

Minutes of the Called Meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore
10:00 am, Thursday, February 10, 2022
Via Zoom Electronic Meeting Platform

Moderator Sue Lowcock Harris called the meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore to order at 10:05 AM, reading the business of the meeting which was to act on the request of Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery to concur in its overture “An Apology to African Americans for the Sin of Slavery,” to vote on an additional rationale for the overture, and to elect a ruling elder alternate to the 225th General Assembly. She invited reflection on the indigenous people who originally occupied the land on which our churches are situated and the former enslaved peoples who labored here. She then opened the meeting with prayer. The call was in order and a quorum was present.

She called on the Stated Clerk, Mary Gaut, who moved the adoption of the Docket. It was seconded and **APPROVED** by common consent.

General Presbyter, Jackie Taylor, welcomed first time ruling elders and new minister members of the Presbytery: Rev. Loril Hawk (HR) and Rev. Emma Horn, newly installed pastor of Harundale Presbyterian. She also introduced Deanna Rolffs and Lon Swartzentruber, consultants from the Design Group, who have been hired to help lead the strategic planning process approved by the Steering Cabinet.

CONSIDERATION OF THE GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY

The moderator called on TE Karen Brown, chairperson of the Commission on Reconciliation who moved on behalf of the commission, THAT the presbytery concur with the overture from the Giddings-Lovejoy presbytery, *An Apology to African Americans for the Sin of Slavery*.

By common consent the presbytery granted the privilege of the floor to RE Susan Krehbiel, social justice consultant, who explained the role of concurrence and gave a brief description of the five sections of the overture.

RE Annette Snyder spoke in favor of the motion on behalf of the Dismantling Racism Team.

The motion was APPROVED.

Rev. Brown then moved, on behalf of the commission, that presbytery adopt the Rationale for Concurrence. After a period of discussion TE Mary Speers moved to end debate. The Presbytery **APPROVED** and the **Rationale was APPROVED**.

The Moderator turned the meeting over to the Vice-Moderator, RE Cecil Phillips to moderate the remainder of the meeting.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Moderator recognized TE Deborah McEachran, chair of the Committee on Representation and Nominations. She moved that RE Joshua Gilhart, from First Presbyterian in Cumberland,

be elected alternate ruling elder commissioner to the 225th General Assembly. There were no nominations from the floor. **The motion was APPROVED.**

The moderator recognized General Presbyter Rev. Jackie Taylor who invited the presbytery to an information session on the Strategic planning process.

The meeting was closed with prayer by the Moderator and adjourned at 11:06AM.

Respectfully submitted
Mary Gaut, Stated Clerk

APPENDIX A Attendance Detail

Category	Present	Excused	Absent
Teaching Elders Serving Churches	33	3	23
Specialized Teaching Elders.	6		9
New Worshiping Community Leaders	0		1
Honorably Retired Teaching Elders	6		-
CREs & Commissioned Pastors	2		1
Ruling Elder Commissioners (including officers and Commission members)	29		-
Former Ruling Elder Moderators	4		-
Former Ruling Elder Stated Clerks	0		-
Certified Educators	0		-
<i>Subtotal voting members</i>	80		
Continuing Corresponding Members	0		-
Youth Advisory Delegates (Non-voting)	0		-
Guests and Presbytery Staff (Non-voting)	16		-
Candidates and Inquirers (Non-voting)	0		-
<i>Subtotal non-voting attendees</i>	16		
TOTAL PRESENT	96		

TEACHING ELDERS SERVING CHURCHES:

Present: Tim Stern, (Ark& Dove);, Andrew Connors, Michele Ward (Brown); Ken Kovacs, Dorothy Boulton (Catonsville); Andy Nagel (Central); Keith Paige (Cherry Hill); Scott Hoffman (Christ Memorial); Laura Batten-Carbaugh (Covenant), Catherine Goodrich (Faith); Edwin Lacy (Fallston), Christian Iosso (First & Franklin), Andrew Kort, Mihee Kim-Kort (First of Annapolis); Alison Peters (First Cumberland), Sue Lowcock Harris, Morton Harris (First of Howard); Matthew Glasgow (First Westminster); Thomas Harris (Govans); Billy Kluttz (Govans); Emma Horn (Harundale); Jennifer DiFrancesco (Havenwood); Ray Meute (Highland), Karen Brown (Hope), Deborah McEachran (Hunting Ridge); Tim Hughes Williams (Light Street); Kimberly Secrist Ashby (Mt. Hebron), Elizabeth McLean (Prince of Peace); Mark Hannah (Roland Park); Randy Clayton (Second), Rebecca Crate-Price (Springfield), Mary Ka Kanahan (St. John United); John Carlson (Woods)

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Amy Carlson (Second); Jessie Lowry (Christ Our Anchor); Essie Koenig-Reinke (Dickey Memorial)

ABSENT: Jon Nelson (Ark & Dove), Shannon Weston (Ashland); Glen Misick (Babcock), Todd Smith (Bethel), Andy Gathman (Chestnut Grove), Jeff Young (Christ Our King); Melissa Lopez (First Bel Air); Eric Myers (Frederick), Sungjin Kim (Glen Burnie Korean), Kerry Slinkard (Good Shepherd); Tanya Wade (Grace), Teresa Martin-Minnich (Hancock), Carrie Finch-Burriss (Kenwood); Jeong Hoon Han (Korean United); Phyllis Felton (Madison Ave.), David Norse Thomas (Maryland); Janna Vanderwoude (Northminster), Mark Sandell (St. Andrew), Dan Melton (St. Andrew's), Rob Carter (Towson), Joel Strom (Towson), Nancy Lincoln-Reynolds (Woods), Jacob Snowden (Woods).

NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITY LEADERS:

Present: *(Jennifer DiFrancesco listed with Havenwood)*

Absent: Jose Lopez-Chapa

RESIDENT SPECIALIZED CLERGY

Present: Jennifer Barchi; Katherine Foster; McKenna Lewellen, Jackie Taylor, Janine Zabriskie

Absent: Cathy Bashore, Brandon Brewer, Sarah Diehl; Richard Jones;. Stephen Mann; Keith Roberts; Charles Thomas, Sr.; David Willerup,

NONRESIDENT SPECIALIZED CLERGY:

Present: Tanya Denley

Absent: Tom Blair

HONORABLY RETIRED

Present: Mary Gaut, Loril Hawk, Barbara Renton, Roger Rice; John Schmidt: Mary Speers.

