

MINUTES
of the
FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA
IN TWO VOLUMES

Both volumes are included in this digital version.

VOLUME 1

PART I: Directory of General Assembly Committees and Agencies

PART II: Journal

PART III: Appendices A-S

VOLUME 2

PART III: Appendices T-X

PART IV: Corrections to Previous Minutes

Part V: References and Index

June 21-24, 2022
Birmingham, Alabama

MINUTES
of the
FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

VOLUME 1 of 2

PLEASE NOTE:

1. The pages of Volume 1 and Volume 2 are numbered consecutively.
2. The INDEX to both volumes is found at the back of Volume 2.

VOLUME 1, pp. 1-684

PART I: Directory of General Assembly Committees and Agencies

PART II: Daily Journal

PART III: Appendices A-S

VOLUME 2, pp. 685-1414

PART III: Appendices T-X

PART IV: Corrections to Previous Minutes

Part V: References and Index

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**MINUTES OF THE
FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

PART I DIRECTORY

I.	Officers of the General Assembly	5
II.	Ministries of the General Assembly	6
III.	Permanent Committees.....	7
IV.	Agencies	10
V.	Special Committees	13
VI.	Standing Judicial Commission	14
VII.	Ad Interim Study Committee	14

PART II JOURNAL (see *Note, p. 2).....	15
Quick Reference Guide to Sessions and Item Numbers	1395

PART III APPENDICES	137
----------------------------------	-----

PERMANENT COMMITTEE AND AGENCY REPORTS

APPENDIX A	Stated Clerk	139
APPENDIX B	Board of Directors	185
APPENDIX C	Administrative Committee.....	191
APPENDIX D	Committee on Discipleship Ministries.....	283
APPENDIX E	Covenant College.....	293
APPENDIX F	Covenant Theological Seminary.....	299
APPENDIX G	Mission to North America	320
APPENDIX H	Mission to the World	343
APPENDIX I	PCA Foundation	365
APPENDIX J	PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.	375
APPENDIX K	Reformed University Fellowship.....	384
APPENDIX L	Ridge Haven	408

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

APPENDIX M	Cooperative Ministries Committee	411
APPENDIX N	Interchurch Relations Committee	412
APPENDIX O	Committee on Constitutional Business.....	419
APPENDIX P	Nominating Committee.....	437
	Supplemental Report	469
APPENDIX Q	Theological Examining Committee.....	479
APPENDIX R	Committee on Review of Presbytery Records...	482

CONTENTS (Continued)

OTHER REPORTS

APPENDIX S Attendance Report639
APPENDIX T Standing Judicial Commission685
Supplemental Report875
APPENDIX U Committee on Thanks947

AD INTERIM COMMITTEE REPORTS

APPENDIX V Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse
and Sexual Assault.....949

OVERTURES

APPENDIX W Overtures to 49th General Assembly..... 1267

COMMUNICATIONS

NoneN/A

WORSHIP SERVICE

APPENDIX X Tuesday Evening Worship 1385

PART IV CORRECTIONS TO PREVIOUS MINUTES 1387

PART V REFERENCES AND INDEX

Docket1389
Quick Reference Guide to Sessions and Item Numbers1395
Index1397

***Note – re:** Recommendations in Reports of Committees of Commissioners

Double underlining in CoC Recommendations indicates that the Committee of Commissioners added or changed the wording from the original Permanent Committee or Agency Recommendation. (Where the original Permanent Committee or Agency Report has proposed a change in the *BCO* or *RAO*, that change is indicated by single underlining.)

SUCCESSION OF MODERATORS

ASSEMBLY	YEAR	NAME	PLACE OF ASSEMBLY
1st	1973	RE W. Jack Williamson	Birmingham, AL
2nd	1974	TE Erskine L. Jackson	Macon, GA
3rd	1975	RE Leon F. Hendrick	Jackson, MS
4th	1976	TE William A. McIlwaine	Greenville, SC
5th	1977	RE John T. Clark	Smyrna, GA
6th	1978	TE G. Aiken Taylor	Grand Rapids, MI
7th	1979	RE William F. Joseph Jr.	Charlotte, NC
8th	1980	TE Paul G. Settle	Savannah, GA
9th	1981	RE Kenneth L. Ryskamp	Fort Lauderdale, FL
10th	1982	TE R. Laird Harris	Grand Rapids, MI
11th	1983	RE L. B. Austin III	Norfolk, VA
12th	1984	TE James M. Baird Jr.	Baton Rouge, LA
13th	1985	RE Richard C. Chewning	St. Louis, MO
14th	1986	TE Frank M. Barker Jr.	Philadelphia, PA
15th	1987	RE Gerald Sovereign	Grand Rapids, MI
16th	1988	TE D. James Kennedy	Knoxville, TN
17th	1989	RE John B. White, Jr.	La Mirada, CA
18th	1990	TE Cortez A. Cooper Jr.	Atlanta, GA
19th	1991	RE Mark Belz	Birmingham, AL
20th	1992	TE W. Wilson Benton Jr.	Roanoke, VA
21st	1993	RE G. Richard Hostetter	Columbia, SC
22nd	1994	TE William S. Barker II	Atlanta, GA
23rd	1995	RE Frank A. Brock	Dallas, TX
24th	1996	TE Charles A. McGowan	Fort Lauderdale, FL
25th	1997	RE Samuel J. Duncan	Colorado Springs, CO
26th	1998	TE Kennedy Smartt	St. Louis, MO
		TE Donald B. Patterson (Honorary)	
27th	1999	RE Thomas F. Leopard	Louisville, KY
28th	2000	TE Morton H. Smith	Tampa, FL
29th	2001	RE Stephen M. Fox	Dallas, TX
30th	2002	TE Joseph F. "Skip" Ryan	Birmingham, AL
31st	2003	RE Joel Belz	Charlotte, NC
32nd	2004	TE J. Ligon Duncan III	Pittsburgh, PA
33rd	2005	RE Howard Q. Davis Jr.	Chattanooga, TN
34th	2006	TE Dominic A. Aquila	Atlanta, GA
35th	2007	RE E. J. Nusbaum	Memphis, TN
36th	2008	TE Paul D. Kooistra	Dallas, TX
37th	2009	RE Bradford L. "Brad" Bradley	Orlando, FL

MODERATORS, continued

ASSEMBLY	YEAR	NAME	PLACE OF ASSEMBLY
38th	2010	TE Harry L. Reeder III	Nashville, TN
39th	2011	RE Daniel A. Carrell	Virginia Beach, VA
40th	2012	TE Michael F. Ross	Louisville, KY
41st	2013	RE Bruce Terrell	Greenville, SC
42nd	2014	TE Bryan S. Chapell	Houston, TX
43rd	2015	RE James W. Wert Jr.	Chattanooga, TN
44th	2016	TE George W. Robertson Jr.	Mobile, AL
45th	2017	RE Alexander Jun	Greensboro, NC
46th	2018	TE Irwyn L. Ince Jr.	Atlanta, GA
47th	2019	RE J. Howard "Howie" Donahoe	Dallas, TX
48th	2021	TE L. Roy Taylor	St. Louis, MO
49th	2022	RE John R. Bise	Birmingham, AL

SUCCESSION OF STATED CLERKS

YEARS	NAME
1973 - 1988	TE Morton H. Smith
1988 - 1998	TE Paul R. Gilchrist
1998 - 2020	TE L. Roy Taylor Jr.
2021 -	TE Bryan Chapell

PART I

DIRECTORY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES 2022-2023

I. OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Moderator

RE John R. Bise
620 Owens Drive SE
Huntsville, AL 35801-1819
Phone: 256-337-6004
E-mail: jbise@johnbise.net

Stated Clerk

TE Bryan Chapell
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1000
E-mail: ac@pcanet.org

II. MINISTRIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Administration

TE Bryan Chapell, Coordinator
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1000
Email: ac@pcanet.org
www.pcaac.org

Committee on Discipleship Ministries

TE Stephen T. Estock, Coordinator
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 102
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1100
Email: sestock@pcanet.org
www.pcacdm.org

Covenant College

RE J. Derek Halvorson, President
14049 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mountain, GA 30750-4164
Phone: 706-419-1117
Email: derek.halvorson@covenant.edu
www.covenant.edu

Covenant Theological Seminary

TE Tom C. Gibbs, President
12330 Conway Road
St. Louis, MO 63141-8609
Phone: 314-434-4044
Email: tom.gibbs@covenantseminary.edu
www.covenantseminary.edu

Mission to North America

TE Irwyn Ince, Coordinator
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 101
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1200
Email: iince@pcanet.org
www.pcamna.org

Mission to the World

TE Lloyd Kim, Coordinator
1600 North Brown Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8141
Phone: 678-823-0004
Email: lloyd.kim@mtw.org
www.mtw.org

PCA Foundation, Inc.

RE Timothy W. Townsend, President
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 103
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1040
Email: ttownsend@pcanet.org
www.pcafoundation.com

Geneva Benefits

Formerly PCA Retirement & Benefits
TE Edward W. Dunnington, President
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 106
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1260
Email: ed.dunnington@pcarbi.org
www.pcarbi.org

Reformed University Fellowship

RE Will W. Huss Jr., Coordinator
1700 North Brown Road, Suite 104
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143
Phone: 678-825-1070
Email: will.huss@ruf.org
www.ruf.org

Ridge Haven

RE Wallace Anderson, Exec. Director
215 Ridge Haven Road
Brevard, NC 28712
Phone: 828-862-3916
Email: wallace@ridgehaven.org
www.ridgehaven.org

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DIRECTORY

**III. PERMANENT COMMITTEES
(2022-2023)**

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: TE Robert Brunson **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Jerry Schriver
SECRETARY: RE Pat Hodge

Class of 2026

TE Michael Dixon, Fellowship

RE Danny McDaniel, Houston Metro

Class of 2025

TE Roger G. Collins, Mississippi Valley
TE Steve Jeantet, Suncoast Florida

RE Richard Dolan, Georgia Foothills

Class of 2024

TE Robert F. Brunson, Metro Atlanta

RE Frank Cohee, Providence
RE Pat Hodge, Calvary

Class of 2023

TE Jerry Schriver, Metro Atlanta
TE Kevin DeYoung, Central Carolina

RE David Nok Daniel, S. New England

Alternates

TE Jon C. Anderson, Blue Ridge

RE Alan Walters, Mississippi Valley

Chairman of Committee or Board, or Designate

TE Thomas M. Harr, New Jersey
Committee on Discipleship Ministries

RE Martin A. Moore, Georgia Foothills
Covenant College

TE Blake Altman, Hills and Plains
Mission to North America

TE Brian Habig, Calvary
Covenant Theological Seminary

TE James Richter, Tennessee Valley
Mission to the World

TE Martin Wagner, Evangel
PCA Foundation

TE Jason Sterling, Evangel
Reformed University Fellowship

RE James W. Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta
Geneva Benefits

RE Dan Nielsen, Savannah River
Ridge Haven

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

CHAIRMAN: TE Thomas Michael Harr Jr. **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE W. Scott Barber

SECRETARY: RE Bill Bolling

Class of 2027

TE Christopher Lee Hutchings., Ohio RE Randy Stair, Metro Atlanta
RE Taylor Clement, Missouri

Class of 2026

TE W. Scott Barber, Providence RE Dan Barber, Central Indiana
TE Dean Williams, Mississippi Valley

Class of 2025

TE Thomas Michael Harr Jr., New Jersey RE Jacob Lightsey Wallace, James River
RE Jeremy Whitley, South Texas

Class of 2024

TE Charles Johnson, Nashville RE Dennis Crowe, Southeast Alabama
TE Dave Lindberg, New Jersey

Class of 2023

TE Danny Kwon, Korean Eastern RE Bill Bolling, Chesapeake
RE Jack Wilkerson, Piedmont Triad

Alternates

TE Richard Burguet, Central Florida RE Aaron Douglas Raines, Hills & Plains

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA

CHAIRMAN: TE Blake Altman **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TBD

SECRETARY: RE Eugene Betts

Class of 2027

TE Dean Faulkner, Central Carolina RE Timothy Threadgill, Mississippi Valley
TE Hansoo Jin, Korean Capital

Class of 2026

TE Roland Barnes, Savannah River RE Brent Andersen, Central Carolina
RE Jason Kang, Metro Atlanta

Class of 2025

TE R. Lyle Caswell Jr., Southwest Florida RE Ernie Shipman, N. New England
TE Robert A. Willetts, Tidewater

Class of 2024

TE Robert Penny, Mississippi Valley RE Keith W. Goben, Pacific Northwest
RE Timothy L. Murr, Grace

Class of 2023

TE Robert A. Cargo, Metro Atlanta RE Lance Kinzer, Heartland
TE Blake A. Altman, Hills and Plains

Alternates

TBD RE Bruce Wells, Eastern Carolina

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DIRECTORY

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO THE WORLD

CHAIRMAN: TE Patrick Womack **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE James Richter
SECRETARY: TE William Dempsey **TREASURER:** TE Theodore Hamilton

Class of 2027

TE Maranatha Chung, Philadelphia RE Theo Hagg, Westminster
TE Owen Lee, Korean Capital

Class of 2026

TE Shaun M. Nolan, Pittsburgh RE John E. Bateman, North Texas
RE Oscar R. Aylor, Eastern Carolina

Class of 2025

TE Brett W. Carl, Tidewater RE Byron Johnson, Metro Atlanta
TE William E. Dempsey, Mississippi Valley

Class of 2024

TE James E. Richter, Tennessee Valley RE Daryl Brister, Huston Metro
RE Norman Leo Mooney, Missouri

Class of 2023

TE Patrick J. Womack, Suncoast Florida RE Hugh S. Potts, Jr., Mississippi Valley
TE Theodore Hamilton, South Coast

Alternates

TE Dan Seale, Eastern Carolina RE David Kliewer, Rocky Mountain

COMMITTEE ON REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

CHAIRMAN: TE Jason Sterling **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE Charles Duggan
SECRETARY: TE Joshua Martin

Class of 2027

TE Martin Biggs, Hills and Plains RE Justen Ellis, Northwest Georgia
TE Eric Zellner, Southeast Alabama

Class of 2026

TE Iron D. Kim, Northern California RE Patrick C. Fant III, Calvary
RE David Hall, Hills & Plains

Class of 2025

TE Joshua A. Martin, Calvary RE Charles Powell Jr., Evangel
TE David Osborne, Eastern Carolina

Class of 2024

TE Hunter M. Bailey, Hills and Plains RE Charles Duggan III, Central Georgia
RE Niles McNeel, Mississippi

Class of 2023

TE Ben Hurst Porter, Missouri RE Michael Martin, Blue Ridge
TE Jason Sterling, Evangel

Alternates

TE Kenneth Foster, Heritage RE Tobe Hester, Lowcountry

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

IV. AGENCIES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT COLLEGE

CHAIRMAN: RE R. Craig Wood **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE John Truschel
SECRETARY: TE Robert S. Rayburn **TREASURER:** RE Martin A. Moore

Class of 2026

TE Thomas Groelsema, Central Carolina	RE Don Mellott, Pacific Northwest
TE Lance Lewis, Northern California	RE Gordon Sluis, Mississippi Valley
TE Sean McGowan, Gulf Coast	
TE Omari Hill, Central Carolina	

Class of 2025

TE Bradley J. Barnes, Southern New England	RE David Caines, Tennessee Valley
TE Alexander Brown, Savannah River	RE Mark Griggs, Tennessee Valley
TE Irwyn L. Ince Jr., Potomac	RE Bradley M. Harris, Covenant
	RE Drew Jelgerhuis, Great Lakes

Class of 2024

TE Matthew David Fray, North Texas	RE Richard T. Bowser, Eastern Carolina
TE Duncan Highmark, Missouri	RE Robert Curtis, Southwest Florida
	RE Martin A. Moore, Georgia Foothills
	RE William H. Ryan, South Florida
	RE Stephen E. Sligh, Southwest Florida

Class of 2023

TE William B. Barclay, Central Carolina	RE David Lucas, Suncoast Florida
TE Robert S. Rayburn, Pacific Northwest	RE Bruce W. Terrell, Metro New York
TE Kevin Smith, Tennessee Valley	RE John Truschel, Southern New England
Vacancy	

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DIRECTORY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHAIRMAN: RE Miles F. Gresham **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Hugh M. Barlett

SECRETARY: RE Frank Wicks

Class of 2026

TE Russell St. John, Missouri

RE James Albritton, Evangel
RE Doug Hickel, Missouri
RE Walter Turner, Pittsburgh

Class of 2025

TE Brian Cosby, Tennessee Valley

RE Samuel N. Graham, Covenant
RE Miles E. Gresham, Evangel
RE Donald Guthrie, Chicago Metro
RE Otis Pickett, Mississippi Valley
RE Curtis S. Shidemantle, Ascension

Class of 2024

TE Hugh M. Barlett, Missouri

RE William Bennett, Evangel
RE Jonathan P. Seda, Heritage
RE Paul R. Stoll, Chicago Metro
RE Gif Thornton, Nashville
RE Frank Wicks Jr., Missouri

Class of 2023

TE Brian C. Habig, Calvary
TE Fredric Ryan Laughlin, Missouri
TE Doug Serven, Hills & Plains

RE Brewster Harrington, Rocky Mountain
RE Robert B. Hayward Jr., Susq. Valley
RE John Plating, Tennessee Valley

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PCA FOUNDATION

CHAIRMAN: TE Martin Wagner **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE W. Russell Trapp

SECRETARY: RE Willis L. Frazer

Class of 2026

RE Owen H. Malcolm, Georgia Foothills
RE W. Russell Trapp, Providence
DE Andrew Schmidt, Central Carolina

Class of 2025

TE Martin Wagner, Evangel

RE Willis L. Frazer, Covenant

Class of 2024

TE Patrick W. Curles, Southeast Alabama

RE John Alexander, Metro Atlanta
RE Rob W. Morton, Central Georgia

Class of 2023

TE Robert Bryant, Palmetto

RE William O. Stone Jr., Miss. Valley

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF GENEVA BENEFITS

CHAIRMAN: RE James W. Wert Jr. **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE Andrew E. Field

SECRETARY: TE Jon Medlock **TREASURER:** RE Chet Lilly

Class of 2026

TE William Chang, Korean SW Orange Co. RE Ken Downer, Highlands
RE Chris Rogers, Covenant

Class of 2025

TE Roderick Miles, Northern California RE Paul A. Fullerton, S. New England
RE Scott P. Magnuson, Pittsburgh

Class of 2024

TE Andrew E. Field, Metropolitan NY RE Ryan Bailey, Metro Atlanta
DE Theodore J. Dankovich, Calvary

Class of 2023

RE S.E. Cody Dick, Houston Metro
RE Keith Passwater, Central Indiana
RE James W. Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF RIDGE HAVEN

PRESIDENT: RE Dan Nielsen **VICE PRESIDENT:** TE James Andrew White

SECRETARY/TREASURER: TE David Sasser Hall

Class of 2027

TE David Sasser Hall, Fellowship
TE Richard Smith, Susquehanna Valley

Class of 2026

RE Art Fox, North Florida
RE Ellison Smith, Pee Dee

Class of 2025

TE Larry Doughan, Iowa RE John Randall Berger, Eastern Carolina

Class of 2024

TE David Hart Sanders, Pee Dee RE Pete Austin IV, Tennessee Valley

Class of 2023

TE J. Andrew White, Westminster RE Dan Nielsen, Savannah River

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DIRECTORY

V. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: RE Richard Leino **SECRETARY:** RE Ned Currie

Class of 2025

TE Guy Richard, Metro Atlanta RE KJ Drake, Eastern Canada

Class of 2024

TE Bruce Baugus, Mississippi Valley RE Edward "Ned" Currie, MS Valley

Class of 2023

TE P. Clay Holland, Houston Metro RE Richard E. Leino, James River

Alternates

TE Kevin Carr, Siouxlans RE Joshua Torrey, South Texas

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN: TE Larry Hoop **SECRETARY:** TE Joel St. Clair

Class of 2026

TE Jason Piland, Ohio RE Bryce Sullivan, Nashville

Class of 2025

TE J. Scott Phillips, Mississippi Valley RE Matt Fender, James River

Class of 2024

TE Joel Craig St. Clair II, Potomac RE Fredric Marcinak, Calvary

Class of 2023

TE Larry C. Hoop, Ohio Valley RE Edward L. Wright, Chesapeake

Alternates

TE Robert D. Cathcart Jr., Calvary RE Chris Shoemaker, S. New England

COMMITTEE ON INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

CHAIRMAN: TE L. Roy Taylor **VICE CHAIRMAN:** TE E. Marvin Padgett
SECRETARY: RE James Walters

Class of 2025

TE Wallace Tinsley, Fellowship RE Billy Ball, Evangel

Class of 2024

TE L. Roy Taylor, Georgia Foothills RE James Isbell, Tennessee Valley

Class of 2023

TE Elmer Marvin Padgett Jr., Nashville RE James D. Walters Jr., Calvary

Alternate

TE David Gilleran, Blue Ridge RE Dennis Watts, Mississippi Valley

Ex-Officio Member

TE Bryan Chapell, Northern Illinois

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

VI. STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION

CHAIRMAN: RE Jack Wilson **VICE CHAIRMAN:** RE Samuel Duncan
SECRETARY: RE Howie Donahoe **ASST. SECRETARY:** TE Fred Greco

Class of 2026

TE Art Sartorius, Siouxlands	RE James Eggert, Southwest Florida
TE Fred Greco, Houston Metro	RE John Bise, Providence
TE Guy Prentiss Waters, Mississippi Valley	RE John Pickering, Evangel

Class of 2025

TE Paul L. Bankson, Central Georgia	RE Steve Dowling, Southeast Alabama
TE David F. Coffin Jr., Potomac	RE Frederick Neikirk, Ascension
TE Paul D. Kooistra, Warrior	RE R. Jackson Wilson, Georgia Foothills

Class of 2024

TE Hoochan Paul Lee, Korean Northeastern	RE Howie Donahoe, Pacific Northwest
TE Sean M. Lucas, Covenant	RE Melton Ledford Duncan, Calvary
TE Michael F. Ross, Columbus Metro	RE Samuel J. Duncan, Grace

Class of 2023

TE David Garner, Philadelphia Metro West	RE Daniel A. Carrell, James River
TE Carl F. Ellis Jr., Tennessee Valley	RE Bruce W. Terrell, Metropolitan NY
TE Charles E. McGowan, Nashville	RE John B. White Jr., Metro Atlanta

Clerk of the Commission

TE Bryan Chapell, Northern Illinois

VII. AD INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Voting Members

TE T. Calhoun Boroughs III, Tennessee Valley
RE Kelly Dehnert, Rocky Mountain
RE Robert Goudzwaard, Central Carolina
RE David Haburchak, Metro Atlanta
TE Timothy LeCroy, Missouri, **Chairman**
TE Lloyd Pierson, Rocky Mountain
TE Shane Waldron, Rocky Mountain

Advisory Members

Mrs. Rachael Denhollander
Mrs. Ann Maree Goudzwaard
Dr. Diane Langberg
Dr. Barbara W. Shaffer
Mrs. Darby A. Strickland

PART II

JOURNAL

MINUTES OF THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

First Session – Tuesday Evening
June 21, 2022

49-1 Assembly Called to Order and Opening Worship

The Forty-ninth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America gathered for the opening worship service at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex in Birmingham, Alabama. Outgoing Moderator, TE L. Roy Taylor, Jr., called the Assembly to order for worship and observance of the Lord's Supper.

Following worship, the Assembly recessed at 8:10 p.m. to reconvene at 8:20 p.m.

49-2 Assembly Reconvened – Declaration of Quorum and Enrollment

The Moderator reconvened the Assembly at 8:22 p.m. for business and asked TE Paul Bankson to open the Assembly in prayer. The Moderator declared a quorum present, with 663 Ruling Elders and 1499 Teaching Elders (2,162 total) enrolled.

49-3 Nominations for Moderator

The Moderator opened the floor for nominations for Moderator of the Forty-ninth General Assembly.

RE Howie Donahoe placed in nomination RE John Bise of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Alabama.

TE Harry Reeder placed in nomination RE Melton Duncan of Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina.

A **motion** to close the nominations was made, seconded, and **adopted**, and the Moderator declared nominations closed.

At the Moderator's request, Mr. Jonathan Calloway briefed the Assembly on the use of the voting devices for the Assembly.

Voting for Moderator was delayed as commissioners sought assistance with their electronic voting devices. The Moderator moved on to other business while the technical issues were being resolved.

49-4 Docket

TE Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk, presented the Docket (p. 1389), which was moved, seconded, and passed. The Moderator declared the docket **adopted**.

49-5 Report of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

TE Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk, presented his report, opening with prayer. He expressed thanks to Evangel Presbytery for its work in planning both the present Assembly and a 2020 Assembly, which had to be postponed because of the Covid pandemic. Dr. Chapell reported on the membership statistics of the PCA as well as the effects of COVID-19 on congregations of the PCA. He continued to update the Assembly on the overall health of the PCA and emphasized that we continue to be a people of the Word with a heart for the nations. (For the full Report of the Stated Clerk, see Appendix A, p. 139.)

49-6 Election of Moderator

The Assembly proceeded to vote for Moderator, and RE John Bise was **elected**, 945-856.

Moderator Bise was escorted to the podium by RE Donahoe and assumed the chair. He briefly addressed the Assembly.

TE Bob Brunson, Chairman of the Administrative Committee, presented to retiring Moderator Taylor a plaque in token of the Assembly's appreciation for his year of service as Moderator of the 48th General Assembly.

49-7 Election of Clerks, Assistant Parliamentarians, and Committee on Thanks

On recommendation by the Stated Clerk to the Moderator, the following men were **elected**, by the **adoption** of an in gross **motion**, to serve the Assembly: TEs Paul L. Bankson, Hoochan Paul Lee, Kenneth A. McHeard, D. Steven Meyerhoff, and RE Dr. Robert Berman, recording clerks; TE Per Almquist, timekeeper; Initial Production Group (IPG), event technology production team; RE Richard "Ric" Springer, Chairman of the floor clerks;

TE Tom Taylor, Vice Chairman of the floor clerks; TE Tom Stein, Assistant to the Chairman of the Floor Clerks; TE Larry Roff, Assembly organist; REs Sam Duncan and John B. White Jr., and TE Randy Schlichting, assistant parliamentarians; and RE Phil VanValkenburg and TE Jon Medlock, Committee on Thanks. TE L. Roy Taylor was identified as Stated Clerk Emeritus.

49-8 Commission to Review Final Minutes

The Moderator appointed TEs Steve Meyerhoff, Randy Schlichting, and Roy Taylor, and RE John White as a Commission to review the final minutes.

49-9 BCO Amendments Sent by 48th Assembly to the Presbyteries

The Moderator reported on the *BCO* amendments sent down by the 48th General Assembly to Presbyteries for voting (note: one additional presbytery submitted votes after the Stated Clerk's written report was finalized): **Item 1.** 83-2; **Item 2.** 53-32; **Item 3.** 78-7; **Item 4.** 45-40; **Item 5.** 84-1; **Item 6.** 84-0; **Item 7.** 72-13; **Item 8.** 83-2. An affirmative vote by two-thirds of the presbyteries (59 of 88 presbyteries) is required for adoption of a *BCO* amendment. **Items 1, 3, and 5-8** were ratified by the presbyteries.

The following *BCO* Amendments, passed and approved by the 48th General Assembly and by the requisite number of Presbyteries, were presented to the 49th Assembly for final approval. (See pp. 155-175).

Item 1: Amendment to *BCO* 12-6 and 13-4 was adopted by the Assembly.

Item 3: Amendment to *BCO* 20-4, 24-3, 24-4 was adopted by the Assembly.

Item 5: Amendment to *BCO* 22-2 was adopted by the Assembly.

Item 6: Amendment to *BCO* 24-1 was adopted by the Assembly.

Item 7: Amendment to *BCO* 32-20 was adopted 1179-363 by the Assembly

Item 8: Amendment to *BCO* 38-1 was adopted by the Assembly.

49-10 Vacancies to be Filled

The Stated Clerk informed the Nominating Committee through the Moderator of the following resignations that need to be filled: TE Hunter Bailey, Reformed University Fellowship, and RE Bruce Narveson, Committee on Discipleship Ministry

49-11 Partial Report of the Committee of Commissioners on Administrative Committee

RE Jack Watkins, Chairman of the Committee of Commissioners, led the Assembly in prayer and presented the partial report. He proposed a substitute from the Committee of Commissioners to the Permanent Committee **Recommendation 3**, namely, to answer Overture 1 in the affirmative, thereby amending *RAO* 15-8.a to make the Overtures Committee report an Order of the Day following the Nominating Committee report. (See AC CoC report, p. 66.)

RE Jim Wert spoke on behalf of the Permanent Committee's recommendation to answer Overture 1 in the negative, referring commissioners to the grounds given (see Appendix C, p. 204).

RE Watkins, CoC Chairman, yielded his time for rebuttal to TE Fred Greco, who spoke in favor of the substitute motion.

Stated Clerk TE Bryan Chapell spoke to the issue and argued against passage of the substitute motion.

The **substitute motion** to answer Overture 1 in the affirmative was **defeated**, 648-772.

The Moderator explained that the vote to decline the substitute motion served to **adopt** the Permanent Committee's **Recommendation 3 to answer Overture 1 in the negative**.

Re Watkins closed the report in prayer.

49-12 Partial Report of the Overtures Committee

RE Steven Vanderhill, Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and began the report, presenting two Overtures for discussion (see p. 103; p. 111).

Recommendation 24, that Overture 24 be answered in the affirmative, was **adopted**, 1272-37, amending *RAO* 11-2 and 11-10 to clarify who may submit an overture.

Recommendation 32, that Overture 32 be answered in the negative, was **adopted**, 876-458, thereby declining to amend *RAO* 8-4.

The Overtures Committee requested and was granted permission to be excused from the Assembly at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22, to reconvene and continue its work.

The Chairman closed his partial report with prayer.

49-13 Partial Report of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC)

TE Fred Greco, Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and presented the partial report, moving proposed changes to *OMSJC* (see Appendix T, p. 871).

The four recommendations, presented in gross, were **adopted**, 1233-25, meeting the required 2/3 majority and a majority of those registered for the Assembly (*RAO 17-5*).

The chairman closed his partial report with prayer.

49-14 Cooperative Ministries Committee (CMC) Report

RE Howie Donahoe, Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and presented the report (see Appendix M, p. 411), which was received as information.

The Chairman closed with prayer.

49-15 Procedural Motion to Postpone

TE David Coffin offered a **procedural motion** proposing that after the chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Business had given a survey of the report and directed commissioners to the pertinent documents in Sharefile.com, any discussion of the report be postponed until after lunch on Wednesday. The motion was seconded and **adopted** by voice vote.

49-16 Partial Report of the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB)

TE Larry Hoop, Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and presented the partial report, pointing out the duties of the CCB as defined in *RAO 8-2.b*, *15-6.1-o*, and *17.1*. He noted that a Minority Report had been submitted in regard to the review of SJC Minutes for April 30, 2021 (see p. 435), and explained how a CCB Minority Report differs from other Minority Reports presented to the Assembly. He directed Commissioners to the CCB rationale for its ruling on the April 30 SJC minutes (see p. 432).

TE Fred Greco advised Commissioners that the SJC pages relevant to this matter could be found in the SJC Supplemental Report (p. 875).

The Chairman closed the report with prayer.

49-17 Motion to Postpone CCB Report

A motion made by TE David Richter to amend the motion postponing the CCB Report from "after lunch on Wednesday" to 3:00 p.m. was **adopted**.

49-18 Theological Examining Committee Report

RE Rich Leino, Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and presented the report, noting that during the year candidates for one first-level and two second-level positions had sustained successful examinations. The report (see Appendix Q, p. 479) was received as information.

The Chairman closed with prayer.

49-19 Assembly Recessed

The Assembly recessed at 10:50 p.m. to reconvene at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

**Second Session - Wednesday Morning
June 22, 2022**

49-20 Assembly Reconvened and Announcements

The Assembly reconvened at 9:30 a.m. on June 22, 2022, being called to order by the Moderator. At the Moderator's request, TE Larry Roff, presented a brief story of the hymn "The Church's One Foundation" and led the Assembly in singing. RE EJ Nussbaum led the Assembly in prayer.

49-21 Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

TE Tim LeCroy, Chairman, opened with prayer and presented the report after introducing the members of the Committee (see p. 949). Chairman LeCroy explained that the report was not a denominational assessment, but rather a theological, Biblical, and pastoral study of the nature of abuse, giving (1) the Biblical and Confessional foundations for understanding abuse, and (2) pastoral and practical applications. Individual sections of the report were presented by Committee members RE Kelly Dehnert, TE Lloyd Pearson, and TE Shane Walter, and advisory members Mrs. Rachel Denhollander, Mrs. Ann Marie Goudzwaard, and Mrs. Darby Strickland.

Chairman LeCroy called the Assembly's attention to the advice given in the study and closed the report with prayer. The Committee was dismissed with thanks and a resounding ovation by the Assembly.

TE Joel Linton rose to request that the Assembly advise committees to refrain in the future from allowing women to exhort adult men in spiritual matters, per the *BCO* and I Timothy 2. The Moderator responded that the request was out of order because the report had been given at the request of the Assembly.

TE Bob Eickelberg rose to request that a counted vote be taken and recorded to show the overwhelming support for the report. The Moderator responded that the Assembly had already approved the report and that the proceedings would be recorded in the *Minutes of General Assembly*.

TE Henry Bolis inquired how questions might be addressed to the Committee. The Moderator advised commissioners to direct questions to Committee members in private, since a question-and-answer session had not been docketed.

49-22 Interchurch Relations Video Presentation from NAE

A video presenting greetings from President Walter Kim of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was viewed by the Assembly.

At the Moderator’s request, Mr. Jonathan Calloway briefed the Assembly again on the use of the voting devices.

49-23 Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee Partial Report

TE Hoochan Paul Lee, Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and presented the report (p. 482). The chairman moved in gross all the Committee’s recommendations except V.6, VI.34, and VI.56. The in gross motion was **adopted** without objection.

Recommendation V.6, to amend *RAO* 16-4.c, was **adopted** with the requisite 2/3 majority of those registered for the Assembly. 1334-23.

Recommendation VI.34, regarding the minutes of the Korean Central Presbytery, was discussed.

TE Stephen Tipton moved an **amendment** to strike the citation and add two exceptions of substance. The motion to amend was **adopted**.

Recommendation VI.34 as amended was **adopted**.

Amended sections of the RPR Report:

IV. Citations

1. Cite the following Presbyteries to appear before the *Standing Judicial Commission* according to the provisions of *BCO* 40-5 for “a credible report” of “an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings”:

None

~~Korean Central Presbytery~~

~~Northwest Georgia Presbytery~~

VI. Report Concerning the Minutes of Each Presbytery

34. That the Minutes of **Korean Central** Presbytery:

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Oct. 13-14, 2020 (BCO 31-2) –
There is no record in the minutes as to how the
Presbytery disposed of accusations against TE
(Name Omitted), TE (Name Omitted), and TE
(Name Omitted).

Exception: April 13-14, 2021 (BCO 13-11, 31-
2, 32-2, 32-3, 32-4, 32-5, 36-1, 36-5, 37-3) –

There is insufficient record in the minutes of actions taken by the Presbytery (as well as documents in support of those actions) pursuant to their handling of an ecclesiastical trial against TE (Name Omitted), such as, but not limited to the allegations against him, the recommendations from an ad interim committee appointed to consider these allegations, the indictment of the prosecutor, the imposition and removal of censure, and several additional motions related to this situation. These missing items need to be either recreated or collected and submitted to the 50th General Assembly.

f. ~~BCO 40-5 Citation:~~

~~The CRPR recommends that the 49th General Assembly:~~

- ~~a. Find that the Korean Central Presbytery's proceedings on October 13-14, 2020, April 13-14, 2021, and July 3, 2021 in the minutes of the Presbytery constitute a "credible report" of "an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings" (BCO 40-5) regarding the handling of the accusations against TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], and TE [name omitted];~~
- ~~b. Cite the Korean Central Presbytery to appear, per BCO 40-5, before the PCA's Standing Judicial Commission which the 49th GA constitutes its commission to adjudicate this matter, by representative or in writing, at the SJC's fall stated meeting, to "show what the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question," following the Operating Manual for the SJC, particularly chapter 15; and~~
- ~~c. Direct the RPR Officers to appoint one or more representatives of the GA and Report (OMSJC 15.2) to present this case to the SJC.~~

Recommendation VI.56, regarding the minutes of Northwest Georgia Presbytery, was presented.

TE Dominic Aquila raised a **point of order** that the citation was out of order

RE Jay Neikerk **challenged** the point of order, referencing a matter before the SJC.

The Moderator **postponed ruling on this point of order** and the remainder of the report until conflicting information could be resolved by the relevant parties. (See Item 49-31, p. 25.)

49-24 Partial Report of the Administrative Committee (AC)

TE Fred Greco **moved** that the General Assembly receive a partial report from the Committee of Commissioners of the Administrative Committee, specifically Recommendation 4 of their report. The motion to receive a partial report was seconded and **adopted**.

RE Jack Watkins, chairman of the of the AC CoC, presented **Recommendation 4**. The recommendation, **answering in the affirmative Overture 22**, to amend *RAO* 3.2.h, was **adopted**, 1267-15, meeting the requirement of 2/3 of Commissioners registered for the Assembly.

49-25 Interchurch Relations Committee Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE Kenneth McHeard, Chairman, read Psalm 121 and led the Assembly in prayer. He yielded to Permanent Committee Chairman TE Roy Taylor, who presented the Committee report (p.412). It was noted that Fraternal Greetings would be made by video at the open and close of sessions of the GA.

CoC Chairman McHeard moved **Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4** in gross. Without objection, the recommendations were **adopted**.

The CoC presented a **substitute motion** for **Recommendation 5**, namely, that **Overture 3** – that the PCA withdraw from the NAE – be answered in the affirmative.

Debate ensued according to the *RAO* 14-9.h.

TE McHeard presented arguments on behalf of the Permanent Committee that Overture 3 be answered in the negative.

TE Carl Robbins presented arguments on behalf of the Committee of the Commissioners.

TE McHeard then offered a brief response on behalf of the Permanent Committee.

49-26 Order of the Day

The order of the day (lunch) was recognized.

49-27 Assembly Recessed

The Assembly recessed to reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

TE Adam Parker closed the session with prayer.

**Third Session – Wednesday Afternoon
June 22, 2022**

49-28 Assembly Reconvened

The Assembly reconvened at 1:30 p.m. RE Kyle Keating led the Assembly in prayer.

The Moderator reminded the Assembly that the Overtures Committee was to be excused at 2:00 p.m., and that the Committee on Constitutional Business was to be excused at 3:00 p.m.

49-29 Interchurch Relations Fraternal Greetings Videos

The Assembly viewed a video presentation with fraternal greetings from Pastor Kwang-Sik Bae, President of the 106th General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church (Hapdong).

A second video presentation with fraternal greetings from Dr. Chad Van Dixhoorn of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was viewed.

49-30 Interchurch Relations Committee of Commissioners Report, continued

Debate resumed on **Recommendation 5** related to Overture 3 and the proposals of the Committee of Commissioners and the Permanent Committee. Debate was limited to one hour (*RAO* 14-9.h).

A motion to call the question was **adopted**, 1233-198, meeting the 2/3 majority required.

TE Roy Tayler, Chairman of the Permanent Committee, rose to give a closing argument.

A **point of order** was raised by TE Daniel Jarstfer that personal names should not be used in debate by the current speaker. The point of order was **well taken**.

Vote on the Recommendation was delayed to allow members of the Overtures Committee to return to the floor to vote on this matter.

During the delay, TE McHeard introduced fraternal delegates who had spoken or who would speak to the Assembly via video:

Dr. Chad Van Dixhoorn – OPC

Dr. Walter Kim – NAE

Dr. Dennis Johnson – Rafiki

Dr. William Zulu – General Secretary Reformed Church of Zambia

Dr. Clement Mwanza – Vice Synod Moderator

Members of the Overture Committee having returned for the vote, the motion to approve the **substitute for Recommendation 5** regarding Overture 3 was **adopted**, 1030-699, effectively removing the PCA from membership in the National Association of Evangelicals.

TE Taylor gave notice of a **Protest** yet unwritten but that would be written in temperate language.

TE Daniel Jarstfer raised a **point of order** that the vote had been to make the substitute the main motion and that the main motion now needed to be voted upon.

The Moderator responded that the Assembly had approved the substitute, which had the effect of passing it as the main motion.

On objection from the floor, the Moderator called for a revote.

The **substitute Recommendation 5**, that Overture 3 be answered in the affirmative, recommending that the PCA withdraw from the NAE, was **adopted** 1059-681,

For text of **IRC CoC Report** see pp. i-vii, after p. 684 (this volume).

The Chairman closed the report with prayer.

49-31 Committee on Review of Presbytery Records, continued (from p. 23)

TE Paul Lee, Chairman of the Review of Presbytery Records, resumed his report.

The Moderator **ruled the point of order** raised by TE Aquila **not well taken**. TE Aquila **challenged the ruling** of the chair, reasoning that *BCO* 40-3 does not allow RPR to review a matter that is in judicial process. The chair responded that the citation in VI.56.e did not deal with the same material as the SJC case in judicial process. The **ruling** of the chair was **sustained**, 996-242.

TE Stephen Tipton **moved an amendment** to the report of RPR, Item VI.56.e, to strike the citation section. TE Lee yielded to TE Jason Piland, who spoke against the motion and for retaining VI.56.e as presented by the RPR.

The **motion to amend** by striking VI.56.e **failed**, 516-670.

The **original recommendation VI.56.e** as presented by RPR was placed before the Assembly and **failed**, 628-752, effectively **recommitting** the presbytery's review of Item VI.56.e to next year's committee.

56. That the Minutes of **Northwest Georgia** Presbytery
- e. **Recommendation VI.56.e** failed adoption by the General Assembly and was therefore effectively recommitted to next year’s CRPR.
 - e. ~~**BCO 40-5 report referred to CRPR on decision of the SJC, Case No. 2021-02:**~~
The CRPR recommends that the 49th General Assembly:
 - a. ~~Find that the February 14, 2021 letter from RE [name omitted] et al. is a “credible report” of “an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (BCO 40-5): specifically, there is evidence that (1) the calls to the three candidates were constitutionally deficient, so implementing them was unconstitutional, and (2) the Presbytery acted improperly in approving the calls and installing the three candidates;~~
 - b. ~~Cite the Northwest Georgia Presbytery to appear, per BCO 40-5, before the PCA’s Standing Judicial Commission which the 49th GA constitutes its commission to adjudicate this matter, by representative or in writing, at the SJC’s fall stated meeting, to “show what the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question,” following the Operating Manual for the SJC, particularly chapter 15; and~~
 - e. ~~Direct the RPR Officers to appoint one or more representatives of the GA and Report (OMSJC 15.2) to present this case to the SJC.~~

Chairman Lee closed the report with prayer.

49-32 Protest Regarding NAE Withdrawal

TE Roy Taylor offered a **Protest** regarding the Assembly’s decision to withdraw the PCA from the National Association of Evangelicals, giving the following reasons:

1. In our opinion, our continuation in the NAE is consistent with our Lord’s prayer recorded in John 17.

JOURNAL

2. Our membership is consistent with our theology of the Church expressed in the *Westminster Confession*, chapters 25 and 26.
 3. The IRC's Report gave specific factual and logical arguments. The IRC Committee of Commissioners written recommendation to the Assembly contained no factual or logical arguments.
 4. We believe that the PCA's withdrawal from the NAE casts doubt on the PCA's practice of catholicity.
- Therefore, we lament the PCA's withdrawal from the National Association of Evangelicals.

Those who wished to join the Protest were offered opportunity to sign the protest.

Protest Signatories

	First Name	Last Name	Presbytery
TE	Dave	Abray	North Florida
TE	Ryan	Alford	Gulf Coast
TE	Joseph	Allen	Chesapeake
TE	Morgan	Angert	Georgia Foothills
TE	Eric	Ashley	Nashville
RE	Andrew	Augenstein	Central Florida
TE	John	Baber	Central Carolina
TE	Charles	Baile	Potomac
RE	Levoy	Bankson	Evangel
TE	Hugh	Barlett	Missouri
TE	Trip	Beans	Chesapeake
TE	Loren	Bell	Missouri
TE	Jefferson	Bennett	Southern New England
TE	Luke	Bert	Eastern Canada
TE	Jeffrey	Birch	Central Carolina
TE	Curran	Bishop	Southern New England
TE	Jason	Bobo	Hills and Plains
TE	Kyle	Bobos	Houston Metro
RE	Joe	Brand	Metro Atlanta
TE	Joel	Branscomb	Piedmont Triad
TE	Nick	Bratcher	Wisconsin
RE	Greg	Brinkmann	Nashville
TE	Cody	Brobst	Central Indiana
RE	William	Brooke	Evangel
TE	Steven	Brooks	Georgia Foothills
TE	Joe	Brown	James River

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE	Ryan	Brown	Metro Atlanta
TE	Robert	Brunson	Metro Atlanta
TE	Philip	Chung	Metro New York
TE	Caleb	Click	Metro Atlanta
RE	Mark	Coddington	Blue Ridge
RE	John	Collmus	Blue Ridge
TE	Nate	Conrad	Columbus Metro
RE	Jeff	Creasy	Nashville
RE	David	Daniels	Sothern New England
TE	Brandon	Dean	Metro Atlanta
TE	Alex	Dean	North Texas
RE	Taylor	Denard	Evangel
RE	Mark	Doehnert	Potomac
TE	Samuel	Dolby	Missouri
TE	David	Driskill	Evangel
RE	Tom	Drury	Nashville
TE	Matthew	Duraski	Fellowship
RE	Chad	Edison	Northern California
TE	Kyle	Edwards	Chicago Metro
TE	Stephen	Estock	Georgia Foothills
TE	Jeremy	Fair	Hills and Plains
RE	LeeEric	Fesko	Nashville
RE	Chuck	Francis	Metro Atlanta
TE	Steven	Froehlich	New York State
TE	David	Gallagher	Wisconsin
RE	Sean	Gann	Northern California
TE	Craig	Garrett	Chesapeake
TE	Chris	Garriott	Potomac
TE	Philip	George	Pacific
TE	Thomas	Gibbs	South Texas
TE	Tony	Giles	Nashville
RE	William	Graham	Nashville
RE	Andy	Gray	Central Georgia
TE	Samuel	Haist	Central Indiana
TE	Allan	Harmening	Maryland
TE	Blake	Harris	Evangel
RE	Jonathan	Haynes	Providence
TE	Michael	Hearon	Savannah River
TE	Ben	Hein	Central Indiana
TE	Monty	Hershberger	Ohio Valley
TE	Robby	Holt	Evangel
TE	Mike	Honeycutt	Fellowship
TE	Larry	Hoop	Ohio Valley
TE	Tony	Howard	Missouri
TE	Thomas	Hudson	Southern New England
TE	Jared	Huffman	Tennessee Valley
RE	Scott	Hulstrand	Calvary

JOURNAL

TE	Jeffrey	Hynds	Eastern Canada
RE	Tino	Imbesi	Metro Atlanta
TE	Hanssoo	Jin	Korean Capitol
RE	Paul	Johnson	Evangel
TE	Thomas	Johnson	Heartland
TE	Ryan	Johnson	Metro Atlanta
TE	Lyndon	Jost	Eastern Canada
TE	Daniel	Jung	Korean Northwest
TE	Steve	Kang	Central Florida
TE	Dan	Katches	Northern California
TE	Jeremy	Kemp	Nashville
TE	David	Kertland	Savannah River
TE	Mike	Khandijan	Chesapeake
RE	PEter	Kim	Korean Capital
TE	Sam	Kim	Korean Capital
TE	Gun	Kim	Korean Eastern
TE	Ezra	Kim	Korean Northwest
TE	Woonny	Kim	Metro Atlanta
TE	John	Kim	Northern California
TE	Daegy	Kim	Potomac
TE	Dan	King	Catawba Valley
TE	Jeremy	King	Ohio
TE	Paul	Kooistra	Warrior
RE	George	Koontz	Calvary
RE	Ken	Kostrzewa	Southern Louisiana
TE	Thomas	Kuhn	Platte Valley
TE	Sun	Kwak	Korean Southwest Orange
TE	Won	Kwak	South Coast
TE	Taylor	Leachman	Houston Metro
TE	Keith	Ledford	Suncoast
TE	Murray	Lee	Evangel
TE	Owen	Lee	Korean Capital
TE	Moses	Lee	Korean Capital
TE	Jacob	Lee	Lowcountry
TE	Ken	Leggett	Nashville
TE	Matt	Lietzen	Potomac
TE	Stan	Long	Chesapeake
TE	Adam	Lopez	South Texas
TE	Matt	Luchenbill	Great Lakes
TE	Morgan	Lusk	Southwest Florida
TE	Ben	Lyon	Tidewater
TE	James	Martin	Metro Atlanta
TE	Rich	McCaskill	New York Metro
TE	Ken	McHeard	Savannah River
TE	David	McNeely	Gulf Coast
TE	John	Medlock	Northern California
TE	Ben	Melchers	Northern California

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE	Chip	Miller	Central Georgia
TE	John	Musgrave	Eastern Carolina
TE	Steven	Nicoletti	Pacific Northwest
RE	Andrew	Norquist	Southern New England
RE	Roger	Norris	Georgia Foothills
TE	Omar	Ortiz	South Coast
RE	David	Palma	Calvary
RE	James	Partridge	Pittsburgh
TE	Tom	Patton	Evangel
TE	Michael	Phillips	Metro Atlanta
RE	John	Pink	Nashville
TE	Chris	Polski	Missouri
TE	José	Portillo	Central Carolina
RE	Daniel	Prins	Eastern Carolina
RE	Mac	Purdy	Nashville
TE	Tim	Rackley	Heartland
TE	Russ	Ramsey	Nashville
TE	Austin	Reed	Great Lakes
RE	Randy	Renbarger	Metro Atlanta
RE	Michael	Richards	Blue Ridge
TE	Keith	Robinson	Missouri
RE	Brian	Roby	Missouri
TE	Lawrence	Roff	North Florida
TE	Brad	Rogers	Palmetto
TE	Amgel	Roman	Central Florida
TE	Pablo	Rosales	Missouri
RE	George	Rountree	Central Georgia
TE	Peter	Rowan	Susquehanna
TE	Israel	Ruiz	Heritage
TE	James	Ryan	Illiana
TE	Mark	Samuel	Chesapeake
TE	Hector	Sanchez	New York Metro
TE	Scott	Sauls	Nashville
RE	Tom	Schmidt	Missouri
TE	Walter	Schrivner	Metro Atlanta
TE	David	Schweissing	Pittsburgh
TE	Travis	Scott	Pittsburgh
TE	Doug	Serven	Chesapeake
RE	David	Shank	Great Lakes
TE	Ethan	Smith	Piedmont Triad
TE	Will	Snyder	Southern New England
RE	Joe	Spencer	Central Carolina
RE	Jacob	Spencer	Hills and Plains
RE	Christopher	Stokes	Hills and Plains
RE	Jacob	Stoltzfus	Great Lakes
RE	Jerry	Stutzman	Great Lakes
TE	Joshua	Suh	Heritage

JOURNAL

TE	Bobby	Suh	Korean Capital
TE	Jeff	Suhr	South Coast
TE	Samuel	Sung	Korean Northwest
TE	Chris	Talley	Tennessee Valley
TE	Jon	Talley	Wisconsin
TE	Owen	Tarantino	Missouri
TE	Roy	Taylor	Calvary
TE	Todd	Teller	Nashville
TE	Parker	Tenent	Covenant
RE	Andrew	Terrell	New York Metro
RE	Joe	Thompson	Missouri
TE	Mike	Tilley	Central Florida
TE	Kevin	Timmons	Northern California
RE	Wally	Tinsley	Eastern Carolina
RE	Joshua	Torrey	South Texas
RE	Oliver	Trimiew	Tennessee Valley
TE	Timothy	Udouj	Calvary
RE	Richard	Ulerich	Grace
RE	Philip	VanValkenburg	Missouri
TE	Peter	Wallace	Great Lakes
TE	Jack	Waller	Potomac
TE	Donald	Waltermeyer	New Jersey
RE	Jack	Watkins	Nashville
RE	Steve	Welke	Potomac
TE	Clay	Werner	Georgia Foothills
RE	Jim	Wert	Metro Atlanta
TE	Jeffrey	White	Metro New York
TE	Noah	Wiersema	North Texas
TE	Robert	Wilkins	Chesapeake
TE	Thurman	Williams	Missouri
TE	Jonathan	Winfree	Southwest Florida
RE	Craig	Wood	Blue Ridge
TE	Jeff	Wreyford	Georgia Foothills
TE	Steve	Yoon	Korean Capital
TE	Dwight	Yoon	Philadelphia
TE	Albert	Young	Korean Capital

49-33 PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc. (RBI/Geneva Benefits) Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE J. Andrew Conrad, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer. He yielded to TE Ed Dunnington, President of Geneva (formerly RBI, Inc.), who presented the Informational Report, explaining the rationale behind the Agency's recent name change. He invited TE Mike Fenema, to speak regarding the help provided to him and his family through Geneva's ministerial relief program when he sustained a severely debilitating spinal injury. (For the full report of the Board of Directors of RBI, Inc., see Appendix J, p. 375.)

Chairman Conrad presented the recommendations of the CoC. **Recommendation 1** was **adopted**. **Recommendations 2, 5, and 6** were **adopted** in gross. **Recommendation 4** was **deferred** to the CoC on AC. **Recommendations 7 and 8** were **adopted**.

For **text of RBI CoC Report** see pp. viii-x, after p. 684 (this volume).

49-34 Report of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC)

TE Fred Greco, chairman of the SJC, led the Assembly in prayer and presented the Report and the Supplemental Report of the SJC, which were received as information. (See Appendix T, p. 685, for the full report of the SJC.)

TE Greco closed the report with prayer.

49-35 Partial Report of the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB)

Before Chairman TE Larry Hoop had resumed his report, RE Matt Fender rose to request that a Minority Report be presented, citing *RAO 19-2* as grounds for the request.

TE Larry Hoop raised a **point of order** that the request was out of order because (1) since the CCB recommends no actions, there would be not a true minority report, but more like a dissenting opinion; and (2) the provision in *RAO 17-1* states that the Assembly acts only on the exceptions taken to SJC Minutes reported in the CCB report. The Moderator ruled the point of order **well taken** for the reasons already articulated by TE Hoop.

RE Fender **challenged** the ruling of the chair.

At the request of the Moderator, TE David Coffin addressed the point of order by giving relevant historical context concerning the nature of the CCB as an exclusively advisory presenting committee that gives no recommendations for action by the Assembly (*RAO 8-2*). In reference to *RAO 19-2*, he stated that *RAO 8-2* takes precedence over *RAO 19-2*.

A member of the Standing Judicial Commission, Moderator Bise yielded the chair to TE Roy Taylor, who called for a vote on the Moderator's ruling.

TE Matt Fender raised a **point of order** that this was a debatable motion. The point of order was ruled **well taken** by the Moderator, and debate proceeded.

During debate, TE Ryan Biese raised a **point of order** that the current speaker, TE Coffin, had already spoken once to this issue. The Moderator ruled the point of order was **not well taken** because TE Coffin had previously spoken at the request of the Moderator.

TE Matt Fender **challenged** the ruling of the chair.

TE Coffin yielded his place to any other commissioners who wished to speak.

TE Fred Greco raised a **point of order** that the speaker at Microphone 8 had already been recognized, but the Moderator had moved on. The Moderator ruled the point of order **well taken**.

Time for debate expired and, by voice vote of the Assembly, was not extended.

The Assembly proceeded to vote on whether to sustain the ruling of the chair that the request for presenting a Minority Report was out of order. The ruling of the chair was, 908-800.

As voting was in progress, TE Donny Friedrichsen reported as a **point of order** that voting devices were not working and that a new vote should be taken. In support, TE Steve Tipton raised the **point of order** that the results of the voting had not been reported, so a re-vote could be taken. The combined **points of order** were **well taken**, and a new vote was taken in the name of fairness.

The **ruling of the chair** that a Minority Report was out of order was **sustained**, 970-856.

TE Larry Hoop resumed the CCB report. He spoke a word to clarify what part of the CCB report had been at issue in the previous debate, namely, that the CCB found the Minutes of the April 30, 2021, SJC meeting in order without exception or notation. [See Appendix O, CCB Supplemental Report, p. 432.]

The chairman closed the report in prayer.

TE Taylor returned the gavel to Moderator Bise.

49-36 Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS) Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE Chris Pulski, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and yielded to TE Thomas C. “Tom” Gibbs, President of the Seminary, who presented the Informational Report on the work of the Seminary. (For the full report of CTS, see Appendix F, p. 299.)

CoC Chairman Pulski moved **Recommendations 1-9**, and **11** in gross. Without objection the recommendations were **adopted**. **Recommendation 10** was **deferred** to the AC CoC.

TE Pulski closed the report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. CTS Report to General Assembly
- B. CTS Stated Board Meeting Minutes
 - Stated Board Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2021; September 24, 2021; January 28, 2022
 - Called Board Meeting Minutes - None
- C. CTS Executive Committee Minutes
 - Stated Executive Committee Meetings:
April 20, 2021; September 17, 2021; December 3, 2021;
January 27, 2022
 - Called Executive Committee Meetings:
August 18, 2021; October 27, 2021; January 17, 2022
- D. CTS 2022-2023 Proposed Budgets
- E. 2021 CTS Audits
- F. CTS Permanent Committee Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. CTS Report to General Assembly
- B. CTS Stated Board Meeting Minutes
 - Stated Board Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2021; September 24, 2021; January 28, 2022
 - Called Board Meeting Minutes - None
- C. CTS Executive Committee Minutes
 - Stated Executive Committee Meetings:
April 20, 2021; September 17, 2021; December 3, 2021;
January 27, 2022
 - Called Executive Committee Meetings:
August 18, 2021; October 27, 2021; January 17, 2022
- D. 2022-2023 Proposed Budgets
- E. 2021 CTS Audits
- F. CTS Permanent Committee Recommendations

III. Recommendations

- 1. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary; for its faithfulness to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith, and the Great Commission; for its students,

- graduates, faculty, staff, and trustees; and for those who support the Seminary through their prayers and gifts. *Adopted*
2. That the General Assembly encourage the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America to support the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary by contributing the Partnership Shares approved by the Assembly, and by recommending Covenant Seminary to prospective students. *Adopted*
 3. That the General Assembly ask the Lord to bless Covenant Seminary's new President, Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Gibbs, and grant him and the Seminary's leadership team, faculty, and Board of Trustees great wisdom, biblical faithfulness, and clear vision as they lead the institution forward in training fruitful pastors and other ministry leaders. Pray also for President Emeritus Dr. Mark Dalbey, as he moves away from his consulting role with the Seminary and into retirement as of the end of the 2021–2022 academic year, that the Lord would provide many opportunities for him to minister to God's people in new ways. *Adopted*
 4. That the General Assembly ask God to guide Covenant Seminary's ongoing efforts at recruiting new students, evaluating and strengthening our programs, and seeking to make the Seminary a greater resource for the church both locally and globally. *Adopted*
 5. That the General Assembly ask God's blessing on the Seminary's planning and fundraising efforts, and on its attempts to recruit a new generation of dedicated pastor-scholars to train new generations of leaders for Christ's church and Kingdom. *Adopted*
 6. That the General Assembly praise God for his provision during the ongoing pandemic, and that he would guide the Seminary's leaders as they seek to maintain the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff while at the same time continuing to build on the new and effective ways to carry out our mission developed during the challenges of the pandemic. Praise him for the gift of resilient and creative people who enable the institution to function so well during an unusual time. *Adopted*
 7. That the General Assembly pray for unity among the brethren of the PCA and ask the Lord to work in all our hearts to foster a deeper desire to engage with one another and the world in compassionate and gospel-centered ways, and that we might bear strong witness to the truth and power of God's redeeming grace. *Adopted*
 8. **Substitute Motion:** The General Assembly approve the minutes of the stated and called meetings of the Seminary's Board of Trustees

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

and Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for 2021–2022 as follows:

- *Stated Board Meetings:* ~~April 30, 2021~~; September 24, 2021; January 28, 2022
- *Called Board Meetings:* None
- *Stated Executive Committee Meetings:* April 20, 2021; September 17, 2021; December 3, 2021; January 27, 2022
- *Called Executive Committee Meetings:* August 18, 2021; October 27, 2021; January 17, 2022

RATIONALE: See Recommendation 11 *Adopted*

9. That the financial audit for Covenant Theological Seminary for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, by Capin Crouse LLC, be received. *Adopted*
10. That the proposed budget for 2022–23 for Covenant Theological Seminary, as presented through the Administrative Committee, be approved. deferred to AC CoC
11. **Substitute Motion:** The General Assembly approve the minutes of the April 30, 2021 stated meeting with exceptions of form and one exception of substance, namely the Amendment to Article 4.11.6 of the Bylaws for a potential conflict with the constitution, and we refer it back to the board. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery

Calvary
Catawba Valley
Central Florida
Central Georgia
Central Indiana
Chesapeake
Eastern Canada
Evangel
Grace
Great Lakes
Gulf Coast
Heartland
Houston Metro
James River
Korean Capital
Mississippi Valley
Missouri

Commissioner (*Convener)

TE Marty Huskey Martin
TE Andrew Goyzueta
TE Heath Zuniga
TE John Charles Kinser
TE Cody Brobst
TE Jesse M. Crutchley
TE Lyndon Micah Jost
TE Mark E. Long
RE Ronnie Eaves
TE Joel Irvin
TE Sean McGowan
TE Tim Elliott
TE Taylor Leachman
RE Robert Rumbaugh
TE Walter Chong Won Lee
TE Caleb G. Cangelosi
TE Chris Alan Polski*

JOURNAL

Nashville	RE Bill Mooney
North Florida	TE Larry Roff
North Texas	TE David Rogers
Northwest Georgia	RE Daryl Lipham
Pacific Northwest	TE Matt Allhands
Pee Dee	RE Ron Riesz
Pittsburgh	TE Jason Leist
Platte Valley	TE Andrew Lightner
Potomac	TE James Timothy Tarter II
Providence	TE Jacob Hale
Ohio Valley	RE Ron Whitely
Rocky Mountain	TE Wes Calton
South Florida	TE Scott Kerens
Southeast Alabama	TE Richard Holbert
Southern New England	TE Curran Bishop
Southwest Florida	RE Jim Eggert
Tennessee Valley	RE Nathan Bowers

Respectfully submitted:

/s/ TE Chris Polski, Chairman

/s/ TE Taylor Leachman, Secretary

49-37 Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) Informational and Committee of Commissioner Reports

TE Jeremy Mullen, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and yielded to RE Will Huss, Coordinator, who presented the Informational Report. (For the full report of RUF, see Appendix K, p. 384.)

