

**ACTIONS OF THE 215TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2003)
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The 215th General Assembly (2003) 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 2003 *Minutes*, Part I, will contain the entire action and should be read for a full understanding of each issue.

GOVERNING BODIES, MIDDLE GOVERNING BODIES

Clergywomen's Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges (Item 04-01, recommendations 1 and 3):

Instruct General Assembly entities and request middle governing bodies and seminaries to encourage congregations to call clergywomen from various racial ethnic backgrounds as well as Caucasian clergywomen; instruct Churchwide Personnel Services and request middle governing bodies, seminaries, and congregations to address the difficulties frequently encountered in the position of associate pastor.

Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons (Item 07-01, recommendations E., F.2, and F.4):

Direct the Stated Clerk to encourage individual members, sessions and middle governing bodies to give prayerful attention to the report as help in study and advocating for the abolition of for-profit private prisons in the communities where they live and work and nationally; urge the middle governing bodies and members of local congregations to work for state, county, and/or municipal legislation and administrative actions that eliminate particular elements of the for-profit private prison system, pending its ultimate abolition by federal law; call upon middle governing bodies and sessions that have endowments, as well as seminaries, church-related colleges and universities, to consider participation in the campaign to abolish for-profit private prisons, including the Lehman Campaign.

Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities (Item 09-01, recommendations 2 and 8):

Urge the governing bodies of the church and the related educational institutions to strengthen their partnership through the process of clarifying the covenant between them as well as the other particular ways that each of the institutions is related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); urge the agencies and governing bodies of the church to inform the denomination about the critical mission of the church in and through its educational institutions.

Strategy for Ministry with Hispanic-Latino Constituencies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (Item 09-03, recommendation 4):

Request the General Assembly Council, the Office of the General Assembly, and middle governing bodies to continue to produce resources in Spanish and Portuguese, and to engage in leadership development, particularly for Hispanic-Latino leaders.

Resolution on Africa (Item 11-03, recommendations E.2.a and b., E.4.a, and E.5.c.):

Call on the General Assembly Council, through WMD, and governing bodies of the PC(USA) to strengthen existing and forge new partnerships with Africa partners that will enable both African and American mission personnel to give direct short, intermediate, and long-term service in areas of health, education, evangelism, relief and development, and church administration; urge entities of the General

Assembly and its governing bodies to work individually and ecumenically to provide financial resources to self-help, development and micro-enterprise projects and programs in Africa; urge the General Assembly Council, through the Ministries Divisions, and entities of the General Assembly, local congregations, and middle governing bodies to assist Africa partners in developing new church-sponsored educational programs, and strengthening existing ones, equipping Christian schools, and providing Christian education opportunities in secular schools; commend the document “A Vision for Children and the Church” to all governing bodies of the PC(USA) and to partner churches for study and action.

Human Rights Update (Item 11-04, 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.

Overture 03-24. On Reaffirming the Church’s Commitment for an End to the U.S. Embargo Against Cuba and the Restoration of Diplomatic Relations—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Item 11-06):

Urge the agencies, governing bodies, and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to continue to advocate and support such measures (easing the embargo against Cuba) when they are introduced into the Congress of the United States; urge the agencies, governing bodies, and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to encourage their representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate, as they consider measures related to remittances, to include authority for churches in the United States to meet in full their contractual obligations to their Cuban pensioners.

Overture 03-31. On Strengthening Our Christian Peacemaking Vision and Witness in Wartime—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Item 12-05):

Encourage sessions and other governing bodies to sponsor and fund consultations, studies, debates, and other witness efforts to deepen awareness of the relations between Christian and democratic values and military, political, and economic power, particularly with regard to inequality, insecurity, and biblical warnings about empire.

Statement “Iraq and Beyond” (Item 12-08):

That individual members, congregations, and middle governing bodies contribute to “Iraq: The Peace Fund for Solidarity with the Churches” to help those churches in the rebuilding of their capacity to make an effective witness to the love of Jesus Christ (ECO# 051722).