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS: None

RULING ELDER OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY'S STEERING CABINET AND COMMISSIONS

Present: Bob Stepling (COR) Audrey Trapp (Chair of Cabinet); [*Cecil Phillips, Vice-Moderator listed with Dickey Memorial*]

RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS FROM CONGREGATIONS:

CATONSVILLE, Keith Glennan; CENTRAL, Rob Smith; CHESTNUT GROVE, Carolyn Nabat; CHRIST OUR KING, Joanne Kokie; CHURCHVILLE, Bonnie Jones; DICKEY MEMORIAL, Cecil Phillips; FAITH, Bobby Hall; FIRST OF ANNAPOLIS, Betsy Stewart, Deborah Dixon; FIRST OF HOWARD CO., Jon Barnett, Sibyl Louisa Leslie; FIRST OF WESTMINSTER, Heather Russell; FRANKLINVILLE, Edward Stuebing; GOVANS, Karen Ceanfaglione; GROVE, Carroll Fitzgerald; HAMILTON, Janice Howard; HARUNDALE, Robyn Crandell; HAVRE DE GRACE Patricia Allingham; HAVENWOOD, Steve Plana; HIGHLAND, Claudia Scarborough; HUNTING RIDGE, Emmanuel Addo; KNOX, Charese Jordan Moore; PRINCE OF PEACE, Bill McWhirter; SECOND, Barbara Matheson; SPRINGFIELD, Sharon Pappas; ST. JOHN UNITED, Susan Moody; WOODS MEMORIAL, Lillian McGraw

CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT ELDER REPRESENTATION Churches listed in ORANGE had elders present but listed in a different voting category:

ARK AND DOVE, ASHLAND, BABCOCK, BARRELVILLE, BETHEL, BROWN, CHERRY HILL, CHRIST MEMORIAL, CHRIST OUR ANCHOR, COVENANT, EMMITSBURG, FIRST OF BEL AIR, FALLSTON, FIRST OF CUMBERLAND, FIRST AND FRANKLIN, FREDERICK, FROSTBURG, GOOD SHEPHERD, GLEN BURNIE KOREAN, GRACE, GRANITE, HAGERSTOWN, HANCOCK,, HOPE, HUGHES MEMORIAL, KENWOOD, KOREAN UNITED, LIGHT STREET, LOCHEARN,. MADISON AVE, MARYLAND, MT. HEBRON, MT PARAN, NORTHMINSTER, PERRY HALL, ROLAND PARK, ST. ANDREW, ST. ANDREW'S, TOWSON, TRINITY

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS

Present: ed terry

Absent: Anita Bishop-Johnson. John Brewington,

CANDIDATES AND INQUIRERS: None

YOUTH ADVISORY DELEGATES: None

CERTIFIED LAY EMPLOYEES WITH VOTE: None

FORMER RULING ELDER MODERATORS (with vote): Adrienne Knight; James Schroll, William Starke; Guy Moody,

FORMER RULING ELDER STATED CLERKS: none

OTHER PRESBYTERY STAFF (without vote): Chuck Brawner, Susan Krehbiel, Frank Perrelli, Felicia Scott,

GUESTS (without vote): David Hutton, Bill & Nancy Henderson (Catonsville), Debbie Schmidt (Central), Keith Reagan, (Christ Our King); James Stickler (First of Cumberland); Annette Snyder (Hunting Ridge); Emily Park (Second), Bob Stepling (Springfield), Mary Shippe (St. John United), Deanna Rolffs & Lon Swartzentruber (consultants from The Design Group)

APPENDIX B

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy overtures the 225th General Assembly (2022) to offer *AN APOLOGY TO AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY* and to approve the following statements:

1. That the PC(USA) and its members, in the spirit of the CONFESSIO OF BELHAR as a framework for considering matters of truth, unity and reconciliation acknowledge that:

White supremacy is a conscious, calculated effort to perpetuate and institutionalize white supremacy and privilege through legal systems as well as economic and physical intimidation. After the Civil War, white Americans controlled economic and political systems that resulted in lynching, Jim Crow Laws, Black Codes, white citizens' councils, slavery through incarceration, poverty, racial profiling, the school to prison pipeline, and mass incarceration; all intended to harm or further enslave African Americans. Even today we continue to prolong racial inequality through codifying white supremacy. As white Presbyterians we apologize for being complicit for the last 400 years in perpetuating these injustices.

We recognize as people of faith that the only appropriate path to healing and reconciliation is to acknowledge the wrongs that we, the Presbyterian Church, as part of the institutional church structure, were and are complicit in perpetuating. This was done through interpretation of selected scriptures and rationalization to justify human bondage and perpetuate white supremacy and privilege. We apologize for this transgression.

We acknowledge that Black lives have been devalued beginning with slavery and their human dignity continues to be circumvented through the economic and legal systems that are racist as institutions. We apologize for benefiting from and continuing to be part of this social, economic, and legal construct. We recognize that the presence and persistence of racism in ourselves and our institutions is the result of the sin of slavery.

We recognize the necessity of building a trusting relationship between White Americans and African Americans. A first step to healing and reconciliation can only be done by acknowledging that slavery is the economic, artistic, and religious foundation on which this country is built.

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A apologizes to African Americans both in the church and outside of the church for all the wrongs that have been done throughout our history and those that are on-going.

2. That the PC(USA), in the spirit of Christ in John 13: 35 “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” and 1 John 4: 12 “No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and God’s love is perfected in us” (NRSV), adopt and use:

A LITANY OF REPENTANCE

As white Christians we repent of our complicity in the belief in white supremacy: the belief that people of European descent are superior in intelligence, skills, imagination, and perseverance. We acknowledge that this belief in white supremacy has been the foundation of, and an excuse for, atrocities against people of African descent in the United States and in the world.

We repent of our failure to recognize and take responsibility for the legacy of slavery.

We repent of the injustice, pain, humiliation, and suffering imposed on African Americans by our ancestors and ourselves through actions and inaction. We repent of our complicity in failing to act in mutual loving relationship.

We repent of closing our eyes to the degradation and injustice forced upon African Americans who were enslaved, segregated, terrorized, and imprisoned.

We repent of covering our ears to the crying of families torn apart, to the sound of human flesh being struck, while songs of freedom and heavenly grace flow from our lips.

We repent that we have failed as an institution and as individuals to use our voices to abhor and end lynching, segregation, and racial profiling. We regret our generations of silence on these issues so that we could maintain a comfortable life in our churches, homes, and communities.