Chairman Mullen moved **Recommendations 1-4**, and **6** in gross. Without objection the recommendations were **adopted**. **Recommendation 5** was **deferred** to the CoC on AC.

TE Mullen closed the report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. RUF Permanent Committee Report
- B. RUF Permanent Committee Minutes from:
October 5, 2021 and March 23, 2022
- C. RUF 2021 Audit

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- D. RUF 2023 Proposed Budget
- E. RUF Permanent Committee Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. RUF Permanent Committee Report
- B. RUF Permanent Committee Minutes from:
October 5, 2021 and March 23, 2022
- C. RUF 2021 Audit
- D. RUF 2023 Proposed Budget
- E. RUF Permanent Committee Recommendations

III. Recommendations

- 1. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the meetings of the Committee on Reformed University Fellowship for October 5, 2021 and March 23, 2022. *Adopted*
- 2. That the General Assembly adopt the Financial Audit for Reformed University Fellowship for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021 by Carr, Riggs, & Ingram, LLP. *Adopted*
- 3. That the General Assembly receive as information the submitted attachment [see Permanent Committee Report Attachment, p.808]. *Adopted*
- 4. That the General Assembly re-elect RE Will W. Huss, Jr. as National Coordinator of Reformed University Fellowship for the 2022/2023 term. *Adopted*
- 5. That the Assembly approve the 2023 RUF budget as presented through the Administrative Committee. *Adopted*
- 6. From the CoC: That the Assembly thank National Coordinator RE Will W. Huss, Jr. and staff and permanent committee for their humble and faithful leadership of RUF. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery	Commissioner (*Convener)
Ascension	TE Stephen Richman
Blue Ridge	TE Justin Clement
Calvary	RE Kevin Mobley
Central Carolina	TE Stanley E. Layton
Central Georgia	RE Christopher Marks
Central Indiana	TE Steven Marusich
Chesapeake	TE J. Patrick Allen
Columbus Metro	TE Dave H. Schutter
Eastern Canada	TE Frank Franklin Garcia

JOURNAL

Eastern Carolina	TE Dan S. Seale
Evangel	RE Billy Ball
Fellowship	TE Al Ward
Georgia Foothills	RE Jack Wilson
Grace	RE Troy Gibson
Great Lakes	RE Allan Knapp
Heartland	TE John Lee
Highlands	TE M. Scott Stewart
Hills and Plains	RE Aaron Raines
Houston Metro	RE Erik Haaland
James River	TE Harrison Ford
Lowcountry	TE Jeremy Mullen*
Metro Atlanta	TE R. Carlton Wynne
Mississippi Valley	RE Ken Haynes
Missouri	RE John Bauer
Nashville	RE Greg Brinkmann
New York State	TE Daniel Wells
Northern Illinois	TE David Keithley
Northwest Georgia	TE Cameron Barham
Ohio Valley	TE Billy Otten
Pacific Northwest	TE Brian Frey
Pee Dee	TE Kye Brent
Potomac	TE Charlie A. Baile
Rocky Mountain	TE Jon Paul Watson
South Texas	TE Eric Landry
Southern Louisiana	TE Nathan C. Tircuit
Southern New England	TE Nathan Barczi
Southwest Florida	TE Anthony Elswick
Tennessee Valley	TE John Blevins III
Westminster	TE Bill Leuzinger
Wisconsin	TE Clayton Smith

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Jeremy Mullen, Chairman

/s/ TE Harrison Ford, Secretary

The Moderator reminded the Assembly that the deadline for floor nominations was at 4:30pm.

49-38 Ridge Haven Conference Center (RH) Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE Sam Brown, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and yielded to TE Cameron Wallace, Ridge Haven Director, who presented the Informational Report on Ridge Haven. (For the full report of RH, see Appendix L, p. 408.)

TE Brown moved **Recommendations 2-4** and **6-7** in gross. Without objection the recommendations were **adopted**. **Recommendation 5** was **adopted** without objection. **Recommendation 1** was **deferred** to the CoC on AC.

TE Brown closed the report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
RIDGE HAVEN
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. RH Report to General Assembly
- B. RH Board of Directors Minutes:
 - March 8-10, 2021
 - September 27-29, 2021
- C. RH 2023 Proposed Budgets
- D. 2020 RH Audit
- E. RH Permanent Committee Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. RH Report to General Assembly
- B. RH Board of Directors Minutes:
 - March 8-10, 2021
 - September 27-29, 2021
- C. RH 2023 Proposed Budgets
- D. 2020 RH Audit
- E. RH Permanent Committee Recommendations

III. Recommendations

- 1. That the Ridge Haven 2023 Budget as presented through the AC Budget Review Committee be approved. *Adopted*
- 2. That the 2020 audit dated August 23, 2021, performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan, be received. *Adopted*
- 3. That the following minutes of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven be approved: March 8-10, 2021, and September 27-29, 2021. *Adopted*

JOURNAL

4. That February 19, 2023, be a day for our churches to pray for the ministries of Ridge Haven. *Adopted*
5. That the Lord would be praised and RE Wallace Anderson be commended for his fruitful work over many years in service to the ministry of Ridge Haven. *Adopted*
6. That the Lord would be praised and the staff and board of Ridge Haven be commended for their work in serving to advance the mission of Ridge Haven. *Adopted*
7. That the churches of the Presbyterian Church in America be encouraged to make use of the tremendous resource for spiritual renewal provided by Ridge Haven. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery

Arizona
Ascension
Central Carolina
Central Florida
Central Georgia
Covenant
Fellowship
Grace
Great Lakes
Gulf Coast
Heartland
Highlands
Mississippi Valley
Missouri
New York State
Northwest Georgia
Piedmont Triad
Providence
Rocky Mountain
South Texas
Southeast Alabama
Southern New England
Suncoast Florida
Tennessee Valley
Tidewater

Commissioner (*Convener)

TE Nathan Morgan
TE Scott P. Moreland
RE Stephen L. Onxley
TE Seth Wallace
RE George Rountree
TE David M. Frierson
TE Matthew Duraski
RE Mike Smith
RE Jim Visser
RE Kelly Jones
TE James A. Baxter
TE Rob Herron*
RE Craig Craig Flowers
RE Ken Leslie
TE Marc Swan
TE Danny Myers
TE Thomas Brown
RE John Waggoner
RE EJ Nusbaum
TE Berdj Tchilinguirian
TE Miguel D'Azevedo
TE Matthew Kerr
TE Robert D. Dillard Jr.
TE Sam Brown
TE W. Dennis Griffith

Respectfully submitted:

/s/ TE Sam Brown, Chairman

/s/ TE Rob Herron, Secretary

49-39 PCA Foundation Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE Erik Veerman, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and yielded to RE Timothy Townsend, President, who presented the Informational Report of the Foundation, together with a video. (For the full report of PCAF, see Appendix I, p. 365.)

Recommendations 1 and 4, moved in gross, were **adopted** without objection.

TE Andy Jones moved that **Recommendation 3** be **recommitted to the CoC**, as it is in conflict with the *RAO* 4-21.d.3. The motion was **adopted**, 408-361.

The Moderator instructed the CoC to reconvene to deal with this matter. (See Supplemental Report, p. 135).

The Chairman closed the report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. PCAF Board of Directors Report
- B. PCAF Board of Directors Minutes from August 6, 2021, and March 4, 2022
- C. 2021 Audit of PCAF by Capin Crouse, LLP
- D. 2023 PCAF Proposed Budget
- E. Recommendations of the PCA Foundation, Inc., Board

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. The work of the PCA Foundation as presented in the PCA Foundation Board Minutes and Report
- B. PCAF Board of Directors Minutes from August 6, 2021, and March 4, 2022
- C. 2021 Audit of PCAF by Capin Crouse, LLP
- D. 2023 PCAF Proposed Budget
- E. Recommendations of the PCA Foundation, Inc., Board

III. Recommendations

- 1. That the finance annual audit for the PCA Foundation, Inc. for the calendar year ended December 31, 2021 by Capin Crouse, LLP be received and acknowledged. *Adopted*

JOURNAL

2. That the General Assembly approve the proposed 2023 Budget of the PCA Foundation, Inc. with the understanding that it is a spending plan and will be modified as necessary by the PCA Foundation’s Board of Directors to accommodate changing circumstances during the year. *Adopted*
3. That the Minutes of Board meetings of August 6, 2021, be approved without exception and that the Minutes of March 4, 2022, be approved with an exception that the substance of the discussion of large, complex gifts and their disposal was not adequately documented. *Adopted*
 - Rationale: The minutes didn’t capture the Board’s decision process about accepting such a large gift into the Increase Fund vs into the Donor Advised Fund.
4. That the General Assembly approve amendments to the PCA Foundation’s Articles of Incorporation shown in Attachment 2 to this report, to (i) clarify that its purposes are confined to and may extend as far as the purposes of the Church of Jesus Christ, including the carrying out of the Great Commission, the support of PCA churches, presbyteries, and committees and agencies, and distributions in ministry to man’s needs; (ii) make the text more concise and readable, and consistent with the most commonly used, IRS-approved wording; (iii) provide for certain unlikely legal contingencies (failure of Assembly to provide for distribution upon dissolution, and IRS determination that the Foundation is a private foundation); and (iv) bar retroactive exposure of Foundation directors to civil liability, and limit director civil liability to the extent permitted by law. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery	Commissioner (Convener marked with *)
Calvary	TE Dan Dodds
Central Carolina	TE John Chandler Black
Central Florida	TE Chuck DeBardeleben
Central Georgia	TE Charles Duncan Cantrell
Chesapeake	TE Michael (Mick) S. Weltin
Fellowship	RE Jeff Sigmon
Grace	TE Josh Adair
Gulf Coast	TE Chad Watkins
Heartland	RE Larry Hauck
Highlands	TE Jonathan Inman
James River	TE Dan Lipford

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Metro Atlanta	TE Erik Veerman *
Mississippi Valley	TE Chris Stevens
Nashville	RE Alfred (Al) Williams
New York State	TE Jonathan Ernest Hood
Northern Illinois	RE Fred Winterroth
Northwest Georgia	RE Wes Richardson
Ohio	RE John Fennell
Pee Dee	RE Carroll Armstrong
Piedmont Triad	RE Ozzie Marin
Potomac	RE Doug Leepa
Providence	TE Nick Robison
Southeast Alabama	TE Jere Scott Bradshaw
Southern New England	RE Patrick Sewell
Southwest Florida	TE Drew Bennett
Tennessee Valley	RE Wil Davis
Tidewater	RE William (Bill) Patrick Cover
Westminster	RE Larry Steuck

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Erik Veerman, Chairman

/s/ RE Alfred Williams, Secretary

49-40 Interchurch Relations Committee Fraternal Greetings Video

The Moderator presented announcements to the Assembly before the video.

Fraternal greetings from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church were brought via video by Rev. Dr. Dean Weaver, Stated Clerk of the EPC.

49-41 Assembly Recessed

The Assembly recessed at 4:38 p.m. with prayer by TE Charlie Wingard, to gather for worship at 4:45 and to reconvene for business at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday.

49-42 Worship Service

The Assembly entered a time of worship at 4:45 p.m.

**Fourth Session - Thursday Morning
June 23, 2022**

49-43 Assembly Reconvened and Announcements

The Assembly reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 23, 2022 with the singing of “Blessed Assurance.” RE Rich Leino led in prayer.

49-44 Interchurch Relations Committee Fraternal Greetings Video

A video presentation was viewed, with fraternal greetings from Dr. Davi Gomes of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil.

The Moderator announced that the CoC on PCA Foundation would meet at 8:30 a.m. to deal with a matter recommitted to it by the Assembly.

49-45 Covenant College Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE Wes Holland, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer, and yielded to RE Derek Halvorson, President, who presented the Informational Report of the College, which included a video. (For the full report of Covenant College, see Appendix E, p. 293.)

Recommendations 1-3, 5-8 were **adopted** in gross without objection. **Recommendation 4** was **deferred** to the CoC on AC.

TE Holland closed his report in prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
COVENANT COLLEGE
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. CC Report to General Assembly
- B. CC Permanent Committee Minutes from:
 - October 14-15, 2021
 - March 17-18, 2022
- C. CC 2021 Audit
- D. CC 2022-2023 Proposed Budget
- E. CC Permanent Committee Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. CC Report to General Assembly
- B. CC Permanent Committee Minutes from:
 - October 14-15, 2021
 - March 17-18, 2022
- C. CC 2021 Audit
- D. CC 2022-2023 Proposed Budget
- E. CC Permanent Committee Recommendations

III. Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly thank and praise God for the excellent work and faithfulness of the Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff of Covenant College in serving the Presbyterian Church in America by shaping students for lives of service in the Kingdom of God. *Adopted*
2. That the General Assembly commend the faculty and staff of the college for the faithful and God-honoring manner in which they responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic, rendering excellent service to the student body—and through it, the church—in a time of great uncertainty and difficulty. *Adopted*
3. That the General Assembly encourage congregations of the PCA to support the ministry of Covenant College through encouraging prospective students to attend, through contributing the Partnership Shares approved by the General Assembly, and through prayer. *Adopted*
4. That the General Assembly approve the budget for 2022-2023, as submitted through the Administrative Committee. *Adopted*
5. That the General Assembly adopt “The Covenant College and Supporting Foundation Consolidated Financial Statements” dated June 30, 2021, as prepared by Capin Crouse LLP. *Adopted*
6. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees for October 14-15, 2021, and March 17-18, 2022. *Adopted*
7. That the General Assembly receive as information the foregoing Annual Report, recognizing God’s gracious and abundant blessing and commending the College in its desire to continue pursuing excellence in higher education for the glory of God. *Adopted*
8. That the General Assembly designate Sunday, October 16, 2022 as a Lord’s Day on which churches of the denomination are encouraged to highlight the ministry of Covenant College and to pray specifically for the College in its mission and ministry. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery

Arizona
Ascension
Blue Ridge
Calvary
Central Carolina
Central Florida
Central Georgia

Commissioner (*Convener)

TE Kelley Hand
TE Gerald J. Knight
TE Tobias Riggs
RE Don Boroughs
TE John W. Downs
RE Gabriel E. Williams
RE Douglas Pohl

JOURNAL

Chesapeake	TE Joshua P. Sillaman
Central Indiana	RE Nathan Partain
Chicago Metro	TE Ian Hammond
Covenant	TE Hunter Townsend Brewer
Evangel	RE Michael McMillan
Fellowship	TE Chris Sewell
Grace	RE Bryan Kelly
Great Lakes	RE Zane Meibeyer
Gulf Coast	RE Brett Doster
Heartland	TE Jonathan Whitley
Highlands	TE David Hina
Hills and Plains	RE Jeff Chewning
Houston Metro	RE Ryan Bowling
Illiana	TE Ryan Diehl
James River	TE Dennis Bullock
Metro Atlanta	TE Tim R. Locke
Mississippi Valley	RE Charles Murphy
Missouri	RE Christian Madsen
Nashville	TE Paul Joiner
New York State	TE Steve D. Froehlich
North Texas	RE Ken Smith
Northern California	TE Michael Awtry
Northern Illinois	TE Brad Lucht
Northwest Georgia	TE Clif Daniell
Ohio	TE Jacob Piland
Ohio Valley	RE Thomas Hill
Palmetto	RE Robert Allen
Piedmont Triad	TE Benjamin Milner
Pittsburgh	TE LeRoy Capper
Potomac	TE John Porter Harlow
Providence	RE James Thigpen
Rocky Mountain	RE Timothy Anderson
Siouxlands	TE Daniel Brendsel
Southeast Alabama	RE Mark Anderson III
Southern Louisiana	TE A. Campbell Silman
Southern New England	TE Stephen LaValley
Southwest Florida	TE Wes Holland Jr.*
Susquehanna Valley	TE David Kertland
Tennessee Valley	TE Ryan F. Biese

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Tidewater
Westminster

TE James Brock
TE Andrew Lee Wyatt

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Wes Holland Jr., Chairman /s/ TE Andy Wyatt, Secretary

49-46 Committee on Discipleship Ministries Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE Michael Wichmann, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer, and yielded to TE Stephen Estock, Coordinator, who presented the Informational Report, including a video. (For the full report of the CDM Permanent Committee, see Appendix D, p. 283.)

Recommendation 7 was **adopted**, giving thanks for Ms. Sue Jakes for over 20 years of service to the PCA, especially in her role as Children's Ministry Coordinator for CEP/CDM.

Recommendations 1-6, 8, and 9 were presented in gross and **adopted**. **Recommendation 10** was **deferred** to the CoC on AC.

The CoC Chairman closed his report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. CDM Permanent Committee Report
- B. CDM Permanent Committee Minutes from:
 - September 9-10, 2021
 - March 10-11, 2022
 - June 2, 2022
 - June 10, 2022
- C. CDM 2023 Proposed Budget
- D. 2021 CDM Audit
- E. CDM Permanent Committee Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. CDM Permanent Committee Report
- B. CDM Permanent Committee Minutes from:
 - September 9-10, 2021

March 10-11, 2022

June 2, 2022

June 10, 2022

C. CDM 2023 Proposed Budget

D. 2021 CDM Audit

E. CDM Permanent Committee Recommendations

III. Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the meetings of the Permanent Committee for the Committee on Discipleship Ministries on September 9-10, 2021; and March 10-11, 2022; and June 2, 2022; and June 10, 2022. *Adopted*
2. That the General Assembly receive the 2021 Audit performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith, and Jordan, and approve the same firm for the 2022 Audit. *Adopted*
3. That the General Assembly encourage churches and individuals to contribute generously to the “**Love Gift Legacy**” (pcacdm.org/wm-love-gift). For 2021, the funds were used by CDM to produce accessible Bible studies and digital training resources for women and children like *Breathe: The Life-Giving Oxygen of the Lord’s Prayer* (pcacdm.org/breathe). For 2022, CDM will promote and expand the new ministry to the wives of elders (“WE”). *Adopted*
4. That the General Assembly encourage individuals, local churches, and presbyteries to utilize the many free resources available on the CDM website (pcacdm.org/resources/ministry-tool-box/). Ministry specific sites include: grow.pcacdm.org (children’s), women.pcacdm.org (women’s), pcanextgen.com (student), and pcabookstore.com (books and resources). *Adopted*
5. That the General Assembly encourage local churches to consider and use **VBS Reachout Adventures** from CDM for Summer programming (vbsreachout.com). This Reformed and covenantal curriculum was written by PCA members. In 2022, the theme is *Genesis One Space Probe* which looks at the early chapters of Genesis. The 2023 theme is *Summer Seaquest*, a voyage into the book of Jonah. *Adopted*
6. That the General Assembly encourage individuals and local churches and church plants (which receive a year free) to consider and utilize the excellent print and digital curricula from Great Commission Publications (GCP), e.g., *Show Me Jesus* and *Kids’ Quest Catechism Club* for children, *G2R Genesis to Revelation* Bible studies for preteens to teens—including the new *G2R God’s Promises*—and *So*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- What?* Bible studies for youth. GCP also provides excellent training resources for your staff and volunteers. (See Attachment 2.) *Adopted*
7. That the General Assembly give thanks to Ms. Sue Jakes for over 20 years of service to the churches and covenant children of the PCA, especially in her role as Children’s Ministry Coordinator for CEP/CDM. *Adopted*
 8. That the General Assembly give thanks to TE Rick Downs, RE James Murphy, and TE Phillip Palmertree for their faithful service as members of the Permanent Committee. *Adopted*
 9. That the General Assembly re-elect TE Stephen Estock to serve as the Coordinator for the Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM). *Adopted*
 10. That the General Assembly approve the 2023 CDM budget as presented by the Administrative Committee. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery

Ascension
Blue Ridge
Canada West
Catawba Valley
Central Carolina
Central Florida
Central Georgia
Central Indiana
Chesapeake
Eastern Carolina
Evangel
Fellowship
Grace
Great Lakes
Gulf Coast
Heartland
Highlands
Hills and Plains
Houston Metro
Metro Atlanta
Mississippi Valley
North Texas
Northern Illinois
Northwest Georgia

Commissioner (*Convener)

TE David W. Hills
RE Stuart Pratt
TE Don Hulsey
TE Michael M. Gordon
RE Timm Dazey
TE Jinan Zhang
TE Glenn M. Jakes
TE Taylor Bradbury
TE Todd Hare
TE Chris Christopher Florence
TE Michael Wichlan*
RE Chris Arnold
TE Ezekiel Dean
TE Kevin Phipps
TE Dean E. Conkel
TE Anthony J. Felich
TE Danny Beck
TE Brandon Van Marel
TE Jason T. Wegener
RE John Gunter
TE Eric Mabbott
RE Steve J. Stallard
RE Troy Young
RE Timothy J. Verner

JOURNAL

Ohio	RE Ernest A. Miller
Pacific Northwest	TE Jerid Krulish
Palmetto	TE Trevor Allen
Piedmont Triad	TE Darin Stone
Pittsburgh	TE Greg Mead
Potomac	TE Dae Kim
Savannah River	TE Robert L. Hendrick
Southeast Alabama	TE Caleb C. Galloway
Southeast Louisiana	RE Jason Cabell
Southwest Florida	TE Robert Brubaker
Suncoast Florida	TE Keith Ledford
Susquehanna Valley	RE Darryl Kent MacPherson
Tennessee Valley	TE Brian Salter
Tidewater	RE Kurt Nelson
Westminster	RE AJ Babel

Respectfully submitted:

TE Michael Wichlan, Chairman TE Jerid Krulish, Secretary

49-47 Mission to the World Informational and Committee of Commissioners Report

TE Mike Hearon, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer, and yielded to TE Lloyd Kim, Coordinator, who presented the Informational Report, including a video highlighting current PCA ministry in Ukraine. (For the full report of MTW, see Appendix H, p. 343.)

The CoC Chairman prayed for those in Ukraine and presented the CoC report. **Recommendations 1-4, 6-8** were moved in gross and **adopted** without objection. **Recommendation 5** was **deferred** to the CoC on AC.

On a **point of order** TE Jesse Crutchley requested that an explanation be given regarding the exception of substance taken to the minutes in Recommendation 6. The Moderator ruled the point of order **well taken**. There was no attempt to take a re-vote on that item.

The Chairman closed the report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
MISSION TO THE WORLD
TO THE FORTY- NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A Review of CMTW minutes from:
 - March 10-11, 2021
 - September 29-30, 2021

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- B. Review of Recommendations from Permanent Committee
- C. Review of finances for 2020
- D. Review of Proposed 2022 and 2023 Budgets

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. Review of CMTW minutes from:
 - March 10-11, 2021
 - September 29-30, 2021
- B. Review of Recommendations from Permanent Committee
- C. Review of finances for 2020
- D. Review of 2022 and 2023 Proposed Budgets

III. Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly urge churches to set aside the month of November 2022 as a month of prayer for global missions, asking God to send many more laborers into His harvest field. (MTW will offer a 30 Days of Prayer Calendar, which your church can download from mtw.org in the fall, as well as other prayer resources); *Adopted*
2. That the General Assembly urge churches to set aside a portion of their giving for the suffering peoples of the world; to that end, be it recommended that a special offering for relief and mercy (MTW Compassion Offering) be taken during 2022 and distributed by MTW; *Adopted*
3. That the General Assembly urge churches to set aside Sunday, November 6, 2022, as a day of prayer for the persecuted church worldwide; *Adopted*
4. Having performed an annual review of our coordinator, we give thanks to our sovereign Lord for his gift to the Church in the person of Dr. Lloyd Kim, who continues to serve and lead humbly and effectively in the glorious cause of missions around the world. CMTW enthusiastically recommends that Dr. Kim be re-elected Coordinator. *Adopted*
5. That the proposed 2023 budgets ~~and the proposed 2022 budget~~ of MTW, as presented through the Administrative Committee, be approved; *Adopted*
6. That the minutes of the meeting of CMTW of March 10-11, 2021, be approved, with exception of substance; *Adopted*
7. That the minutes of the meeting of CMTW of September 29-30, 2021, be approved; *Adopted*
8. Regarding MTW's 2020 Financial Audit: That the Committee of Commissioners reviewed the financial audit for calendar year ending

JOURNAL

December 31, 2020. They also noted per CMTW's minutes that CMTW had accepted the audit. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery

Arizona
Ascension
Blue Ridg
Central Carolina
Central Florida
Chesapeake
Chicago Metro
Covenant
Eastern Canada
Eastern Carolina
Eastern Pennsylvania
Evangel
Fellowship
Grace
Great Lakes
Gulf Coast
Heartland
Heritage
Highlands
Houston Metro
Illiana
James River
Korean Capital
Lowcountry
Metro Atlanta
Mississippi Valley
Missouri
North Texas
Northern California
Northern Illinois
Northern New England
Northwest Georgia
Ohio
Ohio Valley
Pacific Northwest
Pee Dee

Commissioner (*Convener)

TE Paul Muresan
TE Jeff K. Zehnder
TE M. Douglas Hart
TE Michael David Mock
RE David Moore
TE Mark C. Samuel
TE John Rogers
TE Duncan Hoopes
TE Jeffrey Bruce Hynds
RE Bruce Narveson
TE Robert Lee Carr
RE Bryan Wintersteen
TE Michael Grey Dixon
RE Jordan Carl
RE Jerry Stutzman
RE TJ Neely
TE Nathan Currey
TE Joshua Suh
TE Sean Monroe McCann
RE Keith Pendergrass
TE Brian Matthew Sandifer
TE Levi Bakerink
TE Daniel Shinjong Baeq
TE Jon D. Payne
TE Walter H. Henegar
RE Alan Walters
RE Thomas Schmidt
TE Noah Wiersema
RE Chad Edison
TE Steve Jones
TE Seth Anderson
TE Job Dalomba
TE Jason Piland
RE Shay Fout
TE Patrick Severson
TE Matthew Dallas Adams

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Philadelphia Metro West	RE Robert Carlson
Piedmont Triad	TE Owen Palmer Robertson
Pittsburgh	RE James E Partridge
Potomac	RE Edward Faudree
Providence	RE Dennis Bradford
Rocky Mountain	RE David Kliever
Savannah River	TE Mike Hearon*
Siouxlands	TE Judson Marvel
South Coast	TE Daniel Warne
South Texas	TE Timothy Lewis Fox
Southwest Florida	TE Jeremy Fuller
Susquehanna Valley	TE Angelo Valle
Tennessee Valley	TE Seth Hammond
Tidewater	TE David W. Zavadil
Westminster	TE Thomas Edwin Rickard
Wisconsin	TE Spencer Thomas

Three additional commissioners were noted based upon late registrations:

Central Indiana	TE Bob O'Bannon
Hills & Plains	RE Matt Lee
SE Korean Presbytery	TE David Lee

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Mike Hearon, Chairman

/s/ RE Tom Schmidt, Secretary

49-48 Mission to North America Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

TE Paul Boyd, CoC Chairman, led with prayer and yielded to TE Irwyn Ince, Coordinator, who presented the Informational Report, including a video. (For the full report of the MNA Permanent Committee, see Appendix G, p. 320.)

The CoC Chairman presented the CoC report.

Recommendations 2 and 4-8 were **adopted** in gross.

The Chairman highlighted Recommendation 1 and asked the Assembly to celebrate that for the first time, our denomination has hired an African-American elder as a Permanent Committee Coordinator. **Recommendation 1** was **adopted**.

Recommendation 3 was **deferred** to the CoC on AC.

The Chairman closed the report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. MNA Permanent Committee Report
- B. MNA Permanent Committee Minutes
 - October 11, 2018 (called meeting); March 6-7, 2019; September 11-12, 2019; March 4-5, 2020; September 16-17, 2020, November 19, 2020 (called meeting); December 3, 2020 (called meeting); March 3-4, 2021
 - July 27, 2021 (called meeting); October 20 - 21, 2021; and February 24, 2022 (called meeting).
- C. MNA 2023 Proposed Budgets
- D. MNA Permanent Committee 2021 Audits
- E. Overtures referred to MNA Committee
- F. Permanent Committee Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. MNA Permanent Committee Report
- B. MNA Permanent Committee Minutes
 - October 11, 2018 (called meeting); March 6-7, 2019; September 11-12, 2019; March 4-5, 2020; September 16-17, 2020, November 19, 2020 (called meeting); December 3, 2020 (called meeting); March 3-4, 2021
 - July 27, 2021 (called meeting); October 20 - 21, 2021; and February 24, 2022 (called meeting).
- C. MNA 2023 Proposed Budgets
- D. MNA Permanent Committee 2021 Audits
- E. Overtures referred to Committee
- F. MNA Permanent Committee Recommendations

III. Recommendations

- 1. That being well satisfied with his testimony and qualifications, and that having reviewed his work as MNA Coordinator *Pro Tempore* beginning September 1, 2021, according to the General Assembly guidelines, the MNA Permanent Committee recommends that the General Assembly, elect **TE Irwyn L. Ince Jr.**, as Coordinator of Mission to North America. The MNA Committee gives thanks to the Lord for TE Ince's leadership of MNA during 2021-2022.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(**Attachment 3** provides a complete list of MNA staff; see **Attachment 4** for the list of MNA Permanent Committee members.)

Adopted

2. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of RE Brent Andersen from his service as MNA Interim Coordinator effective August 31, 2021, with thanksgiving to God for his faithful leadership of MNA and the progress of MNA ministry from January 1, 2021 – August 31, 2021.

Adopted

3. That the Mission to North America Permanent Committee 2023 budget, as presented through the Administrative Committee, be approved by the General Assembly and commended to the churches for their support.

Deferred to the CoC on AC

4. That the General Assembly adopt the 2021 MNA Audit. *Adopted*
5. That TE CH (COL) Steve William Prost, USA, and TE CH (LTC) James Cotton Pakala, USA, Ret. be appointed to serve as PCA members of the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC) for the Class of 2026.

Adopted

6. That the MNA Permanent Committee implementation of Overture 13 to the 48th General Assembly, “Endorse Lifeline Children’s Services,” (see **Attachment 5** for text of overture, which was answered by the 48th General Assembly in the affirmative, thereby assigning implementation to the MNA Permanent Committee) be approved as follows: “The MNA Permanent Committee has explored the advisability of endorsing Lifeline Children’s Services as a possible resource for PCA churches, and in lieu of endorsement, recommends that the General Assembly commend Lifeline Children’s Services to its churches as a sound agency in its mission to equip the Body of Christ to manifest the gospel to vulnerable children through pregnancy counseling, domestic and international adoption, foster care, global orphan care, and education and counseling.” (*Rationale for underlined substitute: Proposed change in wording is an editorial clarification, not a change in substance.*)

Adopted

RATIONALE:

1. In summary, the MNA Permanent Committee believes that the framework of endorsement that defined the relationship between the PCA and Bethany Christian Services (which Overture 13 seeks to replicate with Lifeline Children’s Services succeeding Bethany Christian Services), is no longer a workable framework for defining the relationship of an outside agency with the PCA.

2. The MNA Permanent Committee has the highest regard for Lifeline Children's Services and having reviewed its reports and interacted with its executive leadership, strongly commends this organization for its work in equipping the body to manifest the gospel to vulnerable children. The MNA Permanent Committee understands that Lifeline leadership perceives that Lifeline will suffer harm should the PCA not approve endorsement, but in no way does the MNA Permanent Committee's recommendation seek to assert or imply any deficiency of this organization in its mission or value.
3. The MNA Permanent Committee's understanding of the nature of "endorsement" is that it creates an exclusive bond between the outside organization and the PCA, one which would grant quasi-denominational status to the endorsed organization as if it were one of the PCA's own agencies. Without prejudice to Lifeline Children's Services, the MNA Permanent Committee believes that such a relationship between the General Assembly and any organization is unwise.
 - a. The one and only agency endorsed by the PCA was Bethany Christian Services, which enjoyed endorsement in some manner from the 11th General Assembly in 1983 through the 46th General Assembly in 2018.
 - b. In its report to the 13th General Assembly in 1985, the MNA Permanent Committee noted [*emphasis added; note that the paragraph numbering is copied from the General Assembly Minutes cited*]:

11. During the year Bethany Christian Services has graciously and correctly asked the Committee the meaning of our endorsement of Bethany. We have been asked to devise a strategy for the implementation of that endorsement. We expect to address that in the near future and perhaps bring back a report to the next General Assembly. In considering the use of Bethany's services by PCA members and adherents, it is evident that Bethany has extended itself for the benefit of our denomination without commensurate financial response. We take the opportunity of this report to encourage individuals, churches and presbyteries to use, encourage and support Bethany Christian Services at a time of national and international

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

crisis occasioned by the rapid growth of humanism, the immorality and the exploding scandal of abortion. Bethany's report to the Assembly is Attachment D. (Recommendation 14).

- c. In its report to the 14th General Assembly in 1986, the MNA Permanent Committee offered the following recommendation to define the meaning of endorsement [note that the paragraph numbering is copied from the General Assembly *Minutes* cited]:
 - 8.a. That the Assembly adopt the following as the meaning of 'endorse.'
 - (1) Endorsement includes accreditation. The agency is declared a valid and worthy ministry. Endorsement goes beyond accreditation, however.
 - (2) Endorsement of any agency is a statement that the General Assembly will not duplicate the agency's service and will seek to actively support it from its resources.
 - (a) Individual donor level: an endorsed agency shall have access to the denomination's mailing list on a schedule approved by the MNA Permanent Committee on Administration which shall also approve the content of the mailing with the concurrence of GA MNA.
 - (b) Local church level: The GA MNA Permanent Committee shall formally recommend that the endorsed agency receive support from local churches and presbyteries.
 - (c) General Assembly Level: develop a plan of cooperation with the endorsed agency to aid its expansion in areas of PCA strength. (See Attachment C, II.c.1.a. p. 368) *Adopted*
 - 8.b. That Bethany Christian Services be considered an endorsed agency under this definition. *Adopted*'

- d. According to this definition, endorsement involves:
 - i. Accreditation (which was not defined by the MNA Permanent Committee in this recommendation), but see below.
 - ii. Exclusivity: the GA will not duplicate the agency's service.
 - iii. Resourcing (access to mailing lists, resources, recommendation that churches and presbyteries provide financial support).
 - iv. Partnership: to help the agency expand.
- e. In its report to the 31st General Assembly in 2003, the MNA Permanent Committee offered the following recommendation which contained additional criteria for endorsement [note that the paragraph numbering is copied from the General Assembly *Minutes* cited]:

6. That the General Assembly express thanks to God for the long and effective ministry of Bethany Christian Services in the area of pregnancy counseling and adoption, encourage continued support and participation by churches and presbyteries. Upon annual review and recommendation through a PCA Permanent Committee, the PCA may endorse agencies based on the following criteria. Currently, Bethany Christian Services is the only agency so endorsed, upon review and recommendation by the MNA Permanent Committee:

- The endorsed agency has a statement of faith, which includes, or at least does not require individual staff members to contradict, the historic reformed creeds and confessional standards; all key staff in the endorsed organization are required to profess their personal commitment to this statement of faith.
- The endorsed agency has a long-standing history of ministry, a minimum of five years, and has demonstrated consistency

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

and stability of ministry through those years.

- The endorsed agency's staff and governing board, while ecclesiastically independent, has an intentional commitment to appoint PCA members in key leadership roles.
 - The PCA Committee through whom the endorsement is carried, reviews the endorsed agency's board minutes, major policy changes at the board level, total annual budget, audit, and annual fund raising plan to ensure that they meet the same standards as do PCA Committees and Agencies.
 - Upon review and recommendation from the PCA Committee through whom endorsement is carried, the PCA General Assembly renews the endorsement annually by vote.
 - The CEO of the endorsed agency, or his designee, reports annually in-person to the PCA Committee through whom the endorsement is carried.
 - The endorsed agency provides services via an actual staff or trained volunteer presence in multiple locations throughout North America, especially in areas where the PCA is strong and PCA members can directly benefit from the agency's services, as well as support and participate in the services provided by the endorsed agency.
 - The PCA does not have an agency that addresses the same need as that addressed by the endorsed agency and has no current plans to begin such a ministry. *Adopted*
- f. This recommendation served to further clarify the criteria for accreditation and the procedure for endorsement.
- i. The criteria sets a high bar for agencies seeking endorsement.

- ii. It also places a substantial burden on the PCA Committee through whom endorsement is carried, which must annually ensure that the endorsed agency is in compliance with the same operating standards of PCA Committees and Agencies. Should there be any lack of compliance, the sole remedy is persuasion, in that the General Assembly has no ownership or authority to direct the endorsed agency to take any specific actions.
 - iii. It also specifies that the “PCA does not have an agency that addresses the same need as that addressed by the endorsed agency” which implies (to the MNA Permanent Committee) that the GA should not consider other endorsements that overlap or compete with the endorsed agency’s scope of services.
4. The MNA Permanent Committee is not convinced that the PCA is in need of an agency to succeed the relationship it had with Bethany Christian Services.
 - a. The endorsement of Bethany Christian Services was reaffirmed annually through a recommendation from MNA to General Assembly. MNA staff did the work of due diligence related to the endorsement criteria, which the MNA Permanent Committee routinely affirmed. There was a season during which this relationship was fruitful both for the PCA and for Bethany, but that season ended in 2018 when Bethany requested that its endorsement not be put before the Assembly for affirmation.
 - b. There is a multiplicity of agencies serving the needs of vulnerable children and providing adoption services throughout the country, each with its own geographical scope, service emphases, and preexisting relationships with local churches. The MNA Permanent Committee is not convinced that the PCA would be best served through a singular relationship with one to the exclusion of others.
5. The MNA Permanent Committee is concerned that the requirement of the MNA Permanent Committee and its staff to annually evaluate an outside agency for endorsement is untenable, especially within our current cultural context in matters that include dealing with state regulatory and licensing bodies.
6. The MNA Permanent Committee is concerned that endorsement may subject the General Assembly to unanticipated legal liability.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

7. The MNA Permanent Committee notes that Lifeline Children’s Services currently enjoys the favor of being one of MNA Recommended Ministries.

[Note: End of Rationale for Overture 13 response.]

MNA RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

7. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the MNA Permanent Committee meetings that were not approved at previous General Assemblies due to administrative oversight: October 11, 2018 (called meeting); March 6-7, 2019; September 11-12, 2019; March 4-5, 2020; September 16–17, 2020, November 19, 2020 (called meeting); December 3, 2020 (called meeting); March 3–4, 2021.

Adopted

8. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the MNA Permanent Committee meetings July 27, 2021 (called meeting); October 20 - 21, 2021; and February 24, 2022 (called meeting).

Adopted

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery Commissioner (*Convener)

Blue Ridge	RE Mark Coddington
Calvary	TE Paul Lambert Sanders
Canada West	TE Jeffrey Kerr
Catawba Valley	TE Stephen O. Stout
Central Carolina	RE Tim Shorey
Central Florida	TE Kevin Gardner
Central Georgia	TE William C. Douglas
Chesapeake	TE Jason Van Bommel
Eastern Carolina	TE Grant M. Beachy
Evangel	TE James Benjamin Youngblood Jr.
Fellowship	RE Steven Palecek
Grace	TE Brian H. Davis
Great Lakes	TE Matthew S. Luchenbill
Gulf Coast	TE Stephen B. Tipton
Heartland	RE Marlon Johnson
Heritage	TE Kenneth Foster
Korean Capital	TE Steve Sun Kyo Yoon
Lowcountry	RE Donald Cummings
Metro Atlanta	RE Frank Brown
Mississippi Valley	TE Charles M. Wingard

JOURNAL

Missouri	TE Pablo Rosales
Nashville	TE Paul Boyd*
New Jersey	TE Robert H. Orner
North Texas	RE Rick Owens
Northern California	TE Jeremiah Hill
Northern Illinois	RE Benjamin Dean Harding
Northwest Georgia	RE Chuck Lokey
Pacific Northwest	TE Michael Kelly
Palmetto	TE Jonathan Adam Shields
Pee Dee	TE Joseph Wayne Arnold
Piedmont Triad	TE Ethan Andrew Smith
Pittsburgh	TE David Schweissing
Providence	TE Dieter Paulson
Rocky Mountain	TE Matthew Capone
Savannah River	RE Jon Thompson
Siouxlands	TE Luke Bluhm
South Florida	TE Michael C. Woodham
Southeast Alabama	TE Eric Byram Zellner
Southern New England	TE J. Bennett
Southwest Florida	TE James Mullen
Susquehanna Valley	TE David Kieffer
Tennessee Valley	RE Bill Browne
West Hudson	TE Steven Sage

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Paul Boyd, Chairman

/s/ TE David Schweissing, Secretary

TE Fred Greco rose with a point of information, asking the Assembly to pray for RE Steve Dowling, who was experiencing a heart health event. At the Moderator's request, TE Greco led the Assembly in prayer for RE Dowling.

49-49 Administrative Committee Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports, continued

RE Jack Watkins, CoC Chairman, led with prayer and yielded to TE Bryan Chapell, PCA Stated Clerk, who presented the Informational Report. (For the full report of the AC Permanent Committee, see Appendix C, p. 191.) The report was interrupted to allow for the Order of the Day.

49-50 Special Order: Nominating Committee Report

At 9:30 a.m. a Special Order was recognized by the Assembly. TE Arthur Sartorius, Chairman, led in prayer and presented the report of the Nominating Committee (Appendix P, p. 437).

Hearing no objection, the Moderator declared all uncontested nominees **elected**.

The following nominees were elected by the Assembly:

Committee on Constitutional Business:

TE Class of 2026:

TE Jason Piland *Ohio* (694-389)

Board of Trustees of Covenant College, Class of 2026:

TE Sean McGowan, *Gulf Coast* (820-631)

TE Omari Hill, *Central Carolina* (717-713)

Committee on Discipleship Ministries, Class of 2027:

TE Lee Hutchings, *Ohio* (840-548)

Committee on Mission to North America, Class of 2027:

TE Hansoo Jin, *Korean Capitol* (859-650)

Committee on Mission to the World, Class of 2027:

TE Maranatha Chung, *Philadelphia Metro* (794-726)

RE Theo Hagg, *Westminster* (786-628)

Committee on Reformed University Fellowship, Alternate:

TE Kenneth Foster, *Heritage* (776-389-301)

Standing Judicial Commission, Class of 2026:

TE Arthur Sartorius, *Siouxlands* (872-620)

RE James Eggert, *Southwest Florida* (759-707)

RE John Pickering, *Evangel* (719-709)

Theological Examining Committee, Class of 2025:

TE Guy Richard, *Metro Atlanta* (865-695)

Chairman Sartorius closed the report with prayer.

49-51 Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) Vows and Declaration to be Assembly's Judicial Commission

Moderator Bise yielded the chair to TE Roy Taylor.

The Moderator administered the oath of office to all newly elected members of the Standing Judicial Commission. The following members of the SJC took their vows:

RE John Pickering

RE John Bise

RE James Eggert

TE Arthur Sartorius
TE Fred Greco
TE Guy Prentiss Waters
TE David B. Garner

The Assembly **declared** the Standing Judicial Commission to be the Judicial Commission of this Assembly in accord with *BCO* 15-4.

49-52 Report of the Administrative Committee Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports, continued

RE Jack Watkins, CoC Chairman, continued his report.

Recommendations 2 and 5-33 were **adopted** without objection in gross, Recommendations 3 and 4 having been dealt with previously (see p. 18).

Recommendation 1 was discussed, an objection having been raised by TE Bill Thrailkill to its adoption. TE Thrailkill's **motion** for a counted vote using the clickers rather than a voice vote was **adopted**, 1133-672. RE Bob Brunson as the Chairman's representative gave the final word in favor of the recommendation. **Recommendation 1** was **adopted**, 1388-449, electing TE Bryan Chapell to another term as Stated Clerk.

TE Rich Leino **moved** that **Recommendation 34**, regarding use of the PCA trademarks and derivatives, be recommitted to the Committee. Chairman Watkins yielded to the Stated Clerk, who gave the final word. The **substitute motion to recommit** was **defeated**, 328-1291. **Recommendation 34** was **adopted**.

Chairman Watkins called attention to Recommendation 2, commending the staff of the Administrative Committee, and the Assembly showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

Chairman Watkins called attention to Recommendation 24, revised by the Committee of Commissioners and already adopted by the Assembly, to raise the General Assembly fee for teaching elders and lower the fee for ruling elders.

The Chairman closed his report in prayer.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

A. AC Permanent Committee Report to GA

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- B. Minutes of the 2021-2022 meetings of the AC and Board of Directors
 - 1. AC – April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021
 - 2. BD – April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021
- C. Budgets for the permanent Committees and Agencies
- D. Overtures Referred to the AC
- E. Recommendations of the AC Committee including the supplemental report

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. AC Permanent Committee Report to GA
- B. Minutes of the 2021-2022 meetings of the AC and Board of Directors
 - 1. AC – April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021
 - 2. BD – April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021

Note:The CoC acknowledges the reception of the minutes of the Administrative Committee meeting on June 6, 2022.

Note:The committee notes that the draft June 6, 2022 minutes of the Permanent Committee on Administration contain a reference of the inclusion of a statement of Constitutional Precedence in its policy manual as required by the 47th General Assembly when it adopted Overture 24 in that year.
- C. Budgets for the permanent Committees and Agencies
- D. Overtures related to the AC
- E. Recommendations of the AC Committee including the supplemental report

III. Recommendations

- 1. That the General Assembly elect Dr. Bryan Chappell for another term as Stated Clerk. *Adopted*
- 2. That the Assembly commend John Robertson and the AC staff: Amanda Burton, Richard Doster, Paul Kooistra, Priscilla Lowrey, Angela Nantz, Wayne Sparkman, Roy Taylor, Margaret Baker, Karen Cook, Ashley Davis, Erika Derr, Anna Eubanks, Karen Frey, Wayne Herring, Larry Hoop, Monica Johnston, Margie Mallow, Billy Park, and Craig Wilkes for their work. *Adopted*
- 3. That **Overture 1** from Palmetto Presbytery, “Docket Overtures Committee Report as a GA Order of the Day,” **be answered in the ~~negative.~~ affirmative** as amended by adding the following to RAO 15-8a:

Therefore, be it resolved that Palmetto Presbytery (PCA) overture the 49th General Assembly to make the report of the Overtures

~~Committee regularly the order of the day at 9:00 a.m. on the Thursday of each General Assembly.~~

15-8.a “The report shall be docketed as a special order immediately following the special order for the Nominating Committee (cf. RAO 8-4.j).”

Adopted

CoC Grounds:

It is clearly evident that our current practice concerning our Overtures Report has not worked effectively or efficiently for our Assembly. The CoC argues that under the Assemblies' current practice, the overtures report is both rushed and it carries on into the latest hours. Last year, the Assembly was almost ejected from the exhibit hall in the early morning hours. This not only forces our commissioners to take up some of the weightiest content at the worst hours, but it also forces the workers and volunteers to continue alongside us. This amendment to the RAO seeks to save our assembly from the embarrassment of making difficult decisions with weighty consequences after midnight.

GROUNDS [Permanent Committee]:

Requiring the Assembly to establish the Overtures Committee Report to be an Order of the Day is well-intended but unwise. All should recognize that business varies significantly from year to year. Important debates can relate to matters other than overtures and sometimes go in unplanned directions with unpredictable timing (such as a motion to limit the time of Committee and Agency reports that caused an extra hour of debate last year). Sometimes BCO Amendments, Ad Interim Committee recommendations, Committee of Commissioner reports, parliamentary motions, or reports from the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records stimulate lengthy discussions and become the unanticipated pressure points of the Assembly apart from overtures discussions. Also, Overtures Committee reports sometimes must be made in partial sections due to the timeliness of the matters being considered or the magnitude of the vote needed for passage (e.g., RAO/OMSJC amendments).

There is only one report (Nominating Committee) required to be an order of the day at each General Assembly, and this is dictated by the RAO (RAO 8-4.j), and even this requirement does not dictate a specific time.

While we do not believe any additional orders of the day are wise, any overture binding future Assemblies by creating a requirement on the

docket would need to codify that requirement in the *RAO*. Changes to the *RAO* require a 2/3 majority of the General Assembly in part because binding future General Assemblies to a course of action is not a step to be taken lightly.

4. That **Overture 22** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery, “Amend *RAO* 3-2.h, Making Statistical Data Digitally Accessible,” **be answered in the affirmative as amended** (double underline and ~~double strikethrough~~ show changes made to the original overture language): *Adopted*

***RAO* 3-2.h**

- h. He shall be responsible for publishing both digitally and in print the General Assembly minutes and church statistical reports of the Presbyterian Church in America and periodically updating the digest of the minutes. ~~Likewise, these minutes and statistical reports (i.e. ‘The PCA Yearbook’) shall be made available in digital format (i.e. pdf, .xls, etc.).~~

GROUNDS:

As the overture states, the Stated Clerk’s Office already publishes the General Assembly Minutes in a digital format. We welcome the charge to investigate ways to best make our statistical information available in a digital format that also preserves the integrity of the information while protecting private information. We do not believe codifying terms in the *RAO* like *PCA Yearbook* or file extensions would be the best solution. File extensions vary as technology progresses. We would also not recommend that the entirety of the information available in the *PCA Yearbook* be available in a digital format. We hope that PCA Teaching Elders would continue to share their biographical information with the denomination, and this information should not be shared in an online format.

5. That **Overture 18** from Pacific Northwest-Georgia, “Amend *RAO* 3-2 by Adding an Administrative Responsibility for the Stated Clerk’s Office Regarding the Processing of Allegations,” **be answered in the negative.**

Adopted

GROUNDS:

The AC shares the concerns noted in this overture regarding allegations in public speech. However, the Stated Clerk already has the authority to give advice and counsel to parties on how to channel their concerns to

JOURNAL

appropriate entities (*RAO* 3-2 a, s). We believe that it is wise for this function to remain as described in the *RAO* so that the Stated Clerk can assess the appropriate course of action. We believe that the determination of whether disciplinary attention is needed is best left to the appropriate court. Further, this overture implements a level of codification that would likely add considerable duties to the work of the Stated Clerk.

6. That the Administrative Committee budget for 2023 of \$3,565,831 Operating Budget and \$1,921,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
7. That the PCA Building budget for 2023 of \$405,475 Operating Budget be approved. The PCA Building does not participate in Partnership Shares *Adopted*
8. That the CDM budget for 2023 of \$2,046,000 Operating Budget and \$840,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
9. That the Covenant College budget for 2023 of \$33,266,734 Operating Budget and \$2,000,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
10. That the CTS budget for 2023 of \$9,817,286 Operating Budget and \$2,000,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
11. That the MNA budget for 2023 of \$23,538,168 Operating Budget and \$8,943,571 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
12. That the MTW budget for 2023 of \$66,248,400 Operating Budget and \$9,351,690 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
13. That the PCAF budget for 2023 of \$1,959,817 Operating Budget be approved. The PCAF does not participate in Partnership Shares. *Adopted*
14. That the RBI budget for 2023 of \$4,854,716 Operating Budget be approved. RBI does not participate in Partnership Shares. *Adopted*
15. That the RUF budget for 2023 of \$51,826,287 Operating Budget and \$8,576,825 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
16. That the RH budget for 2023 of \$3,329,000 Operating Budget and \$1,225,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved. *Adopted*
17. That the “2023 Budgeted Partnership Shares and Ministry Asks of PCA Ministry Partners by the Participating General Assembly Ministries” be approved. *Adopted*
18. That the Assembly take note that the 2021 Audit performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan on the Administrative Committee was received and reviewed as required by *RAO* 14-7.h. *Adopted*
19. That the Assembly take note that the 2021 Audit performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan on the PCA Building Fund was received and reviewed as required by *RAO* 14-7.h. *Adopted*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20. That Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan, PC, be approved as auditors for the Administrative Committee and the Committee on Discipleship Ministries for the calendar year ending December 31, 2022. *Adopted*
21. That Capin, Crouse, & Company be approved as auditors for the Committee on Mission to the World and the Committee on Mission to North America for the calendar year ending December 31, 2022. *Adopted*
22. That Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLP, be approved as auditors for the Committee on Reformed University Fellowship for the calendar year ending December 31, 2022. *Adopted*
23. That the Assembly receive the charts below as the acceptable response to the GA requirement for an annual report on the cost of the AC’s mandated responsibilities. *Adopted*

2021 Unfunded Mandates

GENERAL ASSEMBLY COSTS

Year	# of Commissioners	Total Costs	Cost per Commissioner	Amount of Fee Alloted to GA	Total Standard Fee
2016	1316	572,414	\$435	\$350	\$450
2017	1461	585,301	\$401	\$350	\$450
2018	1537	628,815	\$409	\$350	\$450
2019	1652	729,515	\$442	\$350	\$450
2021	2114	844,600	\$400	\$350	\$450

AC GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESPONSIBILITIES					
				2021	Per
Description				Total ²	Commissioner
Committee on Constitutional Business				\$10,706	\$5.06
General Assembly with Minutes ¹				\$874,600	\$413.72
Interchurch Relations Committee				\$15,058	\$7.12
Nominating Committee ²				\$21,412	\$10.13
Standing Judicial Commission				\$187,394	\$88.64
Theological Examining Committee ³				\$0	\$0
TOTALS				\$1,109,170	\$524.67

1. Review of Presbytery Records is included in the General Assembly Total. In 2021, RPR cost \$6,821 (a significantly

JOURNAL

lower cost due to the pandemic preventing in-person meetings); production and delivery of the General Assembly Minutes cost at least \$30,000 and is included in this "Total".

2. The expense of the Nominating Committee is shared by the PCA Committees and Agencies.
 3. The Theological Examining Committee did not incur any material expenses in 2021 as per their report to the AC.
24. ~~That the registration fee remain at \$450 for the 2023 General Assembly, with \$350 allocated to the GA expenses, \$25 for publication of the GA Minutes, and \$75 allocated to the Standing Committee cost center for the expenses of the Standing Judicial Commission. Honorably retired or emeritus elders would continue to pay 1/3 of the regular registration (\$150). Elders coming from churches with annual incomes below \$150,000, as per their 2022 statistics, may register for \$300.~~

The CoC recommends the following wording as a substitute for Recommendation 24 of the Permanent Committee:

That the registration fee structure for the 2023 General Assembly be \$525 for Teaching Elders and \$300 for Ruling Elders. The allocation of the TE fees would be \$350 allocated to the GA expenses, \$50 for publication of the GA Minutes, and \$100 allocated to the Standing Committee cost center for the expenses of the Standing Judicial Commission. The full Ruling Elder fee would be allocated to the GA expenses. Honorably retired may register for \$150. Elders coming from churches with annual incomes below \$150,000, as per their 2022 statistics, may register for \$300.

Adopted

CoC Grounds:

The CoC wanted to remove some of the burden for Ruling Elder participation in our General Assembly. Though there may be many ways to encourage Ruling Elder participation in our courts, the CoC believed this encouragement from our General Assembly would help bolster Ruling Elder attendance and participation in future General Assemblies. There are many obstacles for Ruling Elders to attend General Assembly, let this change to commissioner fees reflect an earnest desire to reduce one of those obstacles.

25. That the Building Occupancy Cost charged to each ministry be kept at \$12 per square foot for 2023.

Adopted

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26. That the plan outlined below for the payment of the required contribution from the PCA Committees and Agencies to the PCA Administrative Committee be approved. *Adopted*

PLAN: Committees and Agencies are asked to pay in one of the following three options:

1. Semiannual – one-half paid in January and one-half paid in July.
2. Quarterly – one fourth paid the first month of each quarter: January, April, July, and October.
3. Monthly – one twelfth paid the first of each month.

NOTE: The chart on the following page shows the agreed upon amounts for 2023.

PCA MINISTRY	CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT
AC	
CDM	\$11,500
CC	\$11,500
CTS	\$11,500
MNA	\$11,500
MTW	\$11,500
PCAF	\$11,500
RBI	\$11,500
RH	\$11,500
RUF	\$11,500
	\$103,500

27. That the Annual Administration Fee for Ministers be set at \$100 for 2023. *Adopted*
28. That the General Assembly set the request to Presbyteries for GA Host Committee assistance at \$500 for 2023. *Adopted*
29. That the Assembly approve the minutes of the Board of Directors for April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021. *Adopted*
30. That the Assembly approve the minutes of the Administrative Committee for April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021. *Adopted*
31. That the RAO be amended to read:

~~RAO 1-1. The General Assembly shall be called to order at the designated time by the Moderator, and shall begin with a worship service, including a season of prayer, a sermon or exhortation by the retiring Moderator, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper (except when a Condensed version of the meeting is being held as stipulated in RAO 10-6).~~

~~RAO 10.6. In the case of extraordinary events occurring or unusual circumstances arising that make it impractical for the General Assembly to hold its annual stated meeting on the dates or at the site previously approved by the Assembly, the Moderator with the Administrative Committee shall be authorized, upon the recommendation of the Stated Clerk and Moderator, to make alternative arrangements. In the case where national or regional travel is prohibited or unadvised, these arrangements may include calling for a condensed Assembly to be held by virtual means coordinated by the Administrative Committee. A condensed Assembly would only hear business required for the mission of the church to go forward until a full Assembly could be convened. Types of business that could be handled could include Committee and Agency budgets, continuity of business, and immediate mission critical recommendations. All Overtures, Review of Presbytery Records, Nominations, and non-critical reports and recommendations will be postponed until an in-person Assembly could be convened. In the case of a need for a condensed General Assembly, the Moderator of the previous Assembly shall serve as Moderator. Extraordinary matters needing General Assembly action, but not addressed in this paragraph, shall only be considered upon the approval of a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the condensed Assembly.~~

The CoC recommends that **no change** be made to RAO 1.1 and 10.6.

Adopted

CoC Grounds:

The CoC believed the language found in these RAO amendments to be both unclear and unnecessary. This circumstances for this amendment to our RAO is extraordinary rare and would never be implemented.

32. That the General Assembly encourage the pastors and people of the PCA to sign up for the free commemorative editions of byFaith magazine so that we can rejoice together through the year of our 50th General Assembly in what God has done to build a church faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission. *Adopted*
33. That the General Assembly urge all congregations to send in their statistics for 2022 to have the most accurate count possible for the 50th Celebration year. *Adopted*
34. That the GA remind all commissioners and their associated entities that Presbyterian Church in America trademarks and their associated derivatives (names, abbreviations, logos, etc.) are copyright protected and

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

are not to be used without General Assembly approval for individual, organizational, periodical, or internet site titling, fund raising, or representation. Those who have already acted without authorization to identify or credential their websites, organizations, periodicals, Facebook pages, solicitations, etc. with PCA trademarks should remove those designations. If further clarification is needed, inquiries or concerns should be addressed to the Office of the Stated Clerk of the PCA.

