



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



***222nd General Assembly---Day 4***

**"The Hope in our Calling" Ephesians 1:18**

**UPDATES AND REFLECTIONS**

**PRACTICE OF LISTENING....PRACTICE OF VOTING**

**On this day of the General Assembly, the intensive work of committees becomes the focal point for commissioners and observers alike. Much of the discussion and deliberation which began on Sunday evening must come to closure as committees vote on the overtures(or amendments to them) that were assigned to their committee.**

**Each committee has heard presentations from relevant resource people and "overture advocates" who are fellow ruling/teaching elders interested(for/against) in the particular issue. For most of the commissioners, this is a long day within the formalities of debates and parliamentary procedures.**

**Ultimately, each person finds himself/herself in the position of having to vote one way or another based upon God's leading of his/her conscience. More about some of the overtures and their results in committee are listed below under the committee section.**

**COMMISSIONER REACTIONS**

**Part of understanding the General Assembly is also to "see" it through the eyes of the commissioners who are here representing the Presbytery of Redstone. Some of the comments from these**

people include the following:

**Mandi Pascarella**(Young Adult Advisory Delegate)...**"I was impressed with the two women who would be elected co-moderators. When they spoke to the YAADs, they talked about their view on how to bring young people to the church. I was pleased to find out that they believed churches should be less focused on the quantity of people and more focused on educating and pouring into one another."**

**Curtis Paul**...**"The conversation this morning revolved around how the outside world may interpret our nonviolent practices of using boycotts, divestment and sanctions. Nonetheless, we affirmed nonviolent ways to stop human oppression."**

**Tom Shipley**...**"Serving on the General Assembly procedures committee has focused on areas of operations for the General Assembly. Among other items, we approved Columbus, Ohio as the site for the 2022 GA and were engaged in substantial discernment on new wording to ensure that all perspectives and sides on issues are heard. I found the discussion to be educational. Although representatives of the OGA appeared opposed to such openness, yet, I'm glad to say we moved toward ensuring more open and honest discussion and the presentation of diverse positions. Although we did not go as far as I would have liked, but it was movement in the right direction. Additionally, I would not that the YAADs are real assets to our committee and provide valuable perspectives."**

### **WORLD MISSION**

As part of the gathering, I had the opportunity to attend a luncheon sponsored by the Presbyterian World Mission. With the opportunity to hear from Hunter Farrell, Director of Presbyterian World Mission, he spoke of the partnership in world mission initiatives. We also engaged in table conversations based upon the following quote from Matorofa Mutonganavo, Moderators of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe(Ecumenical Advisory delegate to GA).

***"The most significant thing is the exchange of cultures... [There is] a whole lot of cultural learning. And we have been changed. We have been transformed. You know there is a saying: "When you meet the other, you get "othered." That is very important. The fact that we met the other and we were influenced in one way or another by the other. They were influenced. I don't think Denver is as Denver was before they were in partnership with Zimbabwe. Because they got "othered." And we also, we are not the same, because we got "othered" by our partnership with Denver."***

**You recall that Redstone has a partnership with the Sudan/South**

**Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church. While we were here in Portland, we received confirmation on the three visitors from South Sudan that we will have in our presbytery in July. I believe that in many ways we also have been "othered" by our partnership with the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.**

### **MORE COMMITTEE WORK**

**For the commissioners, most of Tuesday was also spent in conference rooms working through the series of overtures for which they had heard presentations. The "harder" work of both discussing and deciding has begun. Not every vote was easy(some were very divided rather evenly), but the deliberations were always both passionate and civil. Maintaining both simultaneously becomes a very difficult task. Sometimes, we know and experience the same difficulty within our own session and congregational meetings, so it is not surprise in a much larger and diverse gathering.**

**As a result, by tomorrow(Wednesday) afternoon, the General Assembly will begin working in plenary session in considering the overtures as they come forward with recommendations for either approval or disapproval. While it becomes necessary for efficiency, many of the overtures which have broad consensus and even unanimous votes within committee will be placed on the consent agenda. The unintended consequence of this necessity makes the focus of plenary sessions on the issues and concerns about which we are more divided(hence, needing more time).**

**The recommendations of the committee do not bind the General Assembly, so each overture will be decided by the this year's General Assembly.**

### **SELECTED COMMITTEE RESULTS**

**(REMEMBER: these and other overtures are recommendations upon which the full General Assembly will need to vote)**

- **Revised language in the General Assembly manual for ensuring "equitable presentation of different perspectives" in materials and resources to be presented to committees and available as resource material to the full assembly.**
- **Voted to rescind the action of the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly(2014) that mandated a process for consolidating and/or modifying synods into 10-12 synods.**
- **Retained the provision on former teaching elders who have renounced jurisdiction, but added language to include measures by which restoration may occur. Encouragement of councils to include a question about renunciation in sexual misconduct or child protection policies.**
- **Recommended the approval of the Confession of Belhar(approved 2014 GA and by more than 2/3 presbyteries) and its inclusion in the Book of**

**Confessions starting with the 2016 printing.**

- Recommended a call for RE/MAX to do everything within its legal and moral power to stop facilitating the sale and rental of property in Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Commend RE/MAX for responding favorably to discussions of this matter with representatives of the PC(USA).
- Because of profound concern about destructive effects of climate change on all God's creation, recognize the need to shift to a sustainable energy. Call upon the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church(USA) Foundation to stop any direct investment in fossil fuel companies and move within three years away from investment in fossil fuel companies.
- Recognize the importance of the continued presence of Christians and churches in the Middle East. Affirm and encourage the Christian presence in the area through strengthened ties between the PC(USA) and the historic and reformed churches of the region. Call for expanded partnership relationships between PC(USA) congregations and those of our partner churches in the Middle East.
- Approved a report and statement on human trafficking, including an emphasis on restoration and human rights.

**As we move to the plenary session, these overtures and countless others will be debated and voted upon by the entire assembly. Additionally, when we gather once more as an entire group, there will be opportunities for worship, electing a stated clerk and hearing reports of God's work among us.**

**Stay tuned for updates not only on votes, but on other aspects of this national gathering of the church.**

**BENEDICTION**

**I will offer to you the words in closing that we sang together for the benediction at the World Mission luncheon (authored by Janet Saunders).**

*Go into the world with faith, trusting God to lead you.  
Go into the world with hope, see God's presence everywhere.  
Go into the world with love, loving those who Christ loves. Go in faith and go in hope, and go out in love.*

**"A Picture (or video) is Worth a Thousand Words" (select link below or for more pictures, see Presbytery of Redstone Facebook page)**

**[Hunter Farrell--Presbyterian World Mission World Mission discussions](#)**

**Mid Council presentations**  
**Some of the Redstone delegation**



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