We repent of shutting our hearts to the experiences of fellow humans whose stories of pain, suffering, hardship, struggle, love and joy mirror our own life journeys, yet are deprived of privilege and marred by racism. We have turned our backs and walked away pretending not to see, yet we saw, pretending not to know, yet we knew, and convincing ourselves that we were not complicit, yet we are.

We now know that we as white Christians have benefitted directly and indirectly from these injustices. We name ourselves as complicit and repent.

Finally, we repent of our violent actions to suppress Black agency. African Americans, since the time of slavery, have actively pursued their freedom...built this country...laid foundational structures...and demonstrated their capacity to fully participate in the construction of this American society in spite of white supremacy.

As repentance means turning and going the other way, with Christ's help we seek to do so. At the same time, we commit ourselves to walking with people of African descent toward the goal of healing, reconciliation, and eliminating racism as we seek to dismantle white privilege.

Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to share this apology with all of the congregations of the PC(USA) on behalf of the denomination. The means of sharing this apology shall be coordinated with the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) and the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation (SCRTR).

3. Therefore, we recommend that the PC(USA) act on the following concerns:
 - Direct the PC(USA) and the Office of Public Witness to refute arguments and new laws that prohibit the teaching of a fully-inclusive history of the United States. God commanded the people to remember the difficult times in their history, the mistakes they would rather forget. "Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation." (Joel 1:3, NRSV)
 - Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the Stated Clerk to develop curriculum about slavery and its legacy for children, youth and adults to foster repentance that leads to metanoia ("a transformative change of heart") with the assistance of a qualified consultant, and to designate appropriate budget resources. The purpose of this curriculum is spiritual change that leads to apology, reconciliation, and acts of restorative justice including reparations. In this way the PCUSA might further the growth of "beloved community" in our midst.
 - Encourage congregations, presbyteries, and synods to prepare a history of their community to facilitate and deepen their study and understanding of these issues and to share the resources they find helpful in that preparation with the larger church.
 - Commit the PCUSA to restorative justice/reparations and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the Stated Clerk to provide tools and budget resources for congregations, presbyteries, and synods to

enact restorative justice measures in their communities that will close gaps in economics, health, education, environmental well-being, and the criminal justice system created out of the legacy of slavery and white supremacy. These gaps have existed since our development as a country and still exist today.

4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to share this apology with the National Council of Churches.
5. Direct the General Assembly to commend this apology to the entire PC(USA) in all its expressions for their use in the work of reconciliation among all peoples.

Rationale

When reviewing the 2016 PCUSA Curriculum on Racism, the Giddings-Lovejoy Dismantling Racism and White Privilege Team noticed it named the need for repentance and jumped to reconciliation. Yet as an African-American member pointed out, an apology is necessary before reconciliation is possible. Thus Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery approved *AN APOLOGY TO OUR AFRICAN AMERICAN SISTERS AND BROTHERS FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY* in its February 2020 Presbytery meeting as the needed missing piece. We present now to General Assembly *AN APOLOGY TO AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY* to make whole a good work already begun.

Biblical and Theological Underpinnings for Apology Overture

²³ So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. – Matt. 5:23-24 NRSV

¹⁶ So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now. ¹⁷ So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived! ¹⁸ All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹ In other words, God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, by not counting people's sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, "Be reconciled to God!"
~ 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 CEB

“The Spirit enables people to receive forgiveness as they forgive one another and to enjoy the peace of God as they make peace among themselves. In spite of their sin, the Spirit gives people power to become representatives of Jesus Christ and his gospel of reconciliation to all. ~ Confession of 1967, 9.20, *Book of Confessions*

²⁷ All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. - Galatians 3:27-28 CEB

"One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, 'Hear, O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.'" -Mark 12:28-31 NRSV

We trust in God the Holy Spirit

[who] gives us courage

to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,

and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

~ *Brief Statement of Faith*, lines 52, 66, 70, 71, *Book of Confessions*

We believe

- “that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation...a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought...;
- that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways;
- that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another....
- that the credibility of this message [of reconciliation] is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity....
- that God has revealed God’s self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people....”

~ *The Confession of Belhar*, from 10.3, 10.5, 10.7, *The Book of Confessions*

The Confession of 1967 gave the church an agenda of action items in a section entitled RECONCILIATION IN SOCIETY. There follow rich paragraphs describing the work to be done in the

areas of · racism, · international peace, · poverty, · gender. In paragraph a, the church confessed;”

“The church is called to bring all people to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it.” *BofC 9.44*

However, a critical step has been omitted: a confession by participants of their complicity, either overtly or unconsciously, in the very problems described. Gifts continue to be brought to the altar, but reconciliation demands that those who have benefitted from the injustice, even if not obviously taking part, apologize for their participation. Without the honest reckoning with past behavior, the tendency is to want to rush from an unpleasant present to a utopian future without apologizing for a destructive past. Cries for redress of past wrongs, for example, The Black Manifesto of 1969, were not heard and true progress was not made. Especially the events of recent years and months have put the problems created by centuries of racial injustice into stark relief and it is past time to be held accountable for the past wrongs, to confess our sin through apology to those who have suffered because of our sins and those of our forebears, and to seek ways to genuinely reconcile with one another.

In the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, “Few are guilty but all are responsible.”

WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

– Frederick Douglass 1857.

The Doctrine of Discovery was proclaimed by Pope Nicolas V in a 1452 letter to Portuguese King Alfonso V. It gave Alfonso the right to enslave into perpetuity “Saracens (Muslims) and pagans and any other unbelievers.” This facilitated the Portuguese slave trade from West Africa. Three years later, in 1455, Pope Nicholas V wrote to Alfonso again, giving him his blessing to claim the lands of “other unbelievers.” So, it is not surprising that enslaved Africans were brought to North America as early as 1619 to labor on lands claimed under this doctrine. The U.S. Supreme Court in **1823 upheld that doctrine.**

When Presbyterians began immigrating to the Colonies, slavery was already established and some Presbyterians became enslavers. Since then, a tension has existed in the Presbyterian church over condoning or condemning white supremacy and privilege.

- Reverend Francis Makemie, an enslaver, organized the first American presbytery in 1706.
- During the **1740 and 50’s** Samuel Davies, an enslaver and educator, held that enslavement was ordained by God, but also championed their literacy and spiritual welfare. In contrast, George Bryan, a Philadelphia Presbyterian leader in the 1750’s,

was an abolitionist. During the American revolutionary era, it was natural that Presbyterian Colonists would be more questioning of the morality of enslavement.

- In **1776**, Jacob Green, a pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Hanover New Jersey, asked: “Can it be believed that a people contending for liberty should, at the same time, be promoting and supporting Slavery?” Abolitionist Presbyterian George Bryan helped pass a 1780 colonial Pennsylvania law mandating gradual emancipation.