SYNODS

Maintaining Four-Level Governing Body System (Item 06-01, recommendation 5):

Ask synods to be mindful that their primary purpose is support of their presbyteries, whose primary purpose, in turn, is support of congregations and their leaders.

Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities (Item 09-01, recommendation 8):

Urge the agencies and governing bodies of the church to inform the denomination about the critical mission of the church in and through its educational institutions • that synods and presbyteries seek connections with the Presbyterian educational institutions in their bounds, and promote them to the congregations, giving special attention to the needs of racial ethnic students.

Resolution on Africa (Item 11-03, recommendations E.1.b. and c):

Encourage congregations, presbyteries, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to establish new, and to strengthen existing partnerships with African churches, parachurch organizations, and mission agencies (in consultation with the Worldwide Ministries Division), and ecumenical bodies in sharing the Gospel and doing mission together; urge individual Presbyterians, congregations, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to study this document and become more informed and knowledgeable about Africa, its problems, challenges, and opportunities.

Overture 03-14. On the Crisis of Migrant Worker Deaths in the Borderlands—From the Presbytery of de Cristo (Item 11-05):

Request that presbyteries and synods in the borderlands consult on the migrant crisis and initiate or support ministries that are meeting the spiritual and physical needs of migrants in crisis.

Commitment to Peacemaking (Item 12-02, recommendation 5):

Urge 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

Clergywomen’s Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges (Item 04-01, recommendations 4 and 5):

Request that presbyteries and congregations review their policies and practices in relation to clergywomen, including salaries, pension, Social Security, health insurance, dependent care, family-leave, and other benefits, and correct any deficiencies or inequities found; request committees on ministry, committees on preparation for ministry, and congregations to emphasize the importance of integrating self-care and care of family with the demands/expectations of the practice of ministry, for clergy and for candidates.

Request 03-10. Sexual Abuse Guidelines Concerning Leaves of Absence in Matters of Sexual Abuse by Ministers—From the Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Florida. (Item 04-08)

Urge all presbyteries to take immediate action to include in the terms of call for all ministers within their bounds provisions for the immediate supervision of the accused, and/or placing the accused on a leave of absence after a prompt preliminary investigation, with an opportunity for the accused to be heard, into whether it is probable that the charges have merit and there is a risk of further abuse.

Maintaining Four-Level Governing Body System (Item 06-01, recommendation 2):

Encourage presbyteries to take a proactive role in shaping and supporting the synod in which they are a part with a goal of increasing support of mutual mission within the region.

Overture 03-23. On Appointing a Pastoral Group Whose Primary Concern Would Be Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Members and Their Families in Our Local Churches—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (Item 06-06).

Encourage presbyteries to equip pastors and sessions to provide pastoral care and nurture to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered members and their families; encourage presbyteries, sessions, and pastors to seek out pastoral care resources presently available in their own communities for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered members and their families.

General Assembly Mission Causes (Item 06-09):

Recognize presbyteries for their leadership in giving in 2002; recognize the presbyteries for their leadership in giving in the prior year.

On Hate Groups and Hate Crimes (Item 07-03, recommendation 1):

Commend to individuals, congregations, and presbyteries for study and advocacy “When Hate Comes to Town: A Handbook of Effective Community Responses,” faith-based edition, revised and updated in a third edition and published by the Center for Democratic Renewal, P.O. Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302; (404) 221-0025; www.thecdr.org. In addition, “Resolution on Paramilitary Activity in the United States of America” (Minutes, 1985, Part I, pp. 77, 382–86); “Joint Resolution on the Christian Identity Movement” (Minutes, 1987, Part I, pp. 58, 685–89); and “6-83 From the NCCC Governing Board” National Anti-Klan Network (Minutes, 1983, Part I, p. 559) are commended to the church for study.

Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities (Item 09-01, recommendation 8):

Urge the agencies and governing bodies of the church to inform the denomination about the critical mission of the church in and through its educational institutions that synods and presbyteries seek connections with the Presbyterian educational institutions in their bounds, and promote them to the congregations, giving special attention to the needs of racial ethnic students.

Catechisms and Confessions (Item 10-05, recommendations 1 and 3):

Urge presbyteries to include workshops on the New Presbyterian Catechisms in its leader development events each year for the next five years; urge presbyteries to develop at least one presbytery-wide event to engage ministers and elders in study of the French Confession of 1559, focusing on its relevance for the contemporary church.

The Lord’s Supper (Item 10-07, recommendation 1):

Encourage each presbytery to arrange for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in one of its churches each Lord’s Day.

Resolution on Africa (Item 11-03, recommendation E.I.b.):

Encourage congregations, presbyteries, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to establish new, and to strengthen existing partnerships with African churches, parachurch organizations, and mission agencies (in consultation with the Worldwide Ministries Division), and ecumenical bodies in sharing the Gospel and doing mission together.

Overture 03-14. On the Crisis of Migrant Worker Deaths in the Borderlands—From the Presbytery of de Cristo (Item 11-05):

Request that presbyteries and synods in the borderlands consult on the migrant crisis and initiate or support ministries that are meeting the spiritual and physical needs of migrants in crisis.

Overture 03-33. On Opposing the Free Trade Area of the Americas in Its Current Form—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Item 11-08):

Call on presbyteries, churches, and church members to • become educated about the FTAA, NAFTA, the South American Trade Market (MERCOSUL), and other trade agreements, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and other multinational organizations in creating and enforcing globalization policies that are unsustainable and unjust; • advocate with state legislators and U.S. senators and representatives, urging them to oppose

extending Fast Track and oppose the FTAA; • join in coalitions with community groups, including other Christian denominations, who are organizing opposition to the FTAA and trade agreements with similar provisions, and to make meeting space available to such groups.

Commitment to Peacemaking (Item 12-02, 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;” urge 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; and urge 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.

SESSIONS

Overture 03-23. On Appointing a Pastoral Group Whose Primary Concern Would Be Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Members and Their Families in Our Local Churches—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (Item 06-06).

Encourage presbyteries, sessions, and pastors to seek out pastoral care resources presently available in their own communities for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered members and their families.

Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons (Item 07-01, recommendations E. and F.4):

Direct the Stated Clerk to encourage individual members, sessions and middle governing bodies to give prayerful attention to the report as help in study and advocating for the abolition of for-profit private prisons in the communities where they live and work and nationally; call upon middle governing bodies and sessions that have endowments, as well as seminaries, church-related colleges and universities, to consider participation in the campaign to abolish for-profit private prisons, including the Lehman Campaign.

Catechisms and Confessions (Item 10-05, recommendation 2):

Urge sessions to develop ways to use *Belonging to God: A First Catechism* in educational and liturgical programs for children; to use *Study Catechism (Confirmation Version)* in confirmation programs; and to use the *Study Catechism (Full Version)* in programs for new members.

Human Rights Update (Item 11-04, 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.

Resolution on Israel and Palestine: End the Occupation Now (Item 12-01, recommendations A.1-7.):

Asks pastors, lay leaders, sessions and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to: • pray, and invite others to pray, to the God of Peace to direct the hearts, minds, wills, and actions of those in positions of authority or influence in the Middle East, as well as those who know only aggression and violence, to seek the ways of peace; • avail themselves of study resources that help them understand the history, nature, and dimensions of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians; • seek out other Christians, Jews, and Muslims, in their own areas, to work together through interfaith peacebuilding, and in support of every effort made, whether by Israelis, Palestinians, the U.S.

