are not the only themes allowed by the Scriptures and our standards as explanations of these facts and doctrines of our religion, and that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, whatever theories they may employ to explain them, are worthy of our confidence and fellowship.

The issue was set: narrowly defined confessional subscription or broadly defined confessional subscription. The question was not *whether* confessional subscription was required, but the specific nature of that confessional subscription.

The matter was referred to a special commission that reported in 1926 and 1927. The upshot of the special commission’s report, adopted by the 1927 General Assembly, was that:

1. The *General Assembly* does not have the constitutional power to give binding definition to the church’s essential faith. By denying that the assembly has the right to define authoritatively the “essentials” of the church’s faith, the commission eliminated the five points as a source of controversy.

2. While a measure of tolerance was embedded in the church, it was made clear that the church, and not the individual, must decide the limits of tolerated diversity, “either *generally*, by amendment to the constitution, or *particularly*, by Presbyterial authority.”

The church has decided limits *generally*, by amending the constitution to create *The Book of Confessions*, and *particularly*, by the continuing examination for ordination of candidates and for reception into membership of ministers. To this

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end, it must be acknowledged that in ordination the presbytery has historically demonstrated its power and responsibility in determining confirmation with the church's theology.

Item 08-06. On Amending W-2.4006 and W-2.4011 Concerning Who May Participate—From the Presbytery of Central Washington. *ACC +GAC

That the recommendation is referred to the General Assembly Council, Office of Theology and Worship, which is conducting work on sacramental study; with a report due to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

Trustees

***Item 08-07. Approved the New Trustees Elected by PC(USA) Theological Institutions in 2003.**

That the recommendation is approved.

***Item 08-08. Approved the Nominees for Mountain Retreat Association Trustees of Stock Board of Directors.**

That the recommendation is approved.

Other

\$ Item 08-09. Trinity Work Group Report.

That the recommendations are approved.

[Financial Implication: 2005: \$18,700 (Mission-Restricted)]

Item 08-10. Encouraged Gatherings of Presbyterians of Varied Views to Covenant Together to Discuss the Affirmations in the Task Force's Preliminary Report.

That the recommendation is approved.

Item 08-11. On Appropriate Language to Describe the Ministry of All Believers—From the Presbytery of New Brunswick.

That the recommendation is approved.

Item 08-12. On Examining the Conscience of Candidates—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

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That the recommendation is answered by the action taken on Item 08-05 of this report, with the following statement added:

The 216th General Assembly (2004) affirms the [~~primary~~] significant and instructive] role of *The Book of Confessions* as guide to interpreting Scripture in the examination of candidates for ordination as ministers, elders, and deacons, and their reception or transfer into new installed calls, congregations, or appointments to mission service

Item 08-13. Approve Iain R. Torrance as President of Princeton Theological Seminary.

That the recommendation is approved.

Item 08-14. Approved Dean K. Thompson as President of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

That the recommendation is approved.

*Item 08-15. Louisville Seminary Articles of Incorporation.

That the recommendation is approved.

Commissioners' Resolutions

\$ Item 08-16. Commissioners' Resolution. Regarding the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Developing an Online Commentary to the Bible.

That the recommendation is disapproved ~~with comment~~:

~~Comment: [The assembly thanks the authors of the resolution and encourages the General Assembly Council Office of Communication and Office of Theology and Worship, and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to explore the concept of an on-line Bible commentary for free, or at a reasonable cost, and to implement it, if possible, as soon as possible, and report to the 217th General Assembly.]~~

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

\$ Item 08-17. Commissioners' Resolution. Regarding the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Call for Presbyterians to Lead a Simpler Life.

That the recommendation is disapproved and that the assembly notes the comment from the General Assembly Council:

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Comment: The General Assembly Council (GAC) welcomes the attention that this commissioners' resolution brings to the encouragement of simpler lifestyles. We believe that several components of the requested action are already in place. The GAC suggests that the most effective approach to accomplishing the commissioners' intent would be a communication from the assembly that calls Presbyterians to use existing programs as resources in a journey toward simpler, more faithful lifestyles.

Encouragement of simpler, less consumption-oriented, living finds expression in various programs of the General Assembly Council. The Spiritual Formation office commends simplicity as a spiritual practice; the Stewardship Education office interprets simpler living as a matter of Christian stewardship; and the Presbyterian Hunger Program encourages simpler lifestyles as a way to assure that all people share in God's abundance. All see a commitment to simpler lives as an expression of Christian discipleship.

The Presbyterian Hunger Program supports and promotes the work of the ecumenical organization Alternatives for Simple Living and distributes its "Whose Birthday Is It Anyway?" resource each year as an encouragement to a simpler observance of Christmas. Alternatives' resources deal with many dimensions of simpler lifestyles, from wedding plans to energy conservation.

