



***WORSHIP AND WORK  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)  
IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCIL***



***223rd General Assembly---Day 4***

*"But strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness."  
Matthew 6:33*

**UPDATES AND REFLECTIONS**

Throughout every General Assembly, much of the real "work" is done in committees. Sitting, listening to advocates and reports, wrestling with both positions and "wordsmithing" amendments, are all the daily activities of a commissioner from Sunday evening through Tuesday (sometimes into the evening). These committees "complete" their work in anticipation of resuming plenary sessions on Wednesday.

While each committee has invested significant time and energy in their overtures they will all be considered, debated and voted upon in the full Assembly (items that were approved by huge margins will initially be listed on the consent agenda and will be approved unless "pulled").

Just some of the items emerging out of the committees are the following (there are many more):

- **An overture on challenging our congregations, presbyteries and national entities to offer support and advocacy to the government on behalf of the people of South Sudan (Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues).**

- **A commissioner's resolution on addressing ministry with those impacted by opioid addictions (Social Justice).**
- **Amended and approved the "revised" per capita budget by proposing a 10% increase in 2019 and in 2020, no additional increase (original-- %; %; revised---10%(2019), 10%(2020).**
- **Approval of the creation of a team to review and evaluate the per capita based funding system for higher church councils for financial sustainability for the next ten years (Way Forward).**
- **A call to affirm and embrace the religiously diverse nature of the U.S.A. and the call of the Christian faith to love all our neighbors-including those of other faiths-as we love ourselves(Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations).**
- **Commend the BOP and the Presbyterian Foundation for fossil-free options for participants and to direct the BOP and the Presbyterian Foundation to divest from the fossil-fuel industry and actively invest in securities of companies whose predominant focus is renewable and/or energy efficiency(Environmental Issues).**
- **Accept the document, "Living by the Gospel: A guide to structuring ministers' terms of call" and request the Board of Pensions to annually update and distribute the document to all mid-councils (BOP,PILP, Foundation).**
- **Develop a U.S. letter to accompany the Confession of Belhar that addresses the participation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other Reformed bodies in the racism in our historical context, building on prior statements of repentance and apology.**
- **Recommend the formation of an administrative commission to address disorder in the Synod of the Covenant(Mid Councils).**
- **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to report to the next General Assembly on its efforts to strengthen the mission and ministry of small congregations, including the progress of implementing the Vital Congregations and Christian Formation initiatives.**
- **Approved, with comment, the Vision 2020 interim report and guiding statement for study and comment before the 2020 General Assembly(Way Forward).**
- **Disapproved the PMA proposal to divide the corporation into two corporations and approved with recommendations many of the recommendations of the Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee(Way Forward).**

**Each of these items and the others considered by the committees will be taken up in plenary session. No doubt, some of these are areas of greater difference and concern than others. Part of what I try to remember is that when we take collective action in some areas, it is not always (nor should be) a reflection of something upon which we all agree, but rather a commitment to honor the**

**consciences of those among us in particular areas as an expression of collective response.**

**As part of the opening worship service, an offering was received for the specific purpose of addressing the "cash bail bond" system operating within St. Louis. On Tuesday afternoon, a march was organized whereby forty seven thousand dollars was delivered for the purpose of releasing those who have misdemeanors, but remain incarcerated because of their economic conditions that do not permit them to post bond.**

**With most committees able to conclude their work by late Tuesday afternoon, the commissioners, delegates and visitors were able to get together for dinner. It was a great opportunity to just debrief and hear about each other's experiences thus far in this 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly.**

***"Glimpses of GA"***  
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