government, the United Nations, the Christian churches, and/or other religious and secular organizations that aim toward bringing about a just, honorable, secure, and viable peace in the Middle East; • travel to the region, as may be feasible and opportune, to visit with Christian partners and others, to gain firsthand experience in understanding of the issues and dynamics behind the conflict, as well as the possibilities for peace and good will, making sure to take advantage of the contacts and travel study resources produced by the PC(USA) and its partners, as well as PC(USA) mission workers and others in the region, who are able to introduce visitors to a wide spectrum of perspectives and opinions within the communities of people in the Holy Land; • take individual and collective initiatives to tell the truth, having “listened with both ears,” and to advocate for a just peace in the Middle East with their representatives in Congress, the administration, United Nations officials, local/regional/national newspaper editors and other opinion makers; • participate and/or promote participation in the international Christian “Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel” (EAPPI), organized through the World Council of Churches, in partnership with Palestinian Christians (for information, see www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/eap.html); increase Presbyterian support to assist the churches in the region to build and maintain their capacity for retaining competent leadership and to create opportunities for vocational training and economic development, in order to curb the flight of Christians from the homeland of their faith.

Overture 03-31. On Strengthening Our Christian Peacemaking Vision and Witness in Wartime—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Item 12-05):

Encourage sessions and other governing bodies to sponsor and fund consultations, studies, debates, and other witness efforts to deepen awareness of the relations between Christian and democratic values and military, political, and economic power, particularly with regard to inequality, insecurity, and biblical warnings about empire.

CONGREGATIONS

Clergywomen’s Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges (Item 04-01, recommendations 3, 4, 5, and 6):

Instruct Churchwide Personnel Services and request middle governing bodies, seminaries, and congregations to address the difficulties frequently encountered in the position of associate pastor; request that presbyteries and congregations review their policies and practices in relation to clergywomen, including salaries, pension, Social Security, health insurance, dependent care, family-leave, and other benefits, and correct any deficiencies or inequities found; request committees on ministry, committees on preparation for ministry, and congregations to emphasize the importance of integrating self-care and care of family with the demands/expectations of the practice of ministry, for clergy and for candidates; call congregations to new openness in considering clergywomen for positions of pastoral leadership, especially as solo pastors and heads of staff.

General Assembly Mission Causes (Item 06-09):

Express its appreciation to the members and congregations of the PC(USA) for their faithful financial support given to the General Assembly Mission causes in the prior year.

On Hate Groups and Hate Crimes (Item 07-03, recommendation 1):

Commend to individuals, congregations, and presbyteries for study and advocacy “When Hate Comes to Town: A Handbook of Effective Community Responses,” faith-based edition, revised and updated in a third edition and published by the Center for Democratic Renewal, P.O. Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302; (404) 221-0025; www.thecdr.org. In addition, “Resolution on Paramilitary Activity in the United States of America” (Minutes, 1985, Part I, pp. 77, 382–86); “Joint Resolution on the Christian

Identity Movement” (Minutes, 1987, Part I, pp. 58, 685–89); and “6-83 From the NCCC Governing Board” National Anti-Klan Network (Minutes, 1983, Part I, p. 559) are commended to the church for study.

Overture 03-18. On Offering Moral Counsel to Protect Mothers and Their Babies Late in Pregnancy—From the Presbytery of Huntingdon (Item 08-02):

The church has a responsibility to provide public witness and to offer guidance, counsel, and support to those who make or interpret laws and public policies about abortion and problem pregnancies. Pastors have a duty to counsel with and pray for those who face decisions about problem pregnancies. Congregations have a duty to pray for and support those who face these choices, to offer support for women and families to help make unwanted pregnancies less likely to occur, and to provide practical support for those facing the birth of a child with medical anomalies, birth after rape or incest, or those who face health, economic, or other stresses.

The church also affirms the value of children and the importance of nurturing, protecting, and advocating their well-being. The church, therefore, appreciates the challenge each woman and family face when issues of personal well-being arise in the later stages of a pregnancy.