For the past three years, several programs of the General Assembly Council have jointly sponsored the Enough for Everyone program, which promotes a related approach to congregational lifestyles. Through the Presbyterian Coffee Project, Sweat-Free T-Shirts, Electric Stewardship, and Investing in Hope, congregations are invited to engage in activities that represent a more just participation in the global economy.

Item 08-17, Rec (2): [Committee Action: 2005: \$0]

Item 08-17, Rec (3): [Committee Action: 2005: \$0]

\$ Item 08-18. Commissioner's Resolution. On Celebrating the "Social Creed" of the Churches and Considering a 21st Century Social Creed. [That this work should be coordinated with the office of Theology and Worship.]

That the recommendation is 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.]

[Financial Implication: 2005: \$25,066; 2006: \$31,957 (Per Capita-GAC)]

Item 08-19. Commissioners Resolution 20. On Recognition That One of the Great Ends of the Church (G-1.0200) Is the Preservation of the Truth.

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That the recommendation is disapproved.

Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[The items listed below were acted upon and approved by the assembly committee. No further action is needed, and is here for information only.]

Item 08-A. Minutes, Committee on Theological Education.

That the minutes are approved.

Item 08-B. Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

That the minutes are approved.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS (06)

The Report of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations was presented by its moderator, Mary Gene Boteler. The consent agenda was approved as follows: Items 06-08, 06-10, and 06-11. Item 06-01 was approved as amended. Item 06-02 was disapproved with instruction to the General Assembly Council. Items 06-03, 06-04 and 06-05 were approved. Item 06-06 was approved with amendments recommended by the assembly committee. Recommendation 1 of item 06-09 was approved as amended by the assembly committee. Recommendation 2 of item 06-09 was disapproved. Rebecca Drover, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations introduced a video on the National Council of Churches of Christ (U.S.A.). Ellen Babinsky, moderator of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations, gave a brief overview of their review of the National Council of Churches of Christ (U.S.A.). Item 06-07 was approved. Boteler presented the remainder of the assembly committee's report. Recommendation 2 of Item 06-12 was disapproved. Item 06-13 was approved.

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The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved the following recommendations:
[Consent agenda items are indicated by an asterisk(*)].

Interfaith Relations

Item 06-01. Recommendation Regarding Expansion of Work Regarding 1999 Referral 25.246: To Equip Presbyterians to Better Articulate Their Faith in Inter-religious Contexts.

That recommendations are approved with the following amendment:

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. Expansion of work responding to the 1999 referral to better equip the church for witness in pluralistic society, to be designed and carried out by a cross-divisional staff team coordinated by the Interfaith Relations Office. This team will also involve at least the Office of Theology and Worship and the Committee on Theological Education in the Congregational Ministries Division, the Office on International Evangelism in the Worldwide Ministries Division, and the Office of Evangelism and Church Development in the National Ministries Division. [To invite and include specialized ministers, chaplains, and others who work frequently in interfaith contexts to be included as part of the cross-divisional staff team.]”

\$Item 06-02. On Forming a Task Force to Draft a Denominational Policy Consistent with the Religious Pluralism Reality in the USA—From the Presbytery of Eastern Oklahoma. +GAC

That the recommendation is disapproved and, recognizing the religious pluralism that exists in the U.S.A. and the world that informs our religious life, we instruct:

1. The Office of Interfaith Relations of the General Assembly Committee to communicate the strong policy statement opposed to religious bigotry and stereotyping as found in General Assembly *Minutes*, 1999, Part I, pp. 79 and 663, and as printed below; and

2. The Office of Interfaith Relations, together with other appropriate offices of the General Assembly Council, to prepare a guide for congregations that makes known and available the resources already available in regard to religious pluralism and Christian discipleship; and

3. The Office of the General Assembly and the Office of Interfaith Relations of the World Ministries Division to bring the 217th General Assembly a

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recommendation on what further study or action might be needed to better equip the church to live in a religiously plural world.