Adopted

IV. Commissioners Present

Presbytery

Ascension
Blue Ridge
Calvary
Catawba Valley
Central Carolina
Central Florida
Central Georgia
Chesapeake
Chicago Metro
Columbus Metro
Covenant
Eastern Canada
Eastern Carolina
Evangel
Fellowship
Georgia Foothills
Grace
Great Lakes
Gulf Coast
Gulfstream
Heartland
Heritage
Highlands
Hills and Plains
Houston Metro
Iowa
James River
Lowcountry
Metro Atlanta
Metro New York

Commissioner (*Convener)

RE Mark Miller
RE J. D. Patton
TE Jonathan Master
TE William Thraikill
RE George Kurz
RE Andrew Augenstein
TE Richard Hunter Stevenson
RE Jeremiah Horner
TE Christopher Paul Colquitt
TE James Kessler
RE Clint Wood
TE Michael Chhangur
RE Daniel Prins
TE Hunter Twitty
RE Thomas Neagle
TE Jared Bryant
TE David T. Irving
TE Jeremy Byrd
TE Richard A. Fennig
TE David Patrick Cassidy
TE D. Timothy Rackley
TE Stephen Coward
TE Skip Gillikin
TE Paul Sagan
TE Fred Greco
TE Luke Wolfe
RE Richard E. Leino
TE Michael Bauer
RE Bob Edwards
TE Michael Keller

JOURNAL

Mississippi Valley	TE Christopher Wright
Missouri	TE Charles Stover
Nashville	RE Jack L. Watkins*
New Jersey	TE Stephen O'Neill
New York State	RE John VanVoorhis
North Florida	TE Stephen Spinnenweber
North Texas	RE Brian Heise
Northern California	TE Alex Ford
Northern Illinois	RE Gary Haluska
Northwest Georgia	RE Jared Kee
Ohio	TE Christopher Lee Hutchings
Pacific Northwest	TE Adam Parker
Palmetto	TE Trent Still
Pee Dee	TE Brian Joseph Peterson
Piedmont Triad	RE Greg Greene
Philadelphia	TE Maranatha Chung
Pittsburgh	TE Frank D. Moser
Platte Valley	TE Stuart L. Kerns
Potomac	RE Robert Mattes
Providence	TE Scott Edburg
Rocky Mountain	E Matthew William Giesman
South Florida	TE Andrew M. Siegenthaler
South Texas	RE Joshua Torrey
Southeast Alabama	TE Ross Hodges
Southern Louisiana	RE Ken Kostrzewa
Southwest Florida	TE Jonathan Winfree
Suncoast Florida	TE Kenneth A. Aldrich
Susquehanna Valley	RE Al Taglieri
Tennessee Valley	RE James Isbell
Warrior	TE Derrick Brite

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ RE Jack Watkins, Chairman

/s/ TE Scott Edburg, Secretary

49-53 Protest Denied

TE Jerid Krulish, rose to raise a **Protest** concerning SJC 2021-06. Moderator Bise ruled this protest **out of order**, on the basis that TE Krulish did not have standing to protest because only an individual entitled to vote on a matter may "protest" (*BCO* 45-1) and concurrently, in this case, a "protest" can only be lodged by a member of the SJC who had the ability to vote on that matter.

TE Krulish inquired whether he might raise an "objection" (*BCO* 45-4). The Moderator responded that an objection would not be allowed, based upon a ruling concerning a similar item at the 41st General Assembly.

TE Jared Nelson challenged the ruling of the chair. RE Bise yielded the chair to TE Roy Taylor, who explained particulars of a case in the 41st General Assembly, in which an objection was ruled out of order "because only a member of the Standing Judicial Commission who did not have the right to vote on a case may register an objection" (*M4IGA*, 39).

The **ruling of the chair** was sustained, 1051-548.

49-54 Overtures Committee Report

As the chairman of the Overtures Committee was coming forward, at the Moderator's request, Organist Roff led the Assembly in singing one verse of the hymn "Immortal, Invisible God, Only Wise."

The Stated Clerk reminded the Assembly of the rules that govern the Assembly's actions with reference to the Overtures Committee report.

RE Steven Vanderhill, Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and began the report (see below). After informing the Assembly that RE Jay Neikerk, vice-chairman alternate, would assist in presenting some of the work of the committee, RE Vanderhill read from Psalm 133.

The Chairman spoke to the unity amid diversity of the committee, composed of representatives from over 90% of the Presbyteries. He reported that the committee had reached a super majority decision of over 75% on approximately 34 of the overtures, considering them for approximately 20 hours over three days.

The Chairman then proposed considering in gross those overtures for which the committee had voted in supermajority of over 75% and for which there was no minority report.

As a **point of personal privilege**, RE Bob Mattes requested that commissioners be given a few moments to review the Committee Report. By voice vote, the request was defeated.

TE Daniel Jarstfer raised as a **point of order** that visitors be instructed not to be seated in the commissioner section and that commissioners be asked to sit in voting area. The Moderator **ruled** the point of order **well taken**.

TE George Sayour made a **parliamentary request** for more time to respond when voting. The Moderator responded positively to the request.

The Chairman presented an in gross motion to be addressed after discussion on Overture 29. After several overtures were removed, the **in gross motion** included **Recommendations on: O-2021-19, O-2021-20, O-2021-21, O-2021-34, O-2021-35, O-2, O-6, O-7, O-9, O-11, O-12, O-13, O-14, O-16, O-17, O-19, O-21, O-25, O-27, O-28, O-30, O-31, O-33, O-34, and O-35.**

The Assembly was reminded that **O-24** and **O-32**, concerning *RAO* amendments, had already been addressed and acted upon (see p. 18).

TE Fred Greco raised a **point of order** that removing O-29 from the in gross motion did not mean that the other items would need to be removed. The Moderator explained that the point of order had to do with any impact the removal of O-29 would have on other overtures that the Committee had answered with reference to O-29.

Chairman Vanderhill moved that Recommendation 29 be considered before the overtures presented in the in gross motion. He then **moved Recommendation 29**, to answer Overture 29 in the affirmative as amended, thereby amending *BCO* 16 by adding a new paragraph (16-4).

TE Bryant Hansen **moved to recommit O-29** without instructions. The motion to recommit was **defeated**, 96-2023. A re-vote was taken due to technical issues, 88-2017.

On a **point of personal privilege**, TE Chris Wright asked the Moderator to remind the Assembly to restrain emotions in responses.

Time on the topic being expired, the Moderator asked if the Assembly wanted to **extend time for debate by 5 minutes**. The motion to extend time was **defeated**.

Recommendation 29, that **O-29 be answered in the affirmative as amended**, was **adopted**, 1922-200.

TE Steve Tipton raised a **point of order** that in the future, the topic clock should be stopped on procedural motions. The Moderator **ruled** that the that the point of order was **not well taken** because the motion made in the previous debate was not a procedural motion but a motion to recommit and was germane to the issue before the Assembly.

The Chairman asked that **O-20 and O-23 be restored to the in gross motion**, and the Chair's motion was **adopted** without objection.

The in gross motion, including **Recommendations on Overtures 2021-19, 2021-20, 2021-21, 2021-34, 2021-35, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, and 35**, was **adopted**, 2062-33.

Vice-chairman Alternate RE Jay Neikirk moved that **Recommendation O-2021-40**, amending the *BCO* 35 to allow victim protection provisions, be answered in the **affirmative as amended**. RE Neikirk gave detailed rationale for the amendments made to the overture by the Committee of Commissioners.

Before debate, the Chairman opened the floor for questions of clarification.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE Tim LeCroy, chairman of the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse, rose to give the Committee's support for the recommendation. Without further debate, the motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

The **Recommendation** that **O-2021-41** be referred to the **50th General Assembly** was discussed.

TE John Irwin rose to make a substitute motion.

Before a second could be made, TE Fred Greco raised a **point of order** that regarding the Overtures Committee report substitute motions may not come from the floor but only from the OC itself as a minority report (*RAO* 15-8.e). The Moderator **ruled** the point of order **well taken**.

The **Recommendation** that **O-2021-41** be referred to the **50th General Assembly** was **adopted**, 1794-49.

TE David Coffin rose to request that a notation be made in the Minutes that the resounding voice vote in favor of Overture 2021-40 indicated overwhelming if not near unanimous response of a total enrollment of 2,380. The Moderator responded that such a notation would be made.

TE Jerid Krulish raised a **point of order** that a previous speaker should not have jested about lynching. The point of order was **well taken** with the apology of the former speaker.

RE Neikirk noted that Overtures 8, 15, 26, and 42, all of which included minority reports, and Overture 41 remained to be dealt with by the Assembly.

TE Fred Greco raised a **point of information** that the Minority Report for Overture 8 had not been timely filed (*RAO* 15-6.s.3), although an intent to file had been filed. The Moderator responded that the Minority Report in question had been timely filed, was available on Sharefile.com and would be distributed in print to commissioners after lunch.

RE Neikirk indicated that because of the approaching order of the day, the Committee's intent was to deal first with Recommendation 41.

RE Neikirk moved **Recommendation 41**, that **O-41** be **postponed indefinitely**.

Debate ensued.

TE Joel St. Clair raised a **point of order** that speeches in favor of or against adopting the overture would not be in order but only speeches for postponing indefinitely or recommitting. The Moderator **ruled** the point of order **well taken**.

Recommendation 41 that **O-41** be **postponed indefinitely**, was **adopted**, 1193-303.

JOURNAL

The Overtures Committee report was paused for the order of the day (lunch).

49-55 Order of the Day

The order of the day was recognized (lunch) and some housekeeping matters were addressed.

49-56 Assembly Recessed

TE Larry Roff led the Assembly in prayer, asking a visitor from Ukraine to translate into Ukrainian so that our Ukrainian brothers and sisters could hear our prayers for them in their suffering.

The Assembly recessed for lunch at 12:10 p.m. to reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

Fifth Session, Thursday Afternoon June 23, 2022

49-57 Assembly Reconvened

The Assembly reconvened at 1:36 p.m. with prayer led by TE Randy Thompson.

49-58 Interchurch Relations Committee Fraternal Greetings Video

Fraternal greetings via video were brought by Rev. Todd De Rooy from the United Reformed Churches of North America.

The Moderator reported a record enrollment of 2,380 commissioners.

49-59 Overtures Committee Report, Continued

The Moderator reminded the Assembly of the special rules pertaining to debate on recommendations of the Overtures Committee, including the process of Minority reports.

Chairman Vanderhill resumed his report and moved **Recommendation 15**, that **O-15** (p. 100) be **answered with reference to O-29**.

RE Matt Fender presented a **Minority Report** for O-15 (p. 125), to **answer O-15 in the affirmative as amended** in the Minority Report.

The Chairman spoke in support of the CoC Recommendation 15. Debate ensued.

During debate TE Ryan Biese raised a **point of order** that the previous speaker had imputed motives behind the Minority Report. The Moderator responded by reminding the entire Assembly to use caution in their language as debate proceeds.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Moderator reminded one speaker not to refer to another speaker by name.

A **point of order** was raised concerning long waits at the microphone. The Moderator thanked the speaker and responded that every effort was being made to be fair.

After approximately 45 minutes of debate, a **motion** was made to **call the question**, which requires a 2/3 majority.

RE EJ Nusbaum raised a **point of order** to stop the topic clock while addressing the matter of calling the question. The point of order was **ruled well taken**, and the Moderator indicated that the clock had been stopped.

The **call of the question** was **adopted**, 1581-513.

The Chairman was given the final word in the debate.

The **proposal to make the Minority Report the main motion** was **adopted**, 1094-1044.

A **motion** by TE Ryan Biese **to move the previous question** was **adopted**, 1546-582, exceeding the 2/3 vote requirement.

The Assembly proceeded to vote on what was now the main motion (the **Minority** recommendation). **The main motion** was **adopted**, 1167-978, effectively answering **O-15 in the affirmative as amended**.

RE Andrew Augenstein requested that his negative vote on Overture 15 be recorded. The Moderator instructed that commissioners could record their negative votes on a list to be started on the clerks' table.

Overture 15 – Negative Votes

	First Name	Last Name	Presbytery
TE	Dave	Abney	North Florida
TE	Dan	Adamson	Chicago Metro
TE	Patrick	Allen	Chesapeake
RE	Nick	Angert	Southern New England
TE	Morgan	Angert	Georgia Foothills
RE	Andrew	Augenstein	Central Florida
TE	John	Baber	Central Carolina
TE	Hunter	Bailey	Hills and Plains
RE	Brian	Barrett	Evangel
RE	John	Bauer	Missouri
TE	Jeffrey	Birch	Central Georgia
TE	David	Bisgrove	Metropolitan New York
TE	Curran	Bishop	Southern New England
TE	Jason	Bobo	Hills and Plains

JOURNAL

TE	Kyle	Bobos	Houston Metro
TE	Brant	Bonetti	Nashville
TE	Billy	Boyce	Potomac
TE	Joel	Branscomb	Piedmont Triad
RE	Ryan	Bratt	Potomac
RE	William	Brooke	Evangel
RE	Lindsay	Brooks	Philadelphia
TE	Sam	Brown	Tennessee Valley
TE	David	Cassidy	Gulfstream
TE	Phil	Chambers	Evangel
TE	Justin	Chappell	Rocky Mountain
TE	Abraham	Cho	Metropolitan New York
TE	Aaron	Chung	Metropolitan New York
TE	John	Chung	Missouri
TE	Matt	Clegg	Evangel
TE	Caleb	Click	Metro Atlanta
RE	Mark	Coddington	Blue Ridge
RE	Aaron	Collier	Southern Louisiana
TE	Steven	Cooper	Southcoast
TE	Jason	Cornwell	Palmetto
TE	Josh	Crawford	Ohio Valley
RE	Jeff	Creary	Nashville
TE	Stacey	Croft	Nashville
TE	David	Cunningham	Evangel
TE	David	Daniel	Southern New England
TE	John	Dawson	Mississippi Valley
TE	Chuch	DeBardeleben	Central Florida
TE	Joe	Dentici	Calvary
TE	David	Driskill	Evangel
RE	Tom	Drury	Nashville
TE	Jonathan	Eagin	Missouri
TE	Justin	Edgar	Rio Grande
TE	Mika	Edmondson	Nashville
TE	Brad	Edwards	Rocky Mountain
TE	Luke	Evans	South Texas
TE	Jeremy	Fair	Hills and Plains
RE	Bryan	Feenstra	Eastern Canada
RE	LeeEric	Fesko	Nashville
TE	Steve	Floehlich	New York State
TE	Andrew	Goyzueta	Catawba Valley
RE	Jason	Greene	Northern California
TE	Michael	Gregory	Pacific
RE	Jim	Griffith	Evangel
RE	John	Gunter	Metro Atlanta

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE	Kyle	Hackmann	Eastern Canada
TE	Samuel	Haist	Central Indiana
TE	Bryce	Hales	Rocky Mountain
TE	James	Han	Korean Southwest
TE	Ben	Hein	Central Indiana
RE	Nagib	Hermes	Metro Atlanta
TE	Giorgio	Hiatt	Piedmont Triad
TE	Larry	Hoop	Ohio Valley
TE	Vincent	Hoppe	Rocky Mountain
TE	Chris	Horne	Piedmont Triad
TE	Jared	Huffman	Tennessee Valley
TE	Dawson	Hunt	Rio Grande
TE	Jeffrey	Hynds	Eastern Canada
RE	Stephen	Iler	Wisconsin
RE	Tino	Imbesi	Metro Atlanta
TE	Tim	Inman	Eastern Carolina
TE	Hansoo	Jin	Korean Capital
TE	Anthony	Johnson	Missouri
TE	David	Jones	Northern California
TE	Gene	Joo	Metropolitan New York
TE	Lyndon	Jost	Eastern Canada
TE	Darrell	Jung	Missouri
TE	Steve	Kang	Central Florida
RE	Kyle	Keating	Missouri
TE	David	Keithley	Northern Illinois
TE	Jeremy	Kemp	Nashville
TE	Chris	Kennedy	Eastern Pennsylvania
TE	Sam	Kennedy	Eastern Carolina
TE	Mike	Khandjian	Chesapeake
TE	Andrew	Kim	Korean Eastern
TE	Sam	Kim	Korean Capital
TE	Sungyak	Kim	Korean Southeastern
TE	Woonny	Kim	Metro Atlanta
RE	Peter	Kim	Korean Capital
TE	Jeremy	King	Ohio Valley
RE	George	Koontz	Calvary
RE	Ken	Kostrzewa	Southern Louisiana
TE	Won	Kwak	South Coast
TE	Sun	Kwak	Korean Southwest Orange County
TE	Duke	Kwon	Potomac
TE	Patrick	Lafferty	Highlands
TE	Steve	Lantz	South Florida
RE	Trevor	Laurence	Piedmont Triad
TE	Taylor	Leachman	Houston Metro
TE	Tim	LeCroy	Missouri

JOURNAL

TE	Keith	Ledford	Suncoast Florida
TE	Luke	LeDuc	Susquehanna Valley
TE	Moses	Lee	Korean Capital
TE	Owen	Lee	Korean Capital
TE	Walter	Lee	Korean Capital
TE	Ken	Leggett	Nashville
TE	Jason	Leist	Pittsburgh
TE	Lance	Lewis	Northern California
TE	Matt	Lietzen	Potomac
TE	Edward	Lim	Korean Southwestern
TE	Nick	Locke	South Coast
TE	Randy	Lovelace	Nashville
TE	Matt	Luchenbill	Great Lakes
TE	Brad	Lucht	Northern Illinois
TE	Ben	Lyon	Tidewater
TE	James	Martin	Metro Atlanta
TE	Nicholas	McDonald	Central Indiana
TE	Jon	Medlock	Northern California
TE	Ben	Melchers	Northern California
TE	BJ	Milgate	Central Florida
TE	Ben	Milner	Piedmont Triad
TE	Andy	Moehn	Westminster
RE	Collin	Newberry	Evangel
TE	Steven	Nicoletti	Pacific Northwest
RE	Andrew	Norquist	Southern New England
RE	David	O'Dell	Evangel
TE	Bruce	O'Neil	Metropolitan New York
TE	Omar	Ortiz	South Coast
RE	David	Palma	Calvary
RE	James	Partridge	Pittsburgh
TE	Jake	Patton	North Texas
TE	Tom	Patton	Evangel
TE	Mark	Peach	Northern California
RE	Larry	Perry	North Texas
RE	John	Pickering	Evangel
TE	Chris	Polski	Missouri
TE	Zach	Pummill	North Texas
RE	Mac	Purdy	Nashville
TE	Russ	Ramsey	Nashville
TE	Paul	Ranheim	Rocky Mountain
TE	Ben	Reed	Central Indiana
TE	David	Richter	Nashville
TE	Jesse	Robinson	Blue Ridge
TE	Angel	Roman	Central Florida

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE	Pablo	Rosales	Missouri
TE	Peter	Rowan	Susquehanna Valley
TE	Chandler	Rowlen	Tennessee Valley
RE	Kevin	Russell	Mississippi Valley
TE	Mark	Samuel	Chesapeake
TE	Hector	Sanchez	Metropolitan New York
TE	Scott	Sauls	Nashville
RE	Rob	Scheele	North Texas
TE	Travis	Scott	Pittsburgh
TE	Doug	Serven	Chesapeake
RE	Patrick	Sewell	Southern New England
TE	Andrew	Shank	Highlands
TE	Charlie	Shaw	Pacific Northwest
TE	John Paul	Sibley	Lowcountry
TE	Timothy	Sin	Rocky Mountain
TE	Ben	Sinnard	Wisconsin
TE	Clay	Smith	Wisconsin
TE	Justin	Smith	North Texas
TE	Chris	Smith	Missouri
RE	Jacob	Spencer	Hills and Plains
TE	Travis	Stephens	Ohio Valley
TE	Scott	Stewart	Highlands
RE	Christopher	Stokes	Hills and Plains
TE	Jon	Storck	Metropolitan New York
TE	Scott	Strickman	Metropolitan New York
RE	Jerry	Stutzman	Great Lakes
TE	Jeff	Suhr	South Coast
TE	Todd	Teller	Nashville
TE	Parker	Tenant	Covenant
TE	Andrew	Terrell	Metropolitan New York
RE	Bruce	Terrell	Metropolitan New York
TE	Spencer	Thomas	Wisconsin
TE	Keith	Timmons	Northern California
TE	Nathan	Tircuit	Southern Louisiana
TE	Marq	Toombs	North Texas
TE	Kevin	Twit	Nashville
TE	Timothy	Udouj	Calvary
TE	Greg	Ward	South Texas
RE	Jack	Watkins	Nashville
RE	Rob	Wheeler	Nashville
TE	Jeff	White	Metropolitan New York
TE	Jefferson	Wilkins	Nashville
TE	Nate	Wilks	Eastern Carolina
TE	Marshall	Wilmhoff	Ohio Valley

JOURNAL

TE	Keith	Winder	Susquehanna Valley
TE	Ben	Winkler	Covenant
RE	Wilson	Wong	Eastern Canada
RE	Elliott	Wood	Nashville
TE	Rob	Wootton	Northern California
TE	Jeff	Wreyford	Georgia Foothills
TE	Steve	Yoon	Korean Central
TE	Heath	Zuniga	Central Florida

The Chairman resumed his report by moving **Recommendation 8** (p. 95), to **answer O-8 in the affirmative as amended**. The Assembly was informed that a Minority Report would also be presented (see p. 117).

The Chairman called upon RE Jay Neikirk, who spoke for the committee's recommendation.

TE Kevin Twit came forward to present the Minority Report.

RE James Brad Isbell raised a **point of order**, requesting that the Minority Report be ruled out of order based on intemperate language and perceived imputing of motives. The Moderator responded that the point was **well taken**, and that the presenter had agreed to modify the language.

RE Isbell followed up with further concerns about the language. The Moderator responded with his understanding that certain font usages were intended to aid the presenter and that these would not be a part of the written record. With that note, the Moderator found the point of order to be **well taken**.

TE Ryan Biese raised a **point of order** regarding the intemperate language of ascribing motives. The Moderator responded that the point of order was **well taken**. He noted that the presenter had indicated a willingness to modify the language and called for the Assembly to sing a hymn to give opportunity for the speaker of the Minority Report to edit his language.

TE Larry Roff led the Assembly in the singing of "Psalm 23, The Lord's My Shepherd."

TE Kevin Twit presented his edited version of the **Minority Report for O-8**, recommending that the Assembly **refer Overture 8 back to the Presbytery without prejudice**.

A **point of personal privilege** was made that there was too much noise in the back, making it difficult to hear. The Moderator responded that the point was **well taken**.

TE Ryan Biese raised a **point of order** that intemperate language remained in the Minority Report. The Moderator offered a vote on this matter to the Assembly. The point of order was **not well taken** by the Assembly, which found that the language was not couched in intemperate language, 768-968. The Moderator permitted the speaker to continue with the caution of the Assembly.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

After TE Twit concluded his presentation, RE Neikirk responded on behalf of the Committee.

After approximately 18 minutes of debate, a **motion** was made to call the previous question. The motion was **adopted**, 1562-141, exceeding the required 2/3 majority.

RE Neikirk gave the final word on behalf of the Committee.

The motion to make the **Minority Report the main motion** was **defeated**, 592-1185.

The Moderator opened the floor for debate on the motion of the Committee.

Before any debate, a motion was made by RE Rich Leino to **call the previous question**, and the motion was **adopted**, 1628-133.

Recommendation 8, to answer O-8 in the affirmative as amended, was **adopted** 1245-521.

RE Neikirk continued the report, moving **Recommendation 26**, to answer **O-26** in the negative (p. 106). He suggested that the Minority be given an opportunity to provide words of explanation to the Assembly concerning the issue before discussion of Recommendation 26 began. This was agreed upon by the Assembly without objection.

After TE Scott Seaton framed the matter for the Assembly, RE Neikirk presented the Committee's Recommendation to answer O-26 in the negative.

TE Seaton presented the Minority Report, recommending that O-26 be answered in the affirmative as amended.

RE Neikirk gave the Committee's response.

Debate ensued on whether to make the Minority Report the main motion.

The **question was called** after approximately 26 minutes of debate, and the calling of the question was **adopted**, 1437-86, having met the 2/3 required majority.

TE Ryan Biese **called the previous question** as well. His motion was **ruled out of order**.

RE Bob Mattes raised as a **point of order** that calling the question on other matters as well as the immediate matter before the Assembly is allowed. The point of order was **ruled well taken**.

TE Randy Lovelace raised a **point of order** that proxy voting is not allowed. The Moderator **ruled his point well taken** and exhorted the Assembly that proxy voting is not allowed.

RE Neikirk made the final argument on behalf of the committee.

The **motion to make the Minority Report the main motion** was **defeated**, 489-1047.

JOURNAL

The Moderator pointed out because that the person who called the second question was not asked for his purpose in the right order, debate would continue until it reached that speaker.

After short debate, the **question was called** by TE Zach Byrd, and the calling of the question was **adopted**, 1357-81, having met the 2/3 majority requirement.

Recommendation 26 of the Committee, that **O-26 be answered in the negative**, was **adopted**, 1108-371.

The Moderator asked TE Mike Biggs to offer prayer for the concerns raised by Overture 26, namely the political violence in our country.

TE Fred Greco made a **procedural motion** to extend the time for recess until 6:00 p.m. rather than 5:30 p.m., to eliminate the need to return for an evening session. The motion was **adopted**.

The **recording of Negative Votes for Overture 26** was requested, and the Moderator gave instructions for doing so.

Overture 26 – Negative Votes

	First Name	Last Name	Presbytery
TE	J. Patrick	Allen	Chesapeake
RE	Stuart	Asp	Potomac
RE	Andrew	Augenstein	Central Florida
TE	Grant	Beachy	Eastern Carolina
TE	Joel	Branscomb	Piedmont Triad
TE	David	Cassidy	Gulfstream
RE	Gordon	Cloke	Central Florida
TE	Jason	Cornwell	Palmetto
RE	Bryan	Feenstra	Eastern Canada
TE	Alex	Ford	Northern California
TE	Samuel	Haist	Central Indiana
TE	Ian	Hard	Northern New England
TE	Ben	Hein	Central Indiana
TE	Jeffrey	Kerr	Canada West
TE	Mike	Khandjian	Chesapeake
TE	Jeremy	King	Ohio
TE	Taylor	Leachman	Houston Metro
TE	Bill	Lenzinger	Westminster
TE	Randy	Lovelace	Nashville
TE	Brad	Lucht	Northern Illinois
RE	David	O'Dell	Evangel
TE	Derek	Radney	Piedmont Triad

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE	Peter	Rowan	Susquehannah
TE	Travis	Scott	Pittsburgh
TE	Doug	Serven	Chesapeake
TE	Benjamin	Sinnard	Wisconsin
TE	Ethan	Smith	Piedmont Triad
RE	Jacob	Spencer	Hill and Plains
RE	Trevor	Storck	Metropolitan New York
RE	Jonathan	Stuckert	Northwest Georgia Presbytery
TE	Ben	Tietje	Piedmont Triad
RE	Phil	Van Valkenburg	Missouri
TE	Jefferson	Wilkins	Nashville
TE	Thurman	William	Missouri
RE	Frank	Wonder	Nashville

TE David Driskell raised as a **point of order** the need to check with the co-chair of the worship committee to confirm that the change in schedule did not interfere with the worship service preparations. The co-chair responded that it did not.

RE Neikirk moved the Committee's **Recommendation 42** (p. 113) that **O-42**, regarding elder participation in "political groups," be **answered in the negative**.

TE Joe Cristman presented the **Minority Report** (p. 131), recommending that **O-42 be answered in the affirmative as amended**.

RE Neikirk responded on behalf of the Committee.

Debate on the Minority Report ensued.

During debate, TE Mike Khandjian raised a **point of order** that a speaker was directing his remarks toward a single group, contrary to the Minority Report's goals. The Moderator **ruled** that the point of order was **well taken** and cautioned the speaker to limit himself to general remarks without specificity. The Moderator also cautioned the speaker against making unsubstantiated claims and instructed the speaker to use temperate language.

A **motion** by TE Nate Xanders **to call all matters before the house** was **adopted**, 1065-189, meeting the required 2/3 majority.

RE Neikirk gave the final word on behalf of the Committee.

The motion to make the Minority recommendation the main recommendation was **defeated**, 514-741.

The Committee's **Recommendation 42**, that **O-42 be answered in the negative**, was **adopted**, 851-411.

Overtures Committee Chairman Vanderhill concluded the Overtures Committee report with prayer.

**REPORT OF THE OVERTURES COMMITTEE
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee – 37 Overtures: 2021-19, 2021-20, 2021-21, 2021-34, 2021-35, 2021-40, 2021-41, 2, 6-9, 11-17, 19-21, 23-35, 41-42. One overture (14) was referred to the SJC as well as to the OC. One overture (28) was referred to MNA as well as to the OC. Ten overtures, referred exclusively to other Committees or Agencies, were not considered by the OC (1, 18, 22 to AC; 3 to IRC; 10 to MNA; 36-40 to SJC).

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

Each overture was discussed and recommendations were made. If the OC recommended no amendment to an overture, then that overture is not reprinted here, and we have included only the Clerk’s Summary Title. In instances where the OC proposed amendments to an overture, the Presbytery’s proposed action is reprinted, noting the changes proposed by OC.

The full text of the Overtures as originally submitted is found on pp. 1267-1384 of Volume 2 of these *Minutes*. OC Recommendation numbers in this report correspond to the Overture numbers.

III. Summary of Recommendations

2021-19 Pacific NW – Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-1; 42-2	Affirmative	87-25-3
2021-20 Pacific NW – Amend <i>BCO</i> 31-10; 33-4	Affirmative/Amended	117-10-0
2021-21 Pacific NW – Amend <i>BCO</i> 42-6	Affirmative	115-12-3
2021-34 Pacific NW – Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-1	Refer back	110-11-2
2021-35 Pacific NW – Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-1	Affirmative/Amended	109-1-2
2021-40 TN Valley – Amend <i>BCO</i> 32-13; 35-1; 35-5	Affirmative/Amended	120-0-2
2021-41. TN Valley – Amend <i>BCO</i> 35-1	Ref. to 50th GA	121-1-0
2. Tennessee Valley – Amend <i>BCO</i> 22-3	Negative	120-12-0
6. Nashville – Amend <i>BCO</i> 31-10; 33-4	Ref. to O-2021-20	121-1-1
7. Nashville – Amend <i>BCO</i> 42-6	Ref. to O-2021-21	104-2-0
8. Houston Metro – Amend <i>BCO</i> 33-1; 34-1	Affirmative/Amended	104-32-1
9. Calvary – Amend <i>BCO</i> 34-1	Ref. to O-8	118-2-1

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

11. Korean Capital – Amend <i>BCO</i> 25-2.e	Negative	112-20-0
12. Hills and Plains – Amend <i>BCO</i> 16	Ref. to O-29	122-11-0
13. Ascension – Petition to End Abortion	Affirmative/Amended	111-6-0
14. Westminster – Amend <i>BCO</i> 15-4; <i>RAO</i> 17-1	Negative	101-30-0
15. Westminster – Amend <i>BCO</i> 7	Ref. to O-29	80-47-2
16. TE Ted Lester – Amend <i>BCO</i> 25-2	Negative	119-12-1
17. TE Ted Lester – Amend <i>BCO</i> 32-3	Negative	108-10-3
19. NW Georgia – Amend <i>BCO</i> 15-2	Negative	120-11-0
20. NW Georgia – Amend <i>BCO</i> 16	Ref. to O-29	122-11-0
21. NW Georgia – Amend <i>BCO</i> 43-2; 43-3	Affirmative/Amended	108-25-1
23. Southeast Alabama – Amend <i>BCO</i> 16	Ref. to O-29	122-11-0
24. Houston M. – Amend <i>RAO</i> 11-2; 11-10	Affirmative	126-6-0
25. Houston M. – Amend <i>BCO</i> 15-1; 15-3	Affirmative/Amended	126-2-0
26. Potomac – Statement on Political Violence	Negative	80-51-1
27. Potomac – Amend <i>BCO</i> 15-1; 15-3	Ref. to Action to O-25	121-0-1
28. Pittsburgh – Amend <i>BCO</i> 8-7	Affirmative/Amended	130-0-0
29. Pittsburgh – Amend <i>BCO</i> 16	Affirmative/Amended	120-17-0
30. Pittsburgh – Amend <i>BCO</i> 6-5; 20-3; 25-1	Refer back	106-27-0
31. Pittsburgh – Amend <i>BCO</i> 21-4; 24-1	Affirmative/Amended	111-24-0
32. Tennessee Valley – Amend <i>RAO</i> 8-4	Negative	106-26-3
33. Nashville – Human Sexuality Report	Ref. O-29	105-25-1
34. Metro Atlanta – Human Sexuality Report	Ref. O-29	105-25-1
35. North Florida – Human Sexuality Report	Ref. O-29	105-25-1
41. Bethel Ch. – Declare CRT Flawed	Postpone Indefinitely	99-25-1
42. Bethel Ch. – Forbid Participation in Political Groups	Negative	72-65-0

IV. Recommendations

2021-19. That **Overture 2021-19** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 38-1 and 42-2 to Allow Appealing a Censure in a Case without Process,” p. 1267) be answered in the **affirmative**. *Adopted*

2021-20. That **Overture 2021-20** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 on Pre-trial Non-Disciplinary Suspensions,” p. 1273) be answered in the **affirmative as amended**. *Adopted*

Be it resolved that *BCO* 31-10 and *BCO* 33-4 be amended by addition, as follows (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

BCO 31-10. When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court's discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure, and this requires a three-fourths ~~(3/4)~~ (2/3) majority.

BCO 33-4. When it is impracticable immediately to commence process against an accused church member, the Session may, if it thinks the edification of the Church requires it, prevent the accused from approaching the Lord's Table until the charges against him can be examined, but this requires a three-fourths ~~(3/4)~~ (2/3) majority.

- 2021-21. That **Overture 2021-21** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery ("Amend *BCO* 42-6 on Vote Required for Maintaining Censure during an Appeal," p. 1275) be answered in the **affirmative**. *Adopted*
- 2021-34. That **Overture 2021-34** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery ("Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Confession Timing for Case without Process," p. 1276) be **referred back to Pacific Northwest Presbytery without prejudice**. *Adopted*
- 2021-35. That **Overture 2021-35** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery ("Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Counsel for Case Without Process," p. 1277) be answered in the **affirmative as amended**. *Adopted*

Be it resolved that *BCO* 38-1 be amended by the addition of a final sentence (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment).

BCO 38-1. When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a

basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment. The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment. The person has the right to be ~~represented~~ assisted by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of BCO 32-19.

- 2021-40. That **Overture 2021-40** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (“Amend BCO 32-13, 35-1, and 35-5 to Allow Victim Protection Provisions,” p. 1281) be answered in the **affirmative as amended.** *Adopted*

Therefore, be it resolved that ~~BCO 32-13~~, BCO 35 paragraphs 1-5 be amended as follows and paragraphs 6-14 be renumbered accordingly (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

35-1. All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments. ~~The accused party may be allowed, but shall not be compelled to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused.~~ Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency. ~~It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.~~

~~Throughout the trial in cases involving alleged child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual assault, a court may make reasonable accommodations to shield accusers from face-to-face contact with the accused. This can be done upon request by the accuser or when the court determines that such accommodation is necessary. Such accommodations might include procedures such as written testimony or videoconferencing testimony, in which a reasonable path for cross examination is~~

~~provided. The court shall include in the record its reasons for any accommodations and any objection from the accused to such accommodation, and the objection and the court's response shall be included in the record.~~

35-2. The accused party is allowed, but shall not be compelled, to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. A husband or wife shall not be compelled to bear testimony against one another in any court.

35-3. A court may, at the request of either party, or at its own initiative, make reasonable accommodation to prevent in-person contact with the accused:

- a. The court may have testimony taken by videoconference. The videoconference shall employ technical means that ensure that all persons participating in the meeting can see and hear each other at the same time, and which allows for live cross-examination by both parties.
- b. The court may restrict the accused from appearing on the videoconference screen, and when the accused is represented by counsel (BCO 32-19), cross-examination shall be conducted by that counsel.
- c. In all cases where such accommodation has been made, videoconference testimony by witnesses under the age of 18 shall be taken by written interrogatory to be read to the witness by a person appointed by the court in accordance with the applicable provisions of BCO 35-12.
- d. The court shall include in the record of the proceedings its reasons for this accommodation and any objection from either party.

~~35-34.~~ The testimony of more than one witness shall be necessary in order to establish any charge; yet if, in addition to the testimony of one witness, corroborative evidence be produced, the offense may be considered to be proved.

~~35-5. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the court, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue. It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.~~

~~Throughout the trial in cases involving alleged child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual assault, a court may make reasonable accommodations to shield accusers from face-to-face contact with the accused. This can be done upon request by the accuser or when the court determines that such accommodation is necessary. Such accommodations might include procedures such as written testimony or videoconferencing testimony, in which a reasonable path for cross-examination is provided. The court shall include in the record its reasons for any accommodations and any objection from the accused to such accommodation, and the objection and the court's response shall be included in the record.~~

35-6. No witness afterwards to be examined, unless a member of the court, shall be present during the examination of another witness on the same case, if either party object.

35-7. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the court, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. No question shall be put or answered except by

JOURNAL

permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue.

- 2021-41. That **Overture 2021-41** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 35-1 to Expand Potential Witness Eligibility,” p. 1285) **be referred to the 50th GA Overtures Committee.**

Adopted

1. *[Overture 1 was referred by the Stated Clerk to AC.]*
2. That **Overture 2** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 22-3 to Allow Assistant Pastors to file Complaints against Sessions,” p. 1286) **be answered in the negative.** *Adopted*

Grounds: As CCB points out, the proposal is in conflict with *BCO* 43-1 that allows one to "make complaint against any actions of a court to whose jurisdiction he is subject." An assistant pastor is not subject to the jurisdiction of a Session. If Presbytery believes the role of the assistant pastors should change they would need to propose other amendments.

3. *[Overture 3 was referred by the Stated Clerk to IRC.]*
4. *[Overture 4 was vacated.]*
5. *[Overture 5 was vacated.]*
6. That **Overture 6** from Nashville Presbytery ("Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 Regarding Suspensions during Process or Delay," p. 1290) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 2021-20.** *Adopted*
7. That **Overture 7** from Nashville Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 42-6 Regarding Suspending Judgment during Appeal,” p. 1292) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 2021-21.** *Adopted*
8. That **Overture 8** from Houston Metro Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 Establishing Percentage Threshold for Original Jurisdiction Requests,” p. 1296) be answered **in the affirmative as amended.** *Adopted*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Be it resolved that *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 be amended as follows (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

33-1. Process against ~~all~~ a church members, other than ministers of the Gospel, shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such members belongs, ~~except in cases of appeal.~~ However, if the Session does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and the Session refuses to act in doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and two other Sessions of at least ten percent (10%) of churches in the same Presbytery request the Presbytery of which the church is a member to initiate proper or appropriate action in a case of process and thus assume original jurisdiction for a case of process (to first receive and initially hear and determine) and authority, the Presbytery shall do so. The Presbytery may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Sessions and the Session of the church member.

34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if the Presbytery does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal and two other at least ten percent (10%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process (to first receive and initially hear and determine), the General Assembly shall do so. The General Assembly may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Presbyteries and the Presbytery of the minister.

So that *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 as amended would read:

33-1. Process against a church member shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such members belongs. However, if the Session does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and the Sessions of at least ten percent (10%) of churches in the same Presbytery request the Presbytery of which the church is a

member to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process, the Presbytery shall do so. The Presbytery may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Sessions and the Session of the church member.

34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if the Presbytery does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and at least ten percent (10%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process, the General Assembly shall do so. The General Assembly may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Presbyteries and the Presbytery of the minister.

9. That **Overture 9** from Calvary Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 34-1 to Establish Percentage Threshold for Original Jurisdiction Requests,” p. 1297) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 8**.

Adopted

10. [*Overture 10 was referred by the Stated Clerk to MNA.*]

11. That **Overture 11** from Korean Capital Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 25-2.e and Add a New Item *BCO* 25-2.f, New Percentage Threshold for Calling Large Church Congregational Meetings,” p. 1299) be answered in the **negative**.

Adopted

Grounds: The change proposed would affect only a small number of churches. Further, it appears unnecessary. The Overture is concerned that low requirements for calling a congregational meeting could allow the minority too much power but the congregational meeting would still need to meet the quorum of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the members which is sufficient to protect the congregation.

12. That **Overture 12** from Hills and Plains Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding a New Paragraph *BCO* 16-4 with Wording from the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality,” p. 1301) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 29**.

Adopted

13. That **Overture 13** from Ascension Presbytery (“Petition United States Government to End Abortion,” p. 1303) be answered in the **affirmative as amended**. *Adopted*

Therefore Be it Resolved, (single underline and single strike-through for OC amendment):

~~Presbytery of the Ascension overtures the General Assembly to humbly petition the United States Government as below, to be sent by~~ That the Stated Clerk of the PCA: General Assembly, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in America, be directed to communicate to the President of the United States, the leaders of Congress, and the Governors and leaders of the State Legislatures of the 50 States, the following statement:

"God declares in Sacred Scripture that civil government, no less than the Church, is a divine institution and owes its authority to God. The Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will and teaches that the unborn child is a human person deserving the full protection of the Sixth Commandment, "You shall not murder". We who love our nation, in the name of God who alone is sovereign, call upon you to renounce the sin of abortion, to repent of the complicity in the mass slaughter of innocent unborn children, who are persons in the sight of God, and to reverse the ruinous direction of both law and practice in this area. The obedience to God which places us in subjection to your rightful authority, requires of us to proclaim the counsel of God as it bears upon the same God-given authority."

Humble Petition to the Honorable President, Members of Congress,
and Justices of the Supreme Court

~~The 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America humbly petitions the President of the United States of America, Members of Congress, and Justices of the Supreme Court to take any and all legal measures to protect the lives of unborn and newly-born babies from the brutality of abortion and infanticide. We support this petition with the following considerations:~~

~~Based on the Word of God and His Law evident in nature, terminating the life of an unborn or newly born baby without just cause violates God's moral standard and therefore is sin and a great evil. According to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, murder and the unjust taking of another's life is forbidden, as all humans are made in the Image of God (Gen 1:26-27) and therefore taking innocent life is a great sin against God (Genesis 9:6). The particular sin of sacrificing of children, as was done to the false god Molech, is called an abomination and worthy of judgment (Leviticus 20:2-5, 1 Kings 11:7, etc). By the light of nature, moreover, we know that the unborn is human, feels pain from an early stage, has a beating heart from an early stage, and is not some other species but a fellow human. Thus our God-given conscience testifies that inflicting pain, stopping a beating heart, and thereby killing another defenseless, fellow human being is a great evil.~~

~~While we are reluctant to address the civil magistrate except in "cases extraordinary," the legalization of the murder of a helpless class, that disproportionately targets the poor and minorities, has resulted in the loss of around 60 million lives since 1973, and thus the tragedy and evil of the legal extermination of the unborn rises to just such a status, as few events have in the history of our nation. The Scriptures declare that a failure to discharge faithfully our duties to these, our helpless neighbors, would incur the judgment of God, just as it did of the watchmen and shepherds of Israel (Isaiah 56:9-12; Ezekiel 33:1-9; 34:1-10).~~

~~The duties of the civil government include the enforcement of laws, as a duty from God, to be a "terror to bad conduct" as you are called to be God's servants (Romans 13:1-7). We implore you to fulfill your divinely granted duty before God and eliminate from our land, by any and all available means, the legal murder known as abortion, and to call our nation to, "Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn~~

~~from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish” (Jonah 3:8-9).~~

~~Therefore, for the honor of Christ and his Church, and the welfare of our nation, we exhort you to remember the words of the wisest magistrate, "Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34) and “Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter” (Proverbs 24:11). We pray for you, your families, and your vocations, and we commend to you the salvation that comes only through Jesus Christ our Lord. We urge all faithful believers to pray for you, as we have been instructed from God's Word: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).~~

~~Very _____ respectfully _____ submitted,
The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in
America~~

14. That **Overture 14** from Westminster Presbytery (“Change the Composition of the SJC by Amending *BCO* 15-4 and *RAO* 17-1; Amend *OMSJC* 5.1 and 6.1,” p. 1306) be answered in the **negative**.
Adopted

Grounds: Concerns with the SJC can be resolved within the current structure (e.g. through elections). This Overture would create an unwieldy body almost four times the size of the current SJC.

An additional matter is cost. Tripling the size of the SJC would likely triple the cost. The suggestion that the expansion of the court would be funded by the Presbyteries would potentially put undue financial burden on poorer or more geographically remote Presbyteries.

15. That **Overture 15** from Westminster Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 7 to Disqualify from Office Men Identifying as Homosexual,” p. 1312) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 29**. *Adopted*

Grounds: We believe that our answer to Overture 29 is sufficient to answer the concerns expressed in Overture 15 and is a better path forward for the peace and purity of the PCA in light of the strong affirmation of the AIC Report on Human Sexuality by the 48th General Assembly.

16. That **Overture 16** from TE Ted Lester (“Amend *BCO* 25-2 to Require Annual Congregational Meeting and Reporting Standards,” p. 1314) be answered in the **negative**. *Adopted*

Grounds: This Overture was rejected by the Presbytery and, in the opinion of the Committee on Constitutional Business, creates conflict with *BCO* 29-2, 36-3, 36-4, 36-6, and 37-4. Also, it put requirements upon a congregation that appear to be unduly controlling of the affairs of a congregation. Additionally, it is unnecessary because church members already have the ability to call a Congregational Meeting with a relatively small threshold (*BCO* 25-1) for any reason and for any stated business. Further, Sessions can currently call “annual meetings” under the *BCO*. Finally, the subject matter proposed in the Overture is not actual business requiring a congregational vote (it may be better suited for an informational meeting without all the strictures of a *BCO* 25 Congregational Meeting).

17. That **Overture 17** from TE Ted Lester (“Amend *BCO* 32-3 to Require Open Proceedings for Trials,” p. 1317) be answered in the **negative**. *Adopted*

Grounds: Due to the sensitive nature of some trials the committee believes this overture unduly restricts our courts. Further, an accused should not be able to set the procedures of the court.

18. [*Overture 18 was referred by the Stated Clerk to AC.*]

19. That **Overture 19** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 15-2 Regarding Presbytery Commission Membership and Quorum,” p. 1323) be answered in the **negative**. *Adopted*

Grounds: There is no conflict between *BCO* 15-2 and 15-3. A commission must be composed of members of the appointing body. This is necessary to allow the commission to "deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it" (*BCO* 15-1). Further, in *BCO* 15-

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3 the phrase "shall be appointed by Presbytery from its members" exists to frame the prohibition that in the case of a judicial commission members may not include "members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up."

20. That **Overture 20** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery ("Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications for Ordination," p. 1324) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 29**.

Adopted

21. That **Overture 21** from Northwest Georgia ("Amend *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 Regarding Timing for Considering a Complaint," p. 1326) be answered in the **affirmative as amended**.

Adopted

Therefore, be it resolved that both *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 be amended as follows (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

43-2. A complaint shall first be made to the court whose act or decision is alleged to be in error. Written notice of complaint, with supporting reasons, shall be filed with the clerk of the court within sixty (60) days following the meeting of the court. The court shall consider the complaint at its next stated meeting, or at a called meeting prior to its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has been filed with the clerk at least ~~seven (7)~~ ten (10) days in advance. **If the complaint is filed with less than ten (10) days-notice, the court may consider the complaint at a later meeting not more than 60 days later.** No attempt should be made to circularize the court to which complaint is being made by either party.

43-3. If, after considering a complaint, the court alleged to be delinquent or in error is of the opinion that it has not erred, and denies the complaint, the complainant may take that complaint to the next higher court. If the lower court fails to consider the complaint against it by or at its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has been filed with the clerk at least ~~seven (7)~~ ten (10) days in advance, the complainant may take that complaint to the next higher

court. **If the complaint is filed with less than ten (10) days-notice, the court may consider the complaint at a later meeting not more than 60 days later.** Written notice thereof shall be filed with both the clerk of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court within thirty (30) days of notification of the last court's decision.

Notification of the last court's decision shall be deemed to have occurred on the day of mailing (if certified, registered or express mail of a national postal service or any private service where verifying receipt is utilized), the day of hand delivery, or the day of confirmed receipt in the case of e-mail or facsimile. Furthermore, compliance with such requirements shall be deemed to have been fulfilled if a party cannot be located after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to accept delivery.

22. *[Overture 22 was referred by the Stated Clerk to AC.]*

23. That **Overture 23** from Southeast Alabama Presbytery ("Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications for Ordination," p. 1329) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 29.**

Adopted

24. That **Overture 24** from Houston Metro Presbytery ("Amend *RAO* 11-2 and 11-10 to Clarify Who May Submit an Overture," p. 1332) be answered in the **affirmative.**

Adopted

25. That **Overture 25** from Houston Metro Presbytery ("Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 to Clarify Role of Presbytery Commission," p. 1334) be answered in the **affirmative as amended.**

Adopted

Be it resolved that *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 be amended as follows (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

15-1. A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it, ~~except in the case of judicial commissions of a Presbytery appointed under *BCO* 15-3.~~ A commission shall keep a full record of its

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for filing requirements under the rules of discipline, with exception of the “notification” dates of BCO 42-4 and 43-3, except in the case of a presbytery commission serving as a session or a judicial commission as set forth in BCO 15-3. The effective date of dismissal of a commission of session or presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by ~~the~~ that commission or a higher court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

15-3. Presbytery as a whole may ~~try a judicial case within its jurisdiction (including the right to refer any strictly constitutional issue to a study committee with options listed below), hear a case, with or without process (BCO 31-38), a reference (BCO 41), an appeal (BCO 42), a complaint (BCO 43), a BCO 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (BCO 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit any judicial such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. The Presbytery without debate shall approve or disapprove of the judgment, or may refer, (a debatable motion), any strictly constitutional issue(s) to a study committee. In case of referral, the Presbytery shall either dismiss some or all of the specific charges raised in the case or decide the case only after the report of the study committee has been heard and discussed. If Presbytery approves, the~~ The judgment of the

~~commission shall be final and shall be entered on the minutes of Presbytery as the action the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes. If Presbytery disapproves, it shall hear the case as a whole, or appoint a new commission to hear the case again.~~

So that *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 as amended would read:

15-1. A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for filing requirements under the rules of discipline, with exception of the “notification” dates of *BCO* 42-4 and 43-3. The effective date of dismissal of a commission of session or presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by that commission or a higher court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

15-3. Presbytery as a whole may hear a case, with or without process (*BCO* 31-38), a reference (*BCO* 41), an appeal (*BCO* 42), a complaint (*BCO* 43), a *BCO* 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (*BCO* 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. The

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

judgment of the commission shall be the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes.

26. That **Overture 26** from Potomac Presbytery (“Statement on Political Violence,” p. 1337) be answered in the **negative**. *Adopted*

Grounds: While the subject of political violence is disturbing to our country and to Christ’s Church, the substance of this overture is better dealt with at a local church or presbytery level rather than as a statement from the General Assembly, which would reflect the 'grassroots' nature of our denomination. Scripture and our Confession already answer many of the concerns in this overture. Furthermore, in conformity with (*BCO* 3-3) which speaks of the church being distinct from the civil commonwealth, this overture seems unwise and unnecessary.

27. That **Overture 27** from Potomac Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 to Clarify Role of Presbytery Commission,” p. 1339) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 25**. *Adopted*

28. That **Overture 28** from Pittsburgh Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 8-7 by Adding Chaplain Endorsement Requirements and Recommendations,” p. 1342) be answered in the **affirmative as amended**. *Adopted*

~~Therefore, be it resolved that *BCO* 8-7 be amended by adding the underlined paragraph below:~~ that a new paragraph after *BCO* 8-7 be added, numbered 8-8 and the following paragraphs be renumbered accordingly (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment).

8-7. A Presbytery may, at its discretion, approve the call of a teaching elder to work with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America, provided that he be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word, that the Presbytery be assured he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church, and that he report at least annually on his work. As far as possible, such a teaching elder shall be a member of the Presbytery within whose bounds he labors. (See *BCO* 20-1.)

~~A teaching elder requiring an ecclesiastical endorsement to serve as a chaplain (e.g., military chaplains) after the presbytery's approval shall be endorsed through the denomination's endorsing agency authorized by the General Assembly for such purpose. Teaching elders ministering as paid or volunteer chaplains not requiring ecclesiastical endorsement are highly encouraged to seek and obtain the same endorsement.~~

8-8. A Presbytery may, at its discretion, approve the call of a teaching elder to work as a Chaplain whether military or civilian, with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America, provided that he be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word, that the Presbytery be assured he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church, and that he reports at least annually on his work. The Chaplain may be appointed to the work of an evangelist when serving as a Chaplain. Teaching elders ministering as paid or volunteer chaplains are strongly encouraged to seek and obtain their Ecclesiastical Endorsement from the endorsing agency authorized by the General Assembly for such purpose.

29. That **Overture 29** from Pittsburgh Presbytery (“Amend BCO 16 by adding 16-4 Regarding Qualifications for Church Office,” p. 1345) be answered in the **affirmative as amended**. *Adopted*

Therefore be it resolved that a new paragraph 16-4 be added to BCO 16, which shall read as follows (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

16-4. Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. While office bearers will see spiritual perfection only in glory, they will continue in this life to confess and to mortify remaining sins in light of God’s work of progressive sanctification. Therefore, to be qualified for office, they must affirm the sinfulness of fallen desires, the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, and be committed to the pursuit of Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations,

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

~~inclinations, and actions. Those who deny the sinfulness of fallen desires, or who deny the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, or who fail to pursue Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions are not qualified for ordained office. Our standard of conduct is always the Word of God, which transcends any culture; whether a sin is especially hated or excused in a particular society shall neither excuse those who are unrepentant nor bar those who are clearly repentant.~~

So that *BCO* 16-4 as amended would read:

16-4. Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. While office bearers will see spiritual perfection only in glory, they will continue in this life to confess and to mortify remaining sins in light of God’s work of progressive sanctification. Therefore, to be qualified for office, they must affirm the sinfulness of fallen desires, the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, and be committed to the pursuit of Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions.

30. That **Overture 30** from Pittsburgh Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 6-5, 20-3, 25-1, and 24-3, Allowing Congregations to Establish Voting Age Restrictions,” p. 1346) be **referred back to Pittsburgh Presbytery without prejudice yet paying particular attention to the concerns in the CCB report.** *Adopted*

31. That **Overture 31** from Pittsburgh Presbytery (“Amend *BCO* 21-4 and 24-1 by Adding Paragraphs Regarding Requirements for Ordination,” p. 1349) be answered in the **affirmative as amended.** *Adopted*

Therefore be it resolved that:

1. *BCO* 21-4 be amended by addition of a new sub-paragraph 21-4.e (with subsequent sub-paragraphs 21-4.e-h being relettered to be 21-4.f-i), which shall read as follows (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

21-4. Ordination Requirements and Procedures

- e. In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, ~~officers of the church~~ the candidate must exercise great care not to ~~normalize~~ diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit ~~in Christ Jesus~~ in his progress in holiness ~~changing our sin nature~~ (1 Cor. 6:9-11). ~~In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of the pastoral office, presbyteries are encouraged to empower a committee to conduct detailed examinations of these matters and to give prayerful support to candidates.~~

2. *BCO 24-1* be amended by the addition of a new second paragraph which shall read as follows (single underline and single strike-through for original overture; double underline and double strike-through for OC amendment):

24-1. (following 24-1.a-e)

In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The ~~candidate~~ nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit.

~~depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, officers of the church the nominee must exercise great care not to normalize diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus in his progress in holiness changing our sin nature (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of the pastoral office, presbyteries are encouraged to empower a committee to conduct detailed examinations of these matters and to give prayerful support to candidates.~~

So that *BCO* 21-4.e and 24-1 as amended would read:

21-4. Ordination Requirements and Procedures

- e. In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the candidate must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

24-1. (following 24-1.a-e)

In the examination of the nominee's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, the nominee must exercise great care not to diminish the seriousness of those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in his progress in holiness (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

32. That **Overture 32** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery ("Amend *RAO* 8-4 to Add an Item to the Annual Report of the GA Nominating Committee," p. 1352) be answered in the **negative**. *Adopted*

Grounds: *BCO* 14-1.7 states "The Assembly's committees are to serve and not to direct any Church judicatories. They are not to establish policy, but rather execute policy established by the General Assembly." Thus, the Boards of Committees and Agencies of the PCA are not self-perpetuating or self-appointed. Currently, however, five agencies are allowed to make recommendations to the Nominating Committee, which are taken very seriously, the vast majority of which are heeded in the Nominating Committee's recommendations every year.

However, the Nominating Committee also needs to take seriously the recommendations of the Presbyteries, which are not fully available to the Agencies by the time of their recommendations. To pass these recommendations of the agencies along a second time, this time to the assembly, is a major change as the General Assembly has not allowed floor speeches for or against candidates on the floor of the Assembly, and that communication of recommendations to the GA amounts to a speech for a candidate without rebuttal of the committee who was acting for the whole in their work.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Also, as an Agency's recommendation has not been informed by the comparison of all the candidates with the submissions of other presbyteries, nor the content of the discussion, research, and work of the Nominating Committee, such a change would diminish the work and role of the Nominating Committee and move closer to a self-perpetuating board.

Such a change would also open the door to further debate and avenues for candidate support that would politicize and elongate the time taken to present nominees to the General Assembly. Thus, to expand such a provision without a clear deficiency in the current process invites unnecessary complications.

At the same time, there is no *RAO* rule prohibiting any of the five Agencies from publishing, in their annual reports to the Assembly, the names of men those Agencies have endorsed to the Nominating Committee and who were also nominated by their respective presbyteries. Furthermore, there is no *RAO* prohibition against a floor nominee's bio including the fact that the man was endorsed by the Agency. An Agency endorsement is not a matter requiring confidentiality or executive session protections. GA Commissioners can regard it, or disregard it, as they see fit.

33. That **Overture 33** from Nashville Presbytery ("Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Examination, and Conciliation," p. 1356) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 29**. *Adopted*
34. That **Overture 34** from Metro Atlanta Presbytery ("Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Examination, and Conciliation," p. 1361) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 29**. *Adopted*
35. That **Overture 35** from North Florida Presbytery ("Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Assessment, and Conciliation," p. 1366) be answered **with reference to the answer to Overture 29**. *Adopted*
36. *[Overture 36 was referred by the Stated Clerk to SJC.]*
37. *[Overture 37 was referred by the Stated Clerk to SJC.]*
38. *[Overture 38 was referred by the Stated Clerk to SJC.]*

39. [*Overture 39 was referred by the Stated Clerk to SJC.*]

40. [*Overture 40 was referred by the Stated Clerk to SJC.*]

41. That **Overture 41** from the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago (“Declare Critical Race Theory Flawed,” p. 1381) be **postponed indefinitely**. *Adopted*

Grounds: *Robert's Rules* describes an Indefinite Postponement motion as follows:

"Postpone Indefinitely is a motion that the assembly decline to take a position on the main question. Its adoption kills the main motion (for the duration of the session) and avoids a direct vote on the question. It is useful in disposing of a badly chosen main motion that cannot be either adopted or expressly rejected without possibly undesirable consequences." (*RONR* 12th ed. 11:1). The Overtures Committee considers this Overture to fall into such a category.

42. That **Overture 42** from the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago (“Forbid TE and RE Participation in ‘Political Groups’,” p 1383) be answered in the **negative**. *Adopted*

Grounds: This Overture is broad enough to raise questions about private conversations between elders that are appropriate as they prepare for issues at presbytery and General Assembly, and even of “political groups” like those that helped found the PCA.