“In life and death, we belong to God.” Life is a gift from God. We may not know exactly when human life begins, and have but an imperfect understanding of God as the giver of life and of our own human existence, yet we recognize that life is precious to God, and we should preserve and protect it. We derive our understanding of human life from Scripture and the Reformed Tradition in light of science, human experience, and reason guided by the Holy Spirit. Because we are made in the image of God, human beings are moral agents, endowed by the Creator with the capacity to make choices. Our Reformed Tradition recognizes that people do not always make moral choices, and forgiveness is central to our faith. In the Reformed Tradition, we affirm that God is the only Lord of conscience—not the state or the church. As a community, the church challenges the faithful to exercise their moral agency responsibly.

When an individual woman faces the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy, the issue is intensely personal, and may manifest itself in ways that do not reflect public rhetoric, or do not fit neatly into medical, legal, or policy guidelines. Humans are empowered by the spirit prayerfully to make significant moral choices, including the choice to continue or end a pregnancy. Human choices should not be made in a moral vacuum, but must be based on Scripture, faith, and Christian ethics. For any choice, we are accountable to God; however, even when we err, God offers to forgive us. While the ending of a pregnancy after the point of fetal viability is a matter of grave moral concern to us all, it may be undertaken only in the rarest of circumstances and after prayer and/or pastoral care and counsel, when necessary to save the life of the woman, to preserve the woman’s health in circumstances of a serious risk to the woman’s health, to avoid fetal suffering as a result of untreatable life threatening medical anomalies, or in cases of incest or rape. When it is deemed necessary to end a pregnancy to protect the mother’s life or health in the later months of pregnancy when the baby may be able to live outside the womb, a procedure should be considered which gives both the mother and the child the opportunity to live.

Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities (Item 09-01, recommendations 8):

Urge the agencies and governing bodies of the church to inform the denomination about the critical mission of the church in and through its educational institutions that congregations introduce their young people to the schools, colleges, and universities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Resolution on Africa (Item 11-03, recommendations E.1.b. and c.; E.3.f., and E.4.a.):

Encourage congregations, presbyteries, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to establish new, and to strengthen existing partnerships with African churches, parachurch organizations, and mission agencies (in consultation with the Worldwide Ministries Division), and ecumenical bodies in sharing the Gospel and doing mission together; urge individual Presbyterians, congregations, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to study this document and become more informed and knowledgeable about Africa, its problems, challenges, and opportunities; ask members and congregations to engage in hands-on mission projects that provide care for people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. This can be done by each congregation or a cluster of congregations preparing one AIDS home-based care kit (as being sponsored by the Worldwide Ministries Division, International Health Ministries area) for use by PC(USA) and partner church hospitals and home-care programs in Africa; urge local congregations, and middle governing bodies to assist Africa partners in developing new church-sponsored educational programs, and strengthening existing ones, equipping Christian schools, and providing Christian education opportunities in secular schools.

Human Rights Update 2002-2003 (Item 11-04, recommendation 3):

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

Overture 03-33. On Opposing the Free Trade Area of the Americas in Its Current Form—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Item 11-08).

Call on presbyteries, churches, and church members to • become educated about the FTAA, NAFTA, the South American Trade Market (MERCOSUL), and other trade agreements, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and other multinational organizations in creating and enforcing globalization policies that are unsustainable and unjust; • advocate with state legislators and U.S. senators and representatives, urging them to oppose extending Fast Track and oppose the FTAA; • join in coalitions with community groups, including other Christian denominations, who are organizing opposition to the FTAA and trade agreements with similar provisions, and to make meeting space available to such groups.

Statement "Iraq and Beyond" (Item 12-08, recommendation 5):

That individual members, congregations, and middle governing bodies contribute to "Iraq: The Peace Fund for Solidarity with the Churches" to help those churches in the rebuilding of their capacity to make an effective witness to the love of Jesus Christ (ECO# 051722).