As the Colonial Period ended, slavery was on the wane in the Northern Colonies, but entrenched in the Southern ones. The Presbyterian Church straddled that divide.

During the periods of the Confederation and the early United States, enthusiasm for abolishing slavery continued. The Presbyterian Church’s general assembly spoke against enslavement several times. However, reform was quickly mired down over two issues, how to emancipate the enslaved and how to treat free African Americans.

- Between 1787 and 1817 the General Assembly supported the abolition of slavery, but did not strongly support manumission or consider disciplining enslavers.
- In **1818**, the General Assembly described enslavement as inconsistent with the law of God but at the same time defrocked the Reverend George Bourne of Virginia, for condemning enslavers as sinners. It also declared that in slaveholding regions there are conditions that “render an immediate and universal emancipation inconsistent...with the safety and happiness of the master and the slave.”
- The General Assembly also called on all Presbyterians “to patronize and encourage the society formed for colonizing in Africa.” Robert Finley, director of Princeton Seminary, was among the founders of this movement. Removal of free African Americans appealed to the enslavers’ white supremacy and to the antislavery advocates it moved toward abolition without antagonizing the enslavers.
- During the 1830s, Presbyterian evangelist Charles Finney spoke out against slavery, but considered African Americans as inferior and was opposed to the integration of the races. This thinking became the basis for Jim Crow laws.
- When the issue of slavery threatened to split the church, the General Assembly of 1836 postponed further discussion based on a committee report that stated that “slavery was recognized in the Bible and that to demand abolition was unwarranted interference in state laws.” During the 19th, century two schools of thought emerged among Presbyterians. The anti-slavery activists comprised the new school and were perceived by the conservative wing as a threat to social order. This was the beginning of the North – South schism. The Old School church split along sectional lines at the start of the Civil War in 1861.

- When the Scottish immigrant Covenanters and Seceders formed the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPNA) in 1858, opposition to slavery was one of their five founding tenets.

The Presbyterian church could claim that it was in theory anti-slavery based on its 1818 statement, but in fact the majority of its leadership was heavily contaminated by white supremacy. James Thornwell and others proposed a positive theological defense of slavery. Charles Hodge and Robert Breckinridge took an accommodationist stance, denying that it was sinful but calling for its eventual and gradual elimination. Albert Barnes was the only prominent theologian who argued that it was sinful and preached abolition. The enslaver, the accommodationist and the abolitionist all shared the same communion table. The Presbyterian Church's failure to take prompt action in early colonial times, or to take a strong stand later on makes it complicit in normalizing chattel slavery, one of the most vicious systems ever to exist in the USA.

African American Christians saw the essence of Christ's message more clearly than white Christians. Free African Americans in the north created a Presbyterianism that had an anti-slavery, anti-white supremacy theology. African American attendance at Northern Presbyterian churches was not forbidden, but could lead to difficulties. For example, in 1794 at Scotch Presbyterian Church in New York City, African American Katy Ferguson had to be escorted by the pastor to the communion table. As African Americans became Presbyterians, race, class and their own preferences pushed them to form separate congregations. In these churches, with an African American minister, they enjoyed freedom of worship as well as freedom from the paternalism of white pastors. The first of these churches was First African Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in 1807. Prior to the Civil War, African American Presbyterian Churches were also found in New York state, New Jersey, Washington D.C., and Maryland.

This was an era when most Presbyterian Ministers were trained by apprenticeship to another pastor rather than in seminary. Nevertheless, Theodore Wright became the first African American to graduate from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1828. These educated pastors and their congregants were the seeds of the African American middle class. They were abolitionists and dedicated opponents of white supremacy. They educated a generation of African American Presbyterians that would continue the fight against white supremacy into the Jim Crow era and beyond.

White Supremacy, developed in the Presbyterian and other Christian denominations during the nearly 250 years of enslavement did not vanish but became the force behind new laws that systemically perpetuated white supremacy and economic exploitation of African Americans after the end of Reconstruction.

In 1865, intense northern hostility toward the defeated south provided the political will to keep federal troops in the south for the next twelve years. It was a radical, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to establish civil and political equality for African Americans. The U.S. Army withdrew in 1877, leaving the progress African Americans had made at the mercy of

southern terrorists and severely limiting the ability of all churches to support relief for African Americans. At the same time liberal Presbyterian leadership was presented with a series of other social issues such as: the burgeoning industrial economy, an increasing secularization of society, scientific challenges to interpretation of the Bible and the Prohibition movement.

White supremacist ideology within the Presbyterian leadership made it easier to address these problems instead of tackling the very difficult issue of African American civil rights. Paternalistic views, like those of Presbyterian evangelist Charles Finney who considered African Americans inferior to whites, were prominent in both Presbyterian leadership and laity. Newspapers, north and south, increasingly reflected language and images that reinforced these views. Thus by 1910 legalized white privilege had returned with a vengeance; in the south, enslavement-based agriculture morphed into share cropping, slave patrols morphed into Black Code laws, and the strict hierarchy of enslaver and enslaved morphed into Jim Crow segregation laws. In the north and mid-west, de facto segregation that had existed prior to the Civil War hardened.

The Presbyterian church's indifference to racial reforms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries betrayed African Americans and played a significant role in the return of white supremacy. In contrast, African American Presbyterians like Francis Grimke, a founding member of the NAACP, continued to speak out against racism within and without the Church. He and other anti-racist proponents were passionate and eloquent, but nevertheless a minority.

After Reconstruction was dismantled, white supremacy dominated the Presbyterian Church's race relations policy, a policy driven by its members' views rather than by adherence to the gospels or even Church declarations. The lynching of African Americans was condemned by the General Assembly in 1899. Yet, the Presbyterian Church was more interested in driving biblical scholar Arthur McGiffert from its midst in 1900 than in removing Wilmington clergyman Robert Elwood, who in 1903 was responsible for inciting the lynching of African American George White. After a trial and a reprimand by the PC U.S.A. he was allowed to continue in his ministry in Wilmington, until eventually accepting a call to a large congregation in Leavenworth, Kansas.

The Presbyterian church did nothing concrete to support African American civil rights until 1923 when it supported the Dyer Anti-Lynching Act. It would take until 1946 for the General Assembly to address racial equality within the body of the Church directly. Still by 1957, the Committee on Social Education and Action lamented that "further exhortation only emphasizes the gulf between what we profess and what we do." This era of indifference seemed to end with the *Presbyterian Confession of 1967*. However, in 1969, when The Black Manifesto was introduced by James Foreman, the Presbyterian Church refused to follow the recommendations by Black pastors who supported greater inclusion of Black members in the hierarchy of the Church and requested \$5,000,000 in reparations.