V. Commissioners Present

Presbytery

Arizona
Arizona
Ascension
Ascension
Blue Ridge
Blue Ridge
Calvary
Calvary
Canada West
Canada West
Catawba Valley

Commissioner (*Convener)

RE Matthew Fitzsimmons
TE Joshua Walker
RE Frederick Neikirk
TE Jared Nelson
RE Charlie Nave
TE Todd Pruitt
RE Philip Temple
TE Richard M. Thomas
RE Paul Mandry
TE Garry Venderveen
TE Michael Colvard

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Central Carolina	RE Steve Bennett
Central Carolina	TE Cory Dean Colravy
Central Florida	RE Tommy Craggs
Central Florida	TE Jerry Klemm
Central Georgia	RE Jay Strickland
Central Georgia	TE Kreg Bryan
Central Indiana	RE Dan Barber
Central Indiana	TE Ben Reed
Chesapeake	RE Bradley James Chwastyk
Chesapeake	TE John Arch Van Devender
Chicago Metro	RE Daniel Lyzenga
Chicago Metro	TE Joe Cristman
Columbus Metro	TE Chris Mabee
Covenant	RE Robert Barber
Covenant	TE Jim Plunk
Eastern Canada	RE Bryan Feenstra
Eastern Canada	TE Kyle Hackmann
Eastern Carolina	RE Michael Newkirk
Eastern Carolina	TE Sam Kennedy
Eastern Pennsylvania	RE Terry Carnes
Eastern Pennsylvania	TE Mark A. Herzer
Evangel	RE Drew Ricketts
Evangel	TE Michael Brock
Fellowship	RE Chad Cureton
Fellowship	TE Jason Ryan Anderson
Georgia Foothills	RE Jon Richards
Georgia Foothills	TE Nathan T. Parker
Grace	RE Samuel J. Duncan
Grace	TE Jim McCarthy
Great Lakes	RE Jerome Gorgon
Great Lakes	TE Jason M. Helopoulos
Gulf Coast	RE Mike M. McCrary
Gulf Coast	TE Rafael P. LaGuardia
Gulfstream	TE Bernie van Eyk
Heartland	RE Lance Kinzer
Heartland	TE Rick E. Franks
Heritage	RE Tyler Hogan
Heritage	TE Rick A. Gray
Highlands	RE Alan Sonner
Highlands	TE Andrew David Shank
Hills and Plains	TE Jay Bruce

JOURNAL

Houston Metro	RE Ken Wynne
Houston Metro	TE Richard B. Harris
Illiana	RE Keith Phillips
Illiana	TE William F. Hill Jr.
Iowa	TE Colin Andrade
James River	RE Matt Fender
James River	TE Sam Capitano
Korean Capital	TE Hansoo Jin
Korean Central	TE Peter Soo Hwan Kim
Korean Northeastern	TE Hoochan Paul Lee
Korean Southeastern	TE Edward Lim
Lowcountry	RE David Walters Jr.
Lowcountry	TE John Paul Sibley
Metro Atlanta	RE James W. Wert Jr.
Metro Atlanta	TE Tolivar Wills
Metropolitan New York	RE Bruce W. Terrell
Metropolitan New York	TE Wei Ho
Mississippi Valley	RE Edward Currie
Mississippi Valley	TE David Strain
Missouri	RE Kyle Keating
Missouri	TE Christopher Smith
Nashville	RE Bryce Sullivan
Nashville	TE Kevin J. Twit
New Jersey	RE Jason Method
New Jersey	TE Ted W. Trefsgar Jr.
New River	TE Mark Kozak
New York State	TE Chris Holdridge
North Florida	RE William Cheek
North Florida	TE John Lawler
North Texas	RE Steven Vanderhill*
North Texas	TE Matthew Wood
Northern California	RE Matt Cabot
Northern California	TE David H. Jones
Northern Illinois	RE Larry McAuley
Northern Illinois	TE Justin Coverstone
Northern New England	RE Ernie Shipman
Northern New England	TE Ian G. Hard
Northwest Georgia	RE Justen Ellis
Northwest Georgia	TE David Gilbert
Ohio	RE Gregg Gorzelle
Ohio	TE Rhett P. Dodson

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ohio Valley	RE Chuck Sox
Ohio Valley	TE Robert H. Cunningham
Pacific Northwest	RE Howie Donahoe
Pacific Northwest	TE Brant Bosserman
Palmetto	RE Andrew Rutherford
Palmetto	TE Jason Cornwell
Pee Dee	RE Jack North
Pee Dee	TE Jordan M. Gallo
Philadelphia Metro West	RE Michael Harnish
Piedmont Triad	RE Trevor Laurence
Piedmont Triad	TE Derek Emerson Radney
Pittsburgh	RE David Snoke
Pittsburgh	TE John P. Kenyon
Platte Valley	TE Tag Tuck
Platte Valley	RE Brandon Scholting
Potomac	RE Stu Asp
Potomac	TE Scott P. Seaton
Providence	RE John R. Bise
Providence	TE Randy E. Thompson
Rocky Mountain	RE John Leaf
Rocky Mountain	TE Daniel Nealon
Savannah River	RE Glynn Dyer
Savannah River	TE David Thomas House II
Siouxlands	RE Blake Pool
Siouxlands	TE Jeffrey Neikirk
South Coast	TE Danny Morgan
South Florida	RE Gregory Misesyko
South Florida	TE David Barry
South Texas	RE Barry McBee
South Texas	TE Gregory Allen Ward
Southeast Alabama	RE Steven Dowling
Southeast Alabama	TE Brannon Bowman
Southern Louisiana	RE Aaron Collier
Southern Louisiana	TE Raymond D. Cannata
Southern New England	RE Chris Shoemaker
Southern New England	TE Troy Albee
Southwest Florida	RE Ed Jordan
Southwest Florida	TE Justin Conner Woodall
Suncoast Florida	RE Michael Levenhagen
Suncoast Florida	TE Brent Stuart Lauder
Susquehanna Valley	RE James W. Ressler

JOURNAL

Susquehanna Valley	TE Vincent L. Wood
Tennessee Valley	RE Don Kent
Tennessee Valley	TE Andy Aikens
Tidewater	TE Jeffrey T. Elliott
Warrior	TE Jeffrey Glenn Pate
West Hudson	RE David Talcott
Westminster	RE Daniel A. Witcher
Westminster	TE Steven E. Warhurst
Wisconsin	RE Steve Iler
Wisconsin	TE Benjamin Sinnard

There were no Commissioners from:

- Korean Eastern
- Korean Northwest
- Korean Southern
- Korean Southwest
- Korean Southwest Orange County
- Pacific
- Philadelphia
- Rio Grande

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ RE Steven Vanderhill, Chairman

/s/ TE Edward Lim, Secretary

**REPORT OF THE OVERTURES COMMITTEE
MINORITY REPORTS**

**MINORITY REPORT
ON OVERTURE 8**

Introduction

As a wise PCA pastor friend said recently, “There are numerous reasons to oppose an overture suggesting a *BCO* change. One could oppose an overture because you think the stated problem is not really a problem (or at least not the kind of urgent problem which the overture seeks to correct.) Or, you might believe that there is a real problem, but that the proposed solution doesn’t actually fix the problem.” I would add that, in some cases the proposed solution might make things even worse – adding more confusion to our polity, and/or introducing unintended consequences that will create even worse problems.

Such is the case with Overture 8. It fails to demonstrate that we have a true crisis requiring such a radical solution, and (even worse) proposes a solution with devastating, even if unintended, consequences. Furthermore, it violates core values of our commitment to grassroots Presbyterianism and the deliberative process in extraordinary ways.

This overture claims to raise the bar from two presbyteries to 10% of presbyteries, but in fact this overture also proposes a radical change to **our process**. Currently *BCO* 34-1 and *BCO* 33-1 provide a mechanism to deal with presbyteries and sessions that “refuse to act.” To put it simply, changing “refuses to act” to “fails to indict” fundamentally changes our process. Under the proposed change when a presbytery does an investigation and concludes that the minister is not to be indicted, then 9 presbyteries without firsthand knowledge or access to the record of the investigation will sit in judgment upon the conclusion of the man’s presbytery.

Yet we already have a process whereby the presbytery’s investigation can be reviewed. Anyone in the man’s presbytery can complain about the presbytery’s action and the matter will be sent to the SJC. The reason that this, our current process, is superior is that the SJC *will* have access to the record of the investigation which now becomes part of the record of the case. Furthermore, in our current process the man indicted and tried by this process has the opportunity to appeal his verdict and censure. But under the proposed change the man would be tried by the SJC and have no ability to appeal. In the case of members of churches, the proposed change would create a scenario in which the presbytery would try the church member and that member would then have no ability to appeal because they lack standing in the court which has tried them. This creates a situation which removes a vital right accorded to the accused in our system.

RECOMMENDATION: That The 49th General Assembly Refer Overture 8 Back To The Presbytery Without Prejudice

I. What Is the Problem?

1. Original jurisdiction refers to the important role of court to exercise discipline over its own members, if the need for such discipline arises. For church members that court is ordinarily the session, and for ministers that court is ordinarily the presbytery. However, there are times when it is necessary for other courts to attempt to intervene and take original jurisdiction away from the court which ordinally would have the jurisdiction.

2. This ability to assume original jurisdiction is an important safeguard for the peace and purity of the church. There have been times in the history of the presbyterian church in America when _____ presbyteries have admitted unqualified men to the office of minister and/or refused to discipline those with serious doctrinal problems. One thinks for example of the New School in the 19th century and the frustration that caused for the church as a whole when men who were not even Reformed were being regularly admitted into the ministry through a couple of presbyteries.

3. So, we have over the years developed a way to deal with delinquent or rebellious session and presbyteries. In fact, we actually have several ways to accomplish this. We have the Review Of Presbytery Records process, the ability of a member of the court to complain against an action by that court, and the ability of one who has been convicted and censured to appeal his case to a higher court.

4. But we have one additional provision designed to guard the peace and purity of the church, and this is found in *BCO* 33-1, in the case of sessions refusing to act against members of their church, and 34-1 in the case of Presbyteries refusing to act against ministers who are members of that presbytery. This provision is an important one also. However, this provision is one that is only to be used in doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal. Leaving aside for the moment the question of what kind of doctrinal case should be brought against a member who is not required to affirm our standards in their membership vows, it is clear that this provision provides a sort of backstop that is only to be used when a session or presbytery is delinquent in their responsibility to deal with serious issues. *BCO* 34-1 creates a mechanism for assumption of original jurisdiction [AOJ] when a lower court is delinquent in its constitutional duty to address a serious matter.

5. There are already constitutional mechanisms for higher court review of a lower court's action: GRC, complaint, appeal. 34-1 however is gives an option when there is *no action* to which these constitutional mechanisms can apply.

6. The proposed amended phrase "Does not indict" actually gives a path for bypassing the current constitutional mechanisms and would fundamentally change the way sessions/presbyteries relate to one another.

7. 34-1 provides a way to overturn the action of a lower court—it provides a way to address the *non-action* of a lower court. This overture proposes changes which would fundamentally change all of that. Our system, while not perfect,

has served us well. It is unwise to seek to make radical changes to our polity because of the dissatisfaction some have had with one particularly notorious case. The implications of these proposed changes to our polity are wide-ranging and severe.

8. So, do we have a real problem? Some have contended that the current phrase in 33-1 and 34-1, “refuses to act” is difficult to interpret. However, this overture does not actually seek to clarify the so-called confusing phrase. Instead, it seeks to change our polity in significant ways. Please note: “Refuses to act” implies willful resistance, not a mere failure to act. But to change this to “does not indict” transforms *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 from being a backstop provision for dealing with _____ sessions and presbyteries into one that invites dissatisfied sessions and presbyteries without the ability and before they could properly investigate, to sit in judgment on the decision of a fellow session or presbytery which has done an actual investigation. This means that they would be sitting in judgment based on rumor rather than actual first-hand knowledge because the petitioning sessions or presbyteries would not have been privy to the facts of the investigation done by the court entrusted to make such an investigation! They would in fact be taking on the role of the higher court to whom is actually entrusted the role of review of lower courts actions. In our system, it is when the higher court becomes involved, either through complaint or appeal, that they then have access to the full record of the investigation – and that is a very important difference from what is proposed here.

II. Is This Change Really Necessary?

1. While there are some who contend that 34-1 (and 33-1) would benefit from clarification, replacing the phrase “refuses to act” with “failing to indict” is not the right clarification—because it is not even the right *scenario* for OJ requests.

- Again, 34-1 (and 33-1) creates a mechanism for AOJ when a lower court was delinquent in its constitutional duty to address a matter.
- However, “does not indict” would allow AOJ when a lower court *has acted* by conducting an investigation and not found a strong presumption of guilt
- This creates the possibility of presbyteries “second-guessing” any investigative action that does not render the result they prefer.

- Furthermore, it creates the possibility that a handful of sessions could demand OJ of a member that your session has investigated.

2. Note further that the phrase “fails to indict” is a prejudicial one, it *assumes* that an indictment *should* have happened. It would perhaps be better to say “if after your Presbytery does a full and proper investigation, and *decides* not to indict.” Yet, that sets up the following potential scenario: Imagine that your Presbytery does an investigation of a minister and concludes that he should not be indicted. Because of the sensitive nature of the report against the minister (that which triggered the investigation) the presbytery deals with the investigation in executive session, thus barring the detailed record of the investigation from being shared. But then some other presbyteries, based on rumors (since they have no access to the original investigation record of the case) decide to assume original jurisdiction and subject the minister to another investigation, along with all the cost in time and money that such a process would require. While the overture seeks to share the cost of such an investigation, this does not truly protect the minister from the cost and burden of frivolous suits that this proposed amendment would generate.

3. This would too easily and too often turn our SJC into primarily a court of original jurisdiction tasked with investigation and deciding, rather than an appellate court reviewing the investigation of those who are close at hand to the situation. Currently the SJC typically exercises great caution in judging testimony from afar, but this proposed AOJ change would require the SJC to investigate ministers from all over the world potentially, rather than entrusting the investigation to the court that is close at hand. While the bar in this proposed overture has been raised to 10% of sessions or presbyteries (and raising the bar is a good idea), that is not the most significant effect of this proposed change. The summary of the overture in our packet and as summarized by the article in *byFaith* fails to alert us to the truly radical change to our polity which this overture proposes.

III. Some Additional Problems with the Proposed Overture

1. The Proposed Change Is Too Broad - The current language allows AOJ if a lower court “refuses to act,” which arguably means refuses to exercise its constitutional obligations. By changing it to “declines to indict” opens the door to wresting jurisdiction from a Presbytery simply when the petitioners disagree with Presbytery's decision. That is a huge change in Presbyterian polity.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2. The "Petition" Provision Is Problematic - An AOJ petition could simply be a one-sentence email to the PCA Clerk's office. The *BCO* does not even require any rationale. It doesn't require the petitioning presbytery to have even contacted the allegedly delinquent presbytery.

3. If a presbytery is so delinquent that we need to wrest jurisdiction from them, then there is a much bigger problem than the man over whom jurisdiction should be taken.

4. 10% is much too low. Thus, this new procedure will happen far too often.

- *Robert's Rules* never gives such power to such a small minority. Nor does our *RAO*. While there can be an OC Minority Report triggered by 10%, that MR only brings a recommendation for GA consideration. The proposed change to 34-1 mandates assumption of original jurisdiction. No persuasive arguments are required.
- If 79 PCA presbyteries believe another presbytery has acted wisely in a decision not to indict, on what principal should the PCA disregard the opinion of those? It would be an affront to that 90% (i.e., 79 presbyteries)
- The proponents of the 10% threshold are caught between a rock and a hard place. For example, for someone to argue that the PCA was greatly disturbed by a recent case where a presbytery "did not indict" matter, then they would presumably grant that they could have gotten at least 25% of the Presbyteries to file one-sentence AOJ emails to the Stated Clerk. Honest men would probably admit they could have gotten 22 Presbyteries (25%) to file such AOJ petitions. But, in a case like a recent high profile one, if no more than 10% of the presbyteries file AOJ petitions, then that would demonstrate the PCA was not sufficiently disturbed by the matter. This would create an awkward situation, to say the least.
- Like any denomination, the PCA will likely always have a spectrum of views of different matters. Thus, there will always be 10% at either "end of the spectrum." Why should that 10% have such power?

5. This change would cut "both ways." Some men might have a particular recent case in mind when they think about this Overture, but nothing would prevent 9 of our 88 presbyteries from sending a one-sentence email to the

Stated Clerk insisting the GA assume original jurisdiction over a blogger who those petitioners believe has violated the standards of Larger Catechism 109 (on the 9th commandment).

6. This could very easily swamp the SJC with an overwhelming amount of work. Nothing would preclude the SJC having several AOJ cases at once. It would turn the SJC from an appellate court into a district attorney's office. Doing an investigation and (if warranted a trial) takes much more time than dealing with an appeal or complaint. So, if we are going to do that, then it should only be done upon request of at least 25%.

7. Taking jurisdiction from a Presbytery, especially one that's already done its own investigation and declined to indict, is a significant and extreme measure. While AOJ should be possible, the denomination should set the bar high for doing so, but it should be possible. If all this overture proposed was a raising of the bar, perhaps there would be wider support. Thus we urge the body to refer this back to be perfected.

8. For these reasons, and some others, there is actually very little chance that it will be supported by 2/3 of the Presbyteries. It would be better to get this paragraph into a form that can be supported more broadly and thus we urge the General Assembly to return this overture to the Presbytery.

9. Amending 34-1 to give a novel means for higher courts to judge the action of a lower court would:

- Violate the original intention of 34-1, which sought to limit its validity significantly to instances of non-action,
- Insert a new and problematic constitutional mechanism for the review of lower court action which bypasses the ordinary means of complaint and general review and control, and
- Give a means for every investigative action of your session and your presbytery which does not find a strong presumption of guilt to be taken up and overruled by a higher court—not because of error according to the ordinary methods of review—but simply because men outside your court don't like the result.

Conclusion

The overture title suggests that the main significance of this proposed *BCO* change is raising the bar from two churches or presbyteries to 10%. However,

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the actual significance of this overture, should it pass, is to completely change the way assumption of original jurisdiction works and when it can properly be invoked. And this change is a radical one that seriously threatens the peace and purity of the church.

In fact, numerous experienced PCA fathers have expressed the opinion that this was the most dangerous overture offered this year. This proposed change to our *BCO* would open the door_____, forcing pastors and even members to possibly face investigation and trials at considerable expense (even if shared, it is still significant), as well as the time and trouble which cannot be shared.

This proposed change would also (perhaps inadvertently) remove the ability of the accused church member to appeal should he be convicted by presbytery, because he would not be a member of the higher court which had assumed jurisdiction for the investigation and trial.

Rather than bring greater peace and purity of the church it would surely increase the suspicion among us—an actual problem of tremendous significance that all of us should mourn.

SIGNED BY:

<u>TE/RE</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Presbytery</u>
TE	Kevin Twit	Nashville
RE	Kyle Keating	Missouri
TE	Derek Radney	Piedmont Triad
RE	Bruce Terrell	NY Metro
TE	Kyle Hackman	Eastern Canada
TE	Jerry Klemm	Central Florida
RE	Trevor Laurence	Piedmont Triad
TE	Tag Tuck	Platte Valley
TE	Ben Reed	Central Indiana
RE	Dan Barber	Central Indiana
RE	Stu Asp	Potomac
TE	Ben Sinnard	Wisconsin
TE	Andrew Shank	Highlands
RE	Matt Cabot	Northern California
TE	Greg Ward	South Texas
TE	Sam Kennedy	Eastern Carolina
TE	David Jones	Northern California
RE	Bryan Feenstra	Eastern Canada

MINORITY REPORT ON OVERTURE 15

Pursuant to *RAO* 15-6(s) the undersigned members of the 2022 Overtures Committee respectfully dissent from the action of the majority with respect to Overture 15. **The minority recommends** and moves that the General Assembly **answer Overture 15 in the affirmative as amended**. The amended text of the language to be inserted as new *BCO* paragraph 7-4 would read as follows:

7-4. Men who describe themselves as homosexual, even those who describe themselves as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy by refraining from homosexual conduct, are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America.

The amendments from the original overture 15 are shown below:

7-4. Men who ~~identify~~ describe themselves as homosexual, even those who ~~identify~~ describe themselves as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy ~~in that self-identification by refraining from homosexual conduct~~, are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America.

It is the church's calling and stewardship to be a pillar and buttress of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). It is the "city set on a hill" whose light must not be hidden (Matt 5:14). Since 2018, the purity and peace of our church has been greatly disturbed by notions of Side B Christianity. For far longer, the culture's increasing acceptance and celebration of homosexuality has arisen as a point of clear and obvious contrast. Many "call evil good and good evil"; they "put darkness for light and light for darkness" (Isa 5:20). Even many Christian denominations have joined in to celebrate that which displeases our Lord. Now, the question is before the Presbyterian Church in America. Members of our churches are asking for the denomination to take a stand on these issues, and this overture does so in a way that is clear and specific.

Why Overture 15 as Amended is Needed

We are encouraged and grateful for the work of the Overtures Committee in recommending Overture 29; however, there is a need for further action. Whereas other statements (e.g., the AIC study report on human sexuality,

Overture 29) have admirably defined the line, this overture draws the line. It responds to the risk of winning the exegetical and theological battle, but failing to put it in practice by giving a clear, constitutional standard of accountability.

We as a denomination need to speak unambiguously on the question of personal holiness and the standards of belief and practice for officers. The minority believes this proposed amendment to the *BCO* will do just that.

This overture is Clear, Concise, and Relevant.

Clear

Overture 15 as amended speaks with requisite clarity and specificity. This proposed *BCO* amendment is short, and free from vague concepts or phrases. While the greater question of identity as being primarily a subjective notion of inner feelings and psychology rather than an outward one has caused confusion, the amendment to Overture 15 proposed by this minority report avoids that problem of subjectivity by removing references to identity and instead relying on self-description. This is an objective measure, and an officer or officer candidate can be evaluated based on his own written and oral statements. It also avoids questions of reputation which were concerns raised over the previous year.

Concise

Overture 15 leaves no space for equivocation. Whereas lengthy theological definitions can provide context and breadth, this overture states the issue succinctly and will enable efficiency and avoid the confusion that could arise from lengthier statements in our courts.

Relevant

At this time, homosexuality is the particular sin and cultural hill on which the fight for gospel-holiness is pitched. Martin Luther reportedly stated, that “Though we be active in the battle, if we are not fighting where the battle is the hottest, we are traitors to the cause.” This, fathers and brothers, is where the battle is the hottest. It is right and appropriate to specifically discuss and address this sin.

Possible Objections

This arbitrarily targets particular sins

Objections have been raised that this overture inappropriately singles out a particular sin above others. In response to that, we say that in the place and

time in which the Lord has placed the PCA in 2022, homosexuality is the particular sin and cultural touchpoint where the battle is joined. Our members and particularly our young people are under tremendous pressure in social, educational, and vocational settings to bow the knee to the homosexual agenda. The church needs to give constitutional authority to the clear and unequivocal proposition that a man who describes himself as a homosexual, is not qualified to church office.

This is already addressed in our standards.

While we agree that our standards are clear on historic issues such as the sinfulness of homosexuality, recent innovations have caused confusion. In particular, the questions surrounding Side B Gay Christianity has caused much disruption. In addition, there are questions as to whether the standards are being appropriately applied. When an issue causes as much disruption to the peace and purity of the church such as this, it is right for us to clarify our constitution regarding how we are to respond.

This unnecessarily narrows the BCO on contemporary issues

We should not be bound by the ideal of what constitutes “acceptable” constitutional language to the degree that the Church does not speak.

Objection to placement in BCO 7

It may be argued that this amendment does not belong in *BCO 7*. We disagree. As the title suggests, *BCO 7* addresses “general classifications” of church officers. Currently, the chapter enumerates three prohibitions regarding church office. *BCO 7-1* prohibits the continuation of revelatory gifts. *BCO 7-2* prohibits the ordination of women to the offices of elder or deacon. And, in a single sentence, *BCO 7-3*, prohibits the usurpation of authority in church office. Each of these describes a categorical disqualifier that applies to all officers in the PCA. Therefore, it is fitting to amend *BCO 7* to include another single sentence prohibiting men who “describe themselves as homosexual” from serving in ordained office in the PCA.

This is a “magic words” test

It has been suggested that this overture does nothing more than police language. This objection supposes that a man who struggles with same-sex-attraction, who is pursuing holiness and mortifying his sin, could be disqualified from holding office in the church simply by describing his struggle with certain terminology. To the contrary, the “magic words” objection confuses the sign with the thing signified. It does not obtusely legislate *language* but defines the standard. This overture clearly prescribes a

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

standard of holiness for officers in the Lord’s Church. It serves as a clear and simple standard to complement the AIC study report on human sexuality and overtures 29 and 31, which are also coming before this assembly. Whereas other statements and overtures speak to the underlying theology, overture 15 applies it. Instead of defining “the line”, overture 15 draws it.

Moreover, the “magic words” objection betrays a low view of the competency of our courts. Presbyters have the capacity to work with an officer or candidate, to clarify, and to exercise sanctified discernment as to whether a man is speaking imprecisely or is truly disqualified due to his progress in sanctification.

Conclusion

This matter was a close question in the Overtures Committee. The motion to adopt the substitute to answer Overture 15 in the negative passed by a vote of 72-67. While we appreciate our brothers who seek unity in the church, we feel bound by our vow to promote the purity and peace of the church, and this overture does much to promote both.

Now more than ever, the church needs Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders, and Deacons to lead and to speak. The church needs to give constitutional authority to the clear and unequivocal proposition that a man who describes himself as a homosexual is not qualified to church office. This overture will serve the peace, purity and faithful witness of the church.

SIGNED BY:

TE/RE	Name	Presbytery
RE	Matthew D. Fender	James River
TE	Joe Cristman	Chicago Metro
TE	David Barry	South Florida
RE	Chad Cureton	Fellowship
RE	Steve Dowling	Southeast Alabama
TE	Rafael LaGuardia	Gulf Coast
RE	Terry Carnes	Eastern Pennsylvania
TE	Mark Herzer	Eastern Pennsylvania
TE	William F. Hill, Jr.	Iliana
RE	Mike M. McCary	Gulf Coast
TE	Steven Warhurst	Westminster
TE	David Gilbert	Northwest Georgia
RE	Justen Ellis	Northwest Georgia
RE	Charles Nave	Blue Ridge
TE	Cory Colravy	Central Carolina

JOURNAL

RE	Bradley J. Chwastyk	Chesapeake
TE	Garry Vanderveen	Canada West
RE	Paul Mandry	Canada West
RE	Dan Lyzenga	Chicago Metro
TE	Jim McCarthy	Grace
TE	Jason Anderson	Fellowship
TE	Kreg Bryan	Central Georgia
RE	Jay Strickland	Central Georgia
TE	Michael Brock	Evangel
RE	Andrew Rutherford	Palmetto
TE	Richard Harris	Houston Metro
RE	Ed Jordan	Southwest Florida
RE	James W. Ressler	Susquehanna Valley
TE	Andy Aikens	Tennessee Valley Presbytery
TE	Vincent Wood	Susquehanna Valley
RE	Blake Pool	Siouxlands
RE	John B. Leaf	Rocky Mountain
RE	Drew Ricketts	Evangel
TE	John A. Van Devender	Chesapeake
TE	Colin Andrade	Iowa
TE	Ted Trefsgar	New Jersey
RE	Mike Levenhagen	Suncoast Florida
TE	Matt Wood	North Texas
TE	Jordan Gallo	Pee Dee
RE	Keith Phillips	Iliana
RE	Daniel Witcher	Westminster
TE	Brent Lauder	Suncoast Florida
RE	Greg Miseyko	South Florida
RE	Ken Wynne	Houston Metro
RE	David Walters Jr	Lowcountry
RE	William Cheek	North Florida

MINORITY REPORT ON OVERTURE 26

The minority moves the following as a substitute motion: **Answer Overture 26 as amended in the affirmative**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America would

- Remind the PCA that our highest allegiance is to Jesus Christ.
- Condemn the use of intimidation, rather than persuasion, to change political opinions or outcomes, as well as the destruction of property and the infliction of bodily violence against political opponents, especially that which is done in the name of Christ.

- Pray for peace in our country during the General Assembly.
- Encourage the PCA to pursue peace in the public square.

Rationale:

The objection raised by some commissioners to Overture 26 is that it is a political statement, and thus one that the Church should not be making. We want to be clear: Overture 26 is not a political statement. It is a moral statement, addressed not to the magistrate but to the Church and a watching world, about a pressing issue in our society. Clearly, the Assembly approves speaking to such issues. The Overtures Committee overwhelmingly recommended the Assembly approve two overtures related to other pressing moral issues: sexuality and abortion. Thus, we appeal to the Assembly to be consistent in its reasoning and be willing to speak to moral issues, if and when there is a need to do so.

The need for this Statement could not be more evident. In recent years, violence and intimidation across the political spectrum have dramatically increased. Even since the overture was approved by Potomac Presbytery in March, several churches and pregnancy centers have been vandalized for being pro-life. Judges have been killed or threatened. Death threats have been made against police. Elected representatives, school board and election officials have been threatened with their lives. As the divide in our nation increases, Christians may be tempted to ignore, excuse, or even participate in violence that aids their preferred political views. And when the Church is silent, church members—and a watching world—may wonder whether our highest allegiance is to Christ or to worldly means and methods.

The response should be equally evident: the Church should speak. And our message is clear: Jesus tells his followers to “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27). On the night of his betrayal and arrest, Jesus commanded Peter to put away his sword, “for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52). Jesus’ admonition does not advocate pacifism, as affirmed by the overture’s appeal to our confessional Standards, namely that the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment include “all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense” (*WLC* 136). Rather, the duties of the sixth commandment include “peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior, forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil” (*WLC* 135). We are to love our neighbor.

JOURNAL

The need and the response to a pressing moral issue are evident. And thus, we urge the Assembly to speak, by affirming Overture 26.

Respectfully Submitted,

TE/RE	Name	Presbytery
RE	Stuart Asp	Potomac
RE	Dan Barber	Central Indiana
TE	Jason Cornwell	Palmetto
TE	Jeff Elliott	Tidewater
RE	Bryan Feenstra	Eastern Canada
TE	Kyle Hackman	Eastern Canada
TE	Ian Hard	Northern New England
TE	Sam Kennedy	Eastern Carolina
TE	Jerry Klemm	Central Florida
RE	Trevor Laurence	Piedmont Triad
RE	Blake Pool	Siouxlands
RE	Keith Phillips	Illiana
TE	Derek Radney	Piedmont Triad
TE	Ben Reed	Central Indiana
TE	Scott Seaton	Potomac
TE	Andrew Shank	Highlands
TE	Ben Sinnard	Wisconsin
TE	Tag Tuck	Platte Valley
RE	Bruce Terrell	Metropolitan New York
TE	Kevin Twit	Nashville
TE	Justin Woodall	Southwest Florida

**MINORITY REPORT
ON OVERTURE 42 AS AMENDED**

Pursuant to *RAO* 15-6(s) the undersigned members of the 2022 Overtures Committee respectfully dissent from the action of the majority respect to Overture 42 as amended. **The Minority recommends and moves that the General Assembly answer Overture 42 in the affirmative as amended.** Overture 42 as amended would result in the following declaration:

Therefore, be it resolved that, though there will naturally be affinity groups, friendships, and conversations within a large, connected denomination, the 49th General Assembly calls all Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to refrain from “underhanded ways” (2 Corinthians 4:1-2) by participating in secretive and exclusive factions for the purpose of influencing or manipulating the church courts. Rather, the 49th General

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Assembly encourages Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to engage in an “open statement of the truth” (2 Corinthians 4:1-2) with the brothers in their own sessions, presbyteries, and the greater denomination for the purity, peace, and unity of the church.

The amendments from the original Overture 42 are shown below:

Therefore, be it resolved that, though there will naturally be affinity groups, friendships, and conversations within a large, connected denomination, the 49th General Assembly calls all Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to ~~not participate in~~ refrain from “underhanded ways” (2 Corinthians 4:1-2) by participating in secretive and exclusive ~~political groups~~ factions for the purpose of influencing or manipulating the church courts, ~~according to a particular agenda, but~~ Rather, ~~to engage in good faith with the brothers in their own sessions and presbyteries, for the purity, peace, and unity of the church.~~ The 49th General Assembly encourages Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to engage in an “open statement of the truth” (2 Corinthians 4:1-2) with the brothers in their own sessions, presbyteries, and the greater denomination for the purity, peace, and unity of the church.

The Apostle Paul speaks so clearly, and helpfully, when he writes:

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. (2 Corinthians 4:1-2)

In the calling to gospel ministry, it is necessary for Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to cast off “disgraceful, underhanded ways”(2 Cor. 4:1-2) and rather to engage in “the open statement of truth”(2 Cor 4:1-2). In recent years, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) has had increasing tension, over the revelation of secretive and exclusive factions, which work to influence and even manipulate church courts. The question before our denomination is whether or not this is how we wish to conduct our ministry together. If we desire to see the PCA thrive, we must be able to trust one another, and operate

in good faith with our brothers in our sessions, presbyteries, and the greater denomination. The peace, purity, and unity of the church is threatened if we do not take such action.

Why We Need Overture 42 as amended

Over the past several years, many have become aware of secretive and exclusive factions which have been at work to influence, and even manipulate church courts. This has disrupted the peace, purity, and unity of the church, and has hindered the ability to move forward together, in good faith. When such behavior goes undiscussed, the temptation to distrust one another grows, and the enemy gains a greater foothold. Our work is hindered when such behavior continues, and if we desire the PCA to continue in her mission to be faithful to Scripture, true to the reformed faith, and obedient to the great commission, we must act. Overture 42 as amended allows us to do so in a helpful, but also charitable way.

In calling one another to refrain from participating in these secretive and exclusive factions, we are calling one another to something better. We are calling one another to obey the words of the Apostle Paul, and to faithfully do the work of our office, in display of our greatest ideal. We do this with hearts which desire to move forward with one another, and yet are compelled to protect the peace, purity, and unity of the church. In order for the PCA to be best equipped moving forward in her mission and work, we must call one another to be better, by casting off such disgraceful and underhanded ways.

Possible Misconceptions

We want to be clear, as to what we do not mean in this call. In a group this large, some will inevitably arrive at different conclusions as to what this could mean. We want to state for the record what is not intended by this overture:

“This sounds prosecutorial.”

This is unequivocally not a call to begin judicial prosecution, or an attempt at bringing charges against our brothers in the PCA. This is a call to do better than what is described here, in good faith, with a heartfelt desire to move toward one another, while acknowledging important issues which may hinder that work.

“It is too difficult to know what is, and is not, allowed under this call.”

We believe most if not all are able to discern between innocent, good-spirited discussions with regards to the PCA and her work, and the troubling behavior which is denounced in Overture 42 as amended. The plain reading of the

overture is not difficult to understand, and intentionally speaks to safeguard, and give room for, innocent and appropriate discussions with regards to the church.

“This is singling out one particular faction, which is unfair.”

While one particular faction has gotten much notoriety in recent years, this overture intentionally does not name specific factions. Our desire is to call one another to something better, regardless of which “side” one may be on with regards to a particular issue. Regardless of the specific faction, our desire is to call away from the specific behavior, which damages the peace, purity, and unity of the church.

A Call to Do Better

Fathers and Brothers, we love the PCA. Our desire is for our denomination to move forward in a biblically faithful way, which preserves the peace, purity, and unity of the church. The question, again, before our denomination is whether or not this is how we wish to conduct our ministry together. Let us call one another to something better. We can do better, indeed, we must. We would encourage you all to vote for Overture 42 as amended in the affirmative.

SIGNED BY:

<u>TE/RE</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Presbytery</u>
RE	Matthew D. Fender	James River
TE	Joe Cristman	Chicago Metro
RE	Dan Lyzenga	Chicago Metro
TE	William F. Hill Jr	Illiana
TE	Jim McCarthy	Grace
TE	Todd Pruitt	Blue Ridge
TE	David Strain	Mississippi Valley
TE	Jason Helopoulos	Great Lakes
TE	Joshua Walker	Arizona
TE	Rhett Dodson	Ohio
RE	Gregg Gorzelle	Ohio
RE	David Walters Jr.	Lowcountry
RE	Jerome Gorgan	Great Lakes
RE	Jay Strickland	Central Georgia
RE	Blake Pool	Siouxlands
TE	Jason Anderson	Fellowship
TE	Justin Coverstone	Northern Illinois
RE	Drew Ricketts	Evangel
TE	Sam Capitano	James River
RE	Robert Barber	Covenant

JOURNAL

RE	Charles Nave	Blue Ridge
RE	Justen Ellis	Northwest Georgia
TE	Rafael P LaGuardia	Gulf Coast
TE	Richard Harris	Houston Metro
RE	Chad Cureton	Fellowship
TE	David Barry	South Florida
TE	Michael Brock	Evangel
TE	Kreg Bryan	Central Georgia
RE	Mike M. McCrary	Gulf Coast
RE	Bill Cheek	North Florida

49-60 PCA Foundation Committee of Commissioners Report on Recommittal

TE Eric Veerman, CoC Chairman, led the Assembly in prayer and presented his report on the work recommitted to them by the Assembly (p. 42).
RE Timothy Townsend, President of the Foundation, answered questions related to Recommendation 3.

RE Stu Asp raised a **point of order** regarding whether the present discussion was germane to the action on the floor. The Moderator **ruled** that the point of order was **well taken**.

RE Asp **moved to call the question**, and the motion was **adopted** unanimously by voice vote.

Recommendation 3 was **adopted** without objection.

The Chairman closed his report in prayer.

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT
OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION**

I. Business Recommended to the Committee from the PCA General Assembly

F. PCAF Board of Directors Minutes from August 6, 2021, and March 4, 2022

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

B. PCAF Board of Directors Minutes from August 6, 2021, and March 4, 2022

III. Recommendations

3. That the Minutes of Board meetings of August 6, 2021, and March 4, 2022, be approved. *Adopted*

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery	Commissioner
Calvary	TE Dan Dodds
Central Carolina	TE John Chandler Black
Central Georgia	TE Charles Duncan Cantrell
Fellowship	RE Jeff Sigmon
Heartland	RE Larry Hauck
James River	TE Dan Lipford
Metro Atlanta	TE Erik Veerman (Chairman)
Mississippi Valley	TE Chris Stevens
Nashville	RE Alfred (Al) Williams (Secretary)
Northern Illinois	RE Fred Winterroth
Northwest Georgia	RE Wes Richardson
Piedmont Triad	RE Ozzie Marin
Potomac	RE Doug Leepa
Providence	TE Nick Robison
Southern New England	RE Patrick Sewell
Southwest Florida	TE Drew Bennett
Tennessee Valley	RE Wil Davis
Tidewater	RE William (Bill) Patrick Cover
Westminster	RE Larry Steuck

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Erik Veerman, Chairman

/s/ RE Alfred Williams, Secretary

49-61 Committee on Thanks Report

RE Phil Van Valkenburg led the Assembly in prayer and presented the report. The **Resolution on Thanks** (see Appendix U, p. 947) was **adopted** by acclamation.

49-62 Adjournment and Benediction

The Moderator called on TE Mika Edmondson to lead the Assembly in prayer.

At the vote of the Assembly, the Moderator declared the Assembly adjourned, to reconvene in Memphis, Tennessee, on June 13, 2023.

TE Larry Roff led the Assembly in the singing of Psalm 133, and TE Per Almquist pronounced the Apostolic benediction.

PART III

APPENDICES

NOTE: Appendices A-S are included in Volume 1 of these *Minutes*.
Appendices T-X are found in Volume 2.
See a Table of Contents for these Appendices on the back of this page.

These Appendices include the Reports of the General Assembly Committees, Agencies, and Standing Judicial Commission as originally submitted to the General Assembly. The recommendations in this section are those originally submitted and may have been amended or not adopted by the Assembly. See Part II, Journal, to find the recommendations as they were adopted by the Assembly.

Appendix W presents the Overtures as originally submitted by the presbyteries. See the Overtures Committee report and other Committee of Commissioner reports for Assembly action on these overtures, including any amendments.

The PCA Committee and Agency budgets, as approved by the Assembly, are found in Appendix C, Attachment 3, beginning on p. 215.

**APPENDICES
CONTENTS**

PERMANENT COMMITTEE AND AGENCY REPORTS

APPENDIX A	Stated Clerk	139
APPENDIX B	Board of Directors	185
APPENDIX C	Administrative Committee.....	191
APPENDIX D	Committee on Discipleship Ministries	283
APPENDIX E	Covenant College.....	293
APPENDIX F	Covenant Theological Seminary.....	299
APPENDIX G	Mission to North America	320
APPENDIX H	Mission to the World	343
APPENDIX I	PCA Foundation	365
APPENDIX J	PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.	375
APPENDIX K	Reformed University Fellowship.....	384
APPENDIX L	Ridge Haven	408

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

APPENDIX M	Cooperative Ministries Committee.....	411
APPENDIX N	Interchurch Relations Committee	412
APPENDIX O	Committee on Constitutional Business.....	419
APPENDIX P	Nominating Committee	437
	Supplemental Report.....	469
APPENDIX Q	Theological Examining Committee.....	479
APPENDIX R	Committee on Review of Presbytery Records	482

OTHER REPORTS

APPENDIX S	Attendance Report	639
APPENDIX T	Standing Judicial Commission.....	685
	Supplemental Report.....	875
APPENDIX U	Committee on Thanks	947
APPENDIX V	Ad Interim on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault.....	949

OVERTURES

APPENDIX W	Overtures to 49th General Assembly.....	1267
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COMMUNICATIONS – None

N/A

WORSHIP SERVICE

APPENDIX X	Tuesday Evening Worship.....	1385
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APPENDIX A

STATED CLERK'S REPORT TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

In the category of “the more things change, the more they stay the same” is this story from my wife’s hometown following devastating weather that crippled travel in the community. The year is 1881. The town is Alton, Illinois. The new technology is the telephone. This is the story:

The Presbyterian Church was put in connection with the telephone exchange... and some of our citizens had the privilege of listening to services without leaving their homes. It is stated that as far off as Twelfth Street, the distance being over thirteen blocks, every word of the service and every note of the music were distinctly audible...“Attending church by telephone” would be quite a pleasant innovation for some, especially in bad weather for it would only be necessary for the minister and choir to be present at the place of worship, the members of the congregation remaining at home with an ear attached to the vibrator. But there is one serious drawback to this method of procedure, and that is what would become of the collection? [source: *Alton Telegraph* newspaper, Nov. 10, 1881].

We now know that new technology was not the end of gathered worship, and the collection was not the only reason. Still, Presbyterian leaders of that generation were able to serve God’s people by considering what was needed in a time of crisis to preach, teach, and reach the body of Christ. The mission of God was not vanquished by the challenges of the world as what the business leaders among us call “the brutal facts” were faced by church leaders with creative courage and unblinking faith.

Here are some facts at which we should not blink (see *Christianity Today*, November, 2021):

The average age of PCA members is 55. By comparison, the average age of Muslims in the U.S. is 32. We are fourth oldest among major denominations (we are younger than the Methodists and Episcopalians), but we are the oldest among Evangelical denominations (roughly the same as the Southern Baptists and slightly older than the Assemblies of God).

As the Covid-pandemic lingers, we are facing our third, consecutive year of slight decline in membership. According to our statistics (see 5-Year

Statistical Summary, Attachment 2), we are a denomination of about 400 thousand persons. Last year we dropped by about 400 people, and this year we dropped by about 5 thousand people (half of whom were children). Professions of faith grew by about 1000 as we were coming out of Covid, but were still not back to pre-Covid levels. We are still doing far better than most denominations, but we are in uncharted territory for a denomination that has consistently grown since our inception.

On average, attendance at our local churches is 60 to 80 percent of pre-Covid attendance. Those who study us indicate that pre-Covid attendees fell into three groups: the *always faithful* who account for about 40-50 percent of any congregation and constitute the majority of our volunteers and leaders – these are back to stay; the *only attenders*, who were semi-regular in attendance but were mainly service consumers – these are the 30-40 percent of our congregations who are still deciding whether to return or to keep streaming services in their pajamas; the final group of 10-20 percent was composed of those with slight interest, some were true seekers but mostly there were people only attending out of some cultural or familial obligation – these *slightly interested* will likely never return to our churches since their obligation patterns have been broken.

The consequence of all these dynamics is that most churches are experiencing “the great attendance shuffle.” As people have felt permission to change habits in ways unobserved by pastors and peers, they have also changed churches. So, most of us have lost some of our *always faithful*, gained some new *only attenders* and streamers, and we are all seeking new means to reach the *slightly interested*.

This is not all bad. One researcher writes, “Perhaps the most positive consequence that will transpire in the post-Covid world will be the powerful resurgence of evangelism in local congregations....Church leaders faced with the reality that increases will not come from cultural Christians and biological growth will turn to evangelism out of necessity....Though it is premature to claim with certainty how extensive this evangelistic movement will be, we can predict with a high level of confidence that more people will be evangelized in North America than in any period since the 1970s” [H. Gonzales, NAE.org].

We will need that resurgence. While the PCA has been tremendously blessed not yet to have experienced the huge downturns in membership of sister, evangelical denominations, we still minister in a nation where average church attendance is half of what it was 20 years ago. Only 27% of the U.S. population will be in any church on any given Sunday (only 14% of 18-34 year-olds). Half of the congregations in the U.S. have fewer than 65 worshippers, two-thirds fewer than 100, and PCA figures are not far off from these [2020 Faith Communities Today report].

We are not unaffected by the cultural transitions around us. We have a number of small churches who have been severely damaged by Covid and related factors. Some have closed, for which we grieve. Each church closure signals a heart loss to those who invested in a prior generation for Christ's sake. Covid restrictions and fears have severely affected how we worship, socialize, welcome attenders, enfold members, express mercy, and welcome others into our homes for the sake of the gospel. Unquestionably these factors have affected our membership, but it may take years to be able to assess the full impact. Our professions of faith have begun to increase again as we have moved out of Covid restrictions.

So, with so much against the progress of the gospel, from where does our hope come? You know the answer to that: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and the earth" (Ps. 121:1). What has He provided this church so that we may participate in the great resurgence of the gospel that is needed?

- 1) Strong ministry corps. The average age of our active ministers is 51. This is far younger than most mainline denominations and many Evangelical ones. Most of us have seen the Barna figures, revealing that almost 40 percent of pastors have considered leaving the ministry during the polarities and discouragements of the Covid years, but more recent studies indicate few have acted on that consideration. We have experienced and able ministers ready for leadership for the challenging years ahead. Unlike most denominations, we are not presently facing a shortage of ministers or a shortage of younger ministers to replace retiring ministers. We should also note that, though the overall pool of ordinands has been in slight decline over the past 5 years, there was a significant increase this past year. This may be a Covid-related dynamic, or it may be a sign of seminaries and presbyteries providing innovative means to access ministry training. More and more young men and their families are struggling with the transitions needed to obtain traditional seminary degrees. So, discerning means of supporting men desiring quality training for ministry will become increasingly important if we are to maintain strong leadership for present and future churches.
- 2) Church planting efforts. These remain vigorous. Prior to Covid, we were planting churches at the rate of roughly one new mission per week. Downstream of the worst of Covid, we are planting at the rate of one new mission every two weeks due to the courage, tenacity, and faith of primarily younger ministers and their families. We give thanks to God for these young families committing themselves to Christ's purpose and people.

- 3) Generous resources. Remarkably, despite some early pandemic shudders, church giving has been strong overall. Total PCA disbursements were up \$25 million, approaching \$1 billion. Total contributions were down \$43 million last year due to some unusually large gifts in 2020 but are still trending up significantly for the 5-year period. Despite the downturn in church attendance due to Covid, giving in most of our local churches has stayed strong. Those always faithful have seen the necessity of their generosity in a tenuous time, and have continued faithful, particularly to local church efforts. Per capita giving has actually risen during the Covid years.

We are still learning to be Presbyterian in our corporate mission. Less than half of PCA churches report that they give to any PCA mission, cause, or agency, but those who are committed to the corporate work of the church are seeing tremendous fruit from their giving. One example is the \$4 million that has been specially given toward Ukraine relief efforts. Among the uses for these funds, the PCA has been supporting Ukrainian ministers who in the early days of the Russian invasion were smuggling people out of occupied cities, and who now are smuggling food into occupied cities at the risk of their own lives.

It is a blessing to lift our eyes to the God who is not tribal so that we may participate in His mission to the whole world. We can always do more together than we can separately. For those who choose not to give to any PCA cause because of disagreement with some aspect of our church, I urge you find something to support for the sake of Christ's mission and your own Presbyterian confession. In the PCA, we can give as we choose – this is our liberty and privilege *and* obligation when we call ourselves Presbyterian. For those who support no denominational cause because of local financial pressures, I thank you for your willingness to struggle on for Christ's sake and still commend to you the value of the widow's mite for the witness it can be and the good it can do – blessed beyond our measure when put in our Savior's hand.

- 4) Covenant children. For understandable reasons, Sunday School attendance dropped significantly during the Covid years, but infant baptisms are again near pre-Covid levels. We remain doctrinally committed to the Scriptural emphasis on the covenant home. This is not abstract theology. God works in families, and the primary means of gospel multiplication through the centuries is faith passed generation upon generation. The common statistic passed among us is that two-thirds of young people from Evangelical churches will stop

attending church after graduating high school. One-third will return when they have children of their own, but most will not. Again, only 14% of America's 18-34-year-olds will be in church this Sunday. The situation sounds dire, but for this reality: The Biblical counter to lost children is covenant families. Focus on the Family reports that 90 percent of young persons remain in the church after high school when prayer and faith are consistently expressed in the home. Even more striking, 93% of our Covenant College graduates remain active in their local church. Nothing should be of greater encouragement to a church committed to covenant theology and the Lordship of Christ over the whole of life. Amid the cultural headwinds we are facing, God is providing his church with the generational resources needed for a great resurgence of the gospel. When we talk of Jesus in our homes and when we travel on our way, in our down-sitting and our uprising – then the next generation believes and extends the gospel. God is faithful to his covenant.

- 5) A Mission Heart. Our founding fathers had an extraordinarily wise plan for multiplying the influence of our Biblical and Confessional commitments, believing that these were the foundation of faithful obedience, worship, and mission. Under presbytery oversight, churches would be the engine of a faith movement with sound doctrine, teaching, and gospel outreach, preparing God's people to honor and serve him. The churches would be aided in different aspects of their mission beyond what any one church could provide by mutually supported denominational committees and agencies. To carry forward the vision for church planting and international mission, Mission to North America (MNA) and Mission to the World (MTW) would provide dependable avenues for supporting those areas of ministry. Christian Education and Publications (CEP, now CDM) would provide Christian training and educational materials, along with Great Commission Publications (GCP, a joint venture with the OPC, 1974), tasked to develop curriculum for children and youth. The preaching and pastoring would be nurtured and guarded by sound theological seminary training, and Joining and Receiving with the RPCES (1982) brought Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS) under denominational oversight. Joining and Receiving also brought under denominational oversight Covenant College (CC), where children preparing to leave home and church for adult endeavors would be trained with a Christian world and life view.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Reaching both covenant and unbelieving young people on university campuses Christian and secular, Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) fostered sound teaching and a vision for the church and outreach in students across the nation and beyond. From all these ranks have come the faithful leaders of succeeding generations. Other denominational agencies were formed to address other aspects of the church family's physical and spiritual health. The camp and retreat ministries of Ridge Haven (RH) would provide times of inspiration and refreshment from pressures that were nudging faith from hearts. Supporting a church culture of giving, a Foundation (PCAF) was formed to aid in leveraging and managing personal and corporate benevolences and estates for the benefit of all. To support faithful ministers beyond ministry years and through health issues, the work of PCA Retirement & Benefits (PCA-RBI) was established. And, so that we could coordinate, examine, and come together to work for the good of the whole church, the Administrative Committee (AC) was designed. It was a cohesive plan with a design that would secure and reproduce generations of faithful witnesses for Christ's mission. Now as we are a half-century from the origins of that plan, we recognize that some have lost sight of the overall plan. Because there may be a blemish (real or imagined) on one aspect of the plan, some want to abandon the plan. But we can do so much when we are working together: the largest Presbyterian mission force in the history of the world – it's ours (almost 600 career missionaries); 170 Reformed campus ministries across this country; new church plants being established even during a pandemic; solid, accredited, and godly educational institutions. All are ours, and all are His. We have great resources to ground a great resurgence of the gospel.

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN BIRMINGHAM, JUNE 20-24, 2022

Registration for General Assembly in Birmingham, June 20-24, opened later than usual because of pandemic-related repercussions. Despite advance planning and contracted services, Covid-19 challenges for hotel staffing and greater financial opportunities (USFL playoffs and World Games events) convinced financially strapped civic authorities to break their contract with us and to wait many months to give us information or explanation regarding their decision.

These challenges necessitate that we bring special attention and honor to the Evangel Presbytery host committee that has labored tirelessly to provide for this Assembly! Please remember that we were supposed to meet in Birmingham in 2020 before that Assembly was postponed due to the Coronavirus. So, this is the second time Evangel Presbytery has prepared for us, and they have done so with unprecedented challenges this time. It's been

double-duty and difficult duty. Yet, Evangel Presbytery's positive and supportive attitude through it all should be an example and inspiration for everyone working on future Assemblies.

OVERTURES TO THE 49TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Seven overtures have been referred to the 49th General Assembly Overtures Committee (OC) by the 48th Assembly.

- Five of these (2021-19, 2021-20, 2021-21, 2021-34, and 2021-35) recommend changes to various provisions in the *BCO* Rules of Discipline. Because last year's Assembly was dealing with two years of business, it was thought best to let these technical, not-time-sensitive matters carry over to this GA.
- Two overtures (2021-40 and 2021-41), dealing with victim protection and witness eligibility, were held over so that they might be considered with possible advice from the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse which will report this year.

As of May 23, forty-two (42) new overtures have been submitted to the 49th General Assembly. (Two of these have since been vacated due to procedural errors.)

New Overture Summaries:

At least five overtures that will come to this General Assembly (GA) seek to re-address matters in last year's *BCO* Amendments relating to ordination standards that failed to receive adequate approval in our presbyteries last year (#12, #15, #23, #29, #31).

Two overtures ask for the General Assembly to make statements about societal issues: Abortion (#13) and Political Violence (#26). An overture that seeks the PCA's withdrawal from the National Association of Evangelicals is again before us (#3).

Overture #18 reflects a growing disquiet and grief over uncharitable internet characterizations that have PCA involvement.

One overture makes new recommendations about certifying chaplains (#28). One overture seeks total restructuring of the Standing Judicial Commission of the PCA (#14).

Three overtures (#33, #34, and #35) encourage church courts to use appropriate aspects of the Human Sexuality Report for study, assessment, examination, and conciliation.

Two overtures (#36 and #37) request that the General Assembly assume original jurisdiction for alleged doctrinal error in the teaching of TE Greg Johnson.

Three overtures (# 38, #39, and #40) request that the General Assembly assume original jurisdiction in Central Indiana Presbytery matters regarding TE Dan Herron.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Two overtures (#41 and #42) request the Assembly’s response to certain cultural and political issues.

The remaining overtures deal largely with procedural clarifications or concerns in our *Book of Church Order* at the General Assembly, Presbytery, or local church level.

A complete listing and the text of the overtures submitted begins on p. 1267. The overtures may also be found on the General Assembly website <https://pcaga.org/resources/#overtures>. The deadline for submitting overtures to this year’s Assembly (if they did not require CCB review) was May 23.

PRESBYTERY VOTES ON BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER AMENDMENTS

Six of the eight *BCO* amendment items initially passed by the 48th General Assembly and sent down to the presbyteries for voting have now been approved by the required two-thirds (59) of presbyteries (*BCO* 26-2) and are being presented to the 49th Assembly for final approval.

The two proposed amendments that generated the most discussion, Items 2 (*BCO* 16) and 4 (*BCO* 21-4 and 24-1), did not receive the requisite approval of two-thirds of the presbyteries. Although these amendments have failed to pass the presbyteries, the votes within individual presbyteries were divided and often very close, indicating considerable differences in views that may precipitate further actions (new overtures, nominations, etc.) and discussion prior to and at the General Assembly.

**Presbytery Votes on Amendments Sent Down by 48th General Assembly
(as of June 1, 2022)**

	Amend:	For	Against
Item 1	<i>BCO</i> 12-6 and 13-4	83	2
Item 2	<i>BCO</i> 16	53	32
Item 3	<i>BCO</i> 20-4, 24-3, and 24-4	78	7
Item 4	<i>BCO</i> 21-4; 24-1	45	40
Item 5	<i>BCO</i> 22-2	84	1
Item 6	<i>BCO</i> 24-1	84	0
Item 7	<i>BCO</i> 32-20	72	13
Item 8	<i>BCO</i> 38-1	83	2

For a complete tally of the presbytery votes as of June 1, please see Attachment 1.

Votes for *BCO* amendments may continue to be submitted up until the convening of the 49th GA. Presbyteries should be aware that not voting on a proposed amendment to the *BCO* is tantamount to a negative vote (*BCO* 26-2)

because the advice and consent of two-thirds of Presbyteries are required. That differs from *Robert's Rules of Order*, in which abstentions (refraining to vote) are not counted in determining a majority. The *BCO* is of higher parliamentary authority than *Robert's Rules of Order*.

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

The Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC), which met on April 12, 2022, continues to correspond with churches and organizations with whom we have fraternal or ecclesiastical relations. We have again invited fraternal delegates to send video greetings to our General Assembly in Birmingham, which we will air at various times in our docket. This plan worked well at last year's Assembly, and in some ways may have facilitated broader attention to the greetings than we have had in the past.

Why do we have an Interchurch Relations Committee to seek cooperative ministry and understanding with like-minded and Bible-believing organizations? Our founding fathers were clear in their expressions of our being a blessed branch, but not the only branch, of Christ's true church. Supporting the mission and faith of those serving Christ with us leverages our resources, furthers our Savior's mission, and links us with those of like faith for matters of legal and legislative protection.

Despite that wisdom, we have wrestled from the beginning of our history with what level of affiliation to have with organizations that are not exactly like us. When does an affiliation move from mission *cooperation* to mission *compromise*? The IRC is elected to gather accurate information to help us make such determinations because we know that our own polarities sometimes lead to inaccurate perceptions that can drive unfortunate decisions in the quick assessments of a General Assembly.

The founders' wisdom of establishing the Interchurch Relations Committee to make deliberative recommendations regarding important associations has become increasingly plain in a time of increasing cultural, legislative, and judicial challenge. Our churches are now regularly being set up for employment or discrimination suits by LGBTQ+ advocates. If the "the Equality Act" passes, if our churches are legally defined as "places of public accommodation" by state legislatures or by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services directives, if our commitment to the uniqueness of salvation in Christ Jesus alone brands us as dispensers of "hate speech" rather than compassionate disciples of the good news that saves souls from an eternity in hell, then this relatively small denomination has much to gain by the work and wisdom of the IRC that helps us coordinate Christ's mission with fellow believers across our nation.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Even as we confess our relatively small size and the importance of our biblical associations, it is also important to thank the Lord for the PCA's disproportionate influence in organizations with whom we have various levels of affiliation. Currently, the executive leaders of the World Reformed Fellowship, the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), the Gospel Coalition, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization all are or recently have been PCA teaching elders, the latter three being of Korean heritage – for which we are very grateful. As PCA Stated Clerk, Bryan Chapell holds a seat on the Board of the NAE, and Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus, served as Chairman of the NAE Executive Committee and Board from 2006 to 2020.

Our founding fathers prayed at the first PCA General Assembly that we would avoid a narrowing fundamentalism that would prevent our applying Scripture to the whole of life. So, they arranged for us to be able to rejoice in Christ's work among others and to co-labor with them in various levels of association that allow us to taste and advance the "oneness" of which Jesus spoke in John 17. Our forefathers prayed that the Lord would use this church to bring a Biblical and Reformed witness to the wider church and the larger culture. Today we can rejoice in our God's profound blessings upon those prayers.

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS

I have referred to the CCB all proposed amendments to the *BCO* and *RAO* (*RAO* 11-5). I sought the advice of the CCB regarding an overture from Tennessee Valley Presbytery that included information that the CCB concluded was not prohibited but also not advisable. I informed the presbytery accordingly (*RAO* 8-2.b.1), and the overture was re-submitted in conformity with the CCB's advice.

THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Since the 48th General Assembly, two first- and second-level Committee and Agency persons have been referred to the TEC to be examined as required by *BCO* 14-1.14. **TE Irwyn Ince** was examined for the position of **Coordinator, Mission to North America**, and **Dr. Collin Messer** was examined for the position of **Vice President of Academic Affairs, Covenant College**. All areas of the exam were sustained and unanimously approved by the committee for both of these men.

For a report of these examinations, see Theological Examining Committee Report to 49th GA, p. 1101 of this Handbook.

STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION (SJC)

The Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) handled approximately 20 cases this past year (see SJC Report to GA, p. 2001 of this *Handbook*). Highly watched cases related to matters that stimulated the failed *BCO* amendments relating to ordination requirements. At its October 2021 meeting, the SJC ruled that Missouri Presbytery did not violate the investigation requirements of the *Book of Church Order* and did not err when it declined to process allegations against TE Greg Johnson.

These judgments were in regard to a complaint arising out of Missouri Presbytery, which alleged that TE Johnson 1) “denies that same-sex-attraction is sinful,” 2) “compromises and dishonors his identity in Christ by self-identifying as a same-sex-attracted man,” 3) “denies God’s purpose and power to sanctify SSA [same-sex-attracted] believers,” and 4) “cannot meet the biblical ‘above reproach’ qualification for the eldership.”

The SJC ruled that: “Based on the Record, there was no reversible error in the decisions reached by Missouri Presbytery regarding the four allegations. It was not unreasonable for Presbytery to judge that TE Johnson’s ‘explanations’ on the four allegations were ‘satisfactory’ (*BCO 31-2*).” According to the SJC judgment, the Record of the Case included “over 600 pages covering multiple years of [TE Johnson’s] writing, speaking, and judicial processes” as well as “representations [that] have been extrapolated by critics....”

At its March 3, 2022 meeting the Standing Judicial Commission of the PCA also concluded its handling of matters related to Missouri Presbytery’s investigation and adjudication of issues related to the 2018 Revoice Conference conducted at Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri. The SJC sustained Missouri Presbytery’s actions on two matters in the complaint, but ruled that the presbytery erred regarding at least three specific judgments related to a third matter in the complaint.

The basis for the SJC’s ruling was that the presbytery used incorrect criteria for review in adjudicating the allegations against Memorial Church and, consequently, failed to act properly to protect the peace and purity of the larger church when it adjudicated errors identified by its own investigating committees.

The SJC instructed Missouri Presbytery (MOP) to “hold a new hearing.” This hearing is to focus on “What steps must MOP take to make clear to the broader Church the errors that were identified in Presbytery’s various investigations with regard to some of the teachings at Revoice 18.” In undertaking this review, the SJC encouraged MOP to consider how specific statements of some speakers at Revoice 18 may have differed from the

propositions of the Report of the General Assembly's Ad Interim Committee on Sexuality.

The SJC also determined that these rulings conclude all matters related to overtures from three presbyteries that had requested that the General Assembly assume original jurisdiction in adjudicating these matters (see p. 2110 of SJC Report to GA).

Because of the intense interest in these cases and their relevance to current discussions and decisions within the PCA, the Stated Clerk's office, with the approval of the SJC, published the full text of the SJC judgments in byfaithonline.com.

The Standing Judicial Commission is one of the treasures of the PCA, with men of differing perspectives typically rising above partisan debates and internet suppositions to issue decisions according to how sworn testimony aligns with our Standards. The whole church is blessed by full and accurate reporting of SJC actions.

COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The Cooperative Ministries Committee (CMC) is designed to unite the leaders of our various agencies and institutions with the elected leaders of the General Assembly in coordinated ministry to advance the mission of the PCA as a whole. The simple goal is to have all the horses in the harness pulling in the same direction. That goal is achieved by relational camaraderie as well as by ministry strategizing, denominational assessment, and shared insights regarding best practices and resources for advancing Christ's mission in our challenging times.

