

**ACTIONS OF THE 216TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2004)  
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**The 216th General Assembly (2004) addressed some actions to various parts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): governing bodies, synods, presbyteries, sessions, congregations, the whole church, and PC(USA) related seminaries and theological institutions.**

**The following statements contain only a brief summary. The 2004 *Minutes*, Part I, will contain the entire action and should be read for a full understanding of each issue.**

**GOVERNING BODIES, MIDDLE GOVERNING BODIES**

*Decade to Overcome Violence* (Item 06-04):

Urge the congregations and middle governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to: engage in study and response to the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence until 2010; work together for peace, justice, and reconciliation at all levels—local, regional, and global; embrace creative approaches to peace building that are consonant with the spirit of the gospel; interact and collaborate with local communities, secular movements, and people of other living faiths towards cultivating a culture of peace; walk with people who are systematically oppressed by violence, and to act in solidarity with all struggling for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; repent together for our complicity in violence, and to engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic, and practice of violence.

*Consultations* (Item 07-07, recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5):

Affirm the primacy of our governing bodies in our Presbyterian polity and urge every governing body to celebrate its independence as well as acknowledge its interdependence on all the other governing bodies in the church; urge every governing body (session through General Assembly) to use the very best of modern electronic and print media in communication with constituents, while at the same time taking special steps for face-to-face communication with persons at other governing body levels; urge governing bodies to make efforts to strengthen the common mission they have with other governing bodies; urge every governing body to find ways to make our polity and Presbyterian processes more flexible while maintaining the values and norms that hold us together as Presbyterians.

*Analysis of Church's Effort to Combat Racism* (Item 10-01, recommendation 5):

Encourage middle governing bodies and local congregations to visit the Websites of Racial Ethnic Ministries program Area, Office of Racial Justice, and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns [[www.pcusa.org/racialjustice](http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice); [www.pcusa.org/acrec](http://www.pcusa.org/acrec)].

*Report of the Task Force to Study Reparations* (Item 10-03, recommendations 2, 3, 8):

Encourage congregations, governing bodies, racial ethnic caucuses, and other PC(USA) entities to create opportunities for discussion in which participants remember the past and celebrate examples of repair, restoration, reconciliation, and renewal on issues of reparations and reconciliation; encourage the Ministries Divisions of the General Assembly Council and governing bodies to include workshops and worship services on reparations, reconciliation, and renewal in conferences, and report their efforts to the 217th General Assembly (2006); encourage congregations and governing bodies to support economic development and congregation-based

organizing projects rooted in the Gospel that lead to repair, reconciliation, and renewal for communities violated by the sin of racism.

*Report and Recommendations on Limited Water Resources and Takings* (Item 10-04, recommendation 5):

Commend this report and the background paper in Appendix 1 to governing bodies and congregations, urging that they be used as a basis for study, action, and advocacy on matters of limited water resources and takings.

*Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States* (Item 10-05, recommendations 1.a., b., c., d.):

Call upon the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its governing bodies to advocate the establishment by law of a comprehensive legalization program for undocumented persons already living and working in the United States; advocate the reform of current immigration policies and procedures to ensure a more timely and humane process, with special attention to family reunification and to those persons who have been waiting for their immigrant visas and for naturalization; adamantly oppose the exploitation of any and all workers as a violation of the humane and just treatment due to all children of God; join with interfaith and secular organizations that are working for comprehensive legalization.

*Resolution on Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Against Educators* (Item 10-12, recommendation 3):

Urge sessions and middle governing bodies to approve and implement strong sexual misconduct policies, procedures, and training programs for prevention of and protection from sexual misconduct.

*Human Rights Update 2003-2004* (Item 13-05, recommendation 2):

Encouraging middle governing bodies, sessions, and individual members to pray for all victims of human rights abuse and for those who persecute them, also seeking ways to act on behalf of these victims.

## SYNODS

*On Cooperative Ecumenical Strategy* (Item 06-13):

Encourage the leadership of synods and presbyteries, in cooperation with long-time ecumenical partners, to develop or renew regional plans to ensure ministry in areas of declining population and/or resources; coordinate meeting locations, fellowship, and educational experiences when feasible; meet with leaders of partner denominations, to share reports, public communications and visits; cooperate in efforts of evangelism, witness, and service in new ways.