What is the current state of white supremacist attitudes in the Presbyterian Church?

Racism has always been an endemic problem and is currently on the rise. Spokespersons for white supremacist ideology are gaining celebrity status by self-publicizing their views on social media. Terrorism against African Americans and other people of color has dramatically

increased over the last decade. Evil is present in our country against which the church must take a stand, or stand for nothing. Hopefully, the questions are not if, but when and how. A radical discipleship, one of courage and love, is necessary.

Since the Civil Rights era there has been progress in dismantling white supremacy. But Robert Jones, Southern Baptist scholar and sociologist, concludes that white privilege and white supremacy are stronger in mainstream Protestantism (and Catholicism) than in the religiously unaffiliated. He finds views that ignore the horrific history of racist oppression against African Americans. White Christians' feelings towards African Americans have become more benevolent since the civil rights movement, yet many within the church still blame African Americans for what are clearly after-effects of the original sin of enslavement and do not understand systemic, structural racism.

Since 1967, fifty years of internal reform have given the Presbyterian Church more concrete expressions of the church's commitment to anti-racism: *Facing Racism: A vision of the beloved community* (1999), addition of the *Belhar Confession* to the *Presbyterian Book of Confessions* (2016) the, *Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era* (2016) and *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community – Churchwide Antiracism Policy* and *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community Antiracism Study Guide*. (2016) These documents, along with the Confession of 1967, serve as a solid foundation for the actions that are to come after the Apology. The PCUSA has been complicit in the making of that scarred history.”

The negative use of the term “Critical Race Theory” is an example of the kind of argument that requires a solid response using historical data and Biblical mandates. For we can only solve our equity issues if we learn exactly what the causes and effects of racism are. The aim is to foster a sense of responsibility for our history, not to make people feel guilty. Together then we might begin to solve issues created by white privilege.

It is time for the Word to become our deeds. James 2: 14-17

HISTORY OF RACISM IN ST. LOUIS

Specific examples of racism are necessary in order to bring home the brutality and terror associated with it. Abolitionist and free press martyr Elijah Lovejoy wrote newspaper columns that “invoked rape and the ripping apart of families to force his readers to face slavery’s atrocities in terms that were raw and draped in horror.” Since this Overture originated in the St. Louis area, it is essential to address its long and important African American history.

Enslavement in St. Louis began with the early Jesuits, who most likely owned enslaved peoples. In 1699, Jesuits, at their settlement at the mouth of the River des Peres, may have been enslavers. St. Stanislaus Seminary enslaved people who lived in multiple dwellings as shown by an 1830s map. St. Louis University students are currently working on a project to document the school’s role in slavery.

In the mid nineteenth century the O'Fallon building, one of Washington University's earliest structures, was named after John O'Fallon, the head of a grand jury that refused to indict the mob that burned Francis McIntosh to death. On the other-hand the founder of the school, William Greenleaf Eliot, and his wife, Abigail, were instrumental in assisting freedom seekers.

In 1780, enslaved people helped successfully defend St. Louis, then under Spanish rule, against the British and their Native American allies at the Battle of Fort San Carlos during the Revolutionary War. This prevented British access to the Mississippi Valley. African Americans toiled on the 19th century farms and plantations in Wildwood, Bridgeton, Florissant and other areas to bring profit to the white man. African Americans wrote our local history and enabled us to live our lives of privilege.

At one time, there were over twenty dealers of enslaved people in St. Louis. The most prominent was Bernard Lynch. Slave auctions, mostly as part of probate sales, were probably held on the grounds of the first two log structures of the old Catholic Church and then later at the Old Courthouse. The Underground Railroad played an important role in the area and many freedom suits were heard at the Old Courthouse, including the famous Dred and Harriet Scott case, which helped precipitate the Civil War.

African American John Buckner was hanged to death from a railroad bridge in St. Louis County in 1894, without due process or a trial. In 1836, biracial boatman, Francis McIntosh, was burned alive by a mob in downtown St. Louis, without due process or a trial. Elijah Lovejoy, pastor and publisher, wrote that McIntosh burned for eighteen minutes and begged to be shot. Lovejoy preached at Old Des Peres Presbyterian Church in St. Louis County in the early 1830s, and also in St. Charles, Missouri as well as Alton, Illinois. For his strong abolitionist views, he himself was killed by a proslavery mob in Alton while defending his printing press. The last area lynching occurred in 1942 in Sikeston when Cleo Wright was murdered.

The 1917 East St. Louis Massacre was described as the worst labor related violence and among the worst race riots in U.S. history – 250 African Americans killed, 6,000 left homeless and 7.8 million dollars in damaged property (in 2019 dollars).

Mill Creek Valley, an African American neighborhood, was leveled in 1954 for redevelopment – around 20,000 people, 95% of them African American, were displaced. Well-known African American protests include the 1943 Jefferson Bank & Trust demonstration, led by Norman Seay and the 1943 Southwestern Bell pickets.

Percy Green, founder of ACTION, and Richard Daly, climbed the Arch in 1964 to protest the exclusion of African Americans from jobs related to the building of the Arch.

William Lacy Clay, Sr., led protests over the closing of the African American Homer G. Phillips Hospital.

Restrictive covenants, redlining and other racist real estate practices have a long tradition in St. Louis. The legality of housing covenants was challenged in the 1946 *Shelley v. Kraemer* housing covenant case. Cote Brilliante Presbyterian Church and the Waggoner Place Methodist Episcopal Churches helped fund Kraemer on the pro covenant side. When such covenants were deemed unconstitutional, white flight followed. In 1954 Cote Brilliante closed and then reopened as an African American congregation on the same site.

Third Presbyterian Church was also impacted by white flight from North St. Louis. In 1955 the church took a vote and said there were “too many Negroes moving into this community. We don't know how to minister to them and we don't want to minister to them so we vote to close.”

Racism in contemporary times rears its ugly head in the police shooting of Michael Brown and the Ferguson uprising, the acquittal of policeman Jason Stockley, other local shootings involving police and African Americans, the resurgence of white supremacist groups and continuing discriminatory real estate practices and voting regulations. The killing of Michael Brown led to the founding of The Black Lives Matter movement.