The Cooperative Ministries Committee met on January 19, 2022. Committee and Agency leaders shared challenges, goals, and prayers. They are also seeking to have more coordinated communication with the denomination through *byFaith*, and have asked one of their members, Dr. Murray Lee, Pastor of Cahaba Park PCA and MNA Chairman, who has a Ph.D. in organizational management, to help them consider together how better to coordinate energies and efforts for the good of all (cf. *RAO* 7-3.c).

As Stated Clerk of the PCA, I serve as secretary of the CMC (*RAO* 7-4 c.).

TRANSLATIONS OF THE *BCO* AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

We continue to make progress with foreign language translations of our *Book of Church Order* and other important documents to help our church minister to all peoples and generations. A Spanish translation of the *BCO* is now being reviewed. We realize that we cannot reach across language barriers by waiting for significant growth of ethnic communities and various national in our churches *before* providing services to the rapidly growing populations of our

nation. Instead, we reach people groups by serving them before they are established in our church communities.

As an example, we recently received correspondence from a church leader in Switzerland who, with other evangelical leaders, is engaging the current issues of sexuality. They have “discovered” the PCA Report on Human Sexuality. “It is enormously helpful,” he wrote. “May we be allowed to translate it into German? This would be of great help for the church in German-speaking Europe.” In case you are wondering, we said “Yes”!. We have also received other similar requests, and we are already processing the Human Sexuality Report in the Korean language.

RESIGNATIONS AND RESULTING NOMINATIONS NEEDED

- **TE Bryan Chapell** resigned from the Standing Judicial Commission class of 2023. As there are no alternates for the SJC, the Nominating Committee will need to nominate a replacement.
- **RE Cliff Eckles** resigned from the Board of Directors of PCA Retirement and Benefits class of 2022. RBI appointed DE Chris Rogers to fill the unexpired term. This term expires at the end of General Assembly so no action is needed.
- **RE Jon Ford** resigned from the Administrative Committee class of 2023. Alternate RE David Nok Daniel filled the unexpired term.
- **RE David Hall** resigned from the Committee on Reformed University Fellowship class of 2026. Alternate RE Rob Grabenkort will fill the unexpired term.
- **TE Irwyn Ince** resigned from the Board of Trustees of Covenant College class of 2025. As there are no alternates for the CC Board, the Nominating Committee will need to nominate a replacement.
- **TE Ralph Kelley** resigned from the Board of Trustees of Covenant College class of 2023. As there are no alternates for the CC Board, the Nominating Committee will need to nominate a replacement.
- **RE Walter Leveille** resigned from the Theological Examining Committee class of Alternate. This term expires at the end of General Assembly so no action is needed.
- **RE David Lucas** resigned from the Board of Trustees of Covenant College class of 2023. As there are no alternates for the CC Board, the Nominating Committee will need to nominate a replacement.
- **RE Carl Margenau** resigned from the Board of Directors of PCA Retirement and Benefits class of 2022. RBI appointed RE Ken Downer to fill the unexpired term. This term expires at the end of General Assembly so no action is needed.

- **RE Ed McDougall** resigned from the Committee on Mission to North America class of 2023. There was no alternate RE, so the Nominating Committee will need to nominate a replacement.
- **RE David Smith** resigned from the Committee on Mission to North America class of 2025. Alternate RE Ernie Shipman will fill the unexpired term.
- **TE Eric Zellner** resigned from the Board of Directors of PCA Retirement and Benefits class of 2022. RBI appointed TE Will Chang to fill the unexpired term. This term expires at the end of General Assembly so no action is needed.

LEGAL MATTERS

Last year I wrote, “I am pleased to report that the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) is not party of any lawsuits.” This year I need to write something different.

I remain thankful that the PCA, as a denomination, is not presently a party to any legal suits, although we are or have been on the precipice of several. Most of these involve the alleged moral failures of pastors with staff or parishioners, or some perceived violation of sexual discrimination standards in church employment or chaplaincy practices. Still, these cases constitute only a small fraction of our vulnerabilities.

We have, thus far, defended ourselves against legal attempts of various parties to sue the PCA and every church in our denomination (and every other denomination) that has ever been associated with Boy Scouts of America and Boy Scout activities. Efforts to this point have been focused on the churches in one region of New Jersey, in which every church of every denomination that hosted or sponsored Boy Scouts has been sued. If this suit is successful, we anticipate such suits will spread nationwide. Eighty thousand former Boy Scouts are now claiming they were abused in scouting activities. The Mormons, Methodists, and Southern Baptists have already committed hundreds of millions to compensating victims.

For narrow legal grounds the bankruptcy judge has excluded from us the present case, but our greater protection lies in one central principle: “We are *not* a hierarchical denomination.” Thus far, those who have tried to find “deeper pockets” than local churches in our denominational structures have been thwarted by the wisdom of our founders who made sure that no higher judicatory has any power other than that granted to it by lower courts. The ultimate authority in *our* Presbyterian system resides in the body of Christ as a whole and higher courts have no authority over property, finance, doctrine,

or judgment, except that which is granted to them from the body. We have a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals precedent at the federal level, now more than a decade old, affirming our legal structure and protections. Still, we need to create long-term institutional memory that our form of government is not hierarchical.

Our “grass roots” features are not simply a slogan to cite during ecclesiastical debates. As the lawyers and judges among us frequently remind PCA leaders, if we establish these principles in our standards but operate differently in our practices, we could lose the legal status of being a “grass roots” denomination and our liabilities will grow exponentially. Wise forefathers established a form of government that has protected us well from devastating legal and financial vulnerabilities. The protections remain only as we all become responsible to understand and act in accord with that polity.

Because these legal actions relating to sexual abuse or sexual discrimination are so prevalent and powerful, we have been significantly aided by our associations with the legal and legislative resources of ecclesiastical organizations with whom we have fraternal relations, specifically the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the National Association of Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). Why both? I did not realize until I became Stated Clerk that, even though we are a relatively small denomination, we are more than 10 times larger than the next largest Presbyterian and Reformed denomination in NAPARC. In fact, the PCA is larger than all other 13 NAPARC denominations combined – some of which have only have only a dozen churches or fewer. We have been significantly aided by the resources and expertise of the NAE.

50th ANNIVERSARY PLANS

The 50th Anniversary Committee for the PCA has begun meeting and strategizing for our 50th General Assembly in Memphis, TN. The local GA host committee has joined with leaders from various constituencies across the PCA to coordinate plans. We also give thanks for the willing and experienced leadership of our Anniversary Committee Chairman RE Jim Wert and Memphis Host Committee Chairman TE Robert Browning. Both have been extremely helpful in clarifying vision and assigning working committees with specific duties.

Plans are underway for commemorating the PCA’s history, ministry, and prayers for the future that our PCA people can treasure. For this purpose we will be using byfaithonline.com and the *byFaith* print magazine to remind us

of pivotal milestones in the PCA's history, to remember and reflect on the issues and debates that clarified our thinking, and to celebrate the PCA people who, through their books, ministries, and messages, not only shaped our denomination, but the wider church as well.

So that we can get these to you and your people, we will need email and postal mail addresses where issues may be sent. We will provide multiple opportunities at this 49th General Assembly for you to provide the addresses we need for delivering these commemorative publications that will celebrate the Lord's blessings on the PCA. We pray that this will be an informing and uniting effort that will help us move forward with joy as one body into the Lord's ministry and mission.

TREASURING CHRIST'S MISSION

As a foretaste of that unity, I want to thank my friend and faithful brother, TE David Coffin, for passing along this word of encouragement to me:

From a report adopted by the General Assembly of the PCUSA in 1830 [prior to the divisions that became so destructive to Biblical fidelity].

“In closing this statement the Assembly would affectionately and earnestly exhort the members of their communion that in the fulfillment of their civil and religious duties, they watch against all unhallowed feelings, and that they suffer reproach meekly, not rendering railing for railing, nor evil for evil, but by patient continuance in well doing, they commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”
PCUSA GA Minutes (1830), p. 300.

The tensions that are between brothers and fathers in our church in the present moment are not original to us. The instructions of Scripture regarding how we are to deal with one another through such tensions are not irrelevant to us. As I wrote to brothers this past fall, “If we are able to by God's grace to deal Biblically with one another at a time that our culture's polarities have made our own relationships so difficult, then we will be well prepared for our role in the unified mission that the Lord calls us to pursue in the time of revival that is must come.” In the Lord's timing He will use a church patterned after His heart for Christ's glory. I know that seeing that glory in our church is sometimes like trying to “watch a sunrise in fractured mirror,” but the Son will rise and our fractures will not diminish His glory. For this certainty we give our God praise and pledge to Him the loyalty of faithful service and loving hearts.

Attachment 1

**2021-2022
BCO AMENDMENTS SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES
BY THE 48th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FOR VOTING, and for ADVICE AND CONSENT**

ITEM 1: Amend BCO 12-6 and 13-4 to allow Presbyteries and Sessions to establish rules for holding virtual meetings. (New wording underlined.)

[Note: The 48th GA answered in the affirmative as amended **Overture 26** from Philadelphia Metro West Presbytery. The Overtures Committee had amended the overture by striking the originally proposed addition to *BCO* 10-7 and by adding the following language to *BCO* 12-6 and 13-4:

12-6. The Session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. Moreover, the pastor has power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite; and he shall always convene it when requested to do so by any two of the ruling elders. When there is no pastor, it may be convened by two ruling elders. The Session shall also convene when directed so to do by the Presbytery. The Session, in its discretion, may for itself and its subordinate committees, commissions, adopt rules determining when videoconference or telecommunication arrangements may be used for meetings and regulating how meetings using telecommunications arrangements shall be conducted.

13-4. Any three ministers belonging to the Presbytery, together with at least three ruling elders, being met at the time and place appointed (which may include a teleconference or videoconference place), shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business. The Presbytery, in its discretion, may for itself and its subordinate committees, commissions, adopt rules determining when videoconference or telecommunication arrangements may be used for meetings and regulating how meetings using telecommunications arrangements shall be conducted.

Grounds: The original Overture proposed a complex series of regulations for the holding of a completely “virtual” General Assembly, as well as virtual Presbytery meetings. The Administrative Committee has not yet

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

been able to study and report to the Assembly its opinion as to what would be required or most helpful in order to hold a virtual General Assembly. The amended version allows Presbyteries and Sessions the liberty to establish rules for holding virtual meetings. It will allow that needed flexibility while giving the Administrative Committee an opportunity to study the issue of a virtual General Assembly.

For: 83 Against: 2

APPENDIX A

Item 1: BCO 12-6 and 13-4

Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote	Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1 Arizona	36	0	1	+	45 Mississippi Valley	78	0	1	+
2 Ascension	32	1	0	+	46 Missouri	57	2	1	+
3 Blue Ridge	63	0	0	+	47 Nashville	58	3	4	+
4 Calvary	96	0	0	+	48 New Jersey	16	0	0	+
5 Canada West	24	0	0	+	49 New River	14	0	0	+
6 Catawba Valley	35	0	0	+	50 New York State	26	0	0	+
7 Central Carolina	60	0	0	+	51 North Florida	40	0	0	+
8 Central Florida	93	0	0	+	52 North Texas	42	53	2	-
9 Central Georgia	46	0	1	+	53 Northern California	51	0	0	+
10 Central Indiana	29	0	0	+	54 Northern Illinois	29	0	0	+
11 Chesapeake	63	0	0	+	55 Northern New England	7	11	3	-
12 Chicago Metro	38	3	1	+	56 Northwest Georgia	35	0	0	+
13 Columbus Metro	13	0	0	+	57 Ohio	19	0	0	+
14 Covenant	85	0	0	+	58 Ohio Valley	40	4	1	+
15 Eastern Canada	26	1	0	+	59 Pacific	22	0	1	+
16 Eastern Carolina	50	0	0	+	60 Pacific Northwest	20	0	0	+
17 Eastern Pennsylvania	31	0	0	+	61 Palmetto	60	0	0	+
18 Evangel	119	1	1	+	62 PeeDee	40	0	0	+
19 Fellowship	37	0	0	+	63 Philadelphia	16	0	0	+
20 Georgia Foothills	56	0	1	+	64 Philadelphia Metro West	26	0	0	+
21 Grace	37	1	9	+	65 Piedmont Triad	33	3	0	+
22 Great Lakes	28	4	3	+	66 Pittsburgh	53	0	2	+
23 Gulf Coast	34	1	0	+	67 Plate Valley	20	1	2	+
24 Gulfstream					68 Potomac	64	0	3	+
25 Heartland	29	0	0	+	69 Providence	57	0	0	+
26 Heritage	40	1	0	+	70 Rio Grande	27	0	0	+
27 Highlands	41	0	0	+	71 Rocky Mountain	54	0	1	+
28 Hills and Plains	40	7	2	+	72 Savannah River	30	13	2	+
29 Houston Metro	53	0	0	+	73 Siouxlans	30	0	0	+
30 Illiana	20	2	2	+	74 South Coast	54	0	0	+
31 Iowa	22	0	1	+	75 South Florida	50	3	5	+
32 James River	55	0	6	+	76 South Texas	53	17	1	+
33 Korean Capital					77 Southeast Alabama	35	0	1	+
34 Korean Central	33	0	0	+	78 Southern Louisiana	20	0	0	+
35 Korean Eastern	15	0	3	+	79 Southern New England	53	0	0	+
36 Korean Northeastern	15	0	0	+	80 Southwest Florida	56	0	0	+
37 Korean Northwest	21	1	2	+	81 Suncoast Florida	40	0	0	+
38 Korean Southeastern	30	0	0	+	82 Susquehanna Valley	69	1	0	+
39 Korean Southern					83 Tennessee Valley	92	4	3	+
40 Korean Southwest	31	0	0	+	84 Tidewater	40	0	0	+
41 Korean Southwest O.C.	31	0	0	+	85 Warrior	30	0	1	+
42 Lowcountry	30	1	0	+	86 West Hudson	27	0	0	+
43 Metro Atlanta	101	4	3	+	87 Westminster	30	0	0	+
44 Metropolitan New York	32	0	0	+	88 Wisconsin	39	4	0	+

Item 1: BCO 12-6 and 13-4

Official Totals: For: 83 Against: 2

Number of Presbyteries: 88

Number Reporting: 85

2/3 Approval is: 59

ITEM 2: Amend BCO 16 by adding a clause (16-4) that prohibits ordination of men who self-identify as “gay Christians,” “same sex attracted Christians,” “homosexual Christians,” “or like terms.” (New wording underlined.)

[Note: The 48th GA answered in the affirmative as amended Overture 23 from Gulf Coast Presbytery. The Overtures Committee had amended the overture by striking the originally proposed addition to *BCO 17* and by adding a new clause (16-4) to *BCO 16*:

16-4. Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. Those who profess an identity (such as, but not limited to, “gay Christian,” “same sex attracted Christian,” “homosexual Christian,” or like terms) that undermines or contradicts their identity as new creations in Christ, either by denying the sinfulness of fallen desires (such as, but not limited to, same sex attraction), or by denying the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, or by failing to pursue Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions are not qualified for ordained office.

<p>For: 53 Against: 32</p>

APPENDIX A

Item 2: BCO 16

Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote	Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1 Arizona	19	18	0	+	45 Mississippi Valley	86	1	0	+
2 Ascension	30	3	0	+	46 Missouri	39	65	0	-
3 Blue Ridge	38	27	1	+	47 Nashville	16	46	3	-
4 Calvary	60	38	2	+	48 New Jersey	10	14	0	-
5 Canada West	15	9	3	+	49 New River	11	1	2	+
6 Catawba Valley	25	7	3	+	50 New York State	7	20	1	-
7 Central Carolina	47	9	1	+	51 North Florida	21	19	0	+
8 Central Florida	50	41	2	+	52 North Texas	49	48	0	+
9 Central Georgia	34	14	0	+	53 Northern California	11	38	0	-
10 Central Indiana	10	18	0	-	54 Northern Illinois	17	11	0	+
11 Chesapeake	54	31	0	+	55 Northern New England	7	14	0	-
12 Chicago Metro	17	23	4	-	56 Northwest Georgia	33	2	1	+
13 Columbus Metro	3	11	0	-	57 Ohio	15	4	0	+
14 Covenant	55	35	2	+	58 Ohio Valley	15	37	0	-
15 Eastern Canada	6	18	3	-	59 Pacific	11	22	1	-
16 Eastern Carolina	28	42	0	-	60 Pacific Northwest	27	51	2	-
17 Eastern Pennsylvania	30	3	0	+	61 Palmetto	28	37	1	-
18 Evangel	79	51	1	+	62 PeeDee	40	0	0	+
19 Fellowship	35	2	0	+	63 Philadelphia	12	11	0	+
20 Georgia Foothills	33	24	0	+	64 Philadelphia Metro West	31	3	3	+
21 Grace	32	6	0	+	65 Piedmont Triad	18	20	0	-
22 Great Lakes	38	2	9	+	66 Pittsburgh	29	23	2	+
23 Gulf Coast	38	2	1	+	67 Platte Valley	10	15	0	-
24 Gulfstream					68 Potomac	37	63	2	-
25 Heartland	24	5	0	+	69 Providence	44	7	5	+
26 Heritage	17	20	1	-	70 Rio Grande	7	20	0	-
27 Highlands	23	17	4	+	71 Rocky Mountain	43	35	0	+
28 Hills and Plains	32	35	1	-	72 Savannah River	39	4	2	+
29 Houston Metro	36	17	0	+	73 Sioulands	22	9	1	+
30 Illiana	24	0	0	+	74 South Coast	28	26	0	+
31 Iowa	12	11	0	+	75 South Florida	30	28	0	+
32 James River	25	32	4	-	76 South Texas	25	47	2	-
33 Korean Capital					77 Southeast Alabama	41	0	1	+
34 Korean Central	22	7	2	+	78 Southern Louisiana	8	11	1	-
35 Korean Eastern	22	2	0	+	79 Southern New England	25	36	1	-
36 Korean Northeastern	6	7	1	-	80 Southwest Florida	39	22	2	+
37 Korean Northwest	20	3	1	+	81 Suncoast Florida	17	24	0	-
38 Korean Southeastern	30	2	1	+	82 Susquehanna Valley	56	16	3	+
39 Korean Southern					83 Tennessee Valley	47	52	0	-
40 Korean Southwest	20	13	0	+	84 Tidewater	6	27	3	-
41 Korean Southwest O.C.	26	4	1	+	85 Warrior	16	14	1	+
42 Lowcountry	19	13	0	+	86 West Hudson	16	10	1	+
43 Metro Atlanta	38	69	1	-	87 Westminster	26	4	0	+
44 Metropolitan New York	6	29	2	-	88 Wisconsin	16	27	1	-

Item 2: BCO 16

Official Totals: For: 53 Against: 32

Number of Presbyteries: 88

Number Reporting: 85

2/3 Approval is: 59

ITEM 3: Amend BCO 20-4, 24-3, and 24-4 regarding election of pastor, associate pastor, and officers. (New wording underlined.)

[Note: The 48th GA answered in the affirmative as amended Overture 5 from Calvary Presbytery. The Overtures Committee had amended the original proposals by adding the parenthetical phrase “(excluding blanks and abstentions)” to each section.]

Amend BCO 20-4 as follows:

20-4. Method of voting: The voters being convened, and prayer for divine guidance having been offered, the moderator shall put the question:

Are you ready to proceed to the election of a pastor?

If they declare themselves ready, the moderator shall call for nominations, or the election may proceed by ballot without nominations. In every case a majority of all the ~~voters present~~ votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) shall be required to elect.

Amend BCO 24-3 as follows:

24-3. All communing members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the churches to which they respectively belong. A majority of ~~those present~~ votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) is required for election.

Amend BCO 24-4 as follows:

24-4. The voters being convened, the moderator shall explain the purpose of the meeting and then put the question:

Are you now ready to proceed to the election of additional ruling elders (or deacons) from the slate presented?

If they declare themselves ready, the election may proceed by private ballot without nomination. In every case a majority of all the ~~voters present~~ votes cast (excluding blanks and abstentions) shall be required to elect.

<p>For: 78 Against: 7</p>

APPENDIX A

ITEM 3: BCO 20-4, 24-3, and 24-4

Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote	Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1 Arizona	36	0	1	+	45 Mississippi Valley	81	2	0	+
2 Ascension	24	8	1	+	46 Missouri	41	20	3	+
3 Blue Ridge	64	1	4	+	47 Nashville	58	3	4	+
4 Calvary	96	0	0	+	48 New Jersey	16	0	0	+
5 Canada West	24	0	1	+	49 New River	11	1	2	+
6 Catawba Valley	35	0	0	+	50 New York State	0	25	1	-
7 Central Carolina	59	0	0	+	51 North Florida	40	0	0	+
8 Central Florida	93	0	0	+	52 North Texas	78	16	3	+
9 Central Georgia	48	0	0	+	53 Northern California	43	3	2	+
10 Central Indiana	30	0	0	+	54 Northern Illinois	29	0	0	+
11 Chesapeake	61	0	0	+	55 Northern New England	14	2	4	+
12 Chicago Metro	41	2	0	+	56 Northwest Georgia	25	0	2	+
13 Columbus Metro	8	2	4	+	57 Ohio	0	18	0	-
14 Covenant	86	0	1	+	58 Ohio Valley	44	0	2	+
15 Eastern Canada	10	15	1	-	59 Pacific	21	0	1	+
16 Eastern Carolina	54	0	0	+	60 Pacific Northwest	71	0	1	+
17 Eastern Pennsylvania	28	0	1	+	61 Palmetto	59	1	0	+
18 Evangel	121	3	0	+	62 PeeDee	40	0	0	+
19 Fellowship	38	0	0	+	63 Philadelphia	22	0	0	+
20 Georgia Foothills	50	4	3	+	64 Philadelphia Metro West	0	31	6	-
21 Grace	34	2	1	+	65 Piedmont Triad	31	0	0	+
22 Great Lakes	36	2	0	+	66 Pittsburgh	24	19	9	+
23 Gulf Coast	38	0	1	+	67 Platte Valley	9	15	1	-
24 Gulfstream					68 Potomac	47	1	0	+
25 Heartland	29	0	0	+	69 Providence	52	4	1	+
26 Heritage	30	2	1	+	70 Rio Grande	27	0	0	+
27 Highlands	36	3	0	+	71 Rocky Mountain	58	0	0	+
28 Hills and Plains	50	0	2	+	72 Savannah River	46	0	0	+
29 Houston Metro	50	0	0	+	73 Siouxlans	31	0	1	+
30 Illiana	13	8	3	+	74 South Coast	54	0	0	+
31 Iowa	21	1	1	+	75 South Florida	17	22	19	-
32 James River	53	3	5	+	76 South Texas	55	13	2	+
33 Korean Capital					77 Southeast Alabama	41	0	1	+
34 Korean Central	31	0	0	+	78 Southern Louisiana	14	4	1	+
35 Korean Eastern	0	12	6	-	79 Southern New England	57	0	0	+
36 Korean Northeastern	14	0	0	+	80 Southwest Florida	57	1	0	+
37 Korean Northwest	20	2	2	+	81 Suncoast Florida	37	0	0	+
38 Korean Southeastern	28	2	4	+	82 Susquehanna Valley	68	1	0	+
39 Korean Southern					83 Tennessee Valley	54	41	4	+
40 Korean Southwest	27	1	0	+	84 Tidewater	40	0	1	+
41 Korean Southwest O.C.	26	4	1	+	85 Warrior	30	0	1	+
42 Lowcountry	19	10	2	+	86 West Hudson	27	0	0	+
43 Metro Atlanta	85	3	20	+	87 Westminster	29	0	0	+
44 Metropolitan New York	27	1	0	+	88 Wisconsin	39	0	5	+

Item 3: BCO 20-4, 24-3, and 24-4
Official Totals: For: 78 Against: 7
Number of Presbyteries: 88
Number Reporting: 85
2/3 Approval is: 59

ITEM 4: Amend BCO 21-4; 24-1 (Overture 37) clarifying moral requirements for church office (Note: Overtures 16 and 30 were answered with reference to Overture 37.)

[Note: The 48th GA answered in the affirmative as amended Overture 37 from Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery. The Overtures Committee had amended the original proposals by removing from both added paragraphs the parenthetical phrase “(e.g., homosexual desires, etc.)” after the words “...he must not be known by reputation or self-profession according to his remaining sinfulness.”

Amend BCO 21-4 to add a new sub-paragraph 21-4.e, as follows, with the subsequent sub-paragraphs [21-4.e-h] re-lettered [to be 21-4.f-i]:

BCO 21-4

e. In the examination of the candidate’s personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potentially notorious concerns, such as but not limited to relational sins, sexual immorality (including homosexuality, child sexual abuse, fornication, and pornography), addictions, abusive behavior, racism, and financial mismanagement. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3; Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, he must not be known by reputation or self-profession according to his remaining sinfulness, but rather by the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of the pastoral office, Presbyteries are encouraged to appoint a committee to conduct detailed examinations of these matters and to give prayerful support to candidates.

Amend BCO 24-1 by the addition of a second paragraph (addition underlined):

24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the office of ruling elders and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the close of the nomination period nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall then be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III, The Constitution Defined),
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination (*BCO* 24-6).

In the examination of each nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potentially notorious concerns, such as but not limited to relational sins, sexual immorality (including homosexuality, child sexual abuse, fornication, and pornography), addictions, abusive behavior, racism, and financial mismanagement. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. Each nominee must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending upon this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5; Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3; Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, he must not be known by reputation or self-profession according to his remaining sinfulness, but rather by the

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of church office, Sessions are encouraged to appoint a committee to conduct detailed examinations into these matters and to give prayerful support to nominees.

If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and place of a congregational meeting for the elections.

If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

<p>For: 45 Against: 40</p>

APPENDIX A

Item 4: BCO 21-4; 24-1

Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote	Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1 Arizona	17	18	1	-	45 Mississippi Valley	84	2	1	+
2 Ascension	31	2	0	+	46 Missouri	37	65	0	-
3 Blue Ridge	50	15	0	+	47 Nashville	19	43	3	-
4 Calvary	53	45	0	+	48 New Jersey	10	14	0	-
5 Canada West	21	3	1	+	49 New River	10	2	2	+
6 Catawba Valley	25	5	2	+	50 New York State	5	22	1	-
7 Central Carolina	48	9	0	+	51 North Florida	12	26	0	-
8 Central Florida	55	37	1	+	52 North Texas	48	53	0	-
9 Central Georgia	28	20	0	+	53 Northern California	13	36	0	-
10 Central Indiana	7	24	0	-	54 Northern Illinois	15	14	0	+
11 Chesapeake	43	33	3	+	55 Northern New England	9	11	1	-
12 Chicago Metro	20	21	3	-	56 Northwest Georgia	32	1	3	+
13 Columbus Metro	4	10	0	-	57 Ohio	13	6	0	+
14 Covenant	31	54	4	-	58 Ohio Valley	14	37	0	-
15 Eastern Canada	9	17	1	-	59 Pacific	3	28	1	-
16 Eastern Carolina	29	41	0	-	60 Pacific Northwest	29	48	2	-
17 Eastern Pennsylvania	27	2	0	+	61 Palmetto	18	45	0	-
18 Evangel	75	53	2	+	62 PeeDee	39	0	1	+
19 Fellowship	35	3	0	+	63 Philadelphia	12	11	0	+
20 Georgia Foothills	22	33	2	-	64 Philadelphia Metro West	30	4	0	+
21 Grace	29	9	0	+	65 Piedmont Triad	18	19	1	-
22 Great Lakes	41	0	1	+	66 Pittsburgh	29	23	1	+
23 Gulf Coast	38	3	1	+	67 Platte Valley	13	12	1	+
24 Gulfstream					68 Potomac	31	68	1	-
25 Heartland	27	2	0	+	69 Providence	39	14	4	+
26 Heritage	14	24	1	-	70 Rio Grande	6	21	0	-
27 Highlands	27	14	3	+	71 Rocky Mountain	41	40	0	+
28 Hills and Plains	29	39	1	-	72 Savannah River	39	5	0	+
29 Houston Metro	37	19	0	+	73 Siouxslands	26	5	0	+
30 Illiana	20	0	0	+	74 South Coast	27	27	0	-
31 Iowa	9	14	0	-	75 South Florida	27	23	8	+
32 James River	27	32	2	-	76 South Texas	24	45	3	-
33 Korean Capital					77 Southeast Alabama	41	1	0	+
34 Korean Central	23	8	2	+	78 Southern Louisiana	4	14		
35 Korean Eastern	4	8	6	-	79 Southern New England	30	30	0	-
36 Korean Northeastern	6	8	0	-	80 Southwest Florida	36	25	1	+
37 Korean Northwest	22	0	2	+	81 Suncoast Florida	24	24	1	-
38 Korean Southeastern	30	5	1	+	82 Susquehanna Valley	52	17	4	+
39 Korean Southern					83 Tennessee Valley	47	52	0	-
40 Korean Southwest	18	13	0	+	84 Tidewater	11	27	4	-
41 Korean Southwest O.C.	30	0	1	+	85 Warrior	20	10	1	+
42 Lowcountry	21	11	0	+	86 West Hudson	9	16	2	-
43 Metro Atlanta	38	68	2	-	87 Westminster	27	4	0	+
44 Metropolitan New York	4	34	0	-	88 Wisconsin	15	26	1	-

Item 4: BCO 21-4 and 24-1

Official Totals: For: 45 Against: 40

Number of Presbyteries: 88

Number Reporting: 85

2/3 Approval is: 59

ITEM 5: Amend BCO 22-2 regarding process for Assistant to Associate Pastor.

[Note: the 48th GA answered in the affirmative as amended **Overture 31** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery. The Overtures Committee had removed the phrase “who has provided satisfactory service for one-year in this congregation,” after the words “An existing assistant pastor.”]

Amend BCO 22-2 by the addition of a new second sentence as follows:

22-2. The pastor and associate pastor are elected by the congregation using the form of call in *BCO 20-6*. An existing assistant pastor may be elected by the congregation as an associate pastor at the recommendation of the Session without the election of a pulpit committee. Being elected by the congregation they become members of the Session.

<p>For: 84 Against: 1</p>

APPENDIX A

Item 5: BCO 22-2

Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote	Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1 Arizona	36	0	1	+	45 Mississippi Valley	79	0	1	+
2 Ascension	32	1	0	+	46 Missouri	59	1	4	+
3 Blue Ridge	39	19	5	+	47 Nashville	58	2	5	+
4 Calvary	39	47	10	-	48 New Jersey	16	0	0	+
5 Canada West	25	0	0	+	49 New River	10	1	3	+
6 Catawba Valley	36	0	0	+	50 New York State	26	0	2	+
7 Central Carolina	59	0	0	+	51 North Florida	40	0	0	+
8 Central Florida	93	0	0	+	52 North Texas	85	11	1	+
9 Central Georgia	47	0	0	+	53 Northern California	48	0	0	+
10 Central Indiana	30	0	0	+	54 Northern Illinois	29	0	0	+
11 Chesapeake	60	1	0	+	55 Northern New England	21	0	0	+
12 Chicago Metro	44	9	9	+	56 Northwest Georgia	32	0	1	+
13 Columbus Metro	13	0	1	+	57 Ohio	17	1	0	+
14 Covenant	86	2	0	+	58 Ohio Valley	49	0	0	+
15 Eastern Canada	27	0	0	+	59 Pacific	22	0	1	+
16 Eastern Carolina	56	0	0	+	60 Pacific Northwest	53	16	7	+
17 Eastern Pennsylvania	32	1	0	+	61 Palmetto	60	0	0	+
18 Evangel	125	0	0	+	62 PeeDee	40	0	0	+
19 Fellowship	37	0	0	+	63 Philadelphia	22	0	0	+
20 Georgia Foothills	53	1	3	+	64 Philadelphia Metro West	25	2	1	+
21 Grace	34	3	0	+	65 Piedmont Triad	31	1	2	+
22 Great Lakes	36	1	4	+	66 Pittsburgh	49	1	4	+
23 Gulf Coast	39	0	0	+	67 Platte Valley	20	0	1	+
24 Gulfstream					68 Potomac	52	0	0	+
25 Heartland	28	1	1	+	69 Providence	45	8	2	+
26 Heritage	38	0	1	+	70 Rio Grande	27	0	0	+
27 Highlands	39	0	1	+	71 Rocky Mountain	56	0	0	+
28 Hills and Plains	50	0	2	+	72 Savannah River	46	0	0	+
29 Houston Metro	51	0	0	+	73 Siouxlands	32	0	0	+
30 Illiana	18	1	0	+	74 South Coast	54	0	0	+
31 Iowa	19	2	1	+	75 South Florida	41	0	17	+
32 James River	54	0	7	+	76 South Texas	67	0	1	+
33 Korean Capital					77 Southeast Alabama	41	0	1	+
34 Korean Central	32	0	1	+	78 Southern Louisiana	13	6		+
35 Korean Eastern	11	0	7	+	79 Southern New England	56	1	0	+
36 Korean Northeastern	11	0	0	+	80 Southwest Florida	60	1	0	+
37 Korean Northwest	19	5	1	+	81 Suncoast Florida	39	0	0	+
38 Korean Southeastern	36	0	1	+	82 Susquehanna Valley	69	1	0	+
39 Korean Southern					83 Tennessee Valley	89	2	8	+
40 Korean Southwest	28	0	0	+	84 Tidewater	37	0	1	+
41 Korean Southwest O.C.	31	0	0	+	85 Warrior	28	1	1	+
42 Lowcountry	25	2	2	+	86 West Hudson	26	1	0	+
43 Metro Atlanta	99	4	5	+	87 Westminster	29	0	0	+
44 Metropolitan New York	27	0	0	+	88 Wisconsin	38	0	3	+

Item 5: BCO 22-2

Official Totals: For: 84 Against: 1

Number of Presbyteries: 88

Number Reporting: 85

2/3 Approval is: 59

ITEM 6: Amend BCO 24-1 to clarify that a session has discretion on the timing of some parts of the exam of officer nominees.

[Note: the 48th GA answered in the affirmative as amended **Overture 18** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery, giving Sessions discretion on the timing of some parts of the exam of officer nominees. The Overtures Committee had amended the original proposal by removing from the first paragraph the phrase “After the close of the nomination period” and adding to the an introductory phrase “Notwithstanding the above,” to the new second paragraph.]

(Note: Overture 6 was answered by reference to Overture 18.)

Amend BCO 24-1, first paragraph, by the deletion of the introductory phrase in sentence three and one word (“then”) in the last sentence, and by the addition of one sentence after 24-1.e, as follows (addition underlined):

BCO 24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus. ~~After the close of the nomination period, a~~ Nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall ~~then~~ be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III, The Constitution Defined),
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO* 24-6)

Notwithstanding the above, the Session may render a decision on Christian experience at any point in the process.

APPENDIX A

and based on that decision, may judge him ineligible for that election.

If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and place of a congregational meeting for elections.

If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

For: 84 Against: 0

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Item 6: BCO 24-1

Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote	Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1 Arizona	36	0	1	+	45 Mississippi Valley	82	1	0	+
2 Ascension	30	1	1	+	46 Missouri	56	1	1	+
3 Blue Ridge	64	1	1	+	47 Nashville	58	2	5	+
4 Calvary	93	0	0	+	48 New Jersey	16	0	0	+
5 Canada West	24	0	0	+	49 New River	11	0	0	+
6 Catawba Valley	36	0	0	+	50 New York State	26	1	1	+
7 Central Carolina	59	0	0	+	51 North Florida	40	0	0	+
8 Central Florida	93	0	0	+	52 North Texas	77	17	3	+
9 Central Georgia	47	0	0	+	53 Northern California	41	1	2	+
10 Central Indiana	30	0	0	+	54 Northern Illinois	29	0	0	+
11 Chesapeake	60	1	0	+	55 Northern New England	21	0	0	+
12 Chicago Metro	14	0	0	+	56 Northwest Georgia	34	1	1	+
13 Columbus Metro	43	0	0	+	57 Ohio	18	0	1	+
14 Covenant	86	0	0	+	58 Ohio Valley	47	0	0	+
15 Eastern Canada	27	0	0	+	59 Pacific	23	0	1	+
16 Eastern Carolina	56	0	0	+	60 Pacific Northwest	72	0	1	+
17 Eastern Pennsylvania	33	0	0	+	61 Palmetto	60	0	0	+
18 Evangel	125	0	0	+	62 PeeDee	40	0	0	+
19 Fellowship	38	0	0	+	63 Philadelphia	22	0	0	+
20 Georgia Foothills	48	3	5	+	64 Philadelphia Metro West	27	0	0	+
21 Grace	36	1	0	+	65 Piedmont Trad	32	0	2	+
22 Great Lakes	40	0	1	+	66 Pittsburgh	53	0	0	+
23 Gulf Coast	37	0	0	+	67 Platte Valley	25	0	0	+
24 Gulfstream					68 Potomac				
25 Heartland	30	0	0	+	69 Providence	57	0	0	+
26 Heritage	34	1	2	+	70 Rio Grande	27	0	0	+
27 Highlands	40	0	1	+	71 Rocky Mountain	57	0	0	+
28 Hills and Plains	50	0	2	+	72 Savannah River	46	0	0	+
29 Houston Metro	52	0	0	+	73 Siouxslands	32	0	0	+
30 Illiana	20	0	1	+	74 South Coast	54	0	0	+
31 Iowa	22	0	0	+	75 South Florida	38	0	20	+
32 James River	48	10	3	+	76 South Texas	67	0	1	+
33 Korean Capital					77 Southeast Alabama	41	0	1	+
34 Korean Central	32	0	0	+	78 Southern Louisiana	21	0	0	+
35 Korean Eastern	12	0	6	+	79 Southern New England	58	0	0	+
36 Korean Northeastern	12	0	0	+	80 Southwest Florida	60	0	1	+
37 Korean Northwest	23	0	1	+	81 Suncoast Florida	38	1	0	+
38 Korean Southeastern	34	3	1	+	82 Susquehanna Valley	68	1	2	+
39 Korean Southern					83 Tennessee Valley	90	1	8	+
40 Korean Southwest	23	4	0	+	84 Tidewater	37	0	2	+
41 Korean Southwest O.C.	26	5	0	+	85 Warrior	29	0	1	+
42 Lowcountry	31	0	0	+	86 West Hudson	27	0	0	+
43 Metro Atlanta	93	3	12	+	87 Westminster	29	0	0	+
44 Metropolitan New York	21	0	1	+	88 Wisconsin	41	0	0	+

Item 6: BCO 24-1

Official Totals: For: 84 Against: 0

Number of Presbyteries: 88

Number Reporting: 84

2/3 Approval is: 59

ITEM 7: Amend BCO 32-20 regarding time considerations for offenses, by deleting the current paragraph (32-20) and substituting the following paragraph.

[Note: the 48th GA answered **Overture 22** in the affirmative as amended. The OC had amended the overture's substitute paragraph by deleting its first sentence as well as the first word of the second sentence.]

Amend BCO 32-20 by deleting the current paragraph 32-20 and substituting the following:

32-20. The accused or a member of the court may object to the consideration of a charge, for example, if he thinks the passage of time since the alleged offense makes fair adjudication unachievable. The court should consider factors such as the gravity of the alleged offense as well as what degradations of evidence and memory may have occurred in the intervening period.

<p>For: 72 Against: 13</p>

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Item 7: BCO 32-20

	Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote		Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1	Arizona	36	0	1	+	45	Mississippi Valley	83	0	0	+
2	Ascension	17	13	3	+	46	Missouri	94	8	1	+
3	Blue Ridge	62	0	1	+	47	Nashville	52	6	7	+
4	Calvary	99	0	0	+	48	New Jersey	14	0	2	+
5	Canada West	24	0	1	+	49	New River	10	0	2	+
6	Catawba Valley	35	1	0	+	50	New York State	17	5	6	+
7	Central Carolina	20	39	1	-	51	North Florida	40	0	0	+
8	Central Florida	93	0	0	+	52	North Texas	42	51	4	-
9	Central Georgia	47	0	0	+	53	Northern California	39	4	3	+
10	Central Indiana	22	0	0	+	54	Northern Illinois	29	0	0	+
11	Chesapeake	36	19	4	+	55	Northern New England	21	0	0	+
12	Chicago Metro	12	24	7	-	56	Northwest Georgia	3	32	0	-
13	Columbus Metro	12	0	2	+	57	Ohio	0	19	0	-
14	Covenant	86	2	0	+	58	Ohio Valley	12	28	4	-
15	Eastern Canada	25	0	2	+	59	Pacific	22	0	2	+
16	Eastern Carolina	56	0	0	+	60	Pacific Northwest	75	0	1	+
17	Eastern Pennsylvania	30	0	3	+	61	Palmetto	53	5	2	+
18	Evangel	124	1	1	+	62	PecDee	0	40	0	-
19	Fellowship	13	22	3	-	63	Philadelphia	22	0	0	+
20	Georgia Foothills	49	2	6	+	64	Philadelphia Metro West	4	21	1	-
21	Grace	37	0	0	+	65	Piedmont Triad	32	1	2	+
22	Great Lakes	38	1	1	+	66	Pittsburgh	48	1	5	+
23	Gulf Coast	29	5	3	+	67	Platte Valley	24	0	0	+
24	Gulfstream					68	Potomac	71	1	2	+
25	Heartland	21	7	2	+	69	Providence	57	0	0	+
26	Heritage	27	1	11	+	70	Rio Grande	27	0	0	+
27	Highlands	37	1	1	+	71	Rocky Mountain	53	0	0	+
28	Hills and Plains	25	16	10	+	72	Savannah River	46	0	0	+
29	Houston Metro	49	2	0	+	73	Sioudlands	31	1	1	+
30	Illiana	23	0	0	+	74	South Coast	54	0	0	+
31	Iowa	7	12	3	-	75	South Florida	6	39	13	-
32	James River	55	0	6	+	76	South Texas	47	22	2	+
33	Korean Capital					77	Southeast Alabama	40	1	1	+
34	Korean Central	30	1	0	+	78	Southern Louisiana	13	4	2	+
35	Korean Eastern	10	1	7	+	79	Southern New England	53	1	0	+
36	Korean Northeastern	10	2	0	+	80	Southwest Florida	42	16	4	+
37	Korean Northwest	23	1	0	+	81	Suncoast Florida	38	0	0	+
38	Korean Southeastern	37	0	1	+	82	Susquehanna Valley	21	35	9	-
39	Korean Southern					83	Tennessee Valley	77	6	16	+
40	Korean Southwest	24	2	0	+	84	Tidewater	36	1	4	+
41	Korean Southwest O.C.	23	3	5	+	85	Warrior	30	0	0	+
42	Lowcountry	8	18	4	-	86	West Hudson	25	0	2	+
43	Metro Atlanta	83	18	7	+	87	Westminster	30	0	0	+
44	Metropolitan New York	21	2	0	+	88	Wisconsin	41	0	1	+

Item 7: BCO 32-20

Official Totals: For: 72 Against: 13

Number of Presbyteries: 88

Number Reporting: 85

2/3 Approval is: 59

ITEM 8: Amend BCO 38-1 regarding confession document for case without process.

[Note: the 48th GA answered in the affirmative **Overture 33** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery, regarding a Confession Document for a case without process.]

Amend BCO 38-1 be amended as follows. (Strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording.)

38-1. When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person's specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions. The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment.

Rationale: In two SJC cases this year, the presbyteries allowed investigative or judicial commissions to present “reports” in addition to the agreed-upon confession document. The SJC ruled that was contrary to *BCO 38-1*.¹ This revision makes the prohibition clearer, and should help avoid a recurrence of the mistaken procedures in those cases.

In addition, it provides examples of the three most important components to a “Confession” document. This is helpful because the current phrase “full statement of the facts” doesn’t explicitly reference the confession of

¹ Case 2019-10 *TE Evans v. Arizona*. SJC sustained the complaint on 7/20/20 by a vote of 18-3. Case 2019-04 *TE Williams v. Chesapeake*. SJC sustained the complaint on 8/24/20 by a vote of 13-5.

And a third Case, 2020-07 *TE Wilbourne v. Pacific*, is pending.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

sin or any expression or evidence of repentance. These items should be in the Confession document, which is the lone document on which the court is to base censure.²

<p>For: 83 Against: 2</p>

² For discussion of the difference between a Commission *presenting a report* and a Commission “submitting a full record of its proceedings” (BCO 15-1), see Dissenting Opinion from RE Donahoe, et al. in Case 2020-04, *Complaint of Marusich v. Central Indiana*. It’s found in the SJC’s 2021 report to GA, and via link below.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yL6rOaH8CWvS3mEx9uL6e_BGSWgksx1N/view?usp=sharing

APPENDIX A

Item 8: BCO 38-1

Presbytery	For	Against	Abstain	Vote
1 Arizona	36	0	1	+
2 Ascension	29	1	3	+
3 Blue Ridge	62	0	2	+
4 Calvary	97	0	0	+
5 Canada West	24	0	0	+
6 Catawba Valley	35	0	1	+
7 Central Carolina	61	0	0	+
8 Central Florida	93	0	0	+
9 Central Georgia	47	0	0	+
10 Central Indiana	25	0	0	+
11 Chesapeake	60	1	2	+
12 Chicago Metro	44	0	0	+
13 Columbus Metro	14	0	0	+
14 Covenant	86	0	1	+
15 Eastern Canada	27	0	0	+
16 Eastern Carolina	56	0	0	+
17 Eastern Pennsylvania	30	0	0	+
18 Evangel	125	0	0	+
19 Fellowship	35	0	0	+
20 Georgia Foothills	51	0	6	+
21 Grace	37	0	0	+
22 Great Lakes	38	0	2	+
23 Gulf Coast	39	0	2	+
24 Gullstream				
25 Heartland	28	0	1	+
26 Heritage	39	1	1	+
27 Highlands	37	1	0	+
28 Hills and Plains	50	0	2	+
29 Houston Metro	48	3		+
30 Illiana	21	0	1	+
31 Iowa	15	5	2	+
32 James River	54	0	7	+
33 Korean Capital				
34 Korean Central	31	1	2	+
35 Korean Eastern	14	0	4	+
36 Korean Northeastern	11	0	0	+
37 Korean Northwest	23	0	1	+
38 Korean Southeastern	31	2	3	+
39 Korean Southern				
40 Korean Southwest	23	2	0	+
41 Korean Southwest O.C.	25	2	3	+
42 Lowcountry	29	1	0	+
43 Metro Atlanta	88	3	17	+
44 Metropolitan New York	24	0	0	+
45 Mississippi Valley	84	0	0	+
46 Missouri	50	0	3	+
47 Nashville	56	3	6	+
48 New Jersey	16	0	0	+
49 New River	12	0	0	+
50 New York State	17	0	11	+
51 North Florida	40	0	0	+
52 North Texas	76	15	6	+
53 Northern California	45	0	1	+
54 Northern Illinois	29	0	0	+
55 Northern New England	21	0	0	+
56 Northwest Georgia	0	36	1	-
57 Ohio	17	0	1	+
58 Ohio Valley	38	2	6	+
59 Pacific	28	1	3	+
60 Pacific Northwest	74	0	0	+
61 Palmetto	60	0	0	+
62 PeeDee	40	0	0	+
63 Philadelphia	22	0	0	+
64 Philadelphia Metro West	23	0	2	+
65 Piedmont Triad	35	0	1	+
66 Pittsburgh	48	1	4	+
67 Platte Valley	24	0	0	+
68 Potomac	75	9	2	+
69 Providence	57	0	0	+
70 Rio Grande	27	0	0	+
71 Rocky Mountain	56	0	0	+
72 Savannah River	46	0	0	+
73 Sioulands	32	0	0	+
74 South Coast	54	0	0	+
75 South Florida	39	9	19	+
76 South Texas	67	0	1	+
77 Southeast Alabama	41	0	1	+
78 Southern Louisiana	21	0	0	+
79 Southern New England	58	0	0	+
80 Southwest Florida	56	1	1	+
81 Suncoast Florida	39	0	0	+
82 Susquehanna Valley	22	36	14	-
83 Tennessee Valley	84	3	12	+
84 Tidewater	35	1	4	+
85 Warrior	30	0	0	+
86 West Hudson	27	0	0	+
87 Westminster	31	0	0	+
88 Wisconsin	39	0	2	+

Item 8: BCO 38-1

Official Totals: For: 83 Against: 2

Number of Presbyteries: 88

Number Reporting: 85

2/3 Approval is: 59

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Attachment 2

STATISTICS (2021)

CHURCHES ADDED TO THE DENOMINATION IN 2021

Presbytery	Church	Address	Date Rec.	Source
Central Carolina	South Charlotte	Charlotte, NC	06/27/21	Organized
Central Florida	Christ United Flshp	Orlando, FL	03/07/21	Organized
Central Indiana	City Hope Flshp	Muncie, IN		Organized
Eastern Canada	KW Redeemer	Kitchener, ON	11/07/21	
E. Pennsylvania	Christ the King	Willow Grove, PA	11/07/21	Organized
Evangel	Homewood	Homewood, AL		Organized
	Urban Hope	Fairfield, AL		Organized
Gulf Coast	Christ Redeemer	Mobile, AL	02/28/21	Organized
Heartland	Christ Redeemer	Lees Summit, MO	03/28/21	Organized
Korean Capital	Calvary Gospel	Towson, MD	12/21	Merger of Light of the Gospel and Calvary
Nashville	Parks	Nashville, TN	04/11/21	Organized
Ohio	Trinity	North Canton, OH	02/14/21	Organized
Ohio Valley	Redeemer	Cincinnati, OH	02/28/21	Organized
Palmetto	Rivercrest	Irmo, SC	08/29/21	Organized
Pittsburgh	Redemption Hill	Pittsburgh, PA	02/14/21	Organized
Potomac	Christ	Burke, VA	03/13/21	Organized
	King's Cross	Ashburn, VA	03/20/21	Organized
South Texas	Trinity Grace	San Antonio, TX	02/21	Organized
S. Louisiana	Parish	Lafayette, LA		Organized
S. New England	Center Grace	Danvers, MA	03/06/21	Organized
Wisconsin	All Saints	Green Bay, WI	05/16/21	Organized
	Friend of Sinners	Milwaukee, WI	05/16/21	Organized
	Living Stone	Oshkosh, WI	05/23/21	Organized

CHURCHES LOST FROM THE DENOMINATION IN 2021

Presbytery	Church	Address	Date	To
Central Florida	Nature Coast	Homosassa, FL	08/17/21	Independency
Grace	Lagniappe	Bay St. Louis, MS	06/30/21	Dissolved
Gulf Coast	Trinity Family	Mobile, AL	02/07/21	Dissolved
Korean Capital	Calvary	Towson, MD	12/21	Merged
	Light of the Gospel	Eldridge, MD	12/21	Merged
Korean SW	LA Sa-Rang	Los Angeles, CA		
MS Valley	Trinity	Jackson, MS	12/21	Dissolved
New Jersey	Princeton Meadow	Princeton, NJ	06/09/21	Independency

APPENDIX A

Churches Lost, continued

Presbytery	Church	Address	Date	To
North Texas	Christ Church	Carrollton, TX	04/21	Dissolved
Pacific	Cornerstone Comm	Cerritos, CA	03/02/21	OPC
Piedmont Triad	Southside Comm	Winston-Salem, NC		10/10/21
	Dissolved			
Pittsburgh	Grace Refomed	Monroeville, PA	08/31/21	Dissolved
Rio Grande	Providence	Albuquerque, NM	05/01/21	Bible PC
Savannah River	Liberty	Sylvania, GA	01/23/21	Vanguard
S. Louisiana	DeRidder	DeRidder, LA	04/12/21	Vanguard
Westminster	Eastern Heights	Bristol, TN	03/14/21	Vanguard
	SHarmony	Kingsport, TN	03/13/21	Dissolved

MINISTERS ADDED TO THE DENOMINATION IN 2021

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date Rec.	Source
Arizona	Paul Muresan		ECO
Ascension	David Hills	02/07/21	Ordained
Calvary	Zachary Groff	09/17/21	Ordained
	Kenny Maple	05/21/21	Ordained
	Jonathan Master		
	Chad Reynolds		ARP
	Neel Skelton	08/15/21	Ordained
Canada West	Wes Hynd	03/28/21	Ordained
Catawba Valley	Christopher Gary	02/21/21	Ordained
	Soon Pak		EPC
Central Carolina	David Carter	06/06/21	Ordained
	John W. Downs	09/05/21	Ordained
	Jose Portillo	01/31/21	Ordained
	Arthur Rankin	11/07/21	Ordained
	Benjamin Thomas	08/28/21	EPCEW
Central Florida	Brian Lum Shue Chan	05/02/21	Ordained
	Michael Glodo		
	Angel Roman		
Central Georgia	Grant Gilliam	06/06/21	Ordained
	Todd Robinson	06/27/21	Ordained
Central Indiana	Taylor Bradbury		Ordained
Chesapeake	Stephen Manyara		
Chicago Metro	Robin Cho		Ordained
	Caleb Hughes	06/13/21	Ordained
	Daniel Miller	05/30/21	Ordained
Covenant	William Gullett	06/27/21	Ordained
Eastern Canada	Kar Ho Choi	05/30/21	Ordained
	Franky Garcia	11/28/21	Ordained

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ministers Added. continued

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date Rec.	Source
E. Pennsylvania	Chris Kennedy	11/16/21	PC Ireland
	Jonathan Kuciemba	04/20/21	ARP
	Michael Moon	09/11/21	KAPC
	Daavid Yoon	11/16/21	KAPC
Evangel Fellowship	Stephen King	11/28/21	Ordained
Grace	Jeremiah Dahl		
	Josh Adair	09/27/21	Ordained
	Ezekiel Dean	10/03/21	Ordained
Great Lakes	James Logan	05/23/21	Ordained
	Josh Crawford		Ordained
	Austin Reed		URC
	Greg Salazar	02/07/21	Ordained
	Travis Stephens		Ordained
Gulfstream	Steven Van Noort	09/18/21	CRCNA
	Mark Murnan		
Hills and Plains	Bill Berry	02/13/21	Sov Grace
Houston Metro	Patrick Fischl	02/21/21	Ordained
	David T. King	08/21	OPC
	Pablo Martinez		Ordained
Iowa	Will Bankston	05/01/21	Ordained
James River	Levi Bakerink		Ordained
	Matthew Cover		
	Charles Lewis	02/07/21	Ordained
Korean Capital	Su Cheor Jang	10/04/21	Christ/Nations
	Benjamin Kim	06/06/21	Ordained
	David Young Kim	06/13/21	Ordained
	Sam Seung Bum Kim	10/04/21	ECA
	Hyo Seok Lim	12/12/21	Ordained
	David Park		Ordained
	Brian Shim	04/05/21	KPCA Kosin
Korean Central	Samuel Kang	10/12/21	KAPC
	Chung Man Lee	08/08/21	
	Daey Shim	05/09/21	Ordained
Korean SE	Kevin Kim	11/14/21	Ordained
	Moonki Park	10/17/21	Ordained
Metro Atlanta	Steven Gilchrist		Ordained
Metro. NYC	Daniel Hong	09/26/21	Ordained
	Richard McCaskill	11/09/21	Soma Eastside
	Steven Na		
	Paul Yoo	05/23/21	Ordained
MS Valley	Christian Brewer	11/28/21	Ordained
	Zachery Byrd	05/16/21	Ordained
	Charles Graeber	09/12/21	Ordained

APPENDIX A

Ministers Added. continued

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date Rec.	Source
MS Valley, cont'd.	James Peipon	08/08/21	Ordained
	Josue Pineda		
	Kevin Vollema	11/07/21	Ordained
Missouri	Zachary Carrera		
	Tyler Hendley		
	Harrison Holbrook	10/24/21	Ordained
	Benjamin Kieffer		
Nashville	Ryan Sparks		
	Brant Bonetti	05/02/21	Ordained
	William Cote	05/02/21	Ordained
	Jamie Crampton	08/29/21	Ordained
	Kenny Silva	11/21/21	Ordained
New Jersey	Stephen O'Neill	03/28/21	Ordained
North Florida	Willie Addison	08/29/21	Ordained
	Cord Carlin	11/21/21	Ordained
North Texas	Mark Husband		
N. California	Matthew Mobley	02/21/21	Ordained
Ohio	David Doty	10/03/21	Ordained
	Jacob Piland	10/17/21	Ordained
Ohio Valley	Josh Crawford	08/08/21	Ordained
	Luke Rakestraw	08/08/21	Ordained
	Travis Stephens	08/08/21	Ordained
Pacific	Ben Ewen	11/14/21	Ordained
	Jonathan Key	/04/18/21	Ordained
Pacific NW	Matt Boffey		
	Mansour Khajehpour		
	Evin Langley		
Palmetto	Trevor Allen	09/12/21	Ordained
	Todd Boone	11/14/21	Ordained
	Matthew Coplin	06/20/21	Ordained
	Brandon Newell	05/13/21	Ordained
	Marc Rattray	11/14/21	
Pee Dee	Donald Stager	04/22/21	Ordained
	Joseph Womack	07/29/21	Ordained
Phil Metro West	Timothy Brindle	05/23/21	Ordained
	John Rohrman	01/10/21	Ordained
Pittsburgh	Seth Gurley	10/31/21	Ordained
	Adam Thomas	03/14/21	Ordained
Platte Valley	Eric Tonjes		
Potomac	Rick Holmes	10/21	EPC
	Matthew Lietzen	08/08/21	Ordained
	Terrence Little	06/01/21	ARP
	Alex Young	08/01/21	Congregational

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ministers Added. continued

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date Rec.	Source
Providence	James Ensley	08/29/21	Ordained
	Jacob Hale	02/07/21	Ordained
	Nick Robison	01/31/21	Ordained
	Nathan White	01/31/21	Ordained
	Amos Williams	08/22/21	Ordained
Rio Grande	Zachary Garris		Ordained
	Dawson Hunt	05/23/21	Ordained
Rocky Mountain	Stephen Baran		
Savannah River	Bridger Leeland Bond	02/07/21	Ordained
	David T. House II	04/25/21	Ordained
Siouxlands	Daniel Brendsel		
	Steve Johnson	01/21/21	Ordained
South Coast	Connor Underseth	02/07/21	Ordained
	Dan Warne		
	Brian White	02/07/21	Ordained
South Texas	Adam Lopez	05/02/21	Ordained
	Eduardo Martorano		
SE Alabama	Adam Coppock	11/14/21	Ordained
S. New England	Jefferson Bennett	06/06/21	Ordained
	Nathaniel Lee	03/06/21	Ordained
	Jerry Ornelas	06/06/21	Ordained
SW Florida	Jeremy Fuller	09/19/21	Ordained
	Aldo Mondin	08/08/21	Ordained
Susquehanna V.	Matt Irvine	08/01/21	Ordained
	Chris Peter		Ordained
	Angelo Valle	02/20/21	OPC
TN Valley	Gustavo Formenti		
	Joshua McQuaid		
Tidewater	Michael Tan	06/27/21	Ordained
Warrior	Pace Holdbrooks		Ordained
	Philip Ryan		Ordained
	Bobby Roberts	03/28/21	Ordained
Westminster	Nicolas Bratcher	02/21/21	Ordained
	David Gallagher	10/17/21	Ordained
	Clayton Smith	05/23/21	Ordained
	Kalan Spencer	08/20/21	Ordained
	Spencer Thomas	01/31/21	Ordained

APPENDIX A

MINISTERS DISMISSED TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS IN 2021

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date	To
Arizona	Justin Beach	11/11/21	EPC
	Rick Schaeffer	11/23/21	EPC
Blue Ridge	Walter Kim	09/01/21	CCCC
Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date	To
Central Carolina	Thomas Hawkes	08/28/21	ARP
	Michael Kruger	01/30/21	EPC
Central Florida	Kevin Labby	01/26/21	Evan Free
Central Georgia	Samuel Smith	01/20/21	
Chesapeake	Eric Tracy	11/09/21	ARP
	Brian Wood	07/10/21	ARP
Chicago Metro	Daniel Svendsen	11/19/21	OPC
Covenant	Todd Matocha	05/28/21	ARP
Heritage	Robert Dekker	01/30/21	Independent
Highlands	Gus Schill	02/27/21	EPC
	Chad Smith	02/27/21	EPC
Houston Metro	Nick Napier		ARP
Korean nw	David Joonghoon Suk	03/09/21	KAPC
Metro. NYC	Chuck Armstrong		ECC
MS Valley	Cory Brock	07/21/21	Scotland
	Leonard Siems	10/21/21	ARP
Missouri	Mark Levine	01/19/21	ARP
	Tony Myles	01/19/21	OPC
	Edward Rogland	04/21	ACNA
New York State	Timothy Chiarot	05/21	EPC
North Texas	Ryan "Slim" Thompson		Independency
N. California	Brian Tsui	12/28/21	OPC
Ohio Valley	Clayton Hutchins	10/19/21	OPC
Pacific NW	Casey Bedell	09/20/21	
Philadelphia	Daniel Schrock	03/20/21	OPC
Piedmont Triad	Logan Spoon		ARP
Platte Valley	Jonathan Cook		ARP
Potomac	Ben Wikner	11/20/21	New Cov Fell
Rio Grande	Henry Fernandez	10/21	Bible PC
	Randy Steele	05/01/21	Bible PC
Savannah River	Jason Wiltse	01/23/21	Vanguard
South Coast	Charles Telfer	01/21	OPC
SE Alabama	Wylly Collins	05/04/21	ARP
SW Florida	Dustin Eudaly	11/09/21	Stephens Valley
	Steven Light	11/09/21	Stephens Valley
Suncoast Florida	Chad Tvenstrup	10/26/21	ARP
TN Valley	Chris Manley		
	Gary Roop		

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MINISTERS REMOVED FROM OFFICE IN 2021

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date	How Removed
Blue Ridge	Marc Corbett	08/14/21	Divested
	John Cunningham	01/23/21	Divested
	Greg Thompson	01/23/21	Divested
Central Florida	Jordan Born	04/21	Demitted
	Brad Bresson	08/17/21	Name Erased
	Tedrick Sinn	12/21	Name Erased
Chesapeake	Stephen Smallman	12/21/21	Demitted
	J. Paul Warren	02/13/21	Deposed
Covenant	Chris Treat	05/18/21	Demitted
E. Pennsylvania	Dan Wilson	07/01/21	Divested
Evangel	Seongmin Im	12/21	Deposed
Gulfstream	Jeremy McKeen	10/19/21	Withdrawn
	Christopher Perry	02/25/21	Divested
Heritage	Charles L. Betters	05/11/21	Name Erased
Highlands	Christopher Brown	08/07/21	Deposed
Korean Central	Jung An Kim	04/13/21	Name Erased
Korean SE	Seoung Baik	11/21	Name Erased
	Shin Min Cho	11/21	Name Erased
	Ku Sang Chung	11/21	Name Erased
	Youngho Jeong	11/21	Name Erased
	Sungho Jo	11/21	Name Erased
	Jong Kyu Kim	11/21	Name Erased
	Noh Moon Park	11/21	Name Erased
MS Valley	Trey Owens	11/02/21	Name Erased
Missouri	Lester Cruzat	01/19/21	Divested
Nashville	Christopher Donnelly	04/13/21	Name Erased (Vanguard)
New River	James Pavlic	03/20/21	Demitted
North Texas	Andrew Bronson	11/06/21	Demitted
Pacific NW	Andrew Pelander	05/19/21	Divested
PeeDee	Tim Melton	10/28/21	Divested
Piedmont Triad	Chris Bitterman	07/24/21	Deposed
	Tim Carper	10/24/21	Divested
Platte Valley	Abel Sisco	04/21	Divested
Providence	John Carrico	02/02/21	Divested
	Harrison Hatfield	02/02/21	Divested
Savannah River	Joshua Keel	01/23/21	Divested
South Coast	Christian Castro	09/21	Name Erased
	Trey Jasso	04/21	Deposed
	David Juelfs	04/21	Deposed
	Brian Tallman	07/21	Deposed

APPENDIX A

Ministers Removed, continued

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date	How Removed
South Texas	Bojan Dragicevic	04/04/21	Divested
	Richard Jones	04/24/21	Deposed
S. Louisiana	James Jones		Name Erased (Vanguard)
	Robert Smith		Name Erased (Vanguard)
S. New England	Nathan Hays	02/17/21	Name Erased
	Logan Keck	04/23/21	Name Erased
	Daniel Rogers	09/18/21	Divested
Susquehanna V.	David Tate	11/20/21	Divested
TN Valley	Clay Walkup	07/13/21	Name Erased
Westminster	Rick Light	03/28/21	Name Erased

MINISTERS DECEASED IN 2021

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date
Blue Ridge	Paul O’Gorek	01/26/21
	James McGoldrick	12/30/21
Calvary	Carl Sorensen	08/15/21
	David Jordan	11/14/21
Central Georgia	James Wagner	11/15/21
	David Hamilton	
Covenant	Billy McGarrity	09/05/21
	Frank Barker	12/27/21
Evangel	John Harris Langford	11/21
	Hubert Stewart	05/21/21
Great Lakes	Donald Remillard	10/03/21
Gulf Coast	Carl Pearson	04/16/21
	Eldon Stanton	07/06/21
Heritage	Harry Marshall	
	George Norris	08/18/21
Highlands	Doug Tilley	04/17/21
	Jae Deok Jang	
Korean Northwest	Robert Edmiston	11/10/21
Metro Atlanta	Bill Whitwer	
Mississippi Valley	Leon Pannkuk	01/19/21
Missouri	George Fuller	05/04/21
	George Smith	02/11/21
New Jersey	James Smith	11/22/21
	Philip Heidt	03/15/21
Pacific	Kevin Allen	10/21
Pacific Northwest		

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ministers Deceased, continued

Presbytery	Name of Minister	Date
Palmetto	Marshall Connor	11/04/21
	Robert Slimp	08/03/21
Pee Dee	Gordon Reed	04/21
	Julian Riddle	08/12/21
Piedmont Triad	Tripp Sanders	08/01/21
Potomac	James Hutchens	07/13/21
Savannah River	Ron Parrish	01/26/21
Southeast Alabama	Henry Lewis Smith	02/05/21
S. New England	Paul Quinn	09/18/21
Southwest Florida	John Graham	07/26/21
Susquehanna Valley	George Omerly	10/08/21
Tennessee Valley	Timothy Tinsley	01/30/21
Tidewater	David Kiewiet	10/27/21
Westminster	Edward Crook	01/19/21
Wisconsin	Dale Dykema	10/14/21

FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY 2021

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA STATISTICS					
FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Presbyteries	86	88	88	88	88
Churches	1,568	1,572	1,567	1,580	1,593
Missions	344	355	348	348	318
Teaching Elders	4,882	4,951	5,057	5,117	5,159
Candidates	474	537	557	531	704
Licentiates	125	192	169	171	222
Profession of Faith by Children	4,529	4,720	4,922	4,023	4,479
Profession of Faith by Adults	5,204	5,351	5,153	4,291	4,674
Communicants	292,450	300,424	300,113	299,891	297,239
Non-communicants	77,404	79,418	78,551	78,330	75,991
Total Membership (Comm, Non-comm,TEs)	374,736	384,793	383,721	383,338	378,389
Family Units	142,838	146,314	147,666	145,058	143,933
Sunday School Attendance	93,670	94,349	92,348	65,648	65,283
Adult Baptisms	2,311	2,520	2,613	2,181	2,275
Infant Baptisms	5,617	5,818	5,717	4,583	5,363
Total Contributions	\$844,786,891	\$861,392,789	\$904,550,356	\$1,042,366,740	\$998,758,176
Per Capita Giving	\$2,888.65	\$2,867.26	\$3,014.03	\$3,475.82	\$3,360.12
Assembly Causes	\$21,507,732	\$21,314,915	\$21,897,147	\$21,952,615	\$21,701,660
Presbytery Causes	\$10,439,287	\$11,031,726	\$10,621,337	\$10,056,064	\$10,383,683
Congregation Benevolences	\$107,447,159	\$107,665,760	\$117,755,108	\$119,004,084	\$120,310,548
Total Benevolences	\$139,394,178	\$140,012,401	\$150,273,592	\$151,012,763	\$152,395,891
Per Capita Benevolences	\$477	\$466	\$501	\$504	\$513
Congregational Current Expenses	\$611,766,975	\$643,653,539	\$697,389,987	\$683,085,062	\$686,149,852
Congregational Building Fund	\$85,568,912	\$87,013,860	\$89,827,572	\$100,487,760	\$121,359,547
Total All Disbursements	\$836,730,065	\$870,679,800	\$937,491,151	\$934,585,585	\$959,905,290
Totals represent the latest statistics reported by churches to the Stated Clerk's Office.					

