

Report B-001
Justice and Compassion Goal Area Committee
General Assembly Council
March 14-16, 2007

The Justice and Compassion Goal Area Committee met on Thursday, March 15, 2007 in Louisville, KY and forwards the following to the General Assembly Council:

FOR CONSENT

GAC ACTION: Approved as submitted

1) Subject: Proxy Voting Recommendations

That the General Assembly Council:

- A) Affirm the proxy voting recommendations of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) contained in the 2007 Shareholder Resolution Directory (Appendix 1).
- B) Request the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation/ New Covenant Trust Company and the Board of Pensions to vote proxies on the shareholder resolutions submitted to companies in which they own stock in accordance with the recommendations listed in the 2007 Shareholder Resolution Directory (Appendix 1).
- C) Urge the middle governing bodies, related institutions, congregations and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give serious consideration to the proxy voting recommendations when they vote on shareholder resolutions.

2) Subject: Annual Reports of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association

That the General Assembly Council having reviewed the annual reports as called for in the *Covenant of Agreement for Shared Ministry between NMD and PHEWA*, note in the minutes that they have been reviewed. (Refer to Information Item 201.)

FOR ACTION

1) Subject: MRTI Report On Request For Dialogue With Hilton Hotels On Corporate Code Related To Child Prostitution And Trafficking

GAC ACTION: Approved

That the General Assembly Council:

- A) Receive the report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) on the unresponsiveness of Hilton Hotels to a request for dialogue about a corporate code addressing child prostitution and trafficking.
- B) Urge Hilton Hotels to engage in dialogue with MRTI and other religious organizations about this serious issue, and how it can be addressed through pro-active corporate action.
- C) Encourage MRTI to inform Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entities and members about the situation with Hilton Hotels, and enlist their participation in communicating to the company about the need for positive action to address child prostitution and trafficking.

2) Subject: Iran Relations

GAC ACTION: Approved with request to attach the letter from the Evangelical Church of Iran to the committee's report.

That the General Assembly Council:

In response to the request of the Evangelical Church of Iran (ECI), the World Mission Program and the Peace and Justice Program recommend:

- A) That on behalf of World Mission and the Peace and Justice Program, the Middle East Area Office express the concern PC(U.S.A.) shares with the Evangelical Church of Iran, and communicate its prayerful support of the ECI for its engagement in peacemaking;
- B) That the General Assembly Council (GAC) acknowledge with gratitude the U. S. Administration's willingness to consider participation in dialogue that would include Iran and Syria, upon the invitation of the Iraqi government. In acknowledging this important step, the GAC recognizes that the journey toward peace is long and complex, and encourages the U.S. leaders to persist and not lose heart, pledging our prayers;
- C) That the GAC lift up to church members the PC(U.S.A.)'s policies on nuclear weapons, and the dangers of military confrontation;
- D) That the GAC urge congregations and individual church members to encourage U.S. political leaders to make serious efforts to enter into and persist in direct diplomatic dialogue with leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, so that by all means, a military confrontation would be avoided; that the GAC also invite Presbyterian military chaplains to engage with the church in prayers for God's peace and wellbeing of all peoples in the region;
- E) That the GAC make available on the church's web site, through appropriate program areas, useful resources for the church to consider for prayer and advocacy for peace, particularly with regard to an intensifying climate of tension with Iran and a potential military confrontation.

FOR INFORMATION

- 1. Andrea Stokes was elected Chair and Manley Olson was appointed Vice-Chair of the Justice & Compassion Goal Area Committee for the year 2007 - 2008.
- 2. The Committee made suggestions and affirmed the General Assembly Council Goals, Objectives and Outcomes, 2007 - 2008 for the Justice & Compassion Goal Area. (Final product will be posted on the web.) See Attachment 1.

Attachment 1

General Assembly Council Goals, Objectives
and Outcomes
2007-2008

JUSTICE & COMPASSIONⁱ

Goal: We are called to address wrongs in every aspect of life and the whole of creation, intentionally working with and on behalf of the poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people as did Jesus Christ, even at the risk to our own corporate and personal lives.

POVERTY OBJECTIVE: Enable partnerships with governing bodies and others to actively address the causes and effects of poverty locally, nationally and globally.

PROPOSED OUTCOME (2007-2008)

1. That PCUSA Congregations experience a deeper mission involvement and missiology regarding poverty, through such efforts as:

ACTIONS

- a. Identify, assess and communicate the PCUSA's current investment in poverty reduction through grants and direct aid.
 - (1) Develop strategy for communicating how mission dollars are reducing impact of poverty.
- b. Identify and transmit **best practices stories** among our congregations for ministering to the poor.
- c. Engage churches in mission projects that reveal to them our long PCUSA mission history and that expose them to our many assets and networks around the globe.
- d. Find new ways of engaging GAC with congregations, middle governing bodies, and other groups.
- e. Find new ways to communicate and raise funding for PCUSA missions.

2. The PCUSA will strengthen its witness and commitment to promoting just globalization policies and practices that protect and ensure the rights of the most vulnerable.

Actions:

- a. Equip Presbyterians to engage in education and public policy advocacy that addresses the root causes of poverty locally, nationally, and internationally.
 - (1) Organize a conference in 2008 that addresses the root causes of poverty, co-sponsored by Hunger, Peacemaking, Urban Ministry, the United Nations Office, Mission Responsibility Through Investment **and the Washington Office . It was also suggested that Ecumenical Partners and Agencies be included and that regional events be considered.**
 - (2) Support the Coalition of Imokolee Workers in their efforts to gain fair living wages for migrant farm workers.
 - (3) Implement the recommendations of the Just Globalization Report, approved by the 217th General Assembly in 2006.
 - (4) Implement the recommendations of the 217th General Assembly's action on Condemning International Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children.

PEACE OBJECTIVE: Encourage and support presbyteries and congregations to be active in seeking non-violent solutions to conflict in their own communities and in the communities of the world.

PROPOSED OUTCOME (2007-2008)

1. Congregations and Middle Governing Bodies will be better equipped to engage controversial issues in ways that bring peace to the Church.

Actions

- a. Collaborate with the Office of the General Assembly to develop conflict transformation models that incorporate techniques such as consensus building and collaboration.
 - b. Engage in regional training events that teach alternative methods such as consensus building and discernment for dealing with conflict in the congregation.
 - c. Identify the best practices for peacemaking within our congregations and best resources for alternative discernment and decision-making.
2. The PCUSA will increase its witness to and support of non-violent conflict resolution in three regions of the world.

Actions

- a. Identify three international projects that promote peace and communicate these efforts broadly to our congregations and middle governing bodies.
 - (1) Colombia Accompaniment Project
 - (2) Israel Palestine peace initiatives and economic development project
 - (3) Sudan Peace Process Advocacy
- b. Provide Presbyterians with opportunities to understand the root causes of these conflicts and equip them to engage in advocacy and action that promote non-violent resolution to the hostilities.
 - (1) Implement the Interfaith Listening Project by itinerating five teams to 15 Presbyteries in the fall of 2007.
 - (2) Support the International Peacemakers Program.

ⁱ Recall that the programs of the GAC that fall in the Justice and Compassion Area include programs that promote peace and non-violence; interfaith engagement and understanding; addressing the root causes and means to reduce poverty, disease and hunger and their effects and to promote health; and to provide relief for victims of disaster. We work in partnership with ecumenical churches and agencies, middle governing bodies and congregations