Commissioners' Resolution 03-14. On Calling for Solidarity with the People and Churches of Pakistan (Item 12-09):

Call upon the congregations and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (through the PC(USA) Web site and "WMD Highlights") to pray for the people and churches of Pakistan, to follow this situation for the long-range, and to welcome opportunities to be led by God in financial support of our partners' request.

WHOLE CHURCH

General Assembly Mission Causes (Item 06-09):

Express its appreciation to the members and congregations of the PC(USA) for their faithful financial support given to the General Assembly Mission causes in the prior year.

Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons (Item 07-01, recommendations C., E., F.2, and F.5.):

Approve the report as a whole for churchwide study and implementation; direct the Stated Clerk to encourage individual members, sessions and middle governing bodies to give prayerful attention to the report as help in study and advocating for the abolition of for-profit private prisons in the communities where they live and work and nationally; urge the middle governing bodies and members of local congregations to work for state, county, and/or municipal legislation and administrative actions that eliminate particular elements of the for-profit private prison system, pending its ultimate abolition by federal law; encourage all Presbyterians, while working to abolish permanently all for-profit private prisons, also to work to protect the health, welfare, and well-being of the prisoners that are held in these facilities, in ways that do not recognize the legitimacy of these institutions or contribute to their continuation; call upon the church to reaffirm and act on the specific recommendations of previous General Assemblies regarding criminal justice and correctional systems, striving for justice regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and national origin, especially for all of those who are affected by the criminal justice and correctional systems of this society.

On Hate Groups and Hate Crimes (Item 07-03, recommendation 1):

Commend to individuals, congregations, and presbyteries for study and advocacy “When Hate Comes to Town: A Handbook of Effective Community Responses,” faith-based edition, revised and updated in a third edition and published by the Center for Democratic Renewal, P.O. Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302; (404) 221-0025; www.thecdr.org. In addition, “Resolution on Paramilitary Activity in the United States of America” (Minutes, 1985, Part I, pp. 77, 382–86); “Joint Resolution on the Christian Identity Movement” (Minutes, 1987, Part I, pp. 58, 685–89); and “6-83 From the NCCC Governing Board” National Anti-Klan Network (Minutes, 1983, Part I, p. 559) are commended to the church for study.

Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities (Item 09-01, recommendation 1):

That both the church and the educational institutions find more financial resources to assist institutions in this endeavor, especially those institutions with limited resources.

Strategy for Ministry with Hispanic-Latino Constituencies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (Item 09-03, recommendation 1):

Commend the strategy to the entire church, and request the Office of General Assembly to make the strategy available in Spanish, English, and Portuguese.

Catechisms and Confessions (Item 10-06, recommendation 2):

Commend the catechisms to the church for use in church school, confirmation classes, new members classes, session studies, and adult education groups.

Resolution on Africa (Item 11-03, recommendations E.1.a., c., and d.; E.3.e. and f., and E.6.b.):

Encourage Presbyterians to celebrate the way that the Holy Spirit has enlivened the evangelistic spreading of the Gospel in Africa, and to learn from the theological insights of African Christians; urge individual Presbyterians, congregations, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to study this document and become more informed and knowledgeable about Africa, its problems, challenges, and opportunities; invite Presbyterians to learn more of the rich history of this church's mission engagement in Africa; urge members of the PC(USA) and appropriate programs of the General Assembly (e.g., the Presbyterian Washington Office, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, and International Health Ministries Office) to call for increased public funding that addresses diseases of poverty, particularly HIV/AIDS; ask members and congregations to engage in hands-on mission projects that provide care for people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. This can be done by each congregation or a cluster of congregations preparing one AIDS home-based care kit (as being sponsored by the Worldwide Ministries Division, International Health Ministries area) for use by PC(USA) and partner church hospitals and home-care programs in Africa; call upon Presbyterians to advocate boldly for more just and extensive application of human rights principles and pronouncements by governments, nongovernmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, and religious institutions globally and in Africa.

Human Rights Update 2002-2003 (Item 11-04, 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.