APPENDIX B

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Presbyterian Church in America June 29, 2021 St. Louis, MO

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church in America held a scheduled meeting on June 29, 2021, at the America's Center in St. Louis, Missouri. President Danny McDaniel called the meeting to order at 12:54 p.m. and TE Kevin DeYoung opened with prayer.

The following men were in attendance:

TE Bob Brunson, Metro Atlanta	RE Frank Cohee, Providence
TE Kevin DeYoung, Central Carolina	RE Jon Ford, Central Indiana
TE Tom Harr, New Jersey, CDM	RE Miles Gresham, Evangel, CTS
TE Rod Mays, Calvary, Alternate	RE Danny McDaniel, Houston Metro
TE Jerry Schriver, Metro Atlanta	RE Dan Nielsen, Savannah River, RH
TE David Silvernail, Potomac	RE Jack Watkins, Nashville
TE Jason Sterling, Evangel, RUF	RE James Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta, RBI
TE Martin Wagner, Evangel, PCAF	
TE Thurman Williams, Missouri, MNA	

Members absent:

RE Bob Caldwell, Calvary, **MTW**; RE Richard Dolan, Georgia Foothills, Alternate; RE Pat Hodge, Calvary; RE Lee McCarty, Evangel; RE Martin Moore, Georgia Foothills, **CC**; TE Bill Sim, Korean Southeastern

Staff present:

TE Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk Pro Tempore
TE John W. Robertson, Business Administrator
TE Wayne Herring, Church Relations Officer
TE Bob Hornick, Assistant to the Stated Clerk
TE L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus
Ms. Angela Nantz, Operations Manager

Visitors present:

RE Brent Andersen, MNA Interim Coordinator
TE Marty Crawford, Evangel Presbytery
TE Stephen Estock, CDM Coordinator
TE Brian Janssen, Iowa Presbytery

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A quorum was declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BD-06/21-1 MSP to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2021 meeting.

BD-06/21-2 MSP that the PCA Board recommend to GA that the PCA Committees and Agencies occupying the PCA Office Building located in Lawrenceville, GA, be granted permissions to rearrange through normal negotiations and agreements the space usage occupied by each ministry and to rearrange the facility after the pattern agreed upon and further that the agreement be approved by the Administrative Committee prior to implementation and the Administrative Committee is to report the basic factors of the agreement, or the status thereof, back to the 49th General Assembly scheduled to be held in Birmingham, AL, in June of 2022.

BD-06/21-2 MSP that the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for the new RUF Corporation be approved. (Documents available upon request, if needed, from the Office of the Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church in America, or the office of Reformed University Fellowship.)

MSP to adjourn.

The meeting was closed in prayer by RE Danny McDaniel at 1:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ RE Danny McDaniel, President /s/ TE Bryan Chapell, Secretary/Treasurer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Presbyterian Church in America
September 30, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) held a scheduled meeting on September 30, 2021 at the Embassy Suites in Duluth, Georgia. President Bob Brunson called the meeting to order at 2:26 p.m. and RE Marty Moore opened with prayer.

In attendance:

TE Bob Brunson, Metro Atlanta	RE Frank Cohee, Providence*
TE Marty Crawford, Evangel, Alt	RE David N. Daniel, S. New England
TE Roger Collins, Mississippi Valley*	RE Richard Dolan, Georgia Foothills
TE Thomas M. Harr, New Jersey, CDM	RE Lee McCarty, Evangel*
TE Steve Jeantet, Suncoast Florida	RE Martin Moore, GA Foothills, CC
TE Murray Lee, Evangel, MNA	RE Dan Nielsen, Savannah River, RH*
TE Jerry Schriver, Metro Atlanta	RE James Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta, RBI
TE Jason Sterling, Evangel, RUF*	
TE Martin Wagner, Evangel, PCAF*	

The following men were excused: RE Robert A. Caldwell, Calvary, **MTW**; TE Kevin DeYoung, Central Carolina; RE Miles Gresham, Evangel, **CTS**; RE Pat Hodge, Calvary; TE Bill Sim, Korean Southeastern.

Staff present:

TE Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk Pro Tempore
TE John Robertson, Business Administrator
TE Wayne Herring, Church Relations Officer*
TE Bob Hornick, Assistant to the Stated Clerk*
TE Larry Hoop, Church and Presbytery Relations Representative*
TE L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus*
RE Richard Doster, *by Faith* Editor*
Ms. Angela Nantz, Operations Manager

Guests present:

TE Ed Dunnington, RBI President; TE Stephen Estock, CDM Coordinator; RE Derek Halvorson, CC President*; TE Tom Gibbs, CTS President; RE Will Huss, RUF Coordinator*; TE Irwyn Ince, MNA Coordinator.

*Those attending virtually by Zoom are marked with an asterisk.

A quorum was declared.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BD-09/21-1 MSP to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2021 meeting.

BD-09/21-2 Dr. Chapell gave an update on the current legal situation. There is no legal action in progress.

BD-09/21-3 That the following men be approved to serve as the MNA Disaster Response Board of Directors:

<u>Class of 2022</u>	RE Tim Murr
<u>Class of 2023</u>	TE Don Ward
<u>Class of 2024</u>	RE Bob Howell
<u>Class of 2025</u>	DE Dick Forrester
	TE Jeff Elliott

BD-09/21-4 MSP to Grant to the PCA Business Administrator permission to open additional bank accounts and to close any current accounts as seems best for the operations of the Administrative Committee and the PCA Office Building. Before any action is taken the Officers Committee will be consulted and fully informed.

MSP to adjourn.

The board adjourned at 2:35 pm with prayer from RE Richard Dolan.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ TE Robert Brunson, President /s/ TE Bryan Chapell, Secretary/Treasurer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Presbyterian Church in America
April 21, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) held a scheduled meeting on April 21, 2022 at the MTW office building in Lawrenceville, GA. President TE Robert Brunson called the meeting to order at 3:27 p.m. RE Richard Dolan opened with prayer.

APPENDIX B

The following men were in attendance:

TE Robert Brunson, Metro Atlanta	RE David Daniel, S. New England
TE Roger Collins, Mississippi Valley	RE Richard Dolan, GA Foothills
TE Marty Crawford, Evangel, Alternate	RE Pat Hodge, Calvary
TE Tom Harr, New Jersey, CDM	RE Martin Moore, GA Foothills, CC
TE Steve Jeantet, Suncoast Florida	RE Dan Nielsen, Savannah River, RH
TE Murray Lee, Evangel, MNA	RE James Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta, RBI
TE Jerry Schriver, Metro Atlanta	
TE Bill Sim, Korean Southeastern	
TE Martin Wagner, Evangel, PCAF	

Members absent:

RE Bob Caldwell, Calvary, **MTW**; RE Frank Cohee, Providence; TE Kevin DeYoung, Central Carolina; RE Miles Gresham, Evangel, **CTS**; RE Lee McCarty, Evangel; TE Jason Sterling, Evangel, **RUF**

Staff present:

TE Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk
TE John W. Robertson, Business Administrator
RE Richard Doster, *byFaith* Magazine Editor
TE Larry Hoop, *byFaith* News Editor
Ms. Angela Nantz, Operations Manager

Visitors present:

TE Ed Dunnington, RBI President
TE Stephen Estock, CDM Coordinator
TE Tom Gibbs, CTS President
RE Will Huss, RUF Coordinator
RE Tim Townsend, PCAF President

A quorum was declared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BD-04/22-1 MSP to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2021 meeting.

BD-04/22-2 MSP That the corporate minutes reflect that the annual corporate filings have been accomplished where required in a timely manner in all states where the corporation is registered to conduct business.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) is registered in the state of Delaware and is registered as a foreign corporation in Georgia, Missouri, Mississippi and Washington. The annual registrations in Delaware, Georgia, Missouri, and Washington have been completed. Mississippi requires no annual registration.

BD-04/22-3 MSP that the AC Minutes reflect, as a Board of Directors, that the annual RPCES corporate filings have been accomplished in a timely manner where required.

Delaware Corporations:

World Presbyterian Missions, Inc.

National Presbyterian Missions, Inc.

Christian Training, Inc.

Michigan Corporation:

Board of Home Ministries

Pennsylvania Corporation:

Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod

BD-04/22-4 MSP that the current officers of the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) are:

Robert Brunson, President

Bryan Chapell, Secretary and Treasurer

John W. Robertson, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer

Angela Nantz, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer

Amanda Burton, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer

BD-04/22-5 Dr. Chapell gave an update on the current legal situation. We are not currently party to any legal suit.

MSP to adjourn.

The board adjourned at 3:32 pm with TE Jerry Schriver leading in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ TE Robert Brunson, President /s/ TE Bryan Chapell, Secretary/Treasurer

APPENDIX C

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA 2022

MEETINGS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA. (A CORPORATION)

The Administrative Committee handles the ecclesiastical matters committed to it by the General Assembly (*BCO* 14-1.12; *RAO* 4-2; V). The twenty-member AC is unique among the other General Assembly Committees and Agencies in that it has eleven voting members elected at-large and nine voting members representing the other nine General Assembly Committees and Agencies. Moreover, the Coordinators and Presidents of the other nine General Assembly Committees and Agencies often attend AC meetings but have no vote.

The Administrative Committee of the General Assembly also serves as the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) [PCA “Corporate Bylaws,” Article II Section 2]. “The purpose of the corporation is to engage in any lawful act or activity for which corporations may be organized under the general Corporation Law of Delaware” (PCA Certificate of Incorporation). Matters requiring civil actions are handled by the PCA Board of Directors. The Board of Directors meets immediately following the stated meetings of the Administrative Committee to deal with civil actions and activities. The stated and called meetings of the AC and Board from June 2021 to April 2022 were:

- June 29, 2021 – General Assembly, St. Louis, Missouri
- September 30, 2021 – Embassy Suites, Duluth Georgia
- April 21, 2022 – MTW Building, Lawrenceville, Georgia

SUMMARY OF THE ACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

These actions of the Board of Directors are reported to the General Assembly. No action of the General Assembly is required on the following items:

1. All required corporate filings of the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) have been filed in the relevant states. The Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) is a registered Delaware corporation. The Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) is currently

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- registered as a foreign corporation in Georgia, Missouri, Mississippi, and Washington.
2. All required corporate filings of the corporations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (acquired in the “Joining and Receiving of 1982) have been filed in the relevant states. **Delaware Corporations:** World Presbyterian Missions, Inc.; National Presbyterian Missions, Inc.; Christian Training, Inc. **Michigan Corporation:** Board of Home Ministries. **Pennsylvania Corporation:** Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.
 3. The current Officers of the Corporation (through the end of this Assembly) are: **President**, RE Robert Brunson; **Secretary and Treasurer**, Dr. Bryan Chapell, (Stated Clerk); **Assistant Secretaries/Treasurers**, Rev. John Robertson (Business Administrator), Miss Angela Nantz, (Operations Manager); Mrs. Amanda Burton (Meeting Planner) [*RAO* 3-2.o, PCA “Corporate Bylaws,” Article IV].
 4. The Stated Clerk updated the Board of Directors on our current legal status and concerns. The PCA as a denomination is not presently a party to any legal suits.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE (AC) OFFICERS FOR THE 2022-2023 ASSEMBLY YEAR

At its 2022 spring meeting, the Administrative Committee elected the following men to serve as the 2022-2023 AC officers:

- Chairman – TE Robert Brunson
- Vice Chairman – TE Jerry Schriver
- Secretary – RE Pat Hodge

FUTURE ASSEMBLIES

- 2023 – Memphis, Tennessee, the location for the 50th General Assembly hosted by Covenant Presbytery, June 13-16
- 2024 – Richmond, Virginia, the location for the 51st General Assembly hosted by James River, Blue Ridge, Tidewater, and Korean Capital, June 10-14, 2024

AD INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Ad Interim Committee (AIC) on Domestic Abuse expects to present its report to this General Assembly (GA). The AC has provided organizational, travel, and clerical support for the study committee. In addition, time has been set aside at the GA for the Committee’s presentation, but not for significant debate, since specific recommendations for Assembly action will not be included. This is not an AIC oversight. The overture for the 47th GA establishing this Ad

Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse included the instruction that the Committee propose no “practice, policy, or guideline...for adoption or approval.” Consequently, the AC has been informed that the AIC will only offer the results of its study and advice to the GA.

There were some concerns raised this past year about the Committee’s launching of a website that could have seemed to advocate certain perspectives or books prior to full GA approval. The Stated Clerk’s Office related these concerns to the Committee at midyear and its leaders were immediately understanding and cooperative, turning the website more clearly toward an information-gathering purpose than a perspective-advocacy purpose. The Committee’s overall work is extensive, demonstrating exhaustive work from a host of experts with personal history, professional expertise, and profound compassion related to this pressing challenge for all churches in our sexualized and violent society. Committee members have given themselves sacrificially to the protection of our church and God’s children with a study report than deserves a careful reading and will be a great blessing in this present evil age.

See Appendix V, p. 949, for the text of the AIC report.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE *BCO* AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

The AC continues to make progress with foreign language translations of our *Book of Church Order* to help our church minister to all peoples and generations. We realize that we cannot reach across language barriers by waiting for significant growth of ethnic communities and various national in our churches *before* providing services to the rapidly growing populations of our nation. Instead, we reach people groups by serving them before they are established in our church communities. As an example, we recently received this correspondence from Switzerland:

I’m part of a group of pastors and church leaders in the evangelical tradition who engage the challenging issues of sexuality in our day and time....We have discovered the PCA STUDY REPORT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY. It is enormously helpful! May we be allowed to translate it into German. This would be of great help for the church in German-speaking Europe.

We answered, yes, with gratitude for the request. We have also received a similar request for Spanish-speaking churches and have already been processing the Human Sexuality Report in Korean.

STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION (SJC)

The Standing Judicial Commission is one of the treasures of the PCA, with members of differing perspectives typically rising above partisan debates and internet suppositions to issue decisions according to how sworn testimony aligns with our Standards. The Lord has blessed our entire denomination through the dedication and sacrificial service of these men over the years.

The SJC is not separately funded, but operates administratively as a subcommittee of the AC (*RAO* 17-1). The Stated Clerk serves as Clerk of the Commission and parliamentarian (*OMSJC* 3-8). Since the meeting of the 48th General Assembly, the twenty-four members of the SJC have processed over twenty cases.

Highly watched cases related to matters that stimulated the failed *BCO* amendments relating to ordination requirements. At its October 2021 meeting, the SJC ruled that Missouri Presbytery did not violate the investigation requirements of the *Book of Church Order* and did not err when it declined to process allegations against TE Greg Johnson.

These judgments were in regard to a complaint arising out of Missouri Presbytery, which alleged that TE Johnson 1) “denies that same-sex-attraction is sinful,” 2) “compromises and dishonors his identity in Christ by self-identifying as a same-sex-attracted man,” 3) “denies God’s purpose and power to sanctify SSA [same-sex-attracted] believers,” and 4) “cannot meet the biblical ‘above reproach’ qualification for the eldership.”

As reported in *byfaithonline.com*, October 22, 2021, the SJC ruled that: “Based on the Record, there was no reversible error in the decisions reached by Missouri Presbytery regarding the four allegations. It was not unreasonable for Presbytery to judge that TE Johnson’s ‘explanations’ on the four allegations were ‘satisfactory’ (*BCO* 31-2).” According to the SJC judgment, the Record of the Case included “over 600 pages covering multiple years of [TE Johnson’s] writing, speaking, and judicial processes” as well as “representations [that] have been extrapolated by critics...” (<https://byfaithonline.com/sjc-concludes-action-on-matters-related-to-revoice-2018/>)

At its March 3, 2022 meeting the Standing Judicial Commission of the PCA also concluded its handling of matters related to Missouri Presbytery’s investigation and adjudication of issues related to the 2018 Revoice Conference conducted at Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri. The SJC sustained Missouri Presbytery’s actions on two matters in

the complaint, but ruled that the presbytery erred regarding at least three specific judgments related to a third matter in the complaint.

The basis for the SJC's ruling was that the presbytery used incorrect criteria for review in adjudicating the allegations against Memorial Church and, consequently, failed to act properly to protect the peace and purity of the larger church when it adjudicated errors identified by its own investigating committees.

The SJC instructed Missouri Presbytery (MOP) to "hold a new hearing." This hearing is to focus on "What steps must MOP take to make clear to the broader Church the errors that were identified in Presbytery's various investigations with regard to some of the teachings at Revoice 18." In undertaking this review, the SJC encouraged MOP to consider how specific statements of some speakers at Revoice 18 may have differed from the propositions of the Report of the General Assembly's Ad Interim Committee on Sexuality.

The SJC also determined that these rulings conclude all matters related to overtures from three presbyteries that had requested that the General Assembly assume original jurisdiction in adjudicating these matters.

byFaith Publications

Because of the intense interest in these cases and their relevance to current discussions and decisions within the PCA, the Stated Clerk's office, with the approval of the SJC, published the full text of the SJC judgments in *byfaith.com*. The whole church is blessed by full and accurate reporting of SJC actions. Providing such reporting is one reason that we have sought to have *byFaith* supply more news of the denomination and its work. The consequence is that roughly 55-thousand unique visitors turned to the *byFaith* website for critical information about the PCA in the first quarter of this year.

THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE

The AC provides administrative assistance and arrangements for the Theological Examining Committee (TEC). For a report of these examinations, see Theological Examining Committee Report to 49th GA, p. 479.

COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The AC provides administrative assistance and arrangements for the Cooperative Ministries Committee (CMC), and the Stated Clerk is a member and serves as secretary (*RAO 7-4.c*). The CMC is designed to unite the leaders of our various agencies and institutions with the elected leaders of the General

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Assembly in coordinated ministry to advance the mission of the PCA as a whole. The simple goal is to have all the horses in the harness pulling in the same direction. That goal is achieved by relational camaraderie as well as by ministry strategizing, denominational assessment, and shared insights regarding best practices and resources for advancing Christ's mission in our challenging times.

The CMC met on January 19, 2022. Committee and Agency leaders shared challenges, goals, and prayers. They are also seeking to have more coordinated communication with the denomination through *byFaith*, and have asked one of their members, Dr. Murray Lee, Pastor of Cahaba Park PCA and MNA Chairman, who has a Ph.D. in organizational management, to help them consider together how better to coordinate energies and efforts for the good of all (cf. RAO 7-3.c).

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The AC provides administrative assistance to the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC), and the Stated Clerk is an *ex officio* member and secretary. The IRC, which met on April 12, 2022, corresponds and maintains relationships with churches and organizations with whom we have fraternal or ecclesiastical relations. As they did last year, the Committee has invited fraternal delegates to send video greetings to General Assembly in Birmingham, which we will air at various times in our docket. This plan worked well at last year's Assembly, and in some ways may have facilitated broader attention to the greetings than we have had in the past.

Our founding fathers strongly believed that we in the PCA constituted a blessed branch, but not the only branch, of Christ's true church. That is why we as a denomination seek cooperative ministry and understanding with like-minded and Bible-believing organizations. Supporting the mission and faith of those serving Christ with us leverages our resources, furthers our Savior's mission, and links us with those of like faith for matters of legal and legislative protection.

Nevertheless, we have wrestled since our founding with what level of affiliation to have with organizations that are not exactly like us. The question persists: When does an affiliation move from mission *cooperation* to mission *compromise*? The IRC is elected to gather accurate information to help us make such determinations because we know that our own polarities sometimes lead to inaccurate perceptions that can drive unfortunate decisions in the quick assessments of a General Assembly.

In this time of increasing cultural, legislative, and judicial challenges, our founders' wisdom in establishing the Interchurch Relations Commission to make appropriate recommendations regarding important associations has become increasingly plain. Our churches are now regularly being set up for employment or discrimination suits by LGBTQ+ advocates. If the "the Equality Act" passes, if our churches are legally defined as "places of public accommodation" by state legislatures or by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services directives, if our commitment to the uniqueness of salvation in Christ Jesus alone brands us as dispensers of "hate speech" rather than compassionate disciples of the good news that saves souls from an eternity in hell, then this this relatively small denomination has much to gain by the work and wisdom of the IRC that helps us coordinate Christ's mission with fellow believers across our nation.

Although our size is relatively small, we give thanks to the Lord for the PCA's disproportionate influence in organizations with whom we have various levels of affiliation. The executive leaders of the World Reformed Fellowship, National Reformed and Presbyterian Council (NAPARC), the Gospel Coalition, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization are or have been PCA teaching elders – the latter three being of Korean heritage – for which we are very grateful. As PCA Stated Clerk, Bryan Chapell holds a seat on the Board of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus, served as Chairman of the NAE Executive Committee and Board from 2006 to 2020.

We praise God that our salt and light witness of his Son far exceeds the apparent strictures of our denominational size, and we pray that this influence will continue for the sake of all branches of Christ's church and witness!

PRESBYTERY CLERKS CONFERENCE

The annual training conference for Presbytery Clerks was held December 3-4, 2021. The AC has an important duty of facilitating communication among clerks for sharing knowledge and experience, and one way we do this is through the annual Presbytery Clerks Conference, which provides instruction for new clerks as well as a forum where experienced clerks can compare notes and discuss challenges they face. Another platform for discussion throughout the year is the clerks' ongoing email group. By these means, clerks help each other with their responsibilities – such as processing GA business, providing advice on discipline cases, communicating with other presbyteries, and keeping presbytery minutes and other records, ministerial transfers, etc. The AC office

also provides tools to this group (e.g., the Clerks Handbook and presbytery portal) to help all clerks in their work. I am delighted that we can serve our presbytery clerks as we all work to serve the whole church in a unified effort to honor our Savior.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCKET CHANGES TO NOTE

Last year's General Assembly was the largest in PCA history, with 2114 commissioners (1499 teaching elders and 615 ruling elders) representing 86 presbyteries and 967 churches. The Spirit of Christ was evident in the proceedings, as the brethren debated weighty issues with, for the most part, charity, humility, and restraint when face-to-face. We were re-introduced to the long schedule of GA, and that caused our debates to go too late into the night on Thursday because few commissioners wanted to re-engage on Friday.

We are adjusting the docket this year, seeking to shorten worship services, again present fraternal delegate reports by video, and condense seminar sessions to keep the late-night debates from re-occurring. Most of the Thursday of GA is dedicated to the discussion and processing of overtures. To help commissioners be prepared for the business of the day (and to help us progress with business), reports may as usual be accessed on ShareFile before they are distributed in print.

These steps are not guaranteed to solve all of last year's concerns about the late hour of significant debate, but the AC staff has responded with good plans to mitigate the concern. An overture that seeks to establish an order of the day to require the Assembly to deal with Overtures Committee matters is well-intended but unwise. All should recognize that business varies significantly from year to year. Important debates can relate to matters other than overtures and sometimes go in unplanned directions with unpredictable timing (such as a motion to limit the time of Committee and Agency reports that caused an extra hour of debate last year). Sometimes *BCO* Amendments, Ad Interim Committee recommendations, Committee of Commissioner reports, parliamentary motions, or reports from the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records stimulate lengthy discussions and become the unanticipated pressure points of the Assembly apart from overtures discussions. Also, Overtures Committee reports sometimes must be made in partial sections due to the timeliness of the matters being considered or the magnitude of the vote needed for passage (e.g., *RAO/OMSJC* amendments).

LAWSUITS

The AC navigates legal matters for at the denominational level for the PCA. I am pleased to report that the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) is not party of any lawsuits.

I remain thankful that the PCA, as a denomination, is not presently a party to any legal suits, although we are or have been on the precipice of several. Most of these involve the moral failures of pastors with staff or parishioners, or some perceived violation of sexual discrimination standards in church employment or chaplaincy practices. Still, these cases constitute only a small fraction of our vulnerabilities related to the Boy Scouts of America.

We have, thus far, defended ourselves against legal attempts of various parties to sue the PCA and every church in our denomination (and every other denomination) that has ever been associated with Boy Scout activities. Efforts thus far have been focused on the churches in one region of New Jersey, in which every church of every denomination that hosted or sponsored Boy Scouts has been sued. If this suit is successful, we anticipate such suits will spread nationwide. Eighty thousand former Boy Scouts are now claiming they were abused in scouting activities. The Mormons, Methodists, and Southern Baptists have already committed hundreds of millions to compensating victims.

For narrow legal grounds the bankruptcy judge has excluded us from the present case, but our greater protection lies in one central principle: “We are *not* a hierarchical denomination.” Thus far, those who have tried to find “deeper pockets” than local churches in our denominational structures have been thwarted by the wisdom of our founders who made sure that no higher judicatory has any power other than that granted to it by lower courts. The ultimate authority in *our* Presbyterian system resides in the body of Christ as a whole and higher courts have no authority over property, finance, doctrine, or judgment, except that which is granted to them from the body. We have a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals precedent at the federal level, now more than a decade old, affirming our legal structure and protections. Still, we need to create long-term institutional memory that our form of government is not hierarchical.

Our “grass roots” commitments are not simply a slogan to cite during ecclesiastical debates. As the lawyers and judges among us frequently remind PCA leaders, if we establish these principles in our standards but operate differently in our practices, we could lose the legal status of being a “grass

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

roots” denomination and our liabilities will grow exponentially. Wise forefathers established a form of government that has protected us well from devastating legal and financial vulnerabilities. The protections remain only as we all become responsible to understand and act in accord with that polity.

Because these legal challenges relating to sexual abuse or sexual discrimination are so prevalent and powerful, we have been significantly aided by our associations with the legal and legislative resources of ecclesiastical organizations with whom we have fraternal relations, specifically the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). Why both? I did not realize until I became Stated Clerk that, even though we are a relatively small denomination, we are more than 10 times larger than the next largest Presbyterian and Reformed denomination in NAPARC. In fact, the PCA is larger than all other 13 NAPARC denominations combined – some of which have only have only a dozen churches or fewer. We have been significantly aided by the resources and expertise of the NAE.

Finally, in the category of legal concerns, but probably better considered among us as a reminder for mutual care, the PCA is facing a proliferation of websites, advocacy groups, and publications using Presbyterian Church in America and PCA copyrighted designations for their titling, advertising, and fundraising. In order to protect us all from misrepresentation or misunderstanding that could have serious legal and financial consequences for the larger church, the PCA Board of Directors is required to notify all that PCA trademark designations are legally protected and may not be used without General Assembly approval. Unless you are a PCA church or a PCA GA-approved entity, please do not use the PCA name in the titling for your organization, website, or Facebook page, etc., and if you have done so, please change.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

God has in His providence richly blessed the funding of the PCA Administrative Committee. First of all, God has blessed our development efforts. The year 2021 saw Contributions Undesignated come in at \$1,458, 882 and Designated at \$44,640 for a total of \$1,503,522. In the same year we had Earned Income of \$1,580,658 and Interest Income of \$10,458 bringing Total Operational Income to \$3,094,638. The higher Earned Income was, of course, driven by the largest General Assembly in our brief history. All of this was enhanced by the “Below the Line” income (the earnings from investments and

APPENDIX C

the PPP Grant) of \$367,374, enabling Total Net Income for the year to reach \$418,918.

Our thanks go out to our Development Team teaching elders led by Paul Kooistra and implemented by Wayne Herring and Craig Wilkes, with several other AC staff and Committee members contributing as time and opportunities are provided from year to year.

- The annual audits of the AC and the PCA Office Building were completed as required (*RAO 14-7.h*).
- The PCA Committees and Agencies have submitted their 2023 proposed budgets for approval by the 49th General Assembly (see Attachment 2, p. 401).
- The AC evaluated the Committee and Agency Chief Administrative Officer compensation guidelines as required (*BCO 14-1.13*). The Committees and Agencies state CAO compensation as separate line items or notes in their respective proposed budgets presented to the Assembly. The AC annually reviews compensation guidelines. Every four years the Committees and Agencies do an in-depth study of comparable CAO compensations. We completed an in-depth study in the fall of 2021.
- The AC reviewed the General Assembly Commissioner's Registration fee as required (*RAO 9-4*) and is recommending no increase this year.¹ (Please be aware that scholarships are available.)
- The 2021 true cost of unfunded mandates was \$524.67 per commissioner, which exceeds the current \$450 Assembly Registration Fee.
- The AC reviewed the required contributions of other General Assembly Committees and Agencies to the AC (*RAO 5-4.a*) and is making appropriate recommendations.

¹ Commissioners should note that the General Assembly Registration fees do not fully cover all the costs associated with the General Assembly, that not all commissioners pay the full fee, and that the AC Funding Plan adopted by the General Assembly in 2012 recommended that the General Assembly Registration fees more realistically cover costs. Moreover, some of the changes in General Assembly logistics and amenities that are being enacted and are being proposed increase Assembly costs, which the AC has been absorbing. About one-third of the costs of the Assembly's annual meeting are underwritten by Exhibitors. The larger costs to commissioners are usually not the registration fee but travel, hotel, and meals expenses.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The AC reviewed the requested Annual Administrative Fee for Ministers to the AC (*RAO 5-4.c*) and is recommending no increase this year.
- Theoretically, SJC costs would be fully funded by a portion of General Assembly Registration Fees being reserved for SJC Operations. This does not always occur.
- The AC received and approved a recommendation from the Building Management Committee regarding the space cost fees for Committees and Agencies occupying the PCA Office Building. No increase is recommended. The PCA Office Building is currently being rearranged to best suit the needs of the Committees and Agencies occupying it. We anticipate an increase in space costs fees in future years and will be better prepared once remodeling and construction bids are received.
- The AC approved auditors for the various Committees and Agencies as requested and is making appropriate recommendations to the Assembly.
- “Certificate of Compliance” forms were signed by AC members and collected for the file (as part of the Conflict of Interest Policy, per *M21GA*, 1993, 21-64, pp. 174ff).

PERSONNEL

We appreciate the faithful and diligent service of all of the staff of the Administrative Committee/Office of the Stated Clerk. The PCA Historical Center (see Attachment 1) and *byFaith* magazine operate under the AC. The AC staff presently includes Bryan Chapell, John Robertson, Amanda Burton, Richard Doster, Paul Kooistra, Priscilla Lowrey, Angela Nantz, Wayne Sparkman, Roy Taylor, Margaret Baker, Karen Cook, Ashley Davis, Erika Derr, Anna Eubanks, Karen Frey, Wayne Herring, Larry Hoop, Monica Johnston, Margie Mallow, Billy Park, and Craig Wilkes. Several staff members work remotely and/or part time.

We give thanks to the Lord for the faithful work of Rev. Robert Hornick, who retired at the end of 2021 after serving as the Assistant to the Stated Clerk for more than 11 years. Bob’s helpful presence leading our annual Clerks Conference is one that we immediately miss. We are thankful for the work he has done specifically to serve our presbytery clerks. Bob spent many hours on the phone and travelling to help the PCA flourish through questions, trials, and frustrations. He has led congregations and presbyteries and trained leaders across the PCA. His work has been a benefit to the PCA and the Lord’s Kingdom.

As noted earlier, preparations for this General Assembly, the committee meetings through the years of the pandemic restrictions, previous General Assemblies scheduled during the pandemic years, and the administrative needs of the denomination in periods of financial pressures, health challenges, transportation difficulties, and contractual breakage have required the AC staff to respond with unprecedented innovation, resilience, energy, patience, and faith. Our people have so responded for the sake of Christ's church, and we give God praise for these dear saints he has graced to serve our needs and his mission so well.

The AC evaluated the job performance of Stated Clerk Bryan Chapell as required by *RAO* 3-3.d and heartily approved his work with gratitude for his experience and demeanor in representing our church and in leading healing efforts to unify our ministry and mission. The General Assembly elects the Stated Clerk-Coordinator of the Administrative Committee annually, and the AC looks forward to the election of Dr. Chapell as Stated Clerk of the PCA for the Assembly year 2022-2023.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PCA: A CELEBRATION

The 50th Anniversary Committee for the PCA has begun meeting and strategizing for our 50th General Assembly in Memphis, TN. With the organizational assistance and authority of the AC, the local GA host committee has joined with leaders from various constituencies across the PCA to coordinate 50th Anniversary plans. We also give thanks for the willing and experienced leadership of our Anniversary Committee Chairman RE Jim Wert and Memphis Host Committee Chairman TE Robert Browning. Both have been extremely helpful in clarifying vision and assigning working committees with specific duties.

Plans are underway for commemorating the PCA's history, ministry, and prayers for the future that our PCA people can treasure. For this purpose we will be using byfaithonline.com and the *byFaith* print magazine to remind us of pivotal milestones in the PCA's history, to remember and reflect on the issues and debates that clarified our thinking, and to celebrate the PCA people who, through their books, ministries, and messages, not only shaped our denomination, but the wider church as well.

So that we can get these to you and your people, we will need email and postal mail addresses where issues may be sent. We will provide multiple opportunities at this 49th General Assembly for you to provide the addresses we need for delivering these commemorative publications that will celebrate

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the Lord's blessings on the PCA. We pray that this will be an informing and uniting effort that will help us move forward with joy as one body into the Lord's ministry and mission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the General Assembly elect Dr. Bryan Chapell for another term as Stated Clerk.
2. That the Assembly commend John Robertson and the AC staff: Amanda Burton, Richard Doster, Paul Kooistra, Priscilla Lowrey, Angela Nantz, Wayne Sparkman, Roy Taylor, Margaret Baker, Karen Cook, Ashley Davis, Erika Derr, Anna Eubanks, Karen Frey, Wayne Herring, Larry Hoop, Monica Johnston, Margie Mallow, Billy Park, and Craig Wilkes for their work.
3. That **Overture 1** from Palmetto Presbytery, "Docket Overtures Committee Report as a GA Order of the Day," **be answered in the negative.**

GROUNDS:

Requiring the Assembly to establish the Overtures Committee Report to be an Order of the Day is well-intended but unwise. All should recognize that business varies significantly from year to year. Important debates can relate to matters other than overtures and sometimes go in unplanned directions with unpredictable timing (such as a motion to limit the time of Committee and Agency reports that caused an extra hour of debate last year). Sometimes *BCO* Amendments, Ad Interim Committee recommendations, Committee of Commissioner reports, parliamentary motions, or reports from the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records stimulate lengthy discussions and become the unanticipated pressure points of the Assembly apart from overtures discussions. Also, Overtures Committee reports sometimes must be made in partial sections due to the timeliness of the matters being considered or the magnitude of the vote needed for passage (e.g., *RAO/OMSJC* amendments).

There is only one report (Nominating Committee) required to be an order of the day at each General Assembly, and this is dictated by the *RAO* (*RAO* 8-4.j), and even this requirement does not dictate a specific time.

While we do not believe any additional orders of the day are wise, any overture binding future Assemblies by creating a requirement on the docket would need to codify that requirement in the *RAO*. Changes to the *RAO* require a 2/3 majority of the General Assembly in part because

binding future General Assemblies to a course of action is not a step to be taken lightly.

4. That **Overture 22** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery, “Amend *RAO* 3-2.h, Making Statistical Data Digitally Accessible,” **be answered in the affirmative as amended** (double underline and ~~double strikethrough~~ show changes made to the original overture language):

RAO 3-2.h

- h. He shall be responsible for publishing both digitally and in print the General Assembly minutes and church statistical reports of the Presbyterian Church in America and periodically updating the digest of the minutes. ~~Likewise, these minutes and statistical reports (i.e. ‘The PCA Yearbook’) shall be made available in digital format (i.e. pdf, .xlsx, etc.).~~

GROUNDS:

As the overture states, the Stated Clerk’s Office already publishes the General Assembly Minutes in a digital format. We welcome the charge to investigate ways to best make our statistical information available in a digital format that also preserves the integrity of the information while protecting private information. We do not believe codifying terms in the *RAO* like *PCA Yearbook* or file extensions would be the best solution. File extensions vary as technology progresses. We would also not recommend that the entirety of the information available in the *PCA Yearbook* be available in a digital format. We hope that PCA Teaching Elders would continue to share their biographical information with the denomination, and this information should not be shared in an online format.

5. That **Overture 18** from Pacific Northwest Georgia, “Amend *RAO* 3-2 by Adding an Administrative Responsibility for the Stated Clerk’s Office Regarding the Processing of Allegations,” **be answered in the negative.**

GROUNDS:

The AC shares the concerns noted in this overture regarding allegations in public speech. However, the Stated Clerk already has the authority to give advice and counsel to parties on how to channel their concerns to appropriate entities (*RAO* 3-2.a, s). We believe that it is wise for this function to remain as described in the *RAO* so that the Stated Clerk can assess the appropriate course of action. We believe that the determination

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of whether disciplinary attention is needed is best left to the appropriate court. Further, this overture implements a level of codification that would likely add considerable duties to the work of the Stated Clerk.

6. That the Administrative Committee budget for 2023 of \$3,565,831 Operating Budget and \$1,921,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
7. That the PCA Building budget for 2023 of \$405,475 Operating Budget be approved. The PCA Building does not participate in Partnership Shares
8. That the CDM budget for 2023 of \$2,046,000 Operating Budget and \$840,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
9. That the Covenant College budget for 2023 of \$33,266,734 Operating Budget and \$2,000,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
10. That the CTS budget for 2023 of \$9,817,286 Operating Budget and \$2,000,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
11. That the MNA budget for 2023 of \$23,538,168 Operating Budget and \$8,943,571 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
12. That the MTW budget for 2023 of \$66,248,400 Operating Budget and \$9,351,690 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
13. That the PCAF budget for 2023 of \$1,959,817 Operating Budget be approved. The PCAF does not participate in Partnership Shares.
14. That the RBI budget for 2023 of \$4,854,716 Operating Budget be approved. RBI does not participate in Partnership Shares.
15. That the RUF budget for 2023 of \$51,826,287 Operating Budget and \$8,576,825 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
16. That the RH budget for 2023 of \$3,329,000 Operating Budget and \$1,225,000 Partnership Shares budget be approved.
17. That the “2023 Budgeted Partnership Shares and Ministry Asks of PCA Ministry Partners by the Participating General Assembly Ministries” be approved.
18. That the Assembly take note that the 2021 Audit performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan on the Administrative Committee was received and reviewed as required by *RAO 14-7.h*.
19. That the Assembly take note that the 2021 Audit performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan on the PCA Building Fund was received and reviewed as required by *RAO 14-7.h*.
20. That Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan, PC, be approved as auditors for the Administrative Committee and the Committee on Discipleship Ministries for the calendar year ending December 31, 2022.
21. That Capin, Crouse, & Company be approved as auditors for the Committee on Mission to the World and the Committee on Mission to North America for the calendar year ending December 31, 2022.

APPENDIX C

22. That Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLP, be approved as auditors for the Committee on Reformed University Fellowship for the calendar year ending December 31, 2022.
23. That the Assembly receive the charts below as the acceptable response to the GA requirement for an annual report on the cost of the AC’s mandated responsibilities.

2021 Unfunded Mandates

GENERAL ASSEMBLY COSTS

Year	# of Commissioners	Total Costs	Cost per Commissioner	Amount of Fee Alloted to GA	Total Standard Fee
2016	1316	572,414	\$435	\$350	\$450
2017	1461	585,301	\$401	\$350	\$450
2018	1537	628,815	\$409	\$350	\$450
2019	1652	729,515	\$442	\$350	\$450
2021	2114	844,600	\$400	\$350	\$450

AC GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESPONSIBILITIES		
Description	2021 Total ²	Per Commissioner
Committee on Constitutional Business	\$10,706	\$5.06
General Assembly with Minutes ¹	\$874,600	\$413.72
Interchurch Relations Committee	\$15,058	\$7.12
Nominating Committee ²	\$21,412	\$10.13
Standing Judicial Commission	\$187,394	\$88.64
Theological Examining Committee ³	\$0	\$0
TOTALS	\$1,109,170	\$524.67

1. Review of Presbytery Records is included in the General Assembly Total. In 2021, RPR cost \$6,821 (a significantly lower cost due to the pandemic preventing in-person meetings); production and delivery of the General Assembly Minutes cost at least \$30,000 and is included in this "Total".
2. The expense of the Nominating Committee is shared by the PCA Committees and Agencies.
3. The Theological Examining Committee did not incur any material expenses in 2021 as per their report to the AC.

24. That the registration fee remain at \$450 for the 2023 General Assembly, with \$350 allocated to the GA expenses, \$25 for publication of the GA

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Minutes, and \$75 allocated to the Standing Committee cost center for the expenses of the Standing Judicial Commission. Honorably retired or emeritus elders would continue to pay 1/3 of the regular registration (\$150). Elders coming from churches with annual incomes below \$150,000, as per their 2022 statistics, may register for \$300. [Editorial note: The 49th Assembly adopted a revised version of this recommendation. See p. 71.]

- 25. That the Building Occupancy Cost charged to each ministry be kept at \$12 per square foot for 2023.
- 26. That the plan outlined below for the payment of the required contribution from the PCA Committees and Agencies to the PCA Administrative Committee be approved.

- PLAN: Committees and Agencies are asked to pay in one of the following three options:
- 1. Semiannual – one-half paid in January and one-half paid in July.
 - 2. Quarterly – one fourth paid the first month of each quarter: January, April, July, and October.
 - 3. Monthly – one twelfth paid the first of each month.

NOTE: The chart below shows the agreed upon amounts for 2023.

PCA MINISTRY	CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT
AC	
CDM	\$11,500
CC	\$11,500
CTS	\$11,500
MNA	\$11,500
MTW	\$11,500
PCAF	\$11,500
RBI	\$11,500
RH	\$11,500
RUF	\$11,500
	\$103,500

- 27. That the Annual Administration Fee for Ministers be set at \$100 for 2023.
- 28. That the General Assembly set the request to Presbyteries for GA Host Committee assistance at \$500 for 2023.
- 29. That the Assembly approve the minutes of the Board of Directors for April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021.
- 30. That the Assembly approve the minutes of the Administrative Committee for April 20, 2021, June 29, 2021, and September 30, 2021.

31. That the *RAO* be amended to read:

RAO 1-1. The General Assembly shall be called to order at the designated time by the Moderator, and shall begin with a worship service, including a season of prayer, a sermon or exhortation by the retiring Moderator, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper (except when a condensed version of the meeting is being held as stipulated in *RAO* 10-6).

RAO 10-6. In the case of extraordinary events occurring or unusual circumstances arising that make it impractical for the General Assembly to hold its annual stated meeting on the dates or at the site previously approved by the Assembly, the Moderator with the Administrative Committee shall be authorized, upon the recommendation of the Stated Clerk and Moderator, to make alternative arrangements. In the case where national or regional travel is prohibited or unadvised, these arrangements may include calling for a condensed Assembly to be held by virtual means coordinated by the Administrative Committee. A condensed Assembly would only hear business required for the mission of the church to go forward until a full Assembly could be convened. Types of business that could be handled could include Committee and Agency budgets, continuity of business, and immediate mission-critical recommendations. All Overtures, Review of Presbytery Records, Nominations, and non-critical reports and recommendations will be postponed until an in-person Assembly could be convened. In the case of a need for a condensed General Assembly, the Moderator of the previous Assembly shall serve as Moderator. Extraordinary matters needing General Assembly action, but not addressed in this paragraph, shall only be considered upon the approval of a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the condensed Assembly.

32. That the General Assembly encourage the pastors and people of the PCA to sign up for the free commemorative editions of *byFaith* magazine so that we can rejoice together through the year of our 50th General Assembly in what God has done to build a church faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.
33. That the General Assembly urge all congregations to send in their statistics for 2022 to have the most accurate count possible for the 50th Celebration year.
34. That the GA remind all commissioners and their associated entities that Presbyterian Church in America trademarks and their associated

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

derivatives (names, abbreviations, logos, etc.) are copyright protected and are not to be used without General Assembly approval for individual, organizational, periodical, or internet site titling, fund raising, or representation. Those who have already acted without authorization to identify or credential their websites, organizations, periodicals, Facebook pages, solicitations, etc. with PCA trademarks should remove those designations. If further clarification is needed, inquiries or concerns should be addressed to the Office of the Stated Clerk of the PCA.

Attachment 1

PCA Historical Center Annual Report to the Administrative Committee January 2022

How the world has changed in the last fifty years, particularly so with the advent of computers. Once upon a time, men like Buswell, MacRae, Rayburn, and Barker kept up a good correspondence with their peers in the Church, and moreover, with an eye to history, they retained those files and made sure they were preserved. And rich files they are, indispensable when questions come up only now as to what they thought and why they made certain decisions or took certain actions.

But now, in this digital age, the hard reality is such that precious few people keep a correspondence file. Emails are deleted; computers and their hard drives are thrown out, and the rich information load they contain is lost to posterity. Published works, blog entries, and social media are now the territory where we might, if we would, gather some record of an individual's life and ministry. Of these three areas where content is available, I try to make some record as time and funds permit, but it is only a drop in the proverbial bucket. If the Historical Center had more staff, one worker might be charged with spending more time gathering from the digital realm. Or if, as a Church, we were wise, we might discipline ourselves in a habit of each one taking it upon himself to save those things that have enduring value. Print off and file away an email where a brother gives good explanation as to why an overture was adopted or why it failed. Make a copy from social media where another tells of revival in his church. And most importantly, give attention to tracking the story of your own life—it is a record of God's work of salvation and providence.

“Search backward into all the performances of Providence throughout your lives. So did Asaph: ‘I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also on all thy work, and talk of thy doings’ (Ps. 77:11-12). He labored to recover and revive the ancient providences of God's mercies many years past, and suck a fresh sweetness out of them by new reviews of them. Ah, sirs, let me tell you, there is not such a pleasant history for you to read in all the world as the history of your own lives, if you would but sit down and record from the beginning hitherto what God has been to you, and done for you; what signal

manifestations and outbursts of His mercy, faithfulness and love there have been in all the conditions you have passed through. If your hearts do not melt before you have gone half through that history, they are hard hearts indeed. ‘My Father, thou art the guide of my youth’ (Jer. 3:4)”—John Flavel, *The Mystery of Providence*, chapter 9.

In review, 2021 seems now like it was a very quiet year at the PCA Historical Center. The bulk of my time was spent building the database for our research library’s online catalog. Several scanning projects were also begun, as noted below.

Research Library

Development of the Historical Center’s own library has been a necessary project these last twenty plus years. Inevitably, the Center will eventually be located elsewhere, not in the Buswell Library and near those resources. When that move takes place, we will certainly need our own collection at that time. Additionally, these holdings are an invaluable help to staff in answering a patron’s questions, and they serve as an aid to visiting researchers, even in some cases being the reason for a patron’s visit.

As the collection grew over the years, there came a point where an indexed catalog or database was the only viable way to keep track of our collection. Appropriate software was finally located and the subscription rate was workable for our small budget. Data entry began in 2020 and continued through 2021, with nearly 2,800 titles now entered into the database. The online catalog can be accessed at <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/pcahc>

And here, I would again extend an invitation to PCA authors – pastors and others – to send a copy of their published works for preservation at the PCA Historical Center. Please sign and date the book on the title page, if you remember to do so, as that adds an important personal touch.

Website Development [www.pcahistory.org]

A major project in 2022 will be a re-working of the Center’s website. Some initial changes have already been made to the home page.

Patronage

Currently we have four patrons working on books where their research is based largely upon resources here at the PCA Historical Center. I think that’s a new record for our small shop! Three of these projects are biographical, and the

fourth will be a history of a stateside ministry. Meanwhile, in-person visits have been rare this past year, as you would expect, and patron requests have arrived almost entirely via email or social media. I maintain an Excel file tracking patron requests and replies provided.

Historical Center Staffing & Student volunteers

Mr. Jay Mallow continues to work on a limited part-time basis as my assistant, working primarily to scan a number of periodicals. Additionally, Mrs. Emma Ford, a Covenant Seminary student, has been serving in 2021 as a volunteer, working at data entry for the online catalog of our research library. Another CTS student, John Sung, has helped with improving our set of Excel files dealing with the various operations of the Historical Center.

Projects:

Rev. Camden Bucey, now serving as Historian for the OPC, has drawn from duplicates in the OPC archives in order to donate fourteen issues from the final years [1938-1949] of *Christianity Today* (not to be confused with the magazine we know today, published under that same name). This was the first publication of the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, which was started by Samuel G. Craig, and the magazine is an important record of the Modernist controversy in the first half of the Twentieth century. This donation comes close to completing our own collection, and so we now have a new project, digitizing these issues and adding them to the issues already posted to our website: <https://pcahistory.org/HCLibrary/periodicals/CT/index.html>

Work will also continue in scanning *The Reformed Presbyterian Advocate*, which served as the denominational magazine for the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod. Twelve years of this journal have already been posted in 2021: <https://pcahistory.org/HCLibrary/periodicals/rpa/index.html>.

Several other similar scanning projects continue, albeit slowly at times. I will also be returning in 2022 to update and improve our *BCO* History Project. Our attention will also turn now to helping to prepare for the PCA's 50th anniversary celebration, in 2023.

Historical Center Advisory Committee

Members of the Historical Center Advisory Committee include:

Rev. Brannon Bowman, pastor of the Millbrook Presbyterian Church, Millbrook, AL.

Rev. Caleb Cangelosi, pastor of the Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church, Madison, MS.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mr. David Cooper, Ruling elder at First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, TN, and author of its history and is former Wire Editor at the Chattanooga Times Free Press.

Mrs. Laura Ledbetter Dowling, mother of seven homeschooled children and wife of RE Steve Dowling.

Mrs. Shirley Duncan, former co-owner of A Press, Greenville, SC. [Editorial note: Mrs. Duncan passed into glory after the writing of this report.]

RE Melton Duncan, Mrs. Duncan's son, serves as alternate on occasion. He is a Ruling elder and church administrator at the Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC.

Miss Lannae Graham, former archivist at the Presbyterian Historical Foundation, Montreat, NC.

Dr. Sean Michael Lucas, pastor of the Independent Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN.

Dr. Ken McHear, pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Duanesburg, NY.

Dr. Otis W. Pickett, Assistant Professor of History & Political Science, Mississippi College, Jackson, MS.

Dr. Robert Davis Smart, pastor of Christ Church, Normal, IL.

Dr. Barry Waugh, author and independent researcher, Greenville, SC.

Ex-officio members of the Advisory Committee include:

Dr. Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Rev. John Robertson, Business Manager for Stated Clerk's Office & Administrative Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ RE Wayne Sparkman, Th.M., C.A., and Director of the PCA Historical Center.

Attachment 2

**PROPOSED BUDGETS
PCA COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES**

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
2023 PROPOSED BUDGET**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

Budget Philosophy

The budget is built primarily on the job description of the Stated Clerk in the *RAO*, which determines the services that are to be provided by the Office of the Stated Clerk to churches, Presbyteries, Committees and Agencies, and to the General Assembly. The General Assembly has also placed the Historical Center and *byFaith* Magazine under the general oversight and in the budget of the AC.

General Comments

Many of the activities and responsibilities of the Administrative Committee are directly affected by the activity and growth of the PCA, which in turn are reflected in annual budget increases for many line items. The economic inflation rate also affects many budget items.

The budgets are presented in a format to comply with the standards for not-for-profit organizations adopted by the Financial Accounting Standards (FASB). The FASB standards provide a definition of “supporting activities” which they call “management and general.” Therefore, compensation for the Stated Clerk and his staff is allocated according to the estimated time spent by each person in “program,” administration, and fund raising areas.

The Current Prognostication

In a time of pandemic remnants, threatening inflation, faltering government, divisive politics, and unpredictable war, one is unsettled relying on any economic forecasts. That being said, numbers are being selected from a posture of optimism that our merciful God and Father will deliver us in the midst of the chaos.

Economic Assumptions

- A. Stated Clerk/Administration
 - 1.0% PCA Growth Rate

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Current 8.5% National Consumer Price Index (CPI) and 6.5% at end of 2022– Kiplinger Letter, March 31, 2022
- Kiplinger predicted a year end unemployment rate of 3.0% for 2022 – Kiplinger Letter, March 31, 2022.
- The full time equivalent (FTE) employees budgeted for 2023 is 17.

B. PCA Office Building

- Rent will be increasing for 2023; the calculation is pending.
- The full time equivalent (FTE) employees budgeted at the beginning and end of the year will be 0.5.

II. Major Changes in the Budget

The main changes in the budget for 2023 are increases to manage inflation and provisions for the 50th Anniversary Celebration.

III. Income Streams and Development Plans

The PCA AC Development plans are increasing in man hours and in effectiveness. Other income streams are expected to grow gradually.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

There was no “Major Ministry” unimplemented in 2021.

Present & Future

- We are continuing our efforts to provide Korean translations of our more important documents. Also progress is being made for Spanish and Portuguese translations.
- We are in the Lord’s hands always, but very evident in these uncertain times.

V. Notes to Line Items

Notes to the Budget Comparison Statement

General Note: First, all expenses are increased on an overall basis by the expectation of inflation effects. If inflation jumps as much as some are expecting, it could be necessary for all Committees and Agencies to increase compensation above these budgeted numbers in order to keep and care for very valuable employees. We trust this will not be necessary, but believe it should be acknowledged.

APPENDIX C

Lines 6, 7, and 12 are increased by larger amounts as they bear the expenses of the budgeted 50th Anniversary Celebration: respectively, News Office - \$80,000, Historical Center - \$5,000, and General Assembly - \$45,000.

Line 8: Committees and Agencies. This costs center increased by a compensation allocation of \$14,600 and a professional services expense of \$7,000.