*Consultations* (Item 07-07, recommendations 6, 7, 9):

Urge presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly entities to use the non-assembly biennial years for gatherings to celebrate mission and build community, especially with other governing bodies; urge presbyteries and synods to find ways to invite staff and elected leaders of all the General Assembly entities to be present around the church to build up the personal relationships with leaders of our presbyteries and synods; urge presbyteries and synods to continue processes similar to these consultations in order to build trust, a sense of community, and a common mission among our governing bodies, beginning with the session level.

*On Encouraging National, Presbytery, and Synod Leaders to Foster Evangelism—From the Presbytery of the Trinity* (Item 09-07, recommendation 2):

Encourage the stated clerk's office of each presbytery and synod to write a letter of encouragement to each session in their jurisdiction to seek God's leading and to make plans as lead by God and the session.

*On Taking Decisive Action to Recover from the Decline in Membership and Development of Ministry and Mission—From the Presbytery of Mackinac (Item 09-09, recommendation 2):*

That the General Assembly, synods, presbyteries, and congregations reaffirm the goal of making disciples for the ministry and mission of Christ's church.

*On Supporting the Association of Presbyterian Schools (APS)—From the Presbytery of Mississippi (Item 09-11, recommendation 3):*

Encourage its member synods and presbyteries to enter into covenants of mutual understanding and support with the member institutions of APS within their bounds.

*Transforming Families (Item 10-06, recommendations 03.d., h., i., j.):*

That presbyteries and synods supply their churches with information on area organizations that deliver education on marriage, parenting, and singleness; hold marriage and family enrichment events; offer marital and family counseling; assist people needing refuge from family oppression; sponsor divorce recovery programs; and facilitate adoption and family-extending relationships; that synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians in their own lives, occupations, and communities urge employers to offer more flexible work hours; more paid leave for the care of dependent persons and child-related activities; health insurance for all family members; telecommuting options; more possibilities for part-time jobs with prorated wages and benefits; family-supporting wages for all workers; and more available, affordable, and flexible child-care programs; that General Assembly entities, synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians "bring the church's influence to bear so that the media will act to strengthen moral values;" urge synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians to advocate for local, state, and federal legislation that might strengthen family life.

*On Endorsing "A Christian Declaration of Marriage—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara (Item 10-11):*

Ask all church members to join in a year of prayer for marriage renewal and reconciliation, and urge synods, presbyteries, and local congregations to seek ways of working with other Christian bodies in their areas toward these same purposes.

*The Commitment To Peacemaking (Item 12-07, recommendation 5):*

Urges presbyteries and synods also to consider adopting the "Commitment to Peacemaking" in forms appropriate to those governing bodies and commends those governing bodies that have done so.

## **PRESBYTERIES**

*General Assembly (Item 03-06, recommendations 1, 2, and 3):*

Instruct presbyteries to work on issues of diversity and inclusiveness when selecting/electing com-missioners to General Assemblies; ask presbyteries to consider cultural sensitivity as an opportunity for growth in leadership; ask presbyteries to continually address the issues that impede youth participation throughout the church.

*Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the General*

*Assembly Council (GAC). Recommendations Pertaining to the General Assembly Per Capita Budget (Item 03-16, recommendation 2):*

Noting in the closing of the books on per capita receipts for 2002, in which the amount of uncollectible per capita is one of the lowest amounts in the last decade (\$188,061), expresses special thanks to presbyteries and congregations for their faithful financial support for the work of the whole church.

*Clergywomen's Experience in Ministry (Item 05-03, recommendation 2):*

Acknowledge the need for ongoing, structured support on the part of all of our 173 presbyteries for all clergywomen.

*Clergywomen's Experience in Ministry (Item 05-04):*

Encourage all committees on ministry to conduct awareness training for gender, racial ethnic, and disabilities concerns with all pastor nominating committees.

