

Bills & Overtures Committee
Presbytery of Tampa Bay
August 27, 2020
Kitty Rawson, Chair

Motions for Presbytery

The Bills & Overtures Committee recommends that the Presbytery of Tampa Bay take the following action:

Direct the moderator to appoint a task force to begin work needed in response to the challenge to all Presbyterians and especially to presbyteries as expressed in *Item 00-29: On the Church in This Moment in History – Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action* as approved by the 224th General Assembly (2020).

The task force should make an initial report on the start of its work at the November Stated Meeting of the Presbytery.

Background and Rationale

The responsibilities of the Bills and Overtures Committee are to "[p]rovide guidance to the Presbytery related to overtures to and from the General Assembly" and "[p]rovide guidance to the Presbytery related to other matters, as requested by the Coordinating Team." Most of the overtures made to the 224th General Assembly were referred to the 225th General Assembly.

However, in *Item 00-29: On the Church in This Moment in History – Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action*, the 224th General Assembly addressed all of the referred overtures and other items and included a specific call to all Presbyterians in one section, a call to congregations, sessions, presbyteries, and synods in another, and a recommendation to congregations and mid-councils to consider in another.

Appointing a task force to begin the work needed to respond to these challenges will permit us to take these matters seriously and give them the focused attention we believe they deserve. With two of our members already chairing standing commissions of the Presbytery (COM and CCV), assigning this work solely to our committee would not be appropriate or effective.

The specific sections of Item 00-29 identified for particular effort by this task force are the following (numbered as they appear in the original, emphasis added):

1. **Call all Presbyterians** to hear and heed the Gospel imperative to love God, neighbor, and self by living out a deeper commitment to active participation with Jesus Christ in the work of building God's kingdom through
 1. Personal and corporate repentance, spiritual renewal, and devotion to the Great Ends of the Church. Repenting, both personally and corporately, for the role we as individuals and as a predominantly White-dominated church played in history and continue to perpetuate today, even if unknowingly, in systemic racism and White Supremacy,

especially in terms of our own local silence, silencing those who attempt to speak or act, and our failure to act regarding police brutality, voter suppression, educational and healthcare inequality, and other acts of systemic racism on federal, state, and local levels

2. Listening and responding to the voices of peoples long silenced through programs such as Hands and Feet: Presbyterians Engaging in Communities, the Poor People's Campaign, and Freedom Rising, approved by the 222nd General Assembly

3. Energetic, intelligent, imaginative, and loving involvement in the Matthew 25 Initiative and its intertwined foci: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty

4. **Call congregations, sessions, presbyteries, and synods** to review items of business referred from the 224th General Assembly (2020) to the 225th General Assembly (2022) and prayerfully consider the call of God to work and witness for the goals and values expressed therein, in particular the following items as starting points for developing plans for action in dismantling structural racism at every level of the PC(USA):

1. [02-020, "Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force Report"](#)

2. [02-034-INFO, "Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Progress Report with Recommendation"](#)

3. [02-041, "Lazarus is Walking in Baltimore - from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy"](#)

4. [02-084, "A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC\(USA\) - From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee"](#)

5. [02-100, "Approval of Part 1 of the 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,"](#) especially the sections on dismantling structural racism

5. **Recommend that PC(USA) congregations, mid-councils, and all General Assembly Entities** develop and adopt an antiracism policy in their bylaws by engaging [Item 02-137, "On Amending G-3.0106 to Add an Antiracism Policy with Suggested Training for All Members of Each Council."](#) This work can be done now at all levels, even in advance of the 225th General Assembly, at which time that General Assembly can act on setting a constitutional requirement to do so if it chooses.

The full text of *Item 00-29: On the Church in This Moment in History – Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action* is available in recent eNews and on PC-Biz at <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000727>.