Line 9: Churches and Presbyteries. The increase in this department/cost center was a change in compensation allocation of almost \$60,000.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE						
PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET						
DESCRIPTION	TOTAL PROGRAMS	MANAGEMENT & GENERAL	FUND RAISING	CAPITAL ASSETS	TOTALS	% OF TOTALS
SUPPORT & REVENUE						
1 Contributions (1)	\$ 1,921,000	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 1,921,000	53.49%
2 Fees	1,538,500	0	0		1,538,500	42.84%
3 Interest	0	2,000	0		2,000	0.06%
4 Others	130,000	0	0	0	130,000	3.62%
5 TOTAL REVENUES	3,589,500	2,000	0	0	3,591,500	100.00%
OPERATING EXPENSES						
6a Coordinator Sal, Hsng & Benefits	248,400	13,800	13,800	0	276,000	7.68%
6b Staff Salary & Benefits	1,526,350	51,710	103,890	0	1,681,950	46.83%
6 Total Staff Salary & Benefits	1,774,750	65,510	117,690	0	1,957,950	54.52%
7 Travel	216,700	4,000	5,000	0	225,700	6.28%
8 Rent	47,900	6,000	2,000	0	55,900	1.56%
9 Janitor/Grounds	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
10 Mail/Ship	164,000	1,000	16,000	0	181,000	5.04%
11 Office Supplies	11,400	4,000	1,200	0	16,600	0.46%
12 Telephone	27,000	1,500	300	0	28,800	0.80%
13 Maintenance	0	500	0	0	500	0.01%
14 Leased Equipment	135,500	5,000	0	0	140,500	3.91%
15 Dues/Subscription	51,300	11,000	300	0	62,600	1.74%
16 Insurance	28,500	1,200	1,000	0	30,700	0.85%
17 Interest	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
18 Printing	230,900	500	15,000	0	246,400	6.86%
19 Staff Training/Develop.	1,200	0	0	0	1,200	0.03%
20 Promotion/Appeals	12,000	0	0	0	12,000	0.33%
21 Foundation	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
22 Planning	25,000	0	0	0	25,000	0.70%
23 Professional Services	457,000	20,000	4,000	0	481,000	13.39%
24 Taxes	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
25 Utilities	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	0.14%
26 Contingencies	50,000	10,000	2,000	0	62,000	1.73%
28 Depreciation	10,552	22,429	0	0	32,981	0.92%
29 TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	3,248,702	152,639	164,490	0	3,565,831	98.37%
30 Operating Surplus/Deficit	340,798	(150,639)	(164,490)	0	25,669	0.71%
31 LESS Depreciation	10,552	22,429	0	0	32,981	0.92%
32 NET OPERATING EXP.	3,238,150	130,210	164,490	0	3,532,850	100.00%
OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS:						
33 Capital Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
34 TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
26 TOTAL NET BUDGET	3,238,150	130,210	164,490	0	3,532,850	98.37%
36 SURPLUS/DEFICIT	351,350	(128,210)	(164,490)	0	58,650	1.63%
(1) Partnership Shares --- (contributions required from churches to fulfill responsibilities)						

APPENDIX C

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE								
BUDGETS COMPARISONS STATEMENT								
FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET								
DESCRIPTION	2019	2020 (amended)	2021	2022	PROPOSED BUDGET		2022 TO 2023	
	BUDGET	BUDGET	Budget	Budget	2023	% OF	CHANGE IN BUDGET	
					PROPOSED	TOTALS	\$	%
SUPPORT & REVENUE								
1 Contributions (1)	\$ 1,951,000	\$ 1,492,000	\$ 1,781,000	\$ 1,881,000	\$ 1,921,000	53.49%	\$ 40,000	2.13%
2 Fees	1,117,500	1,049,622	1,053,500	1,173,500	1,538,500	42.84%	365,000	31.10%
3 Investments	0	8,000	2,000	5,000	2,000	0.06%	(3,000)	-60.00%
4 Others	0	0	300,664	321,962	130,000	3.62%	(191,962)	-59.62%
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	3,068,500	2,549,622	3,137,164	3,381,462	3,591,500	100.00%	210,038	6.21%
OPERATING EXPENSES								
6 News Office	527,620	493,910	507,220	551,030	702,393	19.56%	151,363	27.47%
7 Historical Center	159,360	157,380	157,560	163,740	178,273	4.96%	14,533	8.88%
8 Committees & Agencies	113,500	111,400	122,650	127,750	156,850	4.37%	29,100	22.78%
9 Churches & Presbyteries	805,000	632,600	590,100	643,300	704,500	19.61%	60,500	9.40%
10 Stais & Publications	255,470	236,610	240,620	264,530	284,650	7.93%	20,120	7.61%
11 Standing Comm.	318,600	299,800	377,050	405,300	396,500	11.04%	(8,800)	-2.17%
12 Gen. Assembly	623,000	373,600	708,300	680,150	825,736	22.99%	145,586	21.40%
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	2,802,550	2,305,300	2,703,500	2,836,300	3,248,702	90.46%	412,402	14.54%
13 PROGRAMS	2,802,550	2,305,300	2,703,500	2,836,300	3,248,702	90.46%	412,402	14.54%
14 Management & General	117,560	118,470	122,940	126,400	152,639	4.25%	26,239	20.76%
15 Fund Raising	122,490	122,580	143,660	146,050	164,490	4.58%	18,440	12.63%
TOTAL MGMT. & FUND RAISING	240,050	241,050	266,600	272,450	317,129	8.83%	44,679	16.40%
TOTAL OPERATING	3,042,600	2,546,350	2,970,100	3,108,750	3,565,831	99.29%	457,081	14.70%
17 EXPENSES	3,042,600	2,546,350	2,970,100	3,108,750	3,565,831	99.29%	457,081	14.70%
18 OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	25,900	3,272	167,064	272,712	25,669	0.71%	(247,043)	-90.59%
19 LESS Depreciation	18,900	19,800	23,000	23,800	32,981	0.92%	9,181	38.58%
NET OPERATING EXPENSES	3,023,700	2,526,550	2,947,100	3,084,950	3,532,850	98.37%	447,900	14.52%
OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS:								
21 Capital Expenditures								
22 Principal Loan Pmts								
23 Building Loss/(Gain)								
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	
25 TOTAL EXPENSES	3,023,700	2,526,550	2,947,100	3,084,950	3,532,850	98.37%	447,900	14.52%
26 NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	44,800	23,072	190,064	296,512	58,650	1.63%	(237,862)	-8.31%
27 EXCLUDING DEPRECIATION	44,800	23,072	190,064	296,512	58,650	1.63%	(237,862)	-8.31%
28 NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	44,800	23,072	190,064	296,512	58,650	1.63%	(237,862)	-8.31%

(1) Partnership Share --- (contributions required from churches to fulfill responsibilities)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE					
FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL HISTORY					
FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
SUPPORT & REVENUE					
1 Contributions -Designated & Undesignated Income (1)	\$ 1,309,123	\$ 1,313,191	\$ 1,595,390	\$ 1,992,737	\$ 1,503,522
2 Fees (Earned Income)	1,236,781	1,271,711	1,307,220	394,157	1,580,658
3 Investments	6,396	7,533	8,233	6,880	10,458
4 Others					
TOTAL SUPPORT &					
5 REVENUE	2,552,300	2,592,436	2,910,843	2,393,774	3,094,638
OPERATING EXPENSES					
7 News Office	451,696	505,206	467,533	483,052	560,824
8 Historical Center	135,084	135,274	141,535	144,968	143,884
9 Committees & Agencies	98,343	107,207	110,896	124,241	134,363
10 Churches & Presbyteries	499,289	530,595	532,240	516,911	545,281
11 Stats & Publications	228,332	221,793	252,365	243,360	237,201
12 Standing Comm.	317,488	285,558	311,597	346,984	300,229
13 Gen. Assembly	585,301	628,815	729,408	335,958	844,600
TOTAL					
14 PROGRAMS	2,315,535	2,414,448	2,545,574	2,195,474	2,766,382
15 Management & General	98,628	108,715	117,147	111,833	127,767
16 Fund Raising	87,106	86,633	120,550	104,883	116,196
TOTAL MGMT. &					
17 FUND RAISING	185,734	195,348	237,697	216,716	243,962
TOTAL OPERATING					
18 EXPENSES	2,501,269	2,609,797	2,783,270	2,412,190	3,010,344
19 OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	51,031	(17,361)	127,573	(18,416)	84,294
20 LESS Depreciation & Dispositions	17,252	21,160	20,844	25,099	32,750
21 NET OPERATING EXPENSES	2,518,521	2,630,957	2,804,114	2,437,289	3,043,094
OTHER CAPITAL					
ITEMS:					
22 Capital Expenditures	21,329	17,410	40,644	55,352	7,313
23 Principal Loan Pmts					
24 Other Items - Dishonored Pledges					
TOTAL CAPITAL					
25 EXPENDITURES	21,329	17,410	40,644	55,352	7,313
26 TOTAL EXPENSES W/O Depreciation	2,522,599	2,627,206	2,823,914	2,467,541	3,017,656
NET OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)					
27 EXCLUDING DEPRECIATION	51,031	(17,361)	127,573	(18,416)	84,294
28 Equity Transfer	18,903	(16,206)	28,209	21,615	25,804
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)					
29 EXCLUDING DEPRECIATION	69,934	(33,567)	155,782	3,198	110,097

APPENDIX C

PCA OFFICE BUILDING PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET						
DESCRIPTION	TOTAL PROGRAMS	MANAGEMENT & GENERAL	FUND RAISING	CAPITAL ASSETS	TOTALS	% OF TOTALS
SUPPORT & REVENUE						
1 Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
2 Investments	0	6,000	0	0	6,000	1.97%
3 Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
4 Rent	0	298,884	0	0	298,884	98.03%
5 TOTAL REVENUES	0	304,884	0	0	304,884	100.00%
OPERATING EXPENSES						
6 Staff Salary & Benefits	0	58,050	0	0	58,050	19.04%
7 Travel	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0.33%
8 Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
9 Janitor/Grounds	0	50,000	0	0	50,000	16.40%
10 Mail/Ship	0	100	0	0	100	0.03%
11 Office Supplies	0	1,000	0	0	1,000	0.33%
12 Telephone	0	1,500	0	0	1,500	0.49%
13 Maintenance	0	40,000	0	0	40,000	13.12%
14 Leased Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
15 Dues/Subscription	0	2,000	0	0	2,000	0.66%
16 Insurance	0	35,000	0	0	35,000	11.48%
17 Interest	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
18 Printing	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
19 Staff Training/Develop.	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
20 Promotion/Appeals	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
21 Foundation	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
22 Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
23 Professional Services	0	38,000	0	0	38,000	12.46%
24 Taxes	0	3,000	0	0	3,000	0.98%
25 Utilities	0	65,000	0	0	65,000	21.32%
26 Contingencies	0	16,000	0	0	16,000	5.25%
27 Depreciation	0	38,844	0	55,981	94,825	31.10%
28 TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	0	349,494	0	55,981	405,475	132.99%
29 Operating Surplus/Deficit	0	(44,610)	0	(55,981)	(100,591)	-32.99%
30 LESS Depreciation	0	38,844	0	55,981	94,825	31.10%
31 NET OPERATING EXPENSES	0	310,650	0	0	310,650	101.89%
OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS:						
32 Capital Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
32a Loss (Gain) on Investments	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
33 Depreciation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
34 TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
35 TOTAL NET BUDGET	0	310,650	0	0	310,650	101.89%
36 SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$0	(\$5,766)	\$0	\$0	(\$5,766)	-1.89%

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PCA OFFICE BUILDING							
BUDGETS COMPARISON STATEMENT							
FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET							
DESCRIPTION	2020	2021	2022	2023	%	2022 TO 2023	
	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	OF TOTALS	\$	%
SUPPORT & REV							
1 Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
2 Fees	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
3 Investments	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	1.97%	0	0.00%
4 Rent	298,884	298,884	298,884	298,884	98.03%	0	0.00%
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	304,884	304,884	304,884	304,884	100.00%	0	0.00%
OPERATING EXP							
6 Capital Fund	55,981	55,981	55,981	55,981	18.36%	0	0.00%
7 TOTAL PROG	55,981	55,981	55,981	55,981	18.36%	0	0.00%
8 Mgmt & Gen'l	322,650	357,400	341,568	349,494	114.63%	(7,906)	-2.45%
9 Fund Raising	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
10 TOTAL MGMT& FUND RAISING	322,650	357,400	341,568	349,494	114.63%	(7,906)	-2.45%
11 TOTAL OPER EXPENSES	378,631	413,381	397,549	405,475	132.99%	(7,906)	-2.09%
12 Operating Surplus/(Def)	(73,747)	(108,497)	(92,665)	(100,591)	-32.99%	7,906	0.00%
13 Depreciation	83,981	89,981	92,499	94,825	31.10%	4,844	5.77%
14 NET OPERATING EXPENSES	294,650	323,400	305,050	310,650	101.89%	(12,750)	-4.33%
CAPITAL ASSETS							
15 Capital Additions							
16 TOTAL OPER& CAPITAL EXP	294,650	323,400	305,050	310,650	101.89%	(12,750)	-4.33%
16 Loss (Gain) from Investments	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
17 SURPLUS/(DEF)	\$10,234	(\$18,516)	(\$166)	(\$5,766)	-1.89%	\$12,750	124.58%

APPENDIX C

PCA OFFICE BUILDING FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL HISTORY FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET					
DESCRIPTION	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ACTUAL	2020 ACTUAL	2021 ACTUAL
SUPPORT & REVENUE					
1 Contributions	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$237	\$100
2 Fees					
3 Investments	196,180	(61,753)	294,506	223,053	222,397
4 Rent	298,884	298,884	298,884	298,884	298,884
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	495,164	237,231	593,490	522,174	521,381
OPERATING EXPENSES					
6 Capital Fund	55,981	55,981	55,981	55,981	55,981
7 TOTAL PROGRAM	55,981	55,981	55,981	55,981	55,981
8 Management & General	307,544	294,108	341,068	315,674	285,709
9 Fund Raising					
10 TOTAL MGMT& FUND RAISING	307,544	294,108	341,068	315,674	285,709
11 TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	363,525	350,089	397,049	371,655	341,690
12 OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	131,639	(112,859)	196,441	150,519	179,690
13 Less Depreciation and Dispositions	73,797	79,013	85,476	92,499	93,952
14 NET OPERATING EXPENSES	289,728	271,076	311,573	279,156	247,738
OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS					
15 Other Items	**	**	**	**	**
16 TOTAL OPERATING & CAPITAL EXPENSES	289,728	271,076	311,573	279,156	247,738
17 NET OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$205,436	(\$33,846)	\$281,917	\$243,018	\$273,642

**					
Equity Transfer	131,639	(112,859)	196,441	150,519	179,690
Investments Include:					
3 Realized Gain(Loss) on Investments	55,342	41,434	28,603	96,429	123,688
3 Unrealized Gain(Loss) on Investments	115,145	(133,322)	232,623	100,307	73,965
3 Investment Income	25,694	30,135	33,281	26,317	24,744

**COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
2023 PROPOSED BUDGET**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Focus:

The attached budget represents the anticipated financial activities associated with the ministry to connect and equip those in the PCA involved in discipleship ministry. The staff of CDM works to consult with and train practitioners in the local church, particularly through national, regional, local, and virtual training events. Participants include ministers of discipleship, elders, Bible teachers, small group leaders, Sunday school teachers, and the staff and volunteers who work in ministries to children, youth, and adults. CDM also offers resources for those in the local church by providing helpful materials on the CDM website, by publishing the work of PCA members, by recommending resources available in the broader Church, and by operating the PCA Bookstore.

The Book of Church Order states, “It is the responsibility of every member and every member congregation to support the whole work of the denomination as they be led in their conscience held captive to the Word of God.” (BCO 14-4) Currently, 28% of particular PCA churches contribute to CDM, and the permanent committee and staff are grateful for the generosity shown by these churches. We pray more will join them in support of CDM’s essential ministry in the PCA.

Underlying budget assumptions include:

- inflation that far exceeds that of recent years—particularly impacting compensation, travel, and events. Proposed budget assumes 5% average.
- health insurance premiums projected to increase 15% from actual paid in 2022.
- occupancy cost in the PCA Building will increase at least 12% as space is being reallocated to “shared” meeting space.
- moderate growth in giving from churches and greater need for gifts from individuals to supplement churches that do not give.
- CDM anticipates 11 FTE employees in 2023 which is a net increase of .25.
- CDM continues to provide mailroom and technology services to the committees and agencies in the building and is reimbursed accordingly.

II. Major Changes in Budget:

The budget for 2023 presents a net increase of 10%. This increase reflects five new regional women's conferences planned in 2023 and increased Bookstore sales based on recent sales trends. As noted, inflation is putting upward pressure particularly on travel, compensation, and events. The budget also reflects CDM's pursuit of new donors to help underwrite specific ministry projects and additional support needed from PCA churches.

III. Income Streams:

CDM has four revenue streams: 1) church contributions, 2) individual contributions, 3) revenues from the sale of resources, and 4) registration fees for conferences. CDM's primary source of gift income for the ministry is contributions from 28% of particular PCA churches. In light of the ministry responsibilities given to CDM by the General Assembly, the "Ministry Ask" is set at \$7 per communicant member. If every PCA congregation were to give at this level, CDM would be fully funded and able to accomplish what the Assembly has directed.

Since a majority of PCA congregations do not contribute to the ministry of CDM, and others are unable to give the \$7 "Ministry Ask," the staff of CDM works to solicit donations from individuals, local church women's groups, and the PCA Foundation. Additionally, the staff seeks to find creative ways to enhance revenue through sales of products, attendance at events, and receipt of fees for services provided to churches and the other committees and agencies. These revenues often do not contribute significantly to the overall program cost (staff and office expenses) of CDM, but they are intended to [at least] cover the out-of-pocket costs associated with delivering the training and/or resources.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year:

In an effort to bring the scope of the ministry of CDM in line with the giving from PCA churches, the staff and permanent committee have focused on the areas of ministry to women, children, and resource development. Due to financial constraints, these ministries are forced to operate below budget by forgoing ministry opportunities, using volunteers wherever possible and limiting staff compensation. CDM continues to seek funding from churches and individuals to grow and staff ministries to youth and men in the denomination.

V. Notes to Budget “line items”:

- **Contributions and Support** (Budget Comp., line 1) represent all donated funds by churches, individuals and organizations. CDM is prayerfully optimistic that ongoing development efforts in 2022 will result in a material increase in this source of funds.
- **Other Revenue** (Budget Comp., line 2) consists of book sales, VBS curriculum sales, conference fees, training fees and reimbursements for postage and other services. As previously noted, this line item is projected to increase due to the strong rebound of books sales in 2021 (post pandemic onset) and the addition of new regional women’s conferences.
- **Training and Certification** (Budget Comp., line 3) reflects a fourth year of the Children’s Ministry Certification program. CDM anticipates approximately the same number of students as 2022 as well the potential of a new certification track for youth workers.
- The **Women’s Ministry** (Budget Comp., line 4) represents the cost of related staff, the annual Women’s Leadership Training Conference, the women’s program at General Assembly, local seminars conducted in churches by the Women’s Ministry Trainers and the addition of five new regional conferences. Note these events tend to augment book sales.
- CDM continues, in a limited way, to help local churches that request assistance in developing **Men’s Ministries** (Budget Comp., line 5)
- **Youth Ministry** (Budget Comp., line 6) represents the cost of the CDM coordinator working with a contract consultant and ministry team. At this point, the team is optimistic there will be a new certification track for youth ministers which will bring additional income.
- **Children’s Ministry** (Budget Comp., line 7) is projected to decrease as the costs associated with the transition to a new ministry coordinator were incurred in 2022.
- **Seniors Ministry** (Budget Comp, line 8) costs are now integrated into the Men’s and Women’s Ministries. CDM desires to conduct training in this area but sees its greatest opportunity to do so under these existing ministries and in partnership with other committees and agencies.
- **Publications and Curriculum** (Budget Comp., line 9) includes the costs associated with developing and producing between eight and twelve Bible studies, topical books and other curricula. This is projected to grow somewhat with more opportunities to produce requested online resources.

APPENDIX C

- The increase of budgeted expenses for the **Bookstore** (Budget Comp., line 10) corresponds to the projected increase in sales revenue (line 2). Bookstore sales have increased since 2017, except for the year of the pandemic onset (2020). Sales in 2021 were 12% higher than 2019 and 25% higher than 2018.
- **Management and General** (Budget Comp., line 11) In addition to staff costs, this line item includes the **Audit Fees** (Proposed, line 26), and CDM's share of **Liability Insurance** (Proposed, line 17) as well as fees that are mandated to CDM by the General Assembly such as Nominating Committee and Administrative Committee fees. See **General Assembly Shared Expenses** (Proposed, line 25)
- The line-item **Committee/Agency Services** (Budget Comp., line 12) represents mailroom and technology services provided to the other committees and agencies in the building and are reimbursed 100% to CDM. This no longer includes rental income from Reformed University Fellowship due to reconfiguration within the building. CDM's occupancy cost also declined relative to this.
- **Fund Raising** (Budget Comp., line 15) represents the costs associated with contacting churches, presbyteries and individuals and informing them about the ministry of CDM and their potential role in supporting the ministry. This item includes 20% of the CDM Coordinator and his associated expenses as well as two part-time staff assistants.
- The Coordinator, his part time assistant and related expenses are allocated to the various expense categories as follows: Training and Certification 10%, Fund Raising 20%, Administration 15%, Bookstore 5%, Women's Ministry 10%, Youth Ministry 10%, Children's Ministry 10%, and Publications and Curriculum 20%.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Committee on Discipleship Ministries Proposed 2023 Budget

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Management</u>	<u>Fund</u>	<u>Capital</u>		<u>% of</u>
	<u>Programs</u>	<u>& General</u>	<u>Raising</u>	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Totals</u>
SUPPORT & REVENUE						
1 Contributions and Support	\$439,690	\$264,315	\$120,995	\$15,000	\$840,000	41.06%
2 Other Revenues	\$1,105,650	\$100,150	\$200	\$0	\$1,206,000	58.94%
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$1,545,340	\$364,465	\$121,195	\$15,000	\$2,046,000	100.00%
OPERATING EXPENSES						
3 Coordinator Salary and Housing	\$92,495	\$21,345	\$28,460	\$0	\$142,300	6.96%
4 Coordinator Benefits	\$17,940	\$4,140	\$5,520	\$0	\$27,600	1.35%
5 Staff Salary and Benefits	\$490,617	\$187,057	\$49,436	\$0	\$727,110	35.54%
6 Inventory Purchases	\$392,950	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$392,950	19.21%
7 Supplies	\$2,518	\$653	\$429	\$0	\$3,600	0.18%
8 Telephone & Internet	\$4,509	\$1,640	\$811	\$0	\$6,960	0.34%
9 Technology Resources	\$30,896	\$1,632	\$1,072	\$0	\$33,600	1.64%
10 Printing	\$13,800	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$18,800	0.92%
11 Postage & Shipping Materials	\$98,183	\$17,008	\$2,810	\$0	\$118,000	5.77%
12 Miscellaneous	\$1,465	\$7,165	\$770	\$0	\$9,400	0.46%
13 Subscriptions, Books, Materials	\$448	\$223	\$30	\$0	\$700	0.03%
14 Equipment Rental/Maint.	\$3,358	\$11,871	\$572	\$0	\$15,800	0.77%
15 Depreciation	\$10,493	\$2,720	\$1,786	\$0	\$15,000	0.73%
16 Occupancy Cost	\$40,524	\$24,820	\$2,936	\$0	\$68,280	3.34%
17 Liability Insurance	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	1.22%
18 Consultants, Prof. Services, Reps.	\$16,600	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$0	\$34,600	1.69%
19 Travel	\$72,100	\$1,700	\$3,100	\$0	\$76,900	3.76%
20 General Assembly Expense	\$16,100	\$1,800	\$1,600	\$0	\$19,500	0.95%
21 Staff Development / Book Allowance	\$813	\$338	\$50	\$0	\$1,200	0.06%
22 Graphics/Design	\$21,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$24,000	1.17%
23 Promotion and Advertising	\$21,100	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$26,100	1.28%
24 Video Acquisition and Production	\$17,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$17,500	0.86%
25 G.A. Shared Expenses	\$0	\$16,000	\$0	\$0	\$16,000	0.78%
26 Audit Fees	\$0	\$14,000	\$0	\$0	\$14,000	0.68%
27 Facilities, Events and Activities	\$119,325	\$75	\$1,600	\$0	\$121,000	5.91%
28 Committee and Team Meetings	\$21,500	\$19,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,500	1.98%
29 Honorariums and Royalties	\$49,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$49,600	2.42%
30 Vehicles	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,555,833	\$367,186	\$122,981	\$0	\$2,046,000	100.00%
Surplus/(Deficit) from operations	(\$10,493)	(\$2,720)	(\$1,786)	\$15,000	\$0	
LESS DEPRECIATION	(\$10,493)	(\$2,720)	(\$1,786)	\$0	(\$15,000)	-0.73%
TOTAL CASH OUTLAYS	\$1,545,340	\$364,465	\$121,195	\$0	\$2,031,000	99.27%
OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS						
31 Capital Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000	0.73%
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000	
TOTAL NET BUDGET	\$1,545,340	\$364,465	\$121,195	\$15,000	\$2,046,000	

APPENDIX C

Committee on Discipleship Ministries
Budget Comparisons Statement
for Proposed 2023 Budget

	Unaudited 2021 <u>Actual</u>	Approved 2021 <u>Budget</u>	Proposed 2022 <u>Budget</u>	Proposed 2023 <u>Budget</u>	Budget % of Totals	2022 - 2023 Change in Budget	
						<u>in \$</u>	<u>in %</u>
SUPPORT & REVENUE							
1 Contributions and Support	\$604,680	\$832,000	\$832,000	\$840,000	41.1%	\$8,000	1.0%
2 Other Revenues	\$1,351,717	\$1,072,500	\$1,028,500	\$1,206,000	58.9%	\$177,500	17.3%
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$1,956,397	\$1,904,500	\$1,860,500	\$2,046,000	100.0%	\$185,500	10.0%
OPERATING EXPENSES							
TRAINING							
3 Training and Certification	\$43,330	\$71,922	\$62,054	\$71,418	3.5%	\$9,363	15.1%
4 Women's Ministries	\$191,307	\$259,985	\$261,224	\$367,640	18.0%	\$106,416	40.7%
5 Men's Ministries	\$2,844	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	0.2%	\$1,000	33.3%
6 NextGen Ministries	\$23,443	\$29,465	\$28,553	\$32,789	1.6%	\$4,236	14.8%
7 Children's Ministries	\$169,309	\$187,298	\$236,897	\$209,854	10.3%	(\$27,043)	-11.4%
8 Seniors Ministry	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	0.0%	\$0	n/a
RESOURCES							
9 Publications and Curriculum	\$114,672	\$84,663	\$86,517	\$101,979	5.0%	\$15,462	17.9%
10 PCA Bookstore	\$643,529	\$608,909	\$570,251	\$672,830	32.9%	\$102,579	18.0%
11 VBS Reachout Adventures	\$67,777	\$131,126	\$108,143	\$95,323	4.7%	(\$12,820)	-11.9%
Total Programs	\$1,256,210	\$1,377,868	\$1,356,639	\$1,555,833	76.04%	\$199,194	114.7%
12 Management & General	\$193,864	\$218,514	\$223,950	\$227,340	11.1%	\$3,390	1.5%
13 Committee/Agency Services	\$143,020	\$157,798	\$120,642	\$105,846	5.2%	(\$14,796)	-12.3%
14 CDM Committee	\$6,721	\$17,000	\$16,000	\$19,000	0.9%	\$3,000	18.8%
15 Depreciation	\$13,998	\$12,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	0.7%	\$0	0.0%
16 Fund Raising	\$79,304	\$113,319	\$128,269	\$122,981	6.0%	(\$5,288)	-4.1%
Total Management / Fund Raisin	\$436,906	\$518,632	\$503,861	\$490,167	24.0%	(\$13,694)	-2.7%
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,693,116	\$1,896,500	\$1,860,500	\$2,046,000	100.0%	\$185,500	10.0%
Surplus/(Deficit) from Operations	\$263,281	\$8,000	(\$0)	\$0		\$0	
LESS DEPRECIATION	(\$13,998)	(\$12,000)	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)		\$0	
TOTAL CASH OUTLAYS	\$1,679,119	\$1,884,500	\$1,845,500	\$2,031,000		\$185,500	
OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS							
17 Capital Expenditures	\$1,680	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	0.7%	\$0	0.0%
TOTAL CAPITAL ITEMS	\$1,680	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	0.7%	\$0	0.0%
TOTAL NET BUDGET	\$1,680,799	\$1,904,500	\$1,860,500	\$2,046,000		\$185,500	10.0%

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Committee on Discipleship Ministries Five Year Summary for Proposed 2023 Budget

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
SUPPORT & REVENUE					
1 Contributions and Support	\$685,811	\$568,496	\$694,146	\$669,010	\$604,680
2 Other Revenues	\$869,482	\$1,043,924	\$1,052,659	\$1,075,623	\$1,351,717
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$1,555,293	\$1,612,420	\$1,746,806	\$1,744,633	\$1,956,397
OPERATING EXPENSES					
TRAINING					
3 Training and Certification	\$40,213	\$59,808	\$56,047	\$48,427	\$43,330
4 Women's Ministries	\$192,327	\$273,094	\$240,969	\$241,520	\$191,307
5 Men's Ministries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,854	\$2,844
6 Youth Ministries	\$37,113	\$14,634	\$23,696	\$22,740	\$23,443
7 Children's Ministries	\$135,615	\$168,187	\$166,110	\$144,503	\$169,309
8 Seniors Ministries	\$0	\$4,142	\$0	\$0	\$0
RESOURCES					
9 Publications and Curriculum	\$81,416	\$95,528	\$72,805	\$69,981	\$114,672
10 PCA Bookstore	\$511,352	\$537,168	\$576,429	\$555,552	\$643,529
11 VBS Reachout Adventures	\$0	\$0	\$6,527	\$100,040	\$67,777
Total Programs	\$998,036	\$1,152,561	\$1,142,583	\$1,184,616	\$1,256,210
12 Management & General	\$195,316	\$214,045	\$216,927	\$186,877	\$193,864
13 Committee/Agency Services	\$168,249	\$158,364	\$158,275	\$140,270	\$143,020
14 CE Committee	\$16,678	\$13,220	\$15,361	\$10,118	\$6,721
15 Depreciation	\$7,070	\$9,507	\$11,209	\$15,842	\$13,998
16 Fund Raising	\$69,861	\$75,716	\$79,601	\$90,036	\$79,304
Total Management / Fund Raising	\$457,174	\$470,852	\$481,373	\$443,143	\$436,906
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$1,455,210	\$1,623,413	\$1,623,956	\$1,627,759	\$1,693,116
Surplus/(Deficit) from Operations	\$100,084	(\$10,992)	\$122,849	\$116,874	\$263,281
LESS DEPRECIATION	(\$7,070)	(\$9,507)	(\$11,209)	(\$15,842)	(\$13,998)
TOTAL CASH OUTLAYS	\$1,448,140	\$1,613,905	\$1,612,748	\$1,611,917	\$1,679,119
OTHER CAPITAL ITEMS					
17 Capital Expenditures	\$19,421	\$6,834	\$14,775	\$12,427	\$1,680
TOTAL CAPITAL ITEMS	\$19,421	\$6,834	\$14,775	\$12,427	\$1,680
TOTAL NET EXPENSES	\$1,467,561	\$1,620,740	\$1,627,523	\$1,624,345	\$1,680,799

**COVENANT COLLEGE
PROPOSED BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2023**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

General Comments

Covenant College operates as an institution of higher education in an increasing difficult and competitive market. Since the College is largely dependent on tuition for its revenues, attracting qualified students is essential to sustainable operations. In recent years, the cost of higher education has come under increased scrutiny, and changing enrollment and demographic patterns have created challenges for many institutions, including Covenant College.

Economic cycles in higher education are long. Through renewed efforts and investments in recruiting and marketing, the college has been able to reverse the decline in enrolment. The incoming class for fall 2022 was significantly larger than the prior two years. But we will experience the economic impact of the smaller classes in fall 2020 and 2021 for the next number of years.

For the past number of years the college has worked diligently to mitigate the effects of inflation. Increasing inflation pressures have necessitated selected increases in departmental budgets. College employees, after multiple years without an increase in compensation, were provided an increase in the fall of 2022.

Economic Assumptions

- 300 new students entering in fall 2023
- Total full time equivalent enrollment of 859 students
- Tuition increase of 2.9%
- Inflation of food costs at 7%
- Voluntary employee contributions to the 403(b) retirement plan matched at 2% of eligible compensation
- A draw from the endowment of 5% of the weighted three year average value
- A 10% decline in market values

II. Major Changes in Budget

Covenant College is committed to sound financial planning and good stewardship of its resources. The attached budget proposes a 2.9% increase in tuition and room and board fees for the coming year. These increases,

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

along with the budgetary adjustments, allow the College to maintain its low student-to-faculty ratio of 14:1 and to provide high quality residential programs.

The proposed budget does not provide for any significant changes in programs or program spending but does continue to incorporate aggressive marketing spending to enhance admission efforts in the coming and future years. Two new positions in the area of Marketing & Communications are planned.

With a desire to increase the affordability of a Covenant College education, and building on a successful campaign to grow the college's endowment, this budget also proposes increasing staffing in the development office by two positions. One position would focus on growing our planned giving efforts, and the other on growing the annual fund through increasing and broadening our support base of individuals and churches.

The budget that is presented to the General Assembly includes \$3.5 million in depreciation, which is a non-cash expense. While the college is committed to living within its means, in the coming fiscal year our investments in future growth lead us to plan for a deficit in the current year. This deficit will be funded from free cash flow and by drawing upon surplus funds realized in previous fiscal years.

III. Income Streams

Tuition and fees charged to students, gifts from donors (individuals and churches), fees for services, and gains from investing the College and Foundation endowments constitute the four primary streams of income for the College.

The majority of College costs are paid by the students and their families, who are the direct beneficiaries. The College works with each family in an attempt to find an affordable path to attendance. The attraction and retention of students is essential to the financial health of the College and our retention rates remain above industry norms.

Restricted and unrestricted gifts for scholarships and operations, received from churches and individuals make up \$3.02 million dollars of the operating budget. Churches historically have given about \$1 million of that amount each year. Churches that participate in the Church Scholarship Promise program are able to realize an additional scholarship benefit for their students.

The College provides other services for fees as well. Offering housing in its residential rental properties, operating the college bookstore, and delivering conference services provide for a modest income stream that nets about \$300,000 each year before allocation of facilities costs.

Finally, the combined endowment of the College and the Covenant College Foundation provide resources directly to the annual operating budget of the College for general operations and student scholarships. Due to the growth of the endowment, we anticipate drawing almost \$2.4 million for operations and scholarships

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

There were no major ministry items not implemented in the last year.

V. Notes to Budget “line items”

Accounting Format & Other Notes

The College uses the NACUBO (National Association of College and University Business Officers) definitions of revenue and expense categories. This insures that the College will be able to directly compare various ratios with other colleges and assess our effectiveness in accordance with our assessment systems. While the categories do not exactly parallel the definitions used by the Accounting and Financial Reporting Guide for Christian Ministries, there is some similarity. NACUBO categories including Instructional, Academic Support, Library, Student Services, Public Service and Student Aid, and Auxiliary services (Room and Board) are considered "Program Services."

- Budget Comparison Note 1 - Net Tuition & Fees increasing due to projected increase in total enrolment.
- Budget Comparison Note 2 – Room and Board income increasing due to projected increase in total students living in campus housing.
- Budget Comparison Note 3 – Unrestricted gift income budgeted to increase in line with recent realized gift income.
- Budget Comparison Note 4 – Endowment income growth due to increase in endowment value from gifts.
- Budget Comparison Note 5 – Wage costs increasing due to inflationary pressures and additional positions. Compensation of \$289,430, consisting of salary (\$252,620) and benefits (\$36,810) is provided to the president of the college.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COVENANT COLLEGE PROPOSED BUDGET For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023

	Independent Management Advancement					Total	% of Total Revenue
	Programs	Operations	& General	/Development	Capital		
Revenues							
Net Tuition & Fees	14,659,089					14,659,089	49.6%
Auxiliary Income	7,782,320					7,782,320	26.3%
Independent Operations		1,485,809				1,485,809	5.0%
Other Income	285,510					285,510	1.0%
Gifts & Support Income						-	
Unrestricted Gifts	2,000,000					2,000,000	6.8%
Restricted Gifts	1,020,000					1,020,000	3.4%
Endowment Support	2,339,000					2,339,000	7.9%
Total Gifts & Support Income	5,359,000					5,359,000	18.1%
Total Revenues	28,085,919	1,485,809				29,571,728	100.0%
Operating Expenses							
Salaries & Benefits							
Salaries	9,788,048	297,921	1,825,884	1,409,827		13,321,680	45.0%
Benefits	2,786,347	34,796	715,744	423,457		3,960,344	13.4%
Total Salaries & Benefits	12,574,395	332,717	2,541,628	1,833,284	-	17,282,024	58.4%
Travel & Professional Activities	1,072,384	175	102,676	149,559		1,324,794	4.5%
Insurance	48,427	2,000	72,200	-		122,627	0.4%
Supplies	1,346,768	24,070	577,106	256,376		2,204,320	7.5%
Contracts & Leases	3,072,681	723,115	740,885	17,150		4,553,831	15.4%
Acquisitions	56,597	-	150	-		56,747	0.2%
Other Expenses	428,828	105,871	205,029	-		739,728	2.5%
Allocation of Maintenance Costs	3,237,787	161,632	193,922	24,602		3,617,942	12.2%
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	3,364,721	3,364,721	11.4%
Total Operating Expenses	21,837,867	1,349,580	4,433,596	2,280,971	3,364,721	33,266,734	112.5%
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	6,248,052	136,229	(4,433,596)	(2,280,971)	(3,364,721)	(3,695,006)	-12.5%
Less: Depreciation	-	-	-	-	3,364,721	3,364,721	11.4%
Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)	6,248,052	136,229	(4,433,596)	(2,280,971)	-	(330,285)	-1.1%
Non-Operating Activities							
Capital Expenditures					1,200,000	1,200,000	4.1%
Change in Cash					1,200,000	(1,530,285)	-5.2%

APPENDIX C

COVENANT COLLEGE
BUDGET COMPARISON
For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023

	FY 2021 Budget	FY 2022 Budget	Proposed		FY 2021 to FY 2022	
			FY 2023 Budget	% of Total Revenue	Change in Budget \$	%
Revenues						
Net Tuition & Fees	14,321,793	13,853,818	14,659,089	49.6%	805,271 ¹	5.8%
Auxiliary Income	7,323,404	7,170,392	7,782,320	26.3%	611,928 ²	8.5%
Independent Operations	1,382,420	1,393,420	1,485,809	5.0%	92,389	6.6%
Other Income	784,781	281,437	285,510	1.0%	4,073	1.4%
Gifts & Support Income						
Unrestricted Gifts	1,700,000	1,795,000	2,000,000	6.8%	205,000 ³	11.4%
Restricted Gifts	700,000	1,005,000	1,020,000	3.4%	15,000	1.5%
Endowment Support	1,879,820	2,128,606	2,339,000	7.9%	210,394 ⁴	9.9%
Total Gifts & Support Income	4,279,820	4,928,606	5,359,000	18.1%	430,394	8.7%
Total Revenues	28,092,218	27,627,673	29,571,728	100.0%	1,944,055	7.0%
Operating Expenses						
Salaries & Benefits						
Salaries	12,311,233	12,600,565	13,321,680	45.0%	721,115	5.7%
Benefits	3,740,568	3,543,324	3,960,344	13.4%	417,020	11.8%
Total Salaries & Benefits	16,051,801	16,143,889	17,282,024	58.4%	1,138,135 ⁵	7.0%
Travel & Professional Activities	1,360,094	1,318,078	1,324,794	4.5%	6,716	0.5%
Insurance	111,998	112,282	122,627	0.4%	10,345	9.2%
Supplies	1,792,266	1,983,924	2,204,320	7.5%	220,396	11.1%
Contracts & Leases	4,266,349	4,340,641	4,553,831	15.4%	213,190	4.9%
Acquisitions	52,617	57,531	56,747	0.2%	(784)	-1.4%
Other Expenses	1,037,428	788,857	739,728	2.5%	(49,129)	-6.2%
Maintenance Costs	3,164,511	3,519,714	3,617,942	12.2%	98,228	2.8%
Depreciation	3,457,035	3,457,035	3,364,721	11.4%	(92,314)	-2.7%
Total Operating Expenses	31,294,100	31,721,951	33,266,734	112.5%	1,544,783	4.9%
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(3,201,882)	(4,094,278)	(3,695,006)	-12.5%	399,272	-9.8%
Less: Depreciation	3,457,035	3,457,035	3,364,721	11.4%	(92,314)	-2.7%
Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)	255,153	(637,243)	(330,285)	-1.1%	306,958	-48.2%
Non-Operating Activities						
Capital Expenditures	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	4.1%	-	0.0%
Change in Cash	(944,847)	(1,837,243)	(1,530,285)	-5.2%	306,958	-16.7%

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COVENANT COLLEGE FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL HISTORY For the Proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023

	Audited Financial Statement Actual Performance				
	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Revenues					
Net Tuition & Fees	13,219,181	14,102,280	14,984,956	14,831,963	15,178,086
Auxiliary Income	6,733,319	5,453,025	7,468,901	7,531,533	7,130,264
Independent Operations	481,672	794,173	1,484,220	1,280,250	1,198,326
Other Income	368,208	627,665	894,438	740,166	654,341
Income on Investments	302,595	293,341	277,438	292,999	172,995
Government & Grants	1,590,047	4,458,581	394,280	400,544	437,115
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	2,646,824	2,956,656	2,933,986	2,925,095	1,990,197
Unrestricted Gift Income	1,828,282	2,744,465	3,813,566	2,589,510	2,336,496
	<u>27,170,128</u>	<u>31,430,186</u>	<u>32,251,785</u>	<u>30,592,060</u>	<u>29,097,820</u>
Operating Expenses					
Instructional	8,330,733	8,994,817	9,391,177	9,985,220	9,794,654
Academic support	961,325	974,585	1,180,720	950,768	960,826
Student services	6,513,745	6,626,033	6,480,925	6,343,544	5,990,245
Library	804,473	835,353	855,433	945,958	894,798
Public service	174,169	172,038	181,845	216,836	249,895
Auxiliary enterprises	4,913,556	4,685,466	4,891,535	4,871,724	4,524,637
Independent operations	1,873,431	2,111,618	2,711,168	2,566,305	2,392,868
Institutional support	4,103,648	3,371,210	3,792,960	4,718,414	3,828,028
Advancement / Development	2,081,830	1,877,217	2,104,962	1,773,963	1,564,172
	<u>29,756,910</u>	<u>29,648,337</u>	<u>31,590,725</u>	<u>32,372,732</u>	<u>30,200,123</u>
Change in Net Assets from Operations	<u>(2,586,782)</u>	<u>1,781,849</u>	<u>661,060</u>	<u>(1,780,672)</u>	<u>(1,102,303)</u>
Less: Depreciation	<u>3,364,722</u>	<u>3,450,433</u>	<u>3,433,428</u>	<u>3,442,145</u>	<u>2,588,359</u>
Net Operating Surplus (Deficit)	<u><u>777,940</u></u>	<u><u>5,232,282</u></u>	<u><u>4,094,488</u></u>	<u><u>1,661,473</u></u>	<u><u>1,486,056</u></u>
NonOperating Activities					
Contributions received for Endowment	4,400,014	1,625,596	627,795	860,331	697,204
Contributions received for Capital Purposes	428,725	436,950	1,334,670	3,772,089	3,560,867
Income from sale of Tax Credits	-	-	1,359,166	3,404,376	1,049,874
Income (loss) on Investments	2,202,614	(196,499)	118,737	231,419	715,768
Income (loss) on Endowment Investments	9,862,432	488,385	1,563,580	2,391,071	3,711,062
Capital Expenditures	<u>(1,066,250)</u>	<u>(1,268,850)</u>	<u>(1,607,231)</u>	<u>(3,838,943)</u>	<u>(8,993,515)</u>
Total NonOperating Activities	<u>15,827,535</u>	<u>1,085,582</u>	<u>3,396,717</u>	<u>6,820,343</u>	<u>741,260</u>

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

Ministry Impact: Covenant Theological Seminary is a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America training pastors, counselors, and others who seek to minister in Christ's church. Our purpose is to glorify the triune God by training his servants to walk in God's grace, minister God's Word, and equip God's people — all for God's mission. Our thousands of alumni serve throughout the United States and in dozens of other countries. People all over the world continue to download Covenant's free online materials.

Budget Summary: Covenant Seminary's budget is based on revenue projections for student enrollment, gifts and donations, endowment returns, and auxiliary services (primarily student housing). We make reasonable estimates based on past trends, changes in our industry and economic environment, and institutional indicators. The Seminary faces challenges similar to other small institutions of higher education. Data and anecdotes from peers in seminaries and other small schools demonstrate that there is a common challenge in recruiting and retaining students. The Covid-19 pandemic increased uncertainty around enrollment. Thankfully, the Seminary's enrollment did not suffer in the first year of the pandemic. While the environment is challenging, we believe in the need for biblical, Christ-centered, theological training; and we are adapting so that we can continue as a leading organization in this field.

Net Tuition: The Seminary uses credit hours sold (CHS) as its primary financial measure of enrollment. Based on two years of improving enrollment (9,167 CHS in FY20 and 9,399 CHS in FY21), we have budgeted 9,762 CHS in FY23. The net tuition calculation for FY23 uses the historical scholarship rate of approximately 39% of gross tuition. Of the \$2,243,744 in budgeted scholarships, \$1,246,408 is "funded," i.e., paid for by funds donated for this purpose.

Tuition Costs: Tuition rates will increase to \$585 per credit hour for MDiv and MA students. For DMin and ThM students, the rate will remain \$655 per credit hour. The total costs for the MDiv program remain comparable to peer seminaries. The tuition charge for a full-time student (taking 30 hours) will be \$17,550 before financial aid.

Gifts and Donations: The annual fund budget of \$1,780,000 was unchanged during the years of the Hope for the Future capital campaign. The development team has consistently met this budget for several years. With the closing of the campaign in April 2021, we have budgeted an incremental increase of 1.1% to \$1,800,000.

Endowment Draw: The endowment draw percentage continues to be 5% of the endowment's average fair market value. This fair market value measurement date is one year prior to the beginning of the budgeted fiscal year. Thus, the amount of \$1,644,075 for FY23 was set before the beginning of the budget process.

Auxiliary Services: As the Seminary's online education program has grown, fewer students study on campus, and the vacancy rate has grown in student housing. Nevertheless, campus housing continues to generate a positive return. We anticipate a small reduction in revenue and an increase in expenses to reduce auxiliary net income in FY23.

Expenses: All Seminary departments are asked to submit expense budgets to the business and finance office. The president's cabinet evaluates these budgets in light of revenue assumptions and the strategic direction of the institution. Necessary changes are discussed with departments and approved by the president with the support of the president's cabinet. The Seminary's most significant cost is personnel. Most expense increases in FY23 are driven by cost-of-living adjustments and increases in benefit premiums. Also, contributing to expense increases in FY23 are strategic improvements in technology.

II. Major Changes in Budget

This year there were no major changes in the budget.

III. Income Streams

The Seminary's budgeted revenue sources in FY23 are as follows:

Tuition & Fees	38.16%
Unrestricted Giving	21.33%
Endowment*	17.56%
Temp. Restricted Gifts	15.85%
<u>Auxiliary Services</u>	<u>7.10%</u>
Total	100.0%

(*Note that the Endowment line reflects the draw for both general operating purposes and student scholarships.)

Tuition and Fees: The budget is based on historical trends combined with current retention and recruitment indicators. It is set before the CHS outcome is known for the year immediately preceding the budget year. Forecast adjustments are made, if necessary, after data on CHS outcomes becomes available.

Unrestricted Giving: The development team has consistently met annual fund goals for several years. The team’s direct knowledge of individual donor circumstances and broader giving trends supports an incremental percentage increase in FY23.

Endowment: The endowment draw calculation is based on a fair market value measurement made one year before the fiscal year begins. Thus, it is a known quantity. Professional management of the endowment, combined with fiduciary oversight by the board of trustees, has successfully minimized volatility that would threaten our endowment draw expectations.

Temporarily Restricted Gifts: Restricted Gifts are counted as revenue when the gifts are spent for their restricted purposes. During the recent Hope for the Future capital campaign, the Seminary accumulated significant restricted gifts. Our development team’s interactions with peers and direct experience informs us that donor interest in restricted giving remains strong. The amount of restricted giving in the FY23 budget is consistent with the amounts realized in the preceding years.

Auxiliary Services: Our FY23 budget anticipates a small reduction in revenue and an increase in expenses to reduce auxiliary net income in FY23.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

We did not have a major ministry that was not implemented in the past year.

V. Notes to Budget Line Items

Line Item*	FY22 Budget	FY23 Budget	Difference
Net Tuition & Fees	\$3,507,870	\$3,997,305	+\$489,435
Total Expenses	\$9,238,422	\$9,817,290	+\$578,868

*See “Budget Comparison FY21 – FY23” below.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The overall increase in revenue from the FY22 budget to the FY23 budget is driven primarily by an increase in net tuition, both from an increase in CHS and the tuition rate. This is the revenue component most closely related to our core mission and should be the primary source of our growth.

The overall increase in total expenses from the FY22 budget to the FY23 budget is 6.3%. Major factors behind this increase are a cost-of-living increase for full time staff, a 10% increase expected for medical premiums, costs of CACREP accreditation for our counseling program, and technology improvements for our instruction and advancement functions.

While we project a net loss of \$75,655 in our FY23 budget, we will offset this loss with a targeted use of unrestricted reserve funds. These reserve funds will be directed toward the strategic technological improvements mentioned above.

APPENDIX C

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY								
Proposed FY23 Budget								
	Instruction	Student Services	Auxiliary	Academic Support	Institutional Support -- Fundraising	Institutional Support -- General and Administrative	Total	% of Total
REVENUES								
Credit Hours Sold							9,762	
Gross Tuition	3,861,148	1,014,826	-	877,215	-	-	5,753,190	59.06%
Unfunded Scholarship	(669,344)	(175,924)	-	(152,068)	-	-	(997,336)	-12.24%
Funded Scholarship	(836,504)	(219,859)	-	(190,046)	-	-	(1,246,408)	-12.79%
Net Tuition Before Fees	2,355,300	619,044	-	535,101	-	-	3,509,446	36.03%
Fees	327,418	86,055	-	74,386	-	-	487,859	5.01%
Net Tuition & Fees	2,682,718	705,099	-	609,488	-	-	3,997,305	41.03%
Missional Training Center	22,953	6,033	-	5,215	-	-	34,200	0.35%
Gifts and Donations	-	612,117	-	-	1,387,883	-	2,000,000	20.53%
Auxiliary Enterprises	-	50,656	517,593	-	-	27,840	596,089	6.12%
Released from Temporary Restriction	831,511	249,344	-	201,899	69,829	117,379	1,469,962	15.09%
Operational Endowment	-	8,312	84,935	-	-	1,125,337	1,218,585	12.51%
Endowed Student Aid	285,560	75,054	-	64,876	-	-	425,490	4.37%
TOTAL REVENUES	3,822,742	1,706,616	602,528	881,478	1,457,711	1,270,556	9,741,631	100.00%
EXPENSES								
Salaries & Wages	2,496,090	860,505	165,237	422,360	777,119	626,567	5,347,877	54.47%
Employee Benefits	554,853	261,288	50,684	122,772	217,266	224,775	1,431,639	14.58%
Advertising	4,300	18,107	150	6,657	39,939	-	69,152	0.70%
Contract Services	29,100	51,186	40,920	39,475	28,050	148,714	337,445	3.44%
Occupancy, Utilities, & Maintenance	26,996	19,678	232,125	1,300	3,912	25	284,036	2.89%
Technology	109,435	95,095	300	62,095	51,070	64,500	382,495	3.90%
Travel & Entertainment	74,000	90,319	775	1,969	120,815	18,338	306,215	3.12%
Other	140,743	67,003	66,360	95,210	95,168	62,135	526,619	5.36%
Facilities Allocation	422,225	263,435	45,977	129,641	145,028	125,503	1,131,808	11.53%
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,857,742	1,726,615	602,528	881,478	1,478,367	1,270,556	9,817,286	100.00%
NET INCOME before Depreciation	(35,000)	(19,999)	-	-	(20,656)	-	(75,655)	
President's 100 Reserve	(50,888)	(29,078)	-	-	(30,033)	-	(109,999)	
Excess Reserve Funds	15,888	9,079	-	-	9,377	-	34,344	
President's Salary							229,500	
Benefits							26,256	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY				
Budget Comparison FY21 - FY23				
	20-21	21-22	22-23	FY23 Budget to
	Actual	Budget	Budget	FY21 Actual
				Favorable / (Unfavorable)
REVENUES				
Credit Hours Sold	9,399	9,300	9,762	363
Gross Tuition	\$5,103,898	\$5,248,945	\$5,753,190	\$649,292
Unfunded Scholarship	(1,060,091)	(727,025)	(997,336)	62,755
Funded Scholarship	(891,908)	(1,267,574)	(1,246,408)	(354,500)
Net Tuition Before Fees	3,151,899	3,254,346	3,509,446	357,547
Fees	195,682	253,524	487,859	292,177
Net Tuition & Fees	3,347,581	3,507,870	3,997,305	649,724
Missional Training Center	33,600	34,200	34,200	600
Gifts and Donations	2,008,245	1,980,000	2,000,000	(8,245)
Auxiliary Enterprises	536,339	659,349	596,089	59,750
Released from Temporary Restriction	1,085,444	1,471,280	1,469,962	384,518
Operational Endowment	1,267,342	1,231,758	1,218,585	(48,757)
Endowed Student Aid	316,141	398,574	425,490	109,349
TOTAL REVENUES	8,594,692	9,283,031	9,741,631	1,146,939
EXPENSES				
President's Cabinet				
President / Trustees	390,516	316,580	363,913	26,603
Chaplain	40,737	44,408	46,187	(5,450)
Strategic Academic Projects	128,270	109,716	250	128,020
Operations	201,084	240,054	289,680	(88,596)
Total President's Cabinet	760,607	710,758	700,030	60,577
Academics				
Instruction	1,564,164	1,621,903	1,762,166	(198,002)
Disability Ministry	18,659			18,659
Field Education	123,841	127,431	136,692	(12,851)
Doctor of Ministry	35,612	112,078	108,753	(73,141)
Master of Theology (Th. M.)	2,500	3,000	2,550	(50)
Online Education	86,668	201,722	230,470	(143,802)
Counseling	657,435	732,883	800,657	(143,222)
World Missions	1,551	34,417	35,055	(33,504)
Francis Schaeffer Institute	206,225	224,349	235,421	(29,196)
Church Planting	87,987	106,110	123,605	(35,618)
Seattle Site	3647			3647
Nashville Site	2,395	8,165		2,395
Total Academics	2,790,684	3,172,058	3,435,369	(644,685)
General				
Library	428,215	479,881	496,979	(68,764)
Student Life	294,489	362,920	375,822	(81,333)
Registration & Academic Advising	203,950	247,752	254,500	(50,550)
Financial Aid Administration	119,438	112,803	115,083	4,355
Development	698,425	703,801	772,876	(74,451)
Communications	400,567	403,261	414,287	(13,720)
Admissions	171,537	319,886	337,132	(165,595)
Alumni Relations	127,219	116,127	125,786	1,433
Business Office	395,364	416,300	424,159	(28,795)
Information Technology Services	533,330	636,328	666,148	(132,818)
Facilities	1,014,553	1,025,852	1,109,355	(94,802)
General Sub-total	4,387,087	4,824,911	5,092,127	(705,040)
Total Educational and General	7,938,378	8,707,727	9,227,526	(1,289,148)
Total Auxiliary Enterprises Expenses	523,960	519,936	579,005	(55,045)
Transfers to Non-operating Funds	17,113	10,759	10,759	6,354
Hope for the Future Campaign	82,921			82,921
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,562,372	9,238,422	9,817,290	(1,254,918)
OPERATING NET INCOME	32,320	44,609	(75,659)	(107,979)
Presidential Search/Transition Expense	55,039	TBD		55,039
Reserve Funds Used	383,369		110,000	273,369
Excess Reserve Funds / (Unaccounted Loss)	360,650	TBD	34,341	(326,309)

APPENDIX C

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY					
Budget Comparison FY19 - FY23					
	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
REVENUES					
Credit Hours Sold	8,692	9,167	9,399	9,300	9,762
Gross Tuition	\$4,321,347	\$4,852,715	\$5,103,998	\$5,248,945	\$5,753,190
Unfunded Scholarship	(258,181)	(874,818)	(1,060,091)	(727,025)	(997,336)
Funded Scholarship	(1,405,213)	(1,013,036)	(891,908)	(1,267,574)	(1,246,408)
Net Tuition Before Fees	2,657,953	2,964,861	3,151,899	3,254,346	3,509,446
Fees	162,460	190,875	195,682	253,524	487,859
Net Tuition & Fees	2,820,413	3,155,736	3,347,581	3,507,870	3,997,305
Missional Training Center	27,600	27,600	33,600	34,200	34,200
Gifts and Donations	1,815,235	1,757,428	2,008,245	1,980,000	2,000,000
Auxiliary Enterprises	807,626	639,434	536,339	659,349	596,089
Released from Temporary Restriction	1,807,584	1,696,534	1,085,444	1,471,280	1,469,962
Operational Endowment	879,723	1,173,152	1,267,342	1,231,758	1,218,585
Endowed Student Aid	289,564	313,052	316,141	398,574	425,490
TOTAL REVENUES	8,447,745	8,762,936	8,594,692	9,283,031	9,741,631
EXPENSES					
President's Cabinet					
President / Trustees	301,136	291,823	390,516	316,580	363,913
Chaplain	0	64,354	40,737	44,408	46,187
Strategic Academic Projects	120,014	124,728	128,270	109,716	250
Operations	197,837	216,621	201,084	240,054	289,680
Total President's Cabinet	618,987	697,526	760,607	710,758	700,030
Academics					
Instruction	1,473,965	1,501,863	1,564,164	1,621,903	1,762,166
Disability Ministry	18,644	26,424	18,659		
Field Education	106,308	103,778	123,841	127,431	136,692
Doctor of Ministry	31,928	31,795	35,612	112,078	108,753
Master of Theology (Th. M.)	2,500	2,500	2,500	3,000	2,550
Online Education	127,857	112,280	86,668	201,722	230,470
Counseling	469,450	571,921	657,435	732,883	800,657
World Missions	49,200	2,565	1,551	34,417	35,055
Francis Schaeffer Institute	201,038	204,687	206,225	224,349	235,421
Church Planting	3,860	77,676	87,987	106,110	123,605
Seattle Site	0		3647		
Nashville Site	9,264	2,544		8,165	
Partnership Development	6,060	123	2,395	8,165	
Total Academics	2,500,074	2,638,156	2,790,684	3,180,223	3,435,369
General					
Library	367,080	388,185	428,215	479,881	496,979
Student Life	337,803	273,275	294,489	362,920	375,822
Registration & Academic Advising	191,049	179,242	203,950	247,752	254,500
Financial Aid Administration	83,844	120,495	119,438	112,803	115,083
Development	722,584	575,287	698,425	703,801	772,876
Communications	424,809	426,407	400,567	403,261	414,287
Admissions	285,013	226,911	171,537	319,886	337,132
Alumni Relations	113,335	94,252	127,219	116,127	125,786
Business Office	388,856	383,946	395,364	416,300	424,159
Information Technology Services	426,146	519,709	533,330	636,328	666,148
Facilities	1,065,094	978,964	1,014,553	1,025,852	1,109,355
General Sub-total	4,405,613	4,166,673	4,387,087	4,824,911	5,092,127
Total Educational and General	7,524,674	7,502,355	7,938,378	8,715,892	9,227,526
Total Auxiliary Enterprises Expenses	638,740	573,534	523,960	519,936	579,005
Transfers to Non-operating Funds	222,800	17,113	17,113	10,759	10,759
Hope for the Future Campaign	157,775	84,983	82,921		
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,543,989	8,177,985	8,562,372	9,246,587	9,817,290
OPERATING NET INCOME	(96,244)	584,951	32,320	36,444	(75,659)
Presidential Search/Transition Expense	0	0	55,039	TBD	0
Reserve Funds Used	96,244	0	383,369	0	110,000
Excess Reserve Funds / (Unaccounted Loss)	0	584,951	360,650	TBD	34,341

**MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA
PROPOSED BUDGET
2023**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

The Committee on Mission to North America (MNA) is a Permanent Committee of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), serving PCA churches and presbyteries under the nonprofit corporation of the PCA. Per Rules of Assembly Operations VI.6.2, “The affairs of the church involved in its extension in the United States and Canada are assigned to the Committee on Mission to North America”.

MNA accomplishes its mission of Strengthening the Church to serve, grow, and multiply through the following Ministries:

- African American Ministries
- Bent Tree Fellowship
- Chaplain Ministries
- Church Planter Development
- Church Planter Recruiting
- Church Renewal
- Engaging Disability With The Gospel
- ESL Ministries
- Haitian American Ministries
- Hispanic Ministries
- Korean Ministries
- Korean American Leadership Initiative (KALI)
- Leadership & Ministry Preparation (LAMP)
- Metanoia Prison Ministries
- Ministry to State
- Native American & First Nations Ministries
- Network of Portuguese Speaking Churches
- Parakaleo Church Planting Spouses Ministry
- PCA Unity Fund
- MNA Disaster Response
- MNA SecondCareer
- MNA ShortTerm Missions
- Refugee and Immigrant Ministry
- Urban and Mercy Ministries

Ministry to Constituency: MNA provides publications and referrals for established PCA churches to equip them for participation in church planting.

Church Planting: MNA provides services to those seeking to be church planting catalysts (church planting networks, presbyteries, individual churches) or those seeking to pursue church planting. MNA provides, on a denominational level, services such as church planter development and recruiting, assessment, assistance with placement, training, coaching, and fundraising consultation. MNA also provides forums for leaders in church planting across the PCA to gather for the sharing of ideas, for further leadership training and for creating and carrying out the North American vision for church planting

The PCA Five Million Fund (5MF): The purpose of the 5MF, managed by MNA, is to make loans to PCA organized and mission churches to help them obtain land or to build first buildings they could not afford by any other means.