Sundown towns, where Black people had to be out of town by sundown, were located throughout rural Illinois and Missouri. The Ku Klux Klan has a historical and current presence in Missouri. The Aryan Nation headquarters are in Wood River, IL. Other hate groups are spread throughout Missouri, with two located within the current boundaries of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

The rich history of St. Louis includes the heroic actions of the Underground Railroad conductors, preachers and abolitionists, freedom lawsuits, the United States Colored Troops in the Civil War and more. Let us remember forever the souls who fought to overcome racism: the Roberson Brothers, Rev. John Berry and Mary Meachum, Rev. John Anderson, Dred and Harriet Scott, Priscilla Baltimore, Annie Malone, Archer Alexander, Charlton Tandy, James Milton Turner, Peter and Nancy Jane (Rutledge) Hudlin, Fr. Moses Dickson, Caroline Quarlls, Elijah Madison, Elijah Lovejoy, William Greenleaf Eliot, Josephine Baker, Norman Seay, James Buford, Percy Green and many others.

This history of St. Louis Metro and southeast Missouri is scarred by the legacy of slavery and racism. We acknowledge that the history of the St. Louis region is scarred by the legacy of slavery and racism and that the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy has been complicit in the making of that scarred history.”

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APPENDIX C

Rationale for Concurrence from the Presbytery of Baltimore to the Overture to the 225th General Assembly (2022) of the PCUSA from the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy to offer An Apology to African Americans for the Sin of Slavery and Its Legacy

The Overture presented by the Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery and with which the Presbytery of Baltimore here concurs, AN APOLOGY TO AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACY, offers a series of concrete actions that we believe are the necessary next step in the PCUSA's long and continuing journey toward racial reconciliation.

In particular, the Overture directs the Office of Public Witness to refute arguments and laws prohibiting the teaching of a fully-inclusive history of the United States; directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop curricula on the legacy of slavery to foster repentance, apology, reconciliation, and restorative justice; encourages the components of the Church to examine their own histories; and commits the PCUSA to restorative justice and reparations, including through budget allocations and other tools. The emphasis on apology and restorative justice distinguishes this Overture from prior racial justice actions taken by the PCUSA, and the result of the Overture will be to provide congregations, presbyteries, and

synods with the context and resources required to do meaningful and impactful work toward reconciliation.

Additional Theological Rationale

We must acknowledge at the outset that Scripture and theology have long been used to justify and rationalize racial injustice, not only in the form of slavery but in the ongoing perpetuation of a status quo that includes deeply entrenched racial inequities. Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas wrote in *Sojourners*, “One must recognize the way in which Christianity’s monotheistic claims not only provided justification for enslaving black people and sacred legitimation for White supremacist policies such as the Discovery Doctrine, but also continue to provide theological legitimation for aggressive policies that dehumanize, if not destroy, people who are seen as religiously or culturally different, tacitly fostering a kind of Christian nationalism.”ⁱ

We reject this misuse of Scripture and take to heart these words:

And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. – Luke 16:9 NRSV

In the spirit of Luke’s Gospel, Rev. Mary Speers has written that we are compelled to put the dishonest wealth accumulated through slavery and White supremacist policies and practices to the work of making friends with those who have been wronged by them.ⁱⁱ

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. – Isaiah 58:9-12 NRSV

In doing this work, we seek to repair the breach that the sin of slavery and the legacy of White supremacy have made between us.

For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. – Ephesians 6:12 NRSV

We name as our enemies, not individuals of flesh and blood who have benefitted from the status quo of White supremacy but those rulers and authorities, laws and policies, that maintain that systemically and institutionally racist status quo.

Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye. – Matthew 7:3-5 NRSV

In so doing, we recognize the reality of our own complicity in White supremacy, both individually and in the institution of the Church, and commit ourselves to remedy this hypocrisy by taking the log out of our own eye.

We believe:

- *That the church must stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;*
- *That the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged;*
- *That in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.*

– *The Confession of Belhar, The Book of Confessions*

We commit ourselves to stand where the Lord stands, against injustice and with the wronged. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in his Letter from Birmingham jail, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The Presbytery of Baltimore Experience and its commitment to restorative justice

Following the 2015 killing of Freddie Gray in police custody in Baltimore, there has been a renewed interest in and commitment to the work of racial justice in the Presbytery of Baltimore. For the next year, there were many conversations, Bible studies, prayer services, and dialogues across the Presbytery as we struggled to find a way forward together.

The Presbytery of Baltimore overtured the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to establish a “Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission” of the PCUSA.^{iv} Referencing the 1999 PCUSA General Assembly report “Facing Racism: In Search of the Beloved Community,” the Overture acknowledged that “dismantling racism is a long term struggle.” Several points from the rationale offered there are worth restating here:

“As we make this overture, we recognize that we have not done enough to address racism in our own community. Therefore, we are in the early phases of developing concrete steps to address the issues of racism, injustice and poverty.”

“To be agents of change in dismantling racism in our society, we must acknowledge that it exists within the church. In so doing we recognize our own history of racism both internally as an organization (at all levels of the church) and as institutional members of society.”

“Despite the efforts to change public policies and put an end to segregation, we continue to live in divided neighborhoods with divergent experiences. We have failed to fully comprehend the ways that racism persists today both inside and outside of our church. As an institution founded and dominated by ‘White’ Christians, we need

to create opportunities to listen to those who suffer from racist policies and practices.”

“In order for such reconciliation to occur, however, we must be willing to hear and tell the truth of our sins, trusting ‘that God’s life-giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God’s life-giving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world.’”

In a separate resolution to the same General Assembly,^v it was noted that:

“We can learn from the experience of brothers and sisters around the world who have found time and again that reconciliation does not occur without first acknowledging the truth of the harms that have been committed. We can not heal our brokenness until we see what has been broken and confess our role.”

At the September 2018 Gathering of the Presbytery of Baltimore, a Dismantling Racism training policy was adopted, including the formal recognition of the emergent Dismantling Racism Team under the direction of The Presbytery’s Commission on Reconciliation.^{vi} The Presbytery soon contracted with Baltimore Racial Justice Action, a local non-profit, to provide racial equity training as part of the implementation of that policy. As of October 2020, 120 individuals in our Presbytery have received this training, which provides a template and “lessons learned” guidance to others as they seek to implement similar programming. In 42 post-training evaluations, 79% of respondents agreed that “the discussion of history of racism in the Presbytery was helpful to [our] understanding of racism in the Church” and in 23 medium- to long-term, follow-up surveys, all but one of the respondents said that they have continued their study of racism.