*On Cooperative Ecumenical Strategy (Item 06-13):*

Encourage the leadership of synods and presbyteries, in cooperation with long-time ecumenical partners, to develop or renew regional plans to ensure ministry in areas of declining population and/or resources; coordinate meeting locations, fellowship, and educational experiences when feasible; meet with leaders of partner denominations, to share reports, public communications and visits; cooperate in efforts of evangelism, witness, and service in new ways.

*Consultations (Item 07-07, recommendations 6, 7, 8, 9):*

Urge presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly entities to use the non-assembly biennial years for gatherings to celebrate mission and build community, especially with other governing bodies; urge presbyteries and synods to find ways to invite staff and elected leaders of all the General Assembly entities to be present around the church to build up the personal relationships with leaders of our presbyteries and synods; urge presbyteries to meet with their neighboring presbyteries to explore common mission and mutual support of one another; urge presbyteries and synods to continue processes similar to these consultations in order to build trust, a sense of community, and a common mission among our governing bodies, beginning with the session level.

*Top Ten Presbyteries in Gifts to Basic Mission Support (Item 07-09):*

Express its appreciation to the members and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their faithful financial support of General Assembly Mission causes in 2003 and that . . . presbyteries be recognized for their leadership in giving.

*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 (Item 08-05):*

The 216th General Assembly (2004) affirms the right and responsibility of presbyteries to determine whether candidates and ministers “sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church,” together with all other matters expressed in ordination and installation vows.

*Theological Task Force (Item 08-10):*

Encourage every presbytery to create intentional gatherings of Presbyterians of varied theological views to covenant together to discuss the affirmations in the task force's preliminary report, utilizing the resources being developed by the task force; and that sessions be encouraged to do the same.

*On Examining the Conscience of Candidates—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Item 08-12):*

[See Item 08-05] Additionally, affirms the 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.

*On Encouraging National, Presbytery, and Synod Leaders to Foster Evangelism—From the Presbytery of the Trinity (Item 09-07, recommendation 2):*

Encourage the stated clerk's office of each presbytery and synod to write a letter of encouragement to each session in their jurisdiction to seek God's leading and to make plans as lead by God and the session.

*On Taking Decisive Action to Recover from the Decline in Membership and Development of Ministry and Mission—From the Presbytery of Mackinac (Item 09-09, recommendation 2):*

That the General Assembly, synods, presbyteries, and congregations reaffirm the goal of making disciples for the ministry and mission of Christ's church.

*On Supporting the Association of Presbyterian Schools (APS)—From the Presbytery of Mississippi (Item 09-11, recommendation 3):*

Encourage its member synods and presbyteries to enter into covenants of mutual understanding and support with the member institutions of APS within their bounds.

*Report of the Task Force to Study Reparations (Item 10-03, recommendation 04.c.):*

Urge each presbytery and all congregations to undertake a study of the Belhar Confession before the 218th General Assembly (2008).

*Transforming Families (Item 10-06, recommendations 03.c., d., h., i., j.):*

That presbyteries, clusters of churches within presbyteries, or particular congregations consider approaching local church bodies of other denominations about the possibility of joining in a community marriage policy consistent with the values affirmed in this policy statement and in community efforts on behalf of those fleeing domestic violence and abuse; that presbyteries and synods supply their churches with information on area organizations that deliver education on marriage, parenting, and singleness; hold marriage and family enrichment events; offer marital and family counseling; assist people needing refuge from family oppression; sponsor divorce recovery programs; and facilitate adoption and family-extending relationships; that synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians in their own lives, occupations, and communities urge employers to offer more flexible work hours; more paid leave for the care of dependent persons and child-related activities; health insurance for all family members; telecommuting options; more possibilities for part-time jobs with prorated wages and benefits; family-supporting wages for all workers; and more available, affordable, and flexible child-care programs; that General Assembly entities, synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians "bring the church's influence to bear so that the media will act to strengthen moral values;" urge synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians to advocate for local, state, and federal legislation that might strengthen family life.

*On Endorsing "A Christian Declaration of Marriage"—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara (Item 10-11):*

Ask all church members to join in a year of prayer for marriage renewal and reconciliation, and urge synods, presbyteries, and local congregations to seek ways of working with other Christian bodies in their areas toward these same purposes.