Policy Statement from 1999

- “1. call upon congregations and governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to work prayerfully and carefully to eliminate the language, imagery, and symbols in their preaching and teaching ministries that perpetuate stereotypes through (a) viewing all persons of a particular religion as having certain characteristics in common without giving attention to differences within a religious community or tradition; (b) deriving characterizations of a religion from external sources rather than from the sources within the particular tradition involved; and, (c) comparing the best of Christian practices with the worst behavior or beliefs of the other community;
- “2. call upon individual Presbyterians to reflect carefully and prayerfully on their use of language, symbols, and images in relation to other religions and to challenge stereotypes through appropriate means;
- “3. call upon congregations and governing bodies to create opportunities for dialogues that provide opportunities to share ideas with adherents of other religions and to get to know them as persons of faith;
- “4. call upon congregations and governing bodies to join in interfaith ministries of justice with individuals or congregations, or other appropriate groups;
- “5. call upon individual Presbyterians to view media presentations of other religions critically and to challenge stereotypes when they are presented;
- “6. direct the General Assembly Council, Worldwide Ministries Division, to make available resources that guide Presbyterians in overcoming problems that have developed through the history of Christian relationships with peoples of other faith communities and;
- “7. direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to congregations and governing bodies for study and action.” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 663)
[Original Financial Implications: 2004: \$9,460; 2005: \$36,060; 2006: \$15,750 (Per Capita-OGA)]
[Committee Action: 2004: \$0; 2005: \$0; 2006: \$0]

Item 06-09. On Re-Examining the Relationship Between Christians and Jews and the Implications for our Evangelism and New Church Development--From the Presbytery of Hudson River. +ACREC +GAC

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That recommendation 1 is approved as amended: [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. Direct the Office of Theology and Worship, the Office of Interfaith Relations, and the Office of Evangelism to ‘reexamine [and strengthen] the relationship between Christians and Jews and the implications of this relationship for our evangelism and new church development in continuing response to the 211th General Assembly (1999) mandate to guide the church in “bearing witness to Jesus Christ in a pluralistic age.” ’ ”

That recommendation 2 is disapproved.
Ecumenical Relations

Item 06-03. Invite Churches to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

That the recommendation is approved.

Item 06-04. Congregations and Mobs Study and Response to WCC Decade to Overcome Violence.

That the recommendation is approved.

Item 06-05. Support for Ecumenical Formation.

That the recommendation is approved.

Item 06-06. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Understanding of 16th and 17th Century Condemnations of Other Churches in The Book of Confessions. *ACC

That the recommendations are approved with the following amendments:

1. Amend the second paragraph (policy statement) of 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.]

“Specific statements in 16th and 17th century confessions and catechisms in *The Book of Confessions* contain condemnations or derogatory characterizations of the [Roman] Catholic Church: Chapters XVIII and XXII of the Scots Confession; Questions and Answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism; and Chapters II, III, XVII, and XX, of the Second Helvetic Confession. (Chapters XXII, XXV, and XXIX of the Westminster Confession of Faith have been amended to remove anachronous and offensive language. Chapter XXVIII of the French Confession does not have

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constitutional standing.) While these statements emerged from substantial doctrinal disputes, they reflect 16th and 17th century polemics. Their condemnations and characterizations of the Catholic Church are not the position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and are not applicable to current relationships between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Catholic Church.”

2. Amend Recommendation 2. 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.]

“2. Amend the Preface to *The Book of Confessions* by inserting the policy statement [above] between [paragraph 4 and] paragraph 5 [~~and the concluding quotation from the *Book of Order*.~~”

3. Add a new recommendation, “6.” to read as follows:

“[Direct the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations to consider proposing an additional paragraph in *The Book of Confessions*’ Preface concerning condemnatory language in *The Book of Confessions* towards other world religions similar to the one regarding the relationship between the PCUSA and the Catholic Church.]”

Item 06-07. Review of National Council of Churches in Christ (U.S.A.).

That recommendations 1—10 are approved.

*Item 06-10. Elect Delegates and Alternates to the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (2006).

That the recommendation is approved.

III. Other

*Item 06-08. Amend Standing Rule E.8.b. Regarding the Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

That the recommendation is approved.

*Item 06-11. Confirm Election of Delegate and Alternate to the 24th Council of WARC.

That the recommendation is approved.

DRAFT

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Commissioners' Resolutions

Item 06-12. Commissioners' Resolution: Recommendation #2. Reviewing PC(USA) Relationship with the World Council of Churches.

That the recommendation is disapproved.

Item 06-13. Commissioners' Resolution. On Cooperative Ecumenical Strategy.

That the recommendation is approved.

V. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

[The items listed below were acted upon and approved by the assembly committee. No further action is needed, and is here for information only.]

Item 06-A. Minutes, Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

That the minutes are approved.

Announcements

Stated Clerk Kirkpatrick announced that Wednesday evening's meal has traditionally been a simple meal with the amount saved donated to a local hunger project. Although this evening's meal was not a group meal, commissioners were invited to participate in this project by donating all or part of the \$16 per diem allowed toward this project.

Recess

Following prayer Melissa Manhong Lin ecumenical advisory delegate from the China Christian Council, the assembly recessed at 6:03 p.m., to reconvene at 7:30 p.m.