Overture 03-24. On Reaffirming the Church's Commitment for an End to the U.S. Embargo Against Cuba and the Restoration of Diplomatic Relations—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Item 11-06):

Urge the agencies, governing bodies, and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to continue to advocate and support such measures (easing the embargo against Cuba) when they are introduced into the Congress of the United States; urge the agencies, governing bodies, and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to encourage their representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate, as they consider measures related to remittances, to include authority for churches in the United States to meet in full their contractual obligations to their Cuban pensioners.

Overture 03-33. On Opposing the Free Trade Area of the Americas in Its Current Form—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Item 11-08):

Call on presbyteries, churches, and church members to • become educated about the FTAA, NAFTA, the South American Trade Market (MERCOSUL), and other trade agreements, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and other multinational organizations in creating and enforcing globalization policies that are unsustainable and unjust; • advocate with state legislators and U.S. senators and representatives, urging them to oppose extending Fast Track and oppose the FTAA; • join in coalitions with community groups, including other Christian denominations, who are organizing opposition to the FTAA and trade agreements with similar provisions, and to make meeting space available to such groups.

Gathering For God's Future—Witness, Discipleship, Community: A New Call To Worldwide Mission (Item 11-10):

Urge all Presbyterians to use *Gathering for God's Future* as they discern the ways in which they will participate in God's mission worldwide.

Commissioners' Resolution 03-9. On World Health Organization (WHO) Observer Status for Taiwan (Item 11-13):

Urge all Presbyterians to pray for the control of and end to the global SARS epidemic, and for all the people in the East Asia region who live with fear for their health and security; encourage all Presbyterians to become familiar with issues and concerns of the East Asia region and the United States policies toward the East Asia region; urge all Presbyterians to participate actively in advocacy for people in the East Asia region and for the Taiwanese people by contacting their U.S. representatives and senators, secretary general of the United Nations, and the World Health Assembly.

Resolution on Israel and Palestine: End the Occupation Now (Item 12-01, recommendations A.1-7.):

Asks pastors, lay leaders, sessions and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to: • pray, and invite others to pray, to the God of Peace to direct the hearts, minds, wills, and actions of those in positions of authority or influence in the Middle East, as well as those who know only aggression and violence, to seek the ways of peace; • avail themselves of study resources that help them understand the history, nature, and dimensions of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians; • seek out other Christians, Jews, and Muslims, in their own areas, to work together through interfaith peacebuilding, and in support of every effort made, whether by Israelis, Palestinians, the U.S. government, the United Nations, the Christian churches, and/or other religious and secular organizations that aim toward bringing about a just, honorable, secure, and viable peace in the Middle East; • travel to the region, as may be feasible and opportune, to visit with Christian partners and others, to gain firsthand experience in understanding of the issues and dynamics behind the conflict, as well as the possibilities for peace and good will, making sure to take advantage of the contacts and travel study resources produced by the PC(USA) and its partners, as well as PC(USA) mission workers and others in the region, who are able to introduce visitors to a wide spectrum of perspectives and opinions within the communities of people in the Holy Land; • take individual and collective initiatives to tell the truth, having “listened with both ears,” and to advocate for a just peace in the Middle East with their representatives in Congress, the administration, United Nations officials, local/regional/national newspaper editors and other opinion makers; • participate and/or promote participation in the international Christian “Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel” (EAPPI), organized through the World Council of Churches, in partnership with Palestinian Christians (for information, see www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/eap.html); increase Presbyterian support to assist the churches in the region to build and maintain their capacity for retaining competent leadership and to create opportunities for vocational training and economic development, in order to curb the flight of Christians from the homeland of their faith.

Overture 03-31. On Strengthening Our Christian Peacemaking Vision and Witness in Wartime—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Item 12-05):

Commend individual Christians who serve in Christian peacemaker teams and international relief agencies, protecting and caring for those under military occupation, those serving indefinite imprisonment for reasons of state security, and those suffering hardship due to previous wars; commend pastoral care and prayers for families of those who have loved ones in the armed services and those members who are serving on active duty.