*The Commitment To Peacemaking* (Item 12-07, recommendations 3, 4, 5, and 8):

Request stated clerks of presbyteries who receive the certificates for sessions that have adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking” to present them at a stated meeting of presbytery in such a way as to adequately commend the congregation for this achievement; urge presbyteries to find ways to share and celebrate the experiences of congregations where sessions have adopted and implemented the “Commitment to Peacemaking;” urges presbyteries and synods also to consider adopting the “Commitment to Peacemaking” in forms appropriate to those governing bodies and commends those governing bodies that have done so; urges peacemaking committees of the presbyteries to contact the sessions in their presbytery that have not adopted the “Commitment to Peacemaking” to express the importance of this commitment and to urge their adoption of it.

*On Opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)* (Item 13-09, recommendation 6):

Call on presbyteries, churches, and church members to 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; advocate with state legislators and U.S. senators and representatives, urging them to oppose CAFTA and other free trade agreements in their current form; 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.

## SESSIONS

*Theological Task Force* (Item 08-10):

Encourage every presbytery to create intentional gatherings of Presbyterians of varied theological views to covenant together to discuss the affirmations in the task force’s preliminary report, utilizing the resources being developed by the task force; and that sessions be encouraged to do the same.

*On Encouraging National, Presbytery, and Synod Leaders to Foster Evangelism—From the Presbytery of the Trinity.* (Item 09-07, recommendation 3):

Encourage all ministers and elders to pray for God to raise up faithful members for each congregation in our denomination.

*Transforming Families* (Item 10-06, recommendations 03.b.):

That sessions commit themselves to a program of comprehensive support for loving, lasting, egalitarian marriages; designate committees or individuals to review the congregation’s programs and practices, with a view to making them more family-friendly.

*Resolution on Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Against Educators* (Item 10-12, recommendation 2 and 3):

Urge individual Presbyterians and the sessions of local congregations to become actively involved in their local school districts and private schools to ensure both public and private schools have adequate policies on child sexual abuse that set forth the responsibilities and rights of both students when they are abused and educators when they are falsely accused; mandated staff development and student education about sexual harassment, misconduct, and abuse; and effective procedures that ensure due process that will protect both students and educators; urge sessions and middle governing bodies to approve and implement strong sexual misconduct

policies, procedures, and training programs for prevention of and protection from sexual misconduct.

*Human Rights Update 2003-2004* (Item 13-05, recommendation 2):

Encouraging middle governing bodies, sessions, and individual members to pray for all victims of human rights abuse and for those who persecute them, also seeking ways to act on behalf of these victims.

## CONGREGATIONS

*Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the General Assembly Council (GAC). Recommendations Pertaining to the General Assembly Per Capita Budget* (Item 03-16, recommendation 2):

Noting in the closing of the books on per capita receipts for 2002, in which the amount of uncollectible per capita is one of the lowest amounts in the last decade (\$188,061), expresses special thanks to presbyteries and congregations for their faithful financial support for the work of the whole church.

*Decade to Overcome Violence* (Item 06-04):

Urge the congregations and middle governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to engage in study and response to the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence until 2010; work together for peace, justice, and reconciliation at all levels—local, regional, and global; embrace creative approaches to peace building that are consonant with the spirit of the gospel; interact and collaborate with local communities, secular movements, and people of other living faiths towards cultivating a culture of peace; walk with people who are systematically oppressed by violence, and to act in solidarity with all struggling for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; repent together for our complicity in violence, and to engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic, and practice of violence.

*Top Ten Presbyteries in Gifts to Basic Mission Support* (Item 07-09):

Express its appreciation to the members and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their faithful financial support of General Assembly Mission causes in 2003 and that the following presbyteries be recognized for their leadership in giving.

*On Taking Decisive Action to Recover from the Decline in Membership and Development of Ministry and Mission—From the Presbytery of Mackinac* (Item 09-09, recommendation 2):

That the General Assembly, synods, presbyteries, and congregations reaffirm the goal of making disciples for the ministry and mission of Christ's church.