More recently, congregations in Baltimore have been impacted by and responded to the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others. Many joined in the protests and rallies that ensued. For many, 2020 witnessed a further uncovering of the racial disparities and divisions in our country. At the same time, some congregations experienced internal conflict over differing views about the impact of racism on current events, whether to respond as a congregation, and if so, how. That Fall, the In the Loop Ministry Group of the Presbytery^{vii} began a series of online discussions and presentations centered on the legacy of racial injustice called “B’More Human.”^{viii} In its first season, the series considered the legacy of slavery, racial disparities in health and wealth, the stolen gift of Black American music, the situation of Black women in America in particular, and Liberation Theology. It has also included an annual spoken word contest in honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The current season of the B’more Human series has focused more specifically on restorative justice and reparative action, in part in response to a call from members to explore more deliberately how we can expand our knowledge and understanding of these legacies and transform these injustices into actions to repair past harms. In that context, the present overture on restorative justice and reparations is timely and welcome.

We understand that the recommendations of this Overture are complex in their implementation. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbytery of Baltimore are institutionally White (that is, majority White membership and White European in its origins and polity). At the same time, we are also a community with Black Americans, Indigenous Americans, and other people of color, and persons of many different nationalities and ethnic origins. Through our conversations and study as part of our Dismantling Racism work, our White members have become increasingly aware of the different histories

we carry within our individual churches and the Presbytery, histories that are born of different racial experiences and passed down through different traditions. As a White institution, we have too often privileged the White voices while silencing and obfuscating the voices of Black American members and other people of color. It is, therefore, the burden of the White members to apologize to our Black American siblings within the PCUSA. We confess together and repent together as members of one body, one community of faith, and one institution. These sins, which we are only now willing to confess and acknowledge as "the log in our eye," have been all too visible to our Black American members and have come too late for some.

Teaching a fully inclusive history of the United States

We affirm the importance of revisiting our history, as a nation and as a Church in all its expressions, as necessary to an authentic act of repentance and understanding the work of reparations before us. Our understanding of history must be fully inclusive of voices that have long been silenced. That inclusion requires constant vigilance against continued efforts and measures seeking to conceal or exclude them further. We have heard some who reject the idea of restorative justice, including reparations, as an appropriate remedy for the legacy of slavery and racial injustice in the United States because those who enslaved or who were enslaved are no longer living today or because the federal government does not have the means of implementing such a program. These arguments result from the incomplete record of American history that the PCUSA's Office of Public Witness advocacy would combat under this Overture.

Following the 250 years of chattel slavery that began in the colonies and continued in the United States, 100 years of Jim Crow laws continued the abuse and discrimination of and against Black Americans, including many who are alive today. Even into the Civil Rights era, much of the progressive legislation of the mid-20th century was written in an implicitly racially discriminatory fashion. As Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) argued in a 2019 House of Representatives subcommittee hearing on H.R. 40, "Many of the bedrock policies, in fact, that ushered generations of Americans into the middle class were designed to exclude African Americans, from the GI Bill to Social Security, intentionally designed to exclude Blacks, as was school segregation, redlining..."^{ix} Far from distant memories, these injustices continue to contribute to racial disparities in health, education, criminal justice, and economic and environmental well-being. Likewise, there are multiple instances of reparative actions taken or considered by the federal government throughout its history, from the broken promise of "40 acres and a mule" to the newly emancipated and the contemporary reparations that *were* paid out to their former enslavers to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that paid out \$1.6B in reparations to the living victims of the racist internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

In refuting arguments and laws prohibiting this fully inclusive understanding of our nation's history, the Office of Public Witness would work to repair the historic failure of the PCUSA to speak out against such injustices.

Encouraging congregations, presbyteries, and synods to study their histories

The Baltimore Presbytery and many of its churches have undertaken independent studies of their respective and shared histories, a process that we have found generally rewarding and motivating in our pursuit of racial justice and reconciliation efforts. We here share some of what we have learned in the spirit of this Overture that encourages PCUSA congregations to do the same.

The period immediately before the Civil War was a period of general prosperity and rapid expansion for the Presbytery of Baltimore, with eight Presbyterian churches founded in the city between 1844 and

1855 alone.^x Among them, only Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church was established to serve a primarily Black congregation, and it was founded under a White pastor (indicative of the generally patronizing and paternalistic perspective taken by White Presbyterians of the day towards their Black neighbors). Madison Avenue eventually installed a series of Black pastors in later years, including Rev. Hiram Revels, who later became the first Black man to serve in the United States Senate. In other churches, both free and enslaved Black congregants were counted among their membership. Still, Black congregants were relegated to back seats or the gallery, and separate mission schools and Bible classes were established for them.

It is unlikely that this rapid expansion of the Presbytery could have been accomplished without profiting in some way from the active enslavement of people, which comprised a large segment of the American economy at the time. For example, census reports from 1850 and 1860 reveal that several members of the committee to establish South Presbyterian Church (now Light Street), comprised of representatives from First Presbyterian, Central Presbyterian, and South Presbyterian churches, held ownership over enslaved people.^{xi} Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church was founded in 1869 with a \$150k endowment (equivalent to \$3 million in 2022^{xii}) from Isabella Brown in memory of her husband, George Brown. George Brown worked in his father's investment banking firm, Alex Brown and Sons, an international trading firm that was the leading exporters of cotton to Liverpool, actively participated in the trafficking of enslaved people across the Atlantic, and as the oldest investment bank in the United States (founded by Alexander Brown in 1800 in Baltimore) provided loans to plantation owners.

The Civil War years were particularly divisive for Maryland as a border state. When the 73rd General Assembly adopted Gardiner Spring's Resolutions (1861), formally opposing secession and committing the Presbyterian church to "promote and perpetuate...the integrity of these United States and to strengthen, uphold, and encourage the Federal Government... and to [the] Constitution... we profess our unabated loyalty" in Philadelphia in May 1861, the commissioners from Baltimore voted against it. They instead joined a protest motion from Dr. Charles Hodge of New Brunswick Presbytery, which argued that secession was a political matter and not within the domain of the church.^{xiii} As the Rev. John Chester Backus of First Presbyterian Church of Baltimore argued on a separate occasion, "there could be no justification for allowing political differences to become the subject of discord and division in religious matters."^{xiv} Furthermore, we are aware of at least one pastor from the Presbytery of Baltimore who joined the Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States of America for the duration of the war, only to be reinstated as pastor at a different PCUSA church in Baltimore upon his return at the war's end.^{xv}

Following the Civil War and throughout Reconstruction and beyond, the PCUSA maintained a Board of Missions for Freedman that established schools for formerly enslaved Black youth in the south.^{xvi} These were high-performing and well-resourced educational institutions, with funding reaching \$250k in 1918, equivalent to approximately \$4.7M in 2020 dollars. Nevertheless, the question of whether the Committee on Freedman should be separate from the Board of Home Missions was debated even among Black Presbyterian pastors, and it was eventually folded into what is now the Presbyterian Mission Agency.^{xvii} As noted in the rationale for the Overture provided by the Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery, the early 20th century saw a division of attention by Presbyterian leadership, with a de-emphasis on racial justice in favor of unemployment, the temperance movement, and other social policies even as Jim Crow laws continued to erase the gains made during Reconstruction.