A Call to Listen to Our Partners in the Midst of Crisis Situations (Item 12-06):

Call the people of our church to listen to partner church voices as they seek, in the midst of the Iraq and other international crises, to be knowledgeable about • how U.S. Government actions may be seen internationally, especially in Muslim majority countries, as a conflict between the “Christian West” and the “Islamic nation;” • the plight of Christian people in situations that endanger their continuing existence or place them under great duress; the concerns of partners in non-Muslim majority parts of

the world about unilateral U.S. action in which many people perceive the U.S. War on Terrorism causing great danger to them; the need for special prayer and concern for Christians who are identified with us as “American” and therefore as substitute targets for anger and acts of violence against the U.S.; and the need to grow in understanding about the dynamics at large in the world and international church that are in contrast to those of the U.S. and of the PC(USA), specifically how issues of identity and values affect perceptions about particular crises.

Iraq and Beyond (Item 12-08, recommendation 5):

That individual members, congregations, and middle governing bodies contribute to “Iraq: The Peace Fund for Solidarity with the Churches” to help those churches in the rebuilding of their capacity to make an effective witness to the love of Jesus Christ (ECO# 051722).

Commissioners’ Resolution 03-14. On Calling for Solidarity with the People and Churches of Pakistan (Item 12-09):

Call upon the congregations and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (through the PC(USA) Web site and “WMD Highlights”) to pray for the people and churches of Pakistan, to follow this situation for the long-range, and to welcome opportunities to be led by God in financial support of our partners’ request.

Commissioners’ Resolution 03-17. On Prayer for Peace (Item 12-10):

Call upon the entire church to be in prayer for those who would rather seek conflict than peace. Further, we encourage those in conflict to seek reconciliation as we have been commanded by our Lord Jesus.

SEMINARIES

Clergywomen’s Experiences in Ministry: Realities and Challenges (Item 04-01, recommendations 1, 3, and 7):

Instruct General Assembly entities and request middle governing bodies and seminaries to encourage congregations to call clergywomen from various racial ethnic backgrounds as well as Caucasian clergywomen; instruct Churchwide Personnel Services and request middle governing bodies, seminaries, and congregations to address the difficulties frequently encountered in the position of associate pastor; call upon PC(USA) seminaries to develop courses, including continuing education, addressing the importance of holistic health as it relates to the demands/expectations of the practice of ministry.

Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons (Item 07-01, recommendation F.4):

Call upon middle governing bodies and sessions that have endowments, as well as seminaries, church-related colleges and universities, to consider participation in the campaign to abolish for-profit private prisons, including the Lehman Campaign.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Private Prisons (Item 07-01, recommendation F.4):

Call upon middle governing bodies and sessions that have endowments, as well as seminaries, church-related colleges and universities, to consider participation in the campaign to abolish for-profit private prisons, including the Lehman Campaign.

Reclaiming the Vision: A Mission Strategy to Strengthen the Partnership Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Its Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities (Item 09-01, recommendations 1-6):

Urge the Presbyterian-related schools, colleges, and universities to be more intentional about developing leadership, both lay and clergy, for the church; urge the governing bodies of the church and the related educational institutions to strengthen their partnership through the process of clarifying the covenant between them as well as the other particular ways that each of the institutions is related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); urge the educational institutions of the church to utilize fully the many partners that are willing and able to assist them in developing the Presbyterian and Reformed presence; urge the educational institutions related to the church to maintain a significant presence of persons within their faculty and leadership ranks who support the institutions' distinctive Presbyterian and Reformed heritages and missions and who promote active dialogue between the educational institutions and the church at all levels—General Assembly, middle governing bodies, and local congregations—as appropriate for each institution's circumstances; urge the related schools, colleges, and universities to give attention within their programs of teaching and student service to the concerns of the public good; urge the educational institutions related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to encourage global awareness and international understanding.