*Analysis of Church's Effort to Combat Racism* (Item 10-01, recommendation 5):

Encourage middle governing bodies and local congregations to visit the Websites of Racial Ethnic Ministries program Area, Office of Racial Justice, and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns [[www.pcusa.org/racialjustice](http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice); [www.pcusa.org/acrec](http://www.pcusa.org/acrec)].

*Report of the Task Force to Study Reparations* (Item 10-03, recommendations 2, 4.c.,8.):

Encourage congregations, governing bodies, racial ethnic caucuses, and other PC(USA) entities to create opportunities for discussion in which participants remember the past and celebrate examples of repair, restoration, reconciliation, and renewal on issues of reparations and reconciliation; urge each presbytery and all congregations to undertake a study of the Belhar Confession before the 218th General Assembly (2008); encourage congregations and governing

bodies to support economic development and congregation-based organizing projects rooted in the Gospel that lead to repair, reconciliation, and renewal for communities violated by the sin of racism.

*Report and Recommendations on Limited Water Resources and Takings* (Item 10-04, recommendation 5):

Commend this report and the background paper in Appendix 1 to governing bodies and congregations, urging that they be used as a basis for study, action, and advocacy on matters of limited water resources and takings.

*Transforming Families* (Item 10-06, recommendations 03.c., h., i., j.):

That presbyteries, clusters of churches within presbyteries, or particular congregations consider approaching local church bodies of other denominations about the possibility of joining in a community marriage policy consistent with the values affirmed in this policy statement and in community efforts on behalf of those fleeing domestic violence and abuse; that synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians in their own lives, occupations, and communities urge employers to offer more flexible work hours; more paid leave for the care of dependent persons and child-related activities; health insurance for all family members; telecommuting options; more possibilities for part-time jobs with prorated wages and benefits; family-supporting wages for all workers; and more available, affordable, and flexible child-care programs; that General Assembly entities, synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians “bring the church’s influence to bear so that the media will act to strengthen moral values;” urge synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians to advocate for local, state, and federal legislation that might strengthen family life.

*On Endorsing “A Christian Declaration of Marriage—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara* (Item 10-11):

Ask all church members to join in a year of prayer for marriage renewal and reconciliation, and urge synods, presbyteries, and local congregations to seek ways of working with other Christian bodies in their areas toward these same purposes.

*Human Rights Update 2003-2004* (Item 13-05, recommendation 3):

Encouraging congregations to observe the General Assembly’s Day of Prayer for Those Persecuted and Martyred for Their Faith on the Sunday preceding Epiphany.

*On Opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)* (Item 13-09, recommendation 6):

Call on presbyteries, churches, and church members to 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; advocate with state legislators and U.S. senators and representatives, urging them to oppose CAFTA and other free trade agreements in their current form; 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.

## WHOLE CHURCH

*On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation Clarifying Standards for Ordination—From the Presbytery of the Western Reserve* (Item 05-07):

Recognizing the church's commitment to a churchwide process of discernment with the leadership of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, call upon the church to pray for the task force and to engage faithfully in the processes of discernment as led by the task force.

*Consultations* (Item 07-07, recommendation 4):

Urge the entire church to work to overcome the “disconnects” at every governing body level that result in “I am no part of you” attitudes if left alone.

*Top Ten Presbyteries in Gifts to Basic Mission Support* (Item 07-09):

Express its appreciation to the members and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their faithful financial support of General Assembly Mission causes in 2003 and that . . . presbyteries be recognized for their leadership in giving.

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

Call Presbyterians to use existing programs as resources in a journey toward simpler, more faithful lifestyles.

*On Taking Decisive Action to Recover from the Decline in Membership and Development of Ministry and Mission—From the Presbytery of Mackinac* (Item 09-09, recommendation 3):

The whole church embrace, fund, and implement the goals of the mission initiative JOINING HEARTS AND HANDS—A Campaign to Renew the Church for Mission as the initial initiative to growth in membership and develop ministry and mission of this church.