While the PCUSA did not respond to the Black Manifesto of 1969, which called for \$500M from "White churches and synagogues" to support programs towards economic growth, educational opportunities, and the psychological well-being of the Black community, members of the Presbytery of Baltimore were

nevertheless active during the Civil Rights movement. This commitment has continued through the latter part of the 20th century and into the present in participation in community organizing efforts through organizations such as BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development). These efforts have led to a recent, renewed interest in exploring the possibility for restorative and reparative justice actions to be taken.

Conclusion

We understand/acknowledge and reaffirm that dismantling racism is part of the enduring work of the Church, requiring sustained commitment and honest assessment and evaluation. Like the prophet Micah, we ask what the Lord requires of us at this time. And the answer remains the same, “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). Humility requires honest truth-telling. It is incumbent upon the Church, individually and collectively, to say, to name, to confess—privately and in the public square—all the ways the Church has failed to act justly, love mercy, and in our arrogance refused to walk in the way of God. We affirm this Overture’s call to ground these recommendations for action in the form of an apology. It is a call to public confession and repentance. One of the hallmarks of worship in the Reformed tradition is the corporate prayer of confession, when we humbly confess the reality of sin in our personal and common life.

We are free to confess sin and repent because we are assured of and confident in God’s faithfulness in Christ to redeem, to save, to forgive, to renew, to make all things new” (Rev. 21:5). Confession and repentance open us as the body of Christ to receive God’s grace, which alone has the power to move us, together, into a new day, a new future. Therefore, we applaud the Overture drafters for the comprehensiveness of the proposed apology. In countless meetings of the Presbytery’s Dismantling Racism Team, we affirmed that racism is sin, and therefore the Church’s responsibility to dismantle racism must be theologically grounded. Confession is a matter of the heart. As in all honest confessions, a public apology is not only a message to those who have been wronged, it can also open the hearts of those who confess to repair that which has been broken within and between us and God. This apology is long overdue.

We concur with this Overture for its movement from an apology to restorative action. We have come to understand that simply acknowledging the truth of harms that have been committed and confessing our role and complicity in those harms is not sufficient for achieving reconciliation. After apologizing for the role we have played as a denomination (and individual congregations) to those who have suffered those harms, we must work actively to repair the damage done. We concur with this Overture for the critical connections it makes between studying a more inclusive history to inform our acts of reparation because study without action is hollow and action without understanding lacks accountability. We concur with this Overture because we see all three of these elements: apology, history, and restorative action as helpful next steps in our journey as a Presbytery and we welcome the invitation to share our history, study, and actions with our Presbyterian siblings as we work both individually and collectively toward the vision of reconciliation so eloquently expressed in the Confession of Belhar.

ⁱ Rev. Kelly Brown Douglas, “A Christian Call for Reparations,” *Sojourners*, July 2020. Available online at: <https://sojo.net/magazine/july-2020/christian-call-case-slavery-reparations-kelly-brown-douglas>

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- ⁱⁱ Rev. Mary Speers, honorably retired, “Unrighteous Mammon – Jesus and the Parable of the Dishonest Steward,” Part of *B’More Human Series*, “Reparations: What We Owe, Part 1,” October, 18 2021. Viewable online at: https://youtu.be/H_Me0rqpe2U
- ⁱⁱⁱ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” 16 April 1963. Available online at: <https://letterfromjail.com/>
- ^{iv} “Overture to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.,” *Minutes of the 870th Gathering of the Presbytery of Baltimore*, p. 25, Faith Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland, February 11, 2016.
- ^v “Resolution to the Presbytery of Baltimore at its Stated Meeting on February 11, 2016 from the Commission on Reconciliation,” *Minutes of the 870th Gathering of the Presbytery of Baltimore*, p. 27, Faith Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland, February 11, 2016.
- ^{vi} “Report on Dismantling Racism Trainings in the Presbytery of Baltimore,” October 2020.
- ^{vii} The *In the Loop Ministry Group* is one of six ministry groups in the Presbytery of Baltimore and is made up of 12 churches in Baltimore City. Ministry Groups are intended to strengthen the bonds among congregations by working together to encourage Christian Formation; Congregational and Leader Development; Missional Engagement, the Creation of New Faith Communities; as well as, Prophetic Witness and Action for Reconciliation. The six Ministry Groups are facilitated by conveners elected by their members.
- ^{viii} Recordings of the B’More Human Series are available online at: <https://baltimorepresbytery.org/dismantling-racism/>
- ^{ix} Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.), “Hearing on Slavery Reparations,” *Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Constitutional Civil Rights and Liberties, U.S. House of Representatives*, 19 June 2019. Available online at: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?461767-1/house-judiciary-subcommittee-examines-case-slavery-reparations>
- ^x Rev. Joseph T. Smith, *Eighty Years: Embracing a History of Presbyterianism in Baltimore, with an Appendix*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1899.
- ^{xi} Christopher A. Watson, “Light Street Presbyterian Church and Race: A Historical Perspective,” April 11, 2021. Available online at: <https://lightstreetchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LSPC-Racial-History-Report.pdf>
- ^{xii} Using a Consumer Price Index Calculator the Brown donation would be the equivalent to \$3,075,022 in 2022 purchasing power. <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/>
- ^{xiii} *Minutes of the 73rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, Seventh Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 16, 1861.
- ^{xiv} William Reynolds, *A brief history of the First Presbyterian church of Baltimore*, 1913.
- ^{xv} *Statistical Report, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America*, 1861; Rev. James Stacy, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in Georgia*, 1912; Willard E. Wight, “The Diary of the Reverend Charles S. Vedder, May-July, 1861.” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 39, p. 68-90, 1955.
- ^{xvi} Kristen Gaydos, “A Look Back at the General Assemblies in Saint Louis,” *Blog of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, June 20, 2018. Available online at: <https://history.pcusa.org/about/blog/st.-louis>
- ^{xvii} *Minutes of the 82nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 1870.