*Report of the Task Force to Study Reparations* (Item 10-03, recommendations 1, 4.a.):

Encourage Presbyterians to create opportunities to tell and hear stories remembering the past and celebrating examples of repair, restoration, reconciliation, and renewal; commend the Belhar Confession to the church as a resource for reflection, study, and response, as a means of deepening the commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to dealing with racism and a means of strengthening its unity, bearing in mind that the Belhar Confession emerged from the context of racism in South Africa.

*Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States* (Item 10-05, recommendations 1.a., b., c., d.):

Call upon the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its governing bodies to advocate the establishment by law of a comprehensive legalization program for undocumented persons already living and working in the United States; advocate the reform of current immigration policies and procedures to ensure a more timely and humane process, with special attention to family reunification and to those persons who have been waiting for their immigrant visas and for naturalization; adamantly oppose the exploitation of any and all workers as a violation of the humane and just treatment due to all children of God; join with interfaith and secular organizations that are working for comprehensive legalization.

*Transforming Families* (Item 10-06, recommendations 03.a., h., i., j., m.):

That all church members and their families seek to embody biblical and confessional teachings about God's intentions for families by practicing family-strengthening virtues and habits in their own lives, by extending the bonds of kinship beyond their own marital-biological families, and by undertaking at least one family-extending relationship, such as being mentors, adoptive grandparents, foster parents, big brothers/sisters, and other programs; that synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians in their own lives, occupations, and communities

urge employers to offer more flexible work hours; more paid leave for the care of dependent persons and child-related activities; health insurance for all family members; telecommuting options; more possibilities for part-time jobs with prorated wages and benefits; family-supporting wages for all workers; and more available, affordable, and flexible child-care programs; that General Assembly entities, synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians “bring the church’s influence to bear so that the media will act to strengthen moral values;” urge synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians to advocate for local, state, and federal legislation that might strengthen family life; that the report be approved as a whole for churchwide study and use.

*On Endorsing “A Christian Declaration of Marriage—From the Presbytery of Santa Barbara (Item 10-11):*

Ask all church members to join in a year of prayer for marriage renewal and reconciliation, and urge synods, presbyteries, and local congregations to seek ways of working with other Christian bodies in their areas toward these same purposes.

*Resolution on Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Against Educators (Item 10-12, recommendations 1, 2):*

Approve the Resolution on Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Against Educators, receive the full rationale, and encourage their churchwide study; urge individual Presbyterians and the sessions of local congregations to become actively involved in their local school districts and private schools to ensure both public and private schools have adequate policies on child sexual abuse that set forth the responsibilities and rights of both students when they are abused and educators when they are falsely accused, mandated staff development and student education about sexual harassment, misconduct, and abuse, and effective procedures that ensure due process that will protect both students and educators.

*On Calling for an End to the Construction of a Wall by the State of Israel—From the Presbytery of Chicago (Item 12-02):*

As it voices these concerns within the framework of many General Assembly statements over more than thirty-five years, the GAC wants to help Presbyterians to understand some of the aspects of the wall’s impact.

*On Confronting Christian Zionism—From the Presbytery of Chicago (Item 12-03, recommendation 8):*

Commend to the church the following works to better understand dispensationalism and Christian Zionism: Our own resources from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): *Between Millennia: What Presbyterians Believe About the Coming of Christ* (PDS 70-420-01-007)—commended by the 213th General Assembly (2001) to the church; “Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things,” *Minutes of the General Assembly*, Journal (Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1978); ‘Dispensationalism,’ *Minutes of the General Assembly* (Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1944), pp. 123–27; GAC CMD Comment 12-03 from the GAC that lays out the theological context of Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism. Resources from outside the PCUSA: Wes Granberg-Michaelson, “Christian Zionism distorts faith and imperils peace,” <http://www.warc.ch/update/up134/01.html>; Don Wagner, *Peace or Armageddon?: The Unfolding Drama of the Middle East Accord* (HarperCollins, 2004); Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism : Road Map to Armageddon?* (InterVarsity Press, 2004) [forthcoming]; “Christian Zionists in Their Own Words and Articles on Christian Zionism.” Sabeel Center; Gary Burge, *Whose Land? Whose Promise?: What Christians Are Not Being Told About Israel and the Palestinians* (Pilgrim Press, 2003).

*On Urging Peace in Colombia, South America—From the Presbytery of Baltimore* (Item 12-04, recommendation 7, 9, 11):

Urge the members of the PC(USA) to pray for displaced people, and to provide direct aid to the church, for their work with the displaced; urge Presbyterians to learn about the situation through study and organized visits and better understand the realities Colombians deal with every day; commend to the church the resource created by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, in cooperation with the PC(USA) Office for Latin American and the Caribbean, entitled “Colombia,” (PDS # 70-270-04-015), which is available from the Peacemaking Office and through the PC(USA) Website.

*Iraq: Our Responsibility and the Future* (Item 12-05, recommendation 1, 8, 12):

Affirm the Reformed principle that “God alone is Lord of the conscience,” and that in evaluating U.S. actions in Iraq every Presbyterian has the right to arrive at their own judgment, even if, after prayerful consideration, that places them in opposition to the position of the General Assembly; call attention to the need to understand and take into account the role that religion plays in the cultural and political affairs of nations, particularly those with large Muslim populations, and encourage Presbyterians to reaffirm their commitment to peacemaking in Iraq through dialogue and engagement in their community; approves the report as a whole for churchwide study and implementation (noting that the study developed for Iraq and Beyond, approved by 215th General Assembly (2003), has continuing usefulness for the church: PDS order # 68-600-03-005).

*Resolution on Violence, Religion, and Terrorism* (Item 12-06, recommendations B.1.a., g., h., i.):

Approve the report for churchwide study and implementation; encourage all levels of the church to establish supportive connections with American Muslim groups to enable “support systems” where the U.S. government is engaging in discriminatory actions against Arab Americans and other Muslims in our midst; encourage all levels of the church to support civil rights organizations engaged in monitoring the impact of the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 on citizens and noncitizens alike, and to publicize abuses; encourage all levels of the church to advocate for the passage of the amendments of the USA PATRIOT Act that would limit wiretap authority, limit “sneak and peek” warrants, limit business records warrants, limit use of administrative subpoenas with libraries, impose additional sunset clauses on several provisions, and modify the definition of “domestic terrorism.”

*A Resolution And Confession On The Torture And Abuse Of Prisoners* (Item 12-08, recommendation 1):

That it call upon the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while recognizing the honorable performance of the majority of coalition forces in rebuilding Iraq, to join with the commissioners to reaffirm our support for human rights and the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War; explicitly reject torture and abuse as methods of interrogation and treatment of prisoners for they are inconsistent with the Gospel; and acknowledge we are inescapably part of our culture and offer our confession in repentance.

*Human Rights Update 2003-2004* (Item 13-05, recommendation 2):

Encourage middle governing bodies, sessions, and individual members to pray for all victims of human rights abuse and for those who persecute them, also seeking ways to act on behalf of these victims.

*On Expressing Our Solidarity with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and with the Taiwanese People—From the Presbytery of New Covenant* (Item 13-07, recommendations 3, 4):

Call 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; encourage 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.

*On Opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)* (Item 13-09, recommendation 6):

Call on presbyteries, churches, and church members to 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; advocate with state legislators and U.S. senators and representatives, urging them to oppose CAFTA and other free trade agreements in their current form; 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.

## **THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES**

*Combat Racism* (Item 10-01, recommendation 6):

Commend the seminaries for the work they have done through the Consultation on Theological Education and Race to equip faculty to be more responsive to the needs of racial ethnic students; to better equip all seminarians to minister in multicultural settings; to encourage them to continue their work to assess systemic barriers to dismantling racism; to provide course offerings that support antiracism ministry; and, working in partnership with Racial Ethnic Ministries and the antiracism institute, to provide continuing education experiences for pastors and lay leaders.

*Transforming Families* (Item 10-06, recommendations 03.e.):

That the church's theological seminaries be urged to address family issues in their own communities, as well as family ministries issues and strategies in their curricula, field education training, research projects, and clinical pastoral education.

*Resolution on Violence, Religion, and Terrorism* (Item 12-06, recommendation B.3.c.):

Urge the colleges and theological seminaries of the PC(USA) to use this resolution in their study of terrorism and the responses to terrorism.