PCA Unity Fund: The purpose of the PCA Unity Fund is to provide resources for the seminary training, mentoring and development of ethnic minority leadership in the PCA through partnership with individuals, churches, and presbyteries, with the goal of raising up reformed minority Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders, Church Staff, and Missionaries within the denomination.

Budget estimates, overall, are guided by several factors to include cost of living increase, current economic conditions, as well as past history of actual expenses over a three (3) to five (5) year period of time.

II. Major Changes in Budget

There are no major changes in the proposed 2023 budget.

III. Income Streams

MNA's main income streams come through constituent donations, partnership share giving, and investment income.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

All budgeted ministries were implemented in the past year.

V. Notes to Budget Line Items

Assumption for 2023 budget: MNA is submitting a 2023 proposed budget that is an increase of almost 7% from the 2022 budget. Due to an increase in church planter project accounts and growth in permanent staff ministry development, we believe this is a realistic Total Expense Budget for 2023.

Per Capita Calculation: The 2023 Proposed *Total Expense Budget* of \$23,538,168 is adjusted using the following formula:

2023 Proposed Total Expense Budget	\$ 23,538,168
2023 Proposed Church Planters/Missionaries Expense	(13,746,132)
Subtotal	9,792,036
2023 Budgeted investment income	(419,890)
2023 Budgeted conference revenue	(428,576)
Total Net Partnership Share Fund	<u>\$ 8,943,571</u>

The *per capita* calculation of the *Partnership Share Fund* will be \$8,943,571 divided by the number of PCA members. The MNA Ministry Ask figure will remain at \$26 for 2023.

An overall net increase of 3% in salaries and 5% in benefits is assumed. That is an aggregate of cost of living, merit increases and health insurance costs.

The cost being charged by the Administrative Committee for office space remained the same at \$12 per square foot for the 2023 budget projection.

APPENDIX C

Mission to North America Proposed 2023 Budget

	Total Program	Total Administration/ General	Total Fund Raising	Total	% of Total
Support and Revenue					
Contributions	\$ 20,337,793	\$ 1,749,411	\$ 602,500	\$ 22,689,703	96.4%
Investment	-	419,890	-	419,890	1.8%
Conference and Other Revenues	428,576	-	-	428,576	1.8%
Total Support and Revenue	20,766,368	2,169,300	602,500	23,538,168	100%
Expenses					
Coordinator Salary & Housing	-	107,826	107,826	215,652	0.9%
Coordinator Benefits	-	27,298	27,298	54,596	0.2%
Salaries	3,293,553	709,548	251,538	4,254,640	18.1%
Benefits	144,460	303,328	68,338	516,125	2.2%
Projects/Direct Support	15,810,106	600,000	-	16,410,106	69.7%
Travel	498,000	96,500	125,000	719,500	3.1%
Telephone	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Postage	31,500	46,500	15,000	93,000	0.4%
Materials/Supplies	56,250	-	-	56,250	0.2%
Office Space	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Scholarship/Training	100,000	-	-	100,000	0.4%
Missionary Ministry Programming	8,500	-	-	8,500	0.0%
Ministry Development	623,500	92,500	-	716,000	3.0%
Ministry Publications	82,000	-	-	82,000	0.3%
Conferences/Meetings	55,500	-	-	55,500	0.2%
Insurance	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Equipment & Maintenance	-	-	7,500	7,500	0.0%
Consultants	-	-	-	-	0.0%
NAE Dues	1,500	4,800	-	6,300	0.0%
Audit/Legal Services	-	66,000	-	66,000	0.3%
General Assembly	53,000	75,000	-	128,000	0.5%
Committee Meeting	8,500	20,000	-	28,500	0.1%
Depreciation	-	35,000	-	35,000	0.1%
Capital Expenditures	-	20,000	-	20,000	0.1%
Depreciation	-	(35,000)	-	(35,000)	-0.1%
Total Expenses	20,766,369	2,169,300	602,500	23,538,168	100%
Net of Revenue over Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mission to North America Budget Comparison Spreadsheet For Proposed 2023 Budget

	2021 Actual	2021 Budget	2022 Budget	Proposed 2023 Budget	% of Total	Change in Budget	
						\$	%
Support and Revenues							
Individuals	\$ 735,262	\$ 1,000,517	\$ 1,125,543	\$ 1,406,820	5.98%	\$ 281,277	24.99%
Individuals - Designated for permanent staff	2,686,538	1,729,357	1,915,825	2,111,616	8.97%	195,791	10.22%
Individuals - Designated for church planters	9,919,136	8,049,323	8,491,789	8,737,037	37.12%	245,247	2.89%
Churches	1,400,391	1,920,384	2,016,403	2,194,259	9.32%	177,856	8.82%
Churches - Designated for permanent staff	2,222,449	1,837,646	2,043,808	2,195,999	9.33%	152,190	7.45%
Churches - Designated for church planters	3,173,124	4,604,756	4,841,996	5,009,096	21.28%	167,100	3.45%
Corporation/Foundation	820,023	786,869	842,739	1,034,876	4.40%	192,137	22.80%
Investment (215,733)	340,975	399,705	336,739	428,576	1.78%	91,423	27.83%
Conference and Other Revenues					1.82%	91,837	27.27%
Total Support and Revenues	21,082,165	20,551,382	21,943,309	23,538,168	100.00%	1,594,859	7.27%
Expenses							
Program							
Church Planters and Missionaries	13,092,260	12,654,078	13,333,785	13,746,132	58.40%	412,347	3.09%
Church Planting	856,259	1,907,618	1,986,249	2,284,425	9.71%	298,176	15.01%
MNA Ministries	4,396,371	3,245,108	3,758,723	4,584,311	19.48%	825,588	21.96%
Ministry to Constituency	89,790	171,518	175,805	151,500	0.64%	(24,305)	-13.82%
Five Million Fund		1,800	1,500	-	0.00%	(1,500)	-100.00%
Total Program	18,434,680	17,980,122	19,256,062	20,766,368	88.22%	1,510,306	7.84%
Support Services							
Administrative & General	1,585,173	1,824,972	1,916,220	2,054,300	8.73%	138,080	7.21%
General Assembly	47,409	75,000	75,000	75,000	0.32%	-	0.00%
Committee Meetings	8,400	26,500	20,000	20,000	0.08%	-	0.00%
Development	333,949	624,787	650,026	602,500	2.56%	(53,526)	-8.16%
Total Support Services	1,974,930	2,551,259	2,667,246	2,751,800	11.69%	84,554	3.17%
Capital Expenditures	-	20,000	20,000	20,000	0.08%	-	0.00%
Depreciation Expense	28,578	35,000	35,000	35,000	0.15%	-	0.00%
Depreciation Expense	-	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)			
Total Expenses	20,438,089	20,551,382	21,943,309	23,538,168	100.00%	1,594,860	7.27%
Net Revenue	\$ 644,076	\$ 0	\$ -	\$ -			
Additional Information:							
Coordinator Salary	\$ 75,911	\$ 199,401	\$ 205,383	\$ 215,652		10,269	5%
Coordinator Benefits	7,240	49,520	51,996	54,596		2,600	5%
Total	\$ 83,151	\$ 248,921	\$ 257,379	\$ 270,248		12,869	5%

NOTE: Lower actual salary for 2021 reflects MNA Coordinator starting September 1, 2021

APPENDIX C

MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA Five Year Financial History (Actual)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Support/Revenues					
Individuals	\$ 9,827,194	\$ 9,949,917	\$ 11,171,531	\$ 12,247,018	\$ 13,340,936
Churches	7,529,625	7,032,848	6,720,926	7,212,248	6,795,965
Corporation/Foundation	1,062,920	883,428	867,060	963,698	820,023
Investment	290,720	182,329	281,432	273,743	(215,733)
Conference and Other Revenues	286,605	266,714	290,547	558,860	340,975
Total Support and Revenues	18,997,064	18,315,236	19,331,496	21,255,567	21,082,165
Expenses					
Program					
Church Planting	12,748,099	12,679,182	13,694,580	13,345,517	13,948,519
MNA Ministries	2,568,057	3,106,611	3,389,386	3,612,706	4,396,371
Ministry to Constituency	93,622	100,416	133,343	75,182	89,790
Total Program	15,409,778	15,886,209	17,217,309	17,033,405	18,434,680
Support Services					
Administrative and General	1,370,671	1,550,797	1,745,320	1,937,881	1,585,173
General Assembly	44,563	68,920	96,863	5,726	47,409
Committee Meetings	21,181	25,597	21,303	9,830	8,400
Development	432,111	509,469	594,558	533,129	333,849
Total Support Services	1,868,526	2,154,783	2,458,045	2,486,566	1,974,830
Depreciation Expense	25,980	25,103	31,071	23,913	28,578
Total Expenses	17,304,285	18,066,095	19,706,425	19,543,885	20,438,089
Revenues Less Expenses	\$ 1,692,780	\$ 249,141	\$ (374,930)	\$ 1,711,682	\$ 644,076

NOTE regarding negative final outcomes: The deficit in any year is created by spending down the project and designated support accounts which had accumulated positive balances in previous years. Therefore, they indicate disbursement of actual cash rather than deficit spending.

**MISSION TO THE WORLD
PROPOSED CONSOLIDATED 2023 BUDGET**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Focus:

The proposed 2023 budget is based on an analysis of key factors that influence the income and expenses of Mission to the World (MTW) as it operates in a global context with a rapidly changing global economy. We start by reviewing the results of 2021 and extend these indicators into 2022 and 2023.

The year 2021 was a wild year in many respects. Repeatedly, investors brushed off news that could have derailed stocks in years past: a contested presidential election, an assault on the Capitol, historically high inflation, supply chain disruptions and the still-raging Covid-19 pandemic, including its Delta and Omicron variants. None of these events stopped stocks from reaching all-time highs. In fact, the S&P 500 notched 70 all-time highs in 2021, a record that is second only to 1995. In 2021, the S&P 500 gained 26.9%, the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 18.7%, while the NASDAQ Composite gained 21.4%.

Due to the impressive performance of the market, thankfully MTW's investments ended 2021 with a cumulative net return of 9.69%. Although MTW investments have strongly performed in the last three years, we do not expect a similar performance during the next two years based on historical patterns. Market volatility began rising during the third and fourth quarters of 2021 and this trend is expected in the upcoming quarters of 2022. Also, rising interest rates are expected to provide significant headwind for fixed income investments which will likely provide limited total returns over the upcoming year.

Remembering that the entire program of MTW is by the grace of God, we want to give God praise for a positive year. In 2021, giving from our churches and individuals increased. MTW saw a 4.6% increase in giving to our missionaries and a 36.1% increase in giving to field projects and teams. We rejoice that we were able to see our ministries fully funded and the faithful support of our donors.

II. Major Changes in Budget:

Changes in budget reflect an evaluation of the effects of the lingering pandemic, current economic conditions, and a desire to be good stewards of the resources God gives us through His people. We carefully worked

APPENDIX C

with each department to reach a balanced budget in the home office. Several minor adjustments helped reach the proposed budget. The outcome should allow us to continue to give full support to our missionaries while helping them to advance ministry.

In 2022, we plan to continually increase our engagement with national partners at a strategic level and emphasize partnerships with PCA churches and other agencies to advance church planting around the world. We will seek to open new ministries with an emphasis on church planting and other support ministries tied closely to the churches with which we work.

In 2021, we experienced a net decrease of 37 long-term missionaries, and a decrease of 14 two-year missionaries. The decreases were mainly attributed to the retirement of our aging missionaries. We praise God that amid this lingering pandemic, we continue to experience a high number of new candidates and launch new missionaries. Therefore, we anticipate an increase in long-term and two-year missionaries in 2023.

Since travel restrictions were lifted in many countries in 2021, we were able to organize some short-term trips. As a result, we experienced an increase of 17 interns and an increase in 144 one-to-three-week trip participants. In 2023, we are planning to increase short term trips, including medical trips, therefore our 2023 budget reflects an increase in interns and volunteers.

Ministry Personnel Plans	2019	2020	2021	2022 Plan	2023 Plan
Long-term Missionaries	615	625	588	600	625
Two-year Missionaries	63	73	59	65	75
Intern Missionaries	86	31	48	50	60
Volunteers	1,646	146	290	775	1450

Efforts of the Partner Relations Department will continue to focus on raising endowment funds and increasing planned giving that will mitigate the administrative fee for long-term missionaries and provide funding for the Partner Relations Department’s strategic initiatives. In 2021, we experienced a 30.1% increase in endowment giving and an 8.3% increase in Donor Advised Funds giving.

Our U. S. Operations team (US Ops) has developed three strategic objectives: (1) Engage God’s people in prayer for the mission, (2) Cultivate a culture within the PCA that is passionate for God’s global mission in general and the work of MTW in particular, and (3) Develop and mobilize godly, passionate, and qualified people to serve with MTW.

US Ops continues to strengthen MTW's relationships with local churches, presbyteries, and seminaries/universities by providing helpful resources and promoting mission opportunities. All five regional mobilization centers (Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, South Central, West Coast) are now established and promoting MTW's mission opportunities. We pray that the pandemic effects continue to subside so that the work of US Ops will not be hindered.

In 2021, Workday Prism Analytics was implemented which provides our missionaries a more robust financial reporting framework. Also, a much-needed change to our missionary compensation structure was implemented in January 2022 which we believe will better position us to support the growth for which we have prayed. Additionally, a new version of missionary support budgets was created using the new compensation configuration. This achieved added automation in how these budgets are created and managed, easing the administrative burden on staff who manage this for missionaries.

III. Income Streams:

Projections have been made regarding the number of missionaries, office personnel, annual income, and annual expenses. In making these projections, the following assumptions have been used:

We anticipate that continued efforts to recruit missionaries in 2022 will show additional results during 2023, amplified by the efforts of the regional mobilization centers. MTW continues to focus on its goal of mobilizing churches to send out at least 1% of their adult members for world missions.

Income projections have assumed a gradual increase in donor giving and investments. We have projected the support requirements of missionaries, adjusted the numbers for inflation, and balanced this with future income and growth projections. For expense projections, we analyzed the historic and economic trends and adjusted operating expenses accordingly.

Missionary support accounts with deficit balances decreased in 2021 and our Resource Team continues to work closely with each missionary account in deficit or trending toward deficit to address their ongoing support needs.

APPENDIX C

Partnership share giving for the home office indicated an increase in 2021 and is projected to hold steady in the coming year.

Project and team income are calculated by reviewing active and planned special projects. There was an increase in project and team income in 2021 and we expect an increase in the coming years. Our Ambassadors program continues to provide major funding for new fields, church planting, training nationals, and mercy ministry.

Investment income projections assume modest growth for 2022 based on the historical patterns of the market.

Increased medical claims in 2021 have led to a decrease in the Medical Fund, bringing the reserve to \$3.7 million. Much of the increase in 2021 medical claims occurred during the first half of the year with larger than normal run-out claims related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are optimistic that claims will moderate in the coming two years. As a result, the monthly health insurance premium for missionaries and office staff will remain the same in 2022.

In June 2021, the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan of \$1,918,630 was forgiven by the Small Business Administration (SBA). The loan funds were converted as a revenue stream to help ministries in need.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

All major ministry items were implemented.

V. Notes to Budget

The following three tables show the consolidated income and expense budget proposed for 2023. The first table shows the 2023 budget broken down into major components. The second table presents a historical perspective showing 2021 unaudited actual information and budget approved at General Assembly, 2022 modified budget, and the changes in budget from 2022 to 2023. The third table shows a five-year history of income and expenses.

In addition to the income and expense budget, the capital expense budget is requested in the amount of \$468,000 for computer hardware, new software applications, building improvements, and contract labor for technical support of the new software applications.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MISSION TO THE WORLD PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET						
Consolidated Budget Functional Analysis	Ministry			Designated	Total	% of Total
	Program	Administration	Fundraising	Programs		
Income						
Missionary Contributions	46,970,630				46,970,630	62.2%
Project/Team Contributions	9,365,670				9,365,670	12.4%
Unrestricted Contributions		2,153,500			2,153,500	2.9%
Medical Fund Income				6,500	6,500	0.0%
Endowment Income				6,280,570	6,280,570	8.3%
Investment Income				8,867,780	8,867,780	11.7%
Other Income	1,843,050	24,000			1,867,050	2.5%
Total Income	58,179,350	2,177,500	-	15,154,850	75,511,700	100.0%
Transfers	(8,244,530)	7,288,030	-	956,500	-	
Total Income & Transfers	49,934,820	9,465,530	-	16,111,350	75,511,700	
Expenses						
Staff Personnel Costs		5,776,665	504,955		6,281,620	9.5%
Facilities & Vehicles		177,945	15,475		193,420	0.3%
Marketing		183,400	15,950		199,350	0.3%
Fees & Permits		90,210	10,845		101,055	0.2%
Insurance		146,200	12,920		159,120	0.2%
Professional Services		210,270	509,540		719,810	1.1%
Information Technology		218,885	572,465		791,350	1.2%
Distributions		19,380			19,380	0.0%
Ministry Expenses		1,685	13,015		14,700	0.0%
Office Expenses		20,370	1,775		22,145	0.0%
Hospitality Meals		86,920	2,130		89,050	0.1%
Gifts & Awards		32,955	2,870		35,825	0.1%
Postage & Delivery		102,100	2,035		104,135	0.2%
Conferences		96,935	1,545		98,480	0.1%
Travel Expenses		287,235	235,015		522,250	0.8%
Project & Team Expenses	11,063,055		-		11,063,055	16.7%
Missionary Personnel Costs	31,379,415		1,651,555		33,030,970	49.8%
Missionary Operating Expenses	3,920,080		206,325		4,126,405	6.2%
Endowment Expenses				22,725	22,725	0.0%
Investment Expenses				2,626,150	2,626,150	4.0%
Medical Claims & Expenses				5,087,200	5,087,200	7.7%
Depreciation				976,205	976,205	1.5%
Total Expenses	46,362,550	7,451,155	3,758,415	8,712,280	66,284,400	100.0%
Consolidated Excess or Deficit	3,572,270	2,014,375	(3,758,415)	7,399,070	9,227,300	

APPENDIX C

MISSION TO THE WORLD							
PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET COMPARISON							
Consolidated Budget Comparison	2021	2021 GA	2022 GA	2023 GA	Budget	2022 to 2023	
	Unaudited Actual	Approved Budget	Modified Budget	Proposed Budget	% of Total	Change in Budget \$	%
Income							
Missionary Contributions	44,912,177	43,000,270	46,049,375	46,970,630	62.2%	921,255	2.00%
Project/Team Contributions	10,890,440	8,013,110	9,182,030	9,365,670	12.4%	183,640	2.00%
Unrestricted Contributions	1,794,622	2,238,070	2,100,000	2,153,500	2.9%	53,500	2.55%
Medical Fund Income	4,683	40,000	5,000	6,500	0.0%	1,500	30.00%
Endowment Income	8,351,229	3,734,800	6,014,650	6,280,570	8.3%	265,920	4.42%
Investment Income	11,545,048	4,860,000	8,347,000	8,867,780	11.7%	520,780	6.24%
Other Income	1,947,578	3,550,000	1,756,560	1,867,050	2.5%	110,490	6.29%
Total Income	79,445,777	65,436,250	73,454,615	75,511,700	100.0%	2,057,085	2.80%
Expenses							
Staff Personnel Costs	6,238,437	6,216,075	6,158,455	6,281,620	9.5%	123,165	2.00%
Facilities & Vehicles	175,436	154,770	192,454	193,420	0.3%	966	0.50%
Marketing	129,001	149,940	198,756	199,350	0.3%	594	0.30%
Fees & Permits	122,388	111,100	96,246	101,055	0.2%	4,809	5.00%
Insurance	138,725	113,400	156,770	159,120	0.2%	2,350	1.50%
Professional Services	555,037	627,270	715,518	719,810	1.1%	4,292	0.60%
Information Technology	727,437	693,360	785,458	791,350	1.2%	5,892	0.75%
Distributions	23,087	18,090	18,283	19,380	0.0%	1,097	6.00%
Ministry Expenses	5,672	15,750	14,634	14,700	0.0%	66	0.45%
Office Expenses	18,408	15,090	21,924	22,145	0.0%	221	1.01%
Hospitality Meals	60,165	42,000	88,165	89,050	0.1%	885	1.00%
Gifts & Awards	36,693	34,650	35,470	35,825	0.1%	355	1.00%
Postage & Delivery	100,575	92,700	103,204	104,135	0.2%	931	0.90%
Conferences	72,302	46,375	97,699	98,480	0.1%	781	0.80%
Travel Expenses	266,934	288,375	512,004	522,250	0.8%	10,246	2.00%
Project & Team Expenses	10,787,259	9,430,000	10,900,064	11,063,055	16.7%	162,991	1.50%
Missionary Personnel Costs	29,365,951	28,360,535	32,162,580	33,030,970	49.8%	868,390	2.70%
Missionary Operating Expenses	3,614,369	3,869,140	4,065,425	4,126,405	6.2%	60,980	1.50%
Endowment Expenses	18,803	0	22,500	22,725	0.0%	225	1.00%
Investment Expenses	2,667,894	2,252,175	2,600,100	2,626,150	4.0%	26,050	1.00%
Medical Claims & Expenses	5,831,503	4,728,150	5,036,831	5,087,200	7.7%	50,369	1.00%
Depreciation	932,653	845,000	967,530	976,205	1.5%	8,675	0.90%
Total Expenses	61,888,729	58,103,945	64,950,070	66,284,400	100.0%	1,334,330	2.05%
Consolidated Excess or Deficit	17,557,048	7,332,305	8,504,545	9,227,300			
Coordinator's 2022 Salary is \$150,083, housing is \$42,000, SECA is \$11,977 and benefits at \$30,964.							
Coordinator's 2023 Salary is projected to be \$159,687, housing is \$42,000, SECA is \$12,116 and benefits at \$32,862.							
Note: The 2021 actuals are pre-audit figures as the external audit is not complete.							

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MISSION TO THE WORLD A1:F42A2A1:F30					
PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET - FIVE YEAR ACTUAL HISTORICAL DATA					
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Audited	Unaudited
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Income					
Missionary Contributions	42,251,869	42,691,870	43,009,991	42,955,517	44,912,177
Project/Field Contributions	8,773,593	8,978,385	7,148,399	7,997,728	10,890,440
Unrestricted Contributions	1,630,454	2,045,033	2,511,011	2,249,801	1,794,622
Medical Fund Income	403,626	209,280	40,036	39,336	4,683
Endowment Income	4,822,810	(211,884)	8,881,091	4,742,514	8,351,229
Investment Income	8,954,586	828,106	11,878,658	9,365,405	11,545,048
Other Income	1,742,426	2,450,940	2,411,123	1,641,163	1,947,578
Total Income	68,579,364	56,991,730	75,880,309	68,991,464	79,445,777
Expenses					
Staff Personnel Costs	5,053,098	5,622,082	6,066,289	6,168,542	6,238,437
Facilities & Vehicles	209,890	197,617	228,342	154,395	175,436
Marketing	150,125	161,684	169,992	155,208	129,001
Fees & Permits	118,930	117,529	97,173	109,668	122,388
Insurance	95,156	118,733	115,856	109,268	138,725
Professional Services	485,009	547,279	884,606	597,404	555,037
Financial Expenses	357,465	429,114	13,730	0	0
Information Technology	625,069	517,298	730,889	594,959	727,437
Distributions	16,802	18,070	36,750	17,566	23,087
Ministry Expenses	28,478	17,121	19,283	15,074	5,672
Office Expenses	43,848	20,940	24,666	14,854	18,408
Hospitality Meals	61,864	110,267	103,355	40,433	60,165
Gifts & Awards	25,151	30,812	51,797	32,946	36,693
Postage & Delivery	117,102	80,719	74,647	97,809	100,575
Conferences	142,667	47,411	190,758	37,132	72,302
Travel Expenses	997,391	454,136	524,929	230,688	266,934
Project & Team Expenses	11,149,580	12,776,998	10,991,066	9,741,128	10,787,259
Missionary Personnel Costs	25,986,692	27,092,818	27,505,515	27,534,494	29,365,951
Missionary Operating Expenses	6,407,314	5,360,455	5,588,453	3,215,821	3,614,369
Endowment/Investment Expenses	1,701,419	1,632,480	2,268,120	2,246,669	2,686,697
Medical Claims & Expenses	5,105,436	5,344,400	5,071,759	5,032,685	5,831,503
Depreciation	486,145	489,209	766,926	897,331	932,653
Total Expenses	59,364,631	61,187,172	61,524,901	57,044,074	61,888,729
Consolidated Excess or Deficit	9,214,733	(4,195,442)	14,355,408	11,947,390	17,557,048
Coordinator's 2022 Salary is \$150,083, housing is \$42,000, SECA is \$11,977 and benefits at \$30,964.					
Coordinator's 2023 Salary is projected to be \$159,687, housing is \$42,000, SECA is \$12,116 and benefits at \$32,862.					
Note 1: The 2018 actuals include a \$7.1 million unrealized loss in investments.					
Note 2: The 2021 actuals are pre-audit figures as the external audit is not complete.					

APPENDIX C

PROPOSED 2023 GA BUDGET – CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

<u>Description of Expenditure:</u>	<u>GA Approved 2022 Capital Budget</u>	<u>GA Proposed 2023 Capital Budget</u>
Computer Hardware	\$100,000	\$58,000
New Application Software	25,000	200,000
Furniture and Building Improvements	120,000	160,000
Contract Labor – New Application Software	15,000	50,000
Total Capital Budget	\$260,000	\$468,000

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION, INC.
2023 PROPOSED BUDGET
2023**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

The PCA Foundation's (PCAF) primary purpose is to use its assets "...for the support of the cause of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, primarily through the Presbyterian Church in America, but also through other groups, societies, organizations, and institutions that minister in Jesus' name to man's spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual powers." (PCAF Articles of Incorporation)

The purpose of the PCAF is accomplished primarily by making grants of funds contributed by individuals and families. The PCAF encourages contributions by providing information and education about, and facilitating, generous, tax-efficient contributions, and makes effective grants by enabling donors to recommend grants and providing information to donors about charitable endeavors worthy of support.

The PCAF offers the following charitable giving-granting programs: donor-advised funds, including Advise and Consult Funds, Increase Funds, and Single Charity Funds, Charitable Remainder Trusts, Charitable Lead Trusts, Endowments, Designated Funds for churches and other PCA entities, bequests, and presentation of information about strategic giving and granting to individuals, churches, presbyteries, and other groups.

The PCAF has experienced significant growth in recent years, which has provided increased funds for grants and support and education activities. As of December 31, 2021, its assets totaled \$354.8 million. Compared to the 2016 year-end total assets of \$86.7 million, it has increased \$268.1 million over the last five years. Improving financial markets over that period and increased awareness of the PCAF's charitable services have been significant contributors to the PCAF's growth.

The PCA Foundation's proposed Operating and Capital Budget for 2023 of \$1,944,920 represents a \$433,356 or 28.67% increase from the General Assembly approved budget for 2022 of \$1,511,564.

II. Major Changes in Budget

The major changes in budgeted revenue included in the proposed 2023 Budget compared to 2022 Budget are for increased balanced-based revenue from increased funds, and a higher payout from the Advise & Consult Fund earnings. The PCAF anticipates \$239,250 in increased balanced-based charges, and \$190,000 in increased payout from earnings.

The major changes in budgeted expenses included in the proposed 2023 Budget compared to 2022 Budget are for increased wages and benefits due to adding two new staff positions, and very high cost-of-living increases to remaining staff wages. The PCAF anticipates costs related to hiring a gift planner and an accounting assistant of \$271,380, and costs of \$70,536 for increases in existing staff wages and benefits.

III. Income Streams

The PCAF is self-supported. It does not participate in the PCA's Partnership Shares Program, nor does it rely on the financial support of churches to help underwrite its operating expenses.

Approximately 59% of the PCAF's total 2023 budgeted operating revenue is interest/ earnings generated on its Advise and Consult Funds®, the PCAF Endowment (consistent with prior years) and also several other invested assets. Trustee fees and administrative-cost charges imposed on Increase Funds, Charitable Trusts, Endowments and other charged accounts are expected to be 38% of 2023 budgeted operating revenue. Direct charitable contributions for operational support (primarily from a small number of individuals and Board members) account for the remaining 3%. Income streams budgeted for 2023 are higher than those budgeted for in recent years due to increased funds from complex gifts received as a result of implementing a complex gift strategy.

The sources described above are attainable and sufficient to provide the 2023 budgeted operating revenues.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

There were no new major ministry plans of the PCA Foundation scheduled for implementation during 2021.

V. Notes to Budget “line items”

General Comments

The 2023 Operating and Capital Budget of \$1,944,920 represents a \$433,356 or 28.67% increase compared to the 2022 Budget of \$1,511,564.

Support & Revenue

The 2023 Budget for Support and Revenue is \$2,026,750, the amount needed to fund the 2023 Operating and Capital Budget.

Undesignated Earnings (line 1) – These payouts are from funds held by the PCA Foundation, mainly from Advise & Consult Funds and the PCAF Endowment, which help underwrite the Foundation’s operating expenses. The payout percentages are set annually by the PCA Foundation’s Board, and generally are somewhat correlated to the expected investment returns of the accounts. However, during times when the expected investment returns may be lower than the payout amounts needed to fund operations, reserves in these accounts are significantly more than adequate to compensate for the differences. The 2023 Budget of \$1,200,000 represents a change of \$190,000 or 18.8% from the 2022 Budget amount of \$1,010,000.

Account Charges (line 2) – 2023 account charges are fees and balanced-based charges on funds held for long term administration such as Increase Funds, Charitable Remainder Trusts, Charitable Lead Trusts, Endowments, and Designated Funds. The 2023 Budget amount of \$761,000 compares to the 2022 Budget amount of \$551,000, an increase of \$210,000 or 38.1%. Balanced-based charges on increased funds resulting from the complex gift strategy are projected to be \$239,250 and per-gift transaction charges for complex gift accounts are projected to be \$61,250.

Contributions (line 3) – Gifts primarily from a small number of individuals and Board members help underwrite the Foundation’s Operating Budget. Contributions budgeted for 2023 are \$50,000, compared to \$50,000 in the 2022 Budget.

Operations Expenses

The 2023 amount budgeted for operating expenses is \$1,959,817, compared to \$1,523,064 budgeted for 2022, an increase of \$436,753 or 28.68%.

APPENDIX C

Staff Wages & Benefits (lines 5, 6 and 7) – 2023 is budgeted at \$1,259,880, representing an increase of 37.25% or \$341,916 from the 2022 Budget amount of \$917,964. The increase results from adding two new staff positions, a gift planner and accounting assistant, and much higher than anticipated budgeted salary increases due to high inflation.

The 2023 Budget for Staff Wages and Benefits of \$1,259,880 represents an increase of \$365,233 or 40.82% over the 2021 Actual of \$894,647. However, of this increase, \$271,380 is due to adding a gift planner and full-time accounting assistant in 2022. The remaining increase of \$93,853 is primarily due to inflation-required increases in wage, payroll tax and retirement plan contribution expenses.

All Other Operating Expenses (lines 8-23) – All other operating expenses for the 2023 Budget are \$699,937, compared to \$605,100 in the 2022 Budget, an increase of \$94,837 or 15.67%.

Capital Expenditures

Capital Expenditures (line 24) – The 2023 Budget of \$10,000 consists primarily of computer hardware and software enhancements for operations and donor relations.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION, INC. PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET

	2021 ACTUAL	2021 BUDGET	2022 BUDGET	GENERAL & ADMIN.	FUND RAISING	CAPITAL ASSETS	2023 TOTALS	% OF TOTAL
SUPPORT & REVENUE								
1. UNDESIGNATED EARNINGS	710,000	1,010,000	1,010,000	1,200,000	-	-	1,200,000	59.21
2. ACCOUNT CHARGES	503,271	474,750	551,000	761,000	-	-	761,000	37.55
3. CONTRIBUTIONS	163,414	50,000	50,000	-	50,000	-	50,000	2.47
4. INTEREST INCOME	12,295	25,000	12,500	15,750	-	-	15,750	0.78
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	1,388,980	1,559,750	1,623,500	1,976,750	50,000	-	2,026,750	100.00
OPERATIONS EXPENSES								
5. PRESIDENT'S SALARY	240,424	248,733	250,000	92,235	171,293	-	263,528	13.00
6. PRESIDENT'S BENEFITS	55,919	43,705	50,102	22,531	41,843	-	64,374	3.18
7. STAFF WAGES & BENEFITS	598,304	622,725	617,862	615,038	316,940	-	931,978	45.98
8. TRAVEL EXPENSE	37,021	28,700	42,550	3,050	26,385	-	29,435	1.45
9. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	56,407	210,430	211,480	233,610	-	-	233,610	11.53
10. PROMOTION	92,264	117,650	105,650	-	115,500	-	115,500	5.70
11. OFFICE EXPENSE	98,697	64,700	81,800	82,608	34,568	-	117,175	5.78
12. POSTAGE/UPS/FED EX	12,396	17,500	12,500	3,125	9,375	-	12,500	0.62
13. TAXES & LICENSES	187	300	300	300	-	-	300	0.01
14. RENT	29,016	29,016	29,016	36,000	-	-	36,000	1.78
15. TELEPHONE	7,747	8,000	8,500	2,125	6,375	-	8,500	0.42
16. DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,639	13,850	6,885	2,532	4,703	-	7,235	0.36
17. TRAINING	21,000	10,000	13,500	5,600	13,400	-	19,000	0.94
18. BOARD EXPENSE	10,944	19,500	19,500	19,500	-	-	19,500	0.96
19. OFFICE INSURANCE	26,019	20,000	24,369	36,735	-	-	36,735	1.81
20. GA EXPENSE	13,396	15,000	12,000	22,000	-	-	22,000	1.09
21. ADMIN/GA NOM. CMTES.	12,660	15,000	15,000	15,000	-	-	15,000	0.74
22. MISCELLANEOUS	68	2,550	2,550	2,550	-	-	2,550	0.13
23. DEPRECIATION	15,775	22,000	19,500	17,428	7,469	-	24,897	1.23
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSES	1,329,884	1,509,359	1,523,064	1,211,966	747,851	-	1,959,817	96.70
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FROM OPERATIONS	59,096	50,391	100,436	764,784	(697,851)	-	66,933	3.30
CAPITAL ASSETS								
24. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	5,307	20,000	8,000	-	-	10,000	10,000	0.49
25. LESS DEPRECIATION	(15,775)	(22,000)	(19,500)	-	-	(24,897)	(24,897)	(1.23)
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	(10,468)	(2,000)	(11,500)	-	-	(14,897)	(14,897)	(0.74)
TOTAL OPERATIONS & CAPITAL	1,319,416	1,507,359	1,511,564	1,211,966	747,851	(14,897)	1,944,920	95.96
TOTAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT	69,564	52,391	111,936	764,784	(697,851)	14,897	81,830	4.04

PCAF THREE YEAR COMPARISON OF INCOME, EXPENSE, SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)				
	2019	2020	2021	AVERAGE 2019-2021
BUDGET	1,390,000	1,417,000	1,507,359	1,438,120
INCOME - ACTUAL	1,373,981	1,180,180	1,388,980	1,314,380
EXPENSE - ACTUAL	1,344,534	1,122,899	1,329,884	1,265,772
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) - ACTUAL	29,447	57,281	59,096	48,608

APPENDIX C

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION, INC.
 BUDGETS COMPARISON STATEMENT
 FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	2021 ACTUAL	2021 BUDGET	2022 BUDGET	PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET	BUDGET % OF TOTAL	CHANGE IN BUDGET	
						IN \$	IN %
SUPPORT & REVENUE							
1. UNDESIGNATED EARNINGS	710,000	1,010,000	1,010,000	1,200,000	59.21	190,000	18.81
2. ACCOUNT CHARGES	503,271	474,750	551,000	761,000	37.55	210,000	38.11
3. CONTRIBUTIONS	163,414	50,000	50,000	50,000	2.47	-	-
4. INTEREST INCOME	12,295	25,000	12,500	15,750	0.78	3,250	26.00
TOTAL SUPPORT/REVENUE	1,388,980	1,559,750	1,623,500	2,026,750	100.00	403,250	24.84
OPERATIONS EXPENSES							
PROGRAMS							
5. NONE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL PROGRAMS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUPPORT SERVICES							
6. GENERAL & ADMIN.	851,568	869,255	1,011,613	1,211,966	59.80	200,353	19.81
7. FUND RAISING	478,316	640,104	511,451	747,851	36.90	236,400	46.22
TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES	1,329,884	1,509,359	1,523,064	1,959,817	96.70	436,753	28.68
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSES:	1,329,884	1,509,359	1,523,064	1,959,817	96.70	436,753	28.68
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) OPERATION	59,096	50,391	100,436	66,933	3.30	(33,503)	-
CAPITAL ASSETS:							
8. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	5,307	20,000	8,000	10,000	0.49	2,000	25.00
9. (LESS DEPRECIATION)	(15,775)	(22,000)	(19,500)	(24,897)	(1.23)	(5,397)	27.68
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES:	(10,468)	(2,000)	(11,500)	(14,897)	(0.74)	(3,397)	-
TOTAL OPERATIONS & CAPITAL:	1,319,416	1,507,359	1,511,564	1,944,920	95.96	433,356	28.67
TOTAL SURPLUS/(DEFICIT):	69,564	52,391	111,936	81,830	4.04	(30,106)	-

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION, INC.
 FIVE YEAR ACTUAL REVENUE AND EXPENSE TRENDS
 2017-2021

	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ACTUAL	2020 ACTUAL	2021 ACTUAL
SUPPORT & REVENUE					
1. UNDESIGNATED EARNINGS	705,000	735,000	1,040,000	546,000	710,000
2. ACCOUNT CHARGES	253,843	256,198	285,174	333,395	503,271
3. CONTRIBUTIONS	87,016	142,871	29,731	294,370	163,414
4. INTEREST INCOME	11,198	24,299	19,076	6,415	12,295
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	1,057,057	1,158,368	1,373,981	1,180,180	1,388,980
OPERATIONS EXPENSES					
5. PRESIDENT'S SALARY	195,000	204,600	222,400	227,200	240,424
6. PRESIDENT'S BENEFITS	45,000	45,000	42,900	48,800	55,919
7. STAFF WAGES & BENEFITS	422,362	484,843	554,882	533,597	598,304
8. TRAVEL EXPENSE	9,211	10,103	7,555	3,421	37,021
9. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	41,925	45,245	54,890	68,673	56,407
10. PROMOTION	105,976	89,481	88,911	84,572	92,264
11. OFFICE EXPENSE	46,214	52,019	52,195	47,057	98,697
12. POSTAGE/UPS/FED EX	12,562	10,861	15,013	11,367	12,396
13. TAXES & LICENSES	30	70	192	260	187
14. RENT	29,016	29,016	29,016	29,016	29,016
15. TELEPHONE	5,847	6,940	7,900	8,307	7,747
16. DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	5,553	5,346	5,270	1,405	1,639
17. TRAINING	-	50	2,976	348	21,000
18. BOARD EXPENSE	17,033	40,131	17,617	8,224	10,944
19. OFFICE INSURANCE	18,142	17,667	17,643	20,108	26,019
20. GA EXPENSE	9,474	12,405	19,438	2,000	13,396
21. ADMIN./GA NOM. CMTES.	14,105	14,110	14,419	11,549	12,660
22. MISCELLANEOUS	354	1,820	166,166	1,656	68
23. DEPRECIATION	31,496	33,420	25,151	15,339	15,775
TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSES	1,009,300	1,103,127	1,344,534	1,122,899	1,329,884
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FROM OPERATIONS	47,757	55,241	29,447	57,281	59,096
CAPITAL ASSETS					
24. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	9,433	15,480	40,178	6,260	5,307
25. LESS DEPRECIATION	(31,496)	(33,420)	(25,151)	(15,339)	(15,775)
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	(22,063)	(17,940)	15,027	(9,079)	(10,468)
TOTAL OPERATIONS & CAPITAL	987,237	1,085,187	1,359,561	1,113,820	1,319,416
TOTAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT	69,820	73,181	14,420	66,360	69,564

**PCA RETIREMENT & BENEFITS, INC.
PROPOSED BUDGET
2023**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

- A. RBI Vision: We believe the gospel advances, and the church thrives as men and women who serve PCA ministries grow spiritually and financially healthy.
- B. RBI Mission: We guide PCA pastors and ministry workers through the complexities of financial planning and employee benefits, so they and their families are able to live generously in every season of ministry.
- C. This budget reflects the costs incurred to administer the trust funds for PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc. This budget does not reflect the financial activity in those trust funds. (Complete financial activity in the trust funds is provided in *RBI's Annual Report*, which includes audited financial statements.)

II. Major Changes in Budget

- A. The 2023 budget reflects an 18% increase from the prior year, or \$747,841. The budget increase results primarily from the following line items:
 - i. 6% increase in salary and benefits costs to offset expected higher inflation for existing employees
 - ii. 7% increase in Lilly Grant expenses to include salary and benefits costs for additional full-time staff, participant services and travel
 - iii. 5% increase for professional services and travel expenses for participant communication and outreach
- B. The total number of staff budgeted for 2023 is 28 FTE compared to 25 FTE in 2022. The 2023 budget incorporates staff changes, including hiring an Investment Specialist, Director of Pastoral Wellness, and Benefits Advisor.
- C. The Retirement portion of Support and Revenue increased 17.7%, or \$398,062, as staff additions increase the overall Trustee Fees allocated to Retirement and Insurance. (See details above at II. A.; Budget Comparisons – Line 1).
- D. The Insurance portion of Support and Revenue increased 17.7%, or \$199,031, as staff additions increase the overall Trustee Fees allocated to Retirement and Insurance. (See details above at II. A.; Budget Comparisons – Line 2).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- E. The Relief portion of Support and Revenue shows a 22.9% increase, or \$147,749, due to program administration, donor relations, and the planned hiring of a Director of Pastoral Wellness (See details above at II. A.; Budget Comparisons – Line 3).
- F. The Insurance TPA income portion of Support and Revenue reflects fee income collected by RBI for in-house administration of the Insurance plan (Budget Comparisons – Line 4).
- G. The Retirement Fee Income portion of Support and Revenue represents administrative fees from self-directed investment accounts in the Retirement Plan (Budget Comparisons – Line 5).
- H. The Other Income portion of Support and Revenue reflects estimated registration income for the annual Ministerial Relief Golf Tournament (Budget Comparisons – Line 7)
- I. The 2023 budget reflects \$40,000 for capital additions, consisting primarily of new and existing staff computers. (Proposed Budget – Line 24)
- J. The Grant Income portion of support in 2021 (Budget Comparisons – Line 6) consists of a Paycheck Protection Loan forgiveness for \$351,601 and a relief research grant of \$50,000.
- K. Please note that 2021 actuals are unaudited as of February 23, 2022. The 2021 audit is expected to be complete by April 30, 2022. (Budget Comparisons and Five-Year Comparison).

III. Income Stream

RBI's primary budgeted revenue sources are 1) trustee fees charged to the Health and Welfare Benefit Trust, Relief Trust, and the PCA Retirement Plan Trust, 2) estimated Insurance TPA fees, and 3) estimated Retirement fee income.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

RBI did not implement a planned move to a larger office suite in 2021. The project is now expected to take place in late 2022.

V. Notes to Budget Line Items

- A. Occupancy expense for the shared facility is expected to remain at the same rate of \$12 per square foot, but for a 33% larger office space than currently occupied. The increase in square footage corresponds to a planned office move expected to take place in 2022. (Proposed Budget – Line 13).

APPENDIX C

- B. All fundraising activities are related to the Ministerial Relief department through our development activities, annual Relief Offering, appeals through PCA Foundation, and advertising in denominational publications (Proposed Budget – Fundraising Column). The 2023 fundraising budget includes salary and benefits expenses related to the Director of Philanthropy and the program staff.

- C. Our General Assembly line item includes RBI's share of the Nominating Committee expense and any Ad Hoc Committee expense; the cost of convention services, such as booth space and electrical supply; transportation of materials and staff to and from General Assembly; seminars and other education/information activities presented at General Assembly. (Five-Year Comparison – Line 11).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PCA RETIREMENT & BENEFITS, INC.						
PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET						
DESCRIPTION	PROGRAMS	MANAGEMENT & GENERAL	FUND RAISING	CAPITAL ASSETS	TOTALS	% OF TOTALS
Support & Revenue:						
1 Retirement		2,620,380		26,667	2,647,047	54.08%
2 Insurance		1,310,191		13,333	1,323,524	27.04%
3 Relief	143,352	423,493	226,300		793,145	16.20%
4 Insurance TPA Income		45,000			45,000	0.92%
5 Ministerial Relief Tournament Income		48,000			48,000	0.98%
6 Retirement Fee Income		38,000			38,000	0.78%
Total Support & Revenue	143,352	4,485,064	226,300	40,000	4,894,716	100.00%
Operations Expenses:						
<i>Salaries & Benefits:</i>						
6 President's Salary & Housing	-	201,460	-		201,460	4.12%
7 President's Benefits	-	60,940	-		60,940	1.25%
8 Staff Salaries & Housing	96,442	2,159,692	105,294		2,361,428	48.24%
9 Staff Benefits	35,910	841,359	51,206		928,475	18.97%
<i>G & A:</i>						
10 Advertising, Promotions & Website	-	42,950	8,000		50,950	1.04%
11 Computer & Office Equipment	-	114,670	-		114,670	2.34%
12 Insurance	-	60,000	-		60,000	1.23%
13 Occupancy Cost/Rent	-	90,350	-		90,350	1.85%
14 Office	-	125,293	200		125,493	2.56%
15 Postage	1,000	18,420	15,000		34,420	0.70%
16 Printing	10,000	45,500	30,000		85,500	1.75%
17 Professional Services	-	262,520	15,000		277,520	5.67%
18 Telephone	-	20,700	-		20,700	0.42%
19 Training & Professional/Ministry Dues	-	94,600	-		94,600	1.93%
20 Travel	-	271,750	1,600		273,350	5.58%
21 General Assembly Expense	-	26,860	-		26,860	0.55%
22 Ministerial Relief Tournament Expense	-	48,000	-		48,000	0.98%
Total Operations Expenses:	143,352	4,485,064	226,300	-	4,854,716	99.18%
23 Surplus/(Deficit) from Operations:	-	-	-	40,000	40,000	
Capital Assets:						
24 Capital Expenditures				40,000	40,000	0.82%
25 Depreciation		60,959			60,959	
26 Less Depreciation		(60,959)			(60,959)	
Total Capital Assets:	-	-	-	40,000	40,000	0.82%
Total Operations & Capital:	143,352	4,485,064	226,300	40,000	4,894,716	100.00%

APPENDIX C

PCA RETIREMENT & BENEFITS, INC. BUDGET COMPARISONS STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET							
DESCRIPTION	2021	2021	2022	PROPOSED BUDGET	% OF	2022 TO 2023	
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	BUDGET	2023 BUDGET	TOTALS	CHANGE IN BUDGET	IN %
Support & Revenue:							
1 Retirement	2,017,516	2,017,516	2,248,986	2,647,047	54.08%	398,062	17.7%
2 Insurance	1,008,758	1,008,758	1,124,493	1,323,524	27.04%	199,031	17.7%
3 Relief	583,270	583,270	645,396	793,145	16.20%	147,749	22.9%
4 Insurance TPA Income	45,077	44,400	44,400	45,000	0.92%	600	1.4%
5 Retirement Fee Income	42,863	32,400	35,600	48,000			
6 Grant Income	401,601						
7 Other Income	50,585		48,000	38,000	0.78%	(10,000)	-20.8%
Total Support & Revenue	4,149,669	3,686,343	4,146,875	4,894,716	99.02%	735,441	17.7%
Operations Expenses:							
<i>Programs:</i>							
8 Ministerial Relief	184,008	101,461	86,527	143,352	2.93%	56,825	65.7%
Total Programs:	184,008	101,461	86,527	143,352	2.93%	56,825	65.7%
<i>Supporting Activities:</i>							
9 Administration	3,332,538	3,380,079	3,820,219	4,458,204	91.08%	637,985	16.7%
10 Fund Raising	62,151	37,952	163,279	226,300	4.62%	63,021	38.6%
11 General Assembly Expense	22,501	44,350	27,850	26,860	0.55%	(990)	-3.6%
Total Supporting Activities	3,417,190	3,462,382	4,011,347	4,711,364	96.25%	700,017	17.5%
Total Operations Expenses:	3,601,198	3,563,843	4,097,875	4,854,716	99.18%	756,841	18.5%
12 Depreciation/Disposals	43,458						
13 Surplus(Deficit) after Depreciation	505,013						
Capital Assets:							
14 Capital Additions **	132,387	122,500	49,000	40,000	0.82%	(9,000)	
Total Operations & Capital:	3,777,044	3,686,343	4,146,875	4,894,716	100.00%	747,841	18.0%
Net Revenue over (under) Expense including depreciation and excluding equity transfer	372,626	-	-	-			
Additional Information:	2021 Salary	2021 Budget	2022 Budget	Proposed 2023 Budget		Change in Budget	
President's Salary & Housing	176,450	169,693	190,056	201,460		in \$	in %
President's Benefits	39,633	46,961	56,761	60,940		11,404	6.0%
						4,179	7.4%

* See Budget Note V.E.

* Administrative costs reflected in this budget are incurred to administer the trust funds for Retirement, Insurance and Relief.

This budget does not reflect the financial activity in those trust funds.

** Capital Additions for 2021 were \$88,902. Equity Transfer addition for the building is \$43,485.

2021 Actuals are unaudited as of the 2023 Budget submission deadline.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PCA RETIREMENT & BENEFITS, INC.					
FIVE-YEAR COMPARISON					
DESCRIPTION	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ACTUAL	2020 ACTUAL	2021 ACTUAL
Support & Revenue:					
1 Retirement	1,713,793	1,719,780	1,907,140	1,687,730	2,017,516
2 Insurance	786,990	857,604	968,324	845,005	1,008,758
3 Relief	351,370	433,656	285,236	321,344	583,270
4 Insurance TPA Income	41,642	43,107	43,660	44,768	45,077
5 Retirement Fee Income	-	182,158	31,371	31,845	42,863
6 Grant Income	-	-	-	-	401,601
7 Other Income (Loss)	-	(5,168)	35,878	84,855	50,585
Total Support & Revenue	2,893,795	3,231,138	3,271,608	3,015,547	4,149,669
Operations Expenses:					
<i>Programs:</i>					
8 Ministerial Relief	223,374	332,172	319,223	253,578	184,008
Total Programs:	223,374	332,172	319,223	253,578	184,008
<i>Supporting Activities:</i>					
9 Administration	2,284,932	2,655,235	2,782,656	2,815,165	3,332,538
10 Fund Raising (Relief)	15,176	12,231	15,392	69,246	62,151
11 General Assembly Expense	29,398	31,157	49,939	857	22,501
Total Supporting Activities:	2,329,506	2,698,622	2,847,987	2,885,268	3,417,190
Total Operations Expenses:	2,552,880	3,030,794	3,167,210	3,138,846	3,601,198
12 Depreciation	22,403	19,648	20,946	40,356	43,458
13 Surplus(Deficit) after Depreciation	318,512	180,696	83,452	(163,655)	505,013
Capital Assets:					
14 Capital Additions	**	**	**	**	**
Total Operations & Capital:	2,575,283	3,050,442	3,188,156	3,179,202	3,644,657
Net Revenue over (under) Expense including depreciation	318,512	180,696	83,452	(163,655)	505,013

Administrative Costs reflected in this budget are incurred to administer the trust funds for Retirement, Insurance and Relief. This budget does not reflect the financial activity in those trust funds.

** Capital Additions	\$31,857	\$33,599+ (27,312)	\$123,390+ 47,538	\$52,372+ 36,425	\$88,902 + 43,485
	equity transfer of building and furnishings	Purchase of office equipment, computers + equity transfer of building and furnishings	Purchase of office equipment, computers, improvements, company car + equity transfer of building and furnishings	Purchase of office equipment, computers, improvements + equity transfer of building and furnishings	Purchase of office equipment, computers, improvements + equity transfer of building and furnishings

**RIDGE HAVEN
BREVARD, NC – CONO, IA
PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET**

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

We noted at this time last year that 2021 was off to a slow start compared to past years, yet God saw fit to turn things around and bring a record number 12,000 campers and guests by the year end which enabled us to exceed our income projections. This, alongside the relaunch of our Capital Campaign, created a busy period at Ridge Haven Brevard and Cono.

The wonderful success of our Capital Campaign could not come at a better time, as we have raised 91% of our 5.1 million goal, allowing us to prepare for a full summer and anticipate and full year-round ministry at both locations. Currently we are seeing a 51% increase in summer registrants compared to this time last year and greater interest than ever in summer staff.

Our hopes are to complete our 10,000 square foot multi-purpose gym by the beginning of summer, along with three new summer camper and staff cabins that can accommodate our growing numbers.

Additionally, we continue to hire full-time and part-time staff for both campuses as we further expand our ministry opportunities. We are especially pleased with our new campus, Ridge Haven Cono, that was started in 2018 where we offer a full summer of camps and retreats and weekend retreat offerings all year-round. In addition, we reopened a Junior and Senior High School for the local community, and a Ridge Haven Cono Coop for elementary students in the area.

II. Major Changes in Budget

The major change in this 2023 budget is an increase to account for the wonderful exceptional year the Lord gave us in 2021 and projection for the rest of 2022.

III. Income Streams

Ridge Haven receives support/revenue from the following sources:

1. Camp, conference, and retreat fees (includes food service and campstore/ bookstore revenue).
2. Facility, house rentals, and Cono School and farmland rental.
3. Contributions (includes partnership shares and direct contributions).
4. Minor sources of revenue, which include resident fees (water/sewer fees, road assessments, etc.), and interest-bearing bank accounts.

IV. Major Ministry Not Implemented in the Past Year

With the pandemic, we were unable to complete our new multi-purpose gym. We are pleased to report at the writing of this report that construction has begun and we are hoping to have it finished by this summer. It will seat 1,000+. In addition, last year we delayed starting our enhanced year-round internship program. As noted in our GA Report, it too is being implemented this year.

V. 2023 Budget Line Items Notes

Notes refer to all three inserts below.

Line 2 Property – This line item includes revenue from lot maintenance fees, water hookups, water usage fees, and road maintenance fees from 18 lots which are contiguous to our main campus. The amount budgeted each year reflects the predictable aspects of this revenue, i.e. the principal and interest being paid on lot leases being bought over time, the annually collected lot lease maintenance fees, water usage fees, and a portion of the road maintenance fees. This line item also includes our farmland rental and rental houses at Cono.

Line 6, Miscellaneous – Includes refund of state sales tax, amortization of lot leases, Right-of-Way land sales, staff rentals, and interest revenue. In 2021, this also included our Payroll Tax Refund.

Total Income – Below this line, we included the PPP forgiveness income in the amount of \$471,300. This is non-repeatable.

Line 7, Payroll and Benefits – Includes payroll and benefits for 22 year-round employees including the Executive Director, Director, 6 part-time staff, plus over 100 part-time counselors and summer/weekend staff both for Ridge Haven Brevard, and Ridge Haven Cono. Speakers, and musicians’ honorariums are included in this category, as well as payroll taxes and workers’ compensation insurance. Executive Director’s Salary -- Total Package is included in Line 7. The breakdown is:

2019 Budget	\$100,000	Actual	\$87,373
2020 Budget	\$100,000	Actual	\$50,751
2021 Budget	\$110,000	Actual	\$89,507 (includes \$7,582.93 Benefits)
2022 Budget	\$110,000		(includes \$7,582.93 Benefits)
2023 Budget	\$110,000		(includes \$7,582.93 Benefits)

APPENDIX C

Line 9, Office and Administrative – Includes major expense items, including commercial insurance, telephone fees, office and housekeeping supplies, loan interest and bank fees, and audit and legal fees.

Line 11, Facilities – Includes all maintenance, upkeep, repairs, deferred maintenance, real estate taxes, and refuse expenses. Also includes vehicle parts and service, fuel costs, and equipment leases.

Line 13, Ministry – Includes ministry supplies, registration software fees, our Barnabas Scholarships for ministry leaders, and travel and other expenses associated with our no cost for camp for inner-city kids.

Line 14, Recruitment & Development – Includes all printing costs, promotional ads and media productions, and recruitment initiatives and trips.

Line 17, Capital Campaign – Start-up, production costs, and initial Capital Campaign expenditures until they are capitalized moving them to the Balance Sheet.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ridge Haven 2023 Budget		
DESCRIPTION	BUDGET	% totals
Support/Revenue		
1. Ministry Income	1,700,000	51%
2. Property	155,000	5%
3. Contributions - Brevard	900,000	27%
4. Contributions - Cono	325,000	10%
5. Bookstore & Vending	100,000	3%
6. Miscellaneous	150,000	5%
Total Income	\$ 3,330,000	100%
Operating Expense		
7. Payroll & Benefits	1,200,000	36%
8. Bookstore/Vending	54,000	2%
9. Office & Admin. Expense	180,000	5%
10. Food Service Department	200,000	6%
11. Facilities & Maintenance	375,000	11%
12. Utilities	145,000	4%
13. Ministry	60,000	2%
14. Recruitment & Development	15,000	0%
15. Water & Sewer Systems		0%
16. Depreciation	*	
17. Capital Campaign	1,100,000	33%
18. Cono Expense	**	
Total Expenses	\$ 3,329,000	100%
* Depreciation is on the Balance Sheet.		
** Cono and Brevard are combined above.		

APPENDIX C

Ridge Haven 2023 Budget Comparison							
DESCRIPTION	2021 BUDGET	2021 ACTUAL	2022 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET	2023 Budget %	CHANGE 2021 actual- 2023 Budget \$	CHANGE 2021 actual- 2023 Budget %
Support/Revenue							
1. Ministry Income	1,500,000	1,602,284.85	1,500,000	1,700,000.00	51%	97,715	106%
2. Property	100,000	149,948.27	115,000	155,000.00	5%	5,052	103%
3. Contributions - Brevard	950,000	912,836.51	1,000,000	900,000.00	27%	(12,837)	99%
4. Contributions - Cono	300,000	313,062.13	350,000	325,000.00	10%	11,938	104%
5. Bookstore & Vending	95,000	96,289.69	95,000	100,000.00	3%	3,710	104%
6. Miscellaneous	80,000	246,671.78	20,000	150,000.00	5%	(96,672)	61%
Total Income	\$ 3,025,000	\$ 3,321,093.23	\$ 3,080,000	\$ 3,330,000.00	100%	\$ 8,906.77	100%
PPP Forgiveness		\$ 471,300					
		\$ 3,792,393					
Operating Expense							
7. Payroll & Benefits	1,200,000	1,121,744.96	1,375,000	\$1,200,000.00	36%	78,255	107%
8. Bookstore/Vending	75,000	52,190.60	50,000	\$54,000.00	2%	1,809	103%
9. Office & Admin. Expense	170,000	174,713.51	170,000	\$180,000.00	5%	5,286	103%
10. Food Service Department	190,000	191,547.01	150,000	\$200,000.00	6%	8,453	104%
11. Facilities & Maintenance	275,000	373,647.45	350,000	\$375,000.00	11%	1,353	100%
12. Utilities	120,000	137,254.17	150,000	\$145,000.00	4%	7,746	106%
13. Ministry	70,000	47,990.86	80,000	\$60,000.00	2%	12,009	125%
14. Recruitment & Development	25,000	6,685.25	35,000	\$15,000.00	0%	8,315	224%
15. Water & Sewer Systems	27,000		40,000			-	
16. Depreciation	185,000	*	*				
17. Capital Campaign	275,000	653,771.22	600,000	\$1,100,000.00	33%	446,229	168%
18. Cono Expense	400,000	**	**				
Total Expenses	\$ 3,012,000	\$ 2,759,545.03	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,329,000.00	100%	\$ 569,454.97	121%
* Depreciation is on the Balance Sheet.							
** Cono and Brevard are combined above.							

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ridge Haven Five Year Comparison					
Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Income					
1. Ministry Income	1,131,046	1,307,727	1,403,802	747,660	1,602,284.85
2. Property	50,537	44,158	112,248	110,044	149,948.27
3. Contributions - Brevard	893,086	849,738	767,604	861,731	912,836.51
4. Contributions - Cono	138,209	319,059	209,491	484,297	313,062.13
5. Bookstore & Vending	67,592	74,292	83,157	58,647	96,289.69
6. Miscellaneous	48,934	24,344	78,996	15,688	246,671.78
Total Income	\$ 2,329,404	\$ 2,619,318	\$ 2,655,298	\$ 2,278,067	\$ 3,321,093.23
PPP Forgiveness					471,300.00
					\$ 3,792,393.23
Expense					
7. Payroll & Benefits	1,013,824	992,829	986,213	959,504	1,121,744.96
8. Bookstore/Vending	41,342	57,433	60,903	27,371	52,190.60
9. Office & Admin. Expense	94,077	128,514	161,740	141,593	174,713.51
10. Food Service Department	157,766	168,150	172,805	101,218	191,547.01
11. Facilities & Maintenance	216,741	202,795	250,086	253,796	373,647.45
12. Utilities	96,679	113,922	110,175	147,852	137,254.17
13. Ministry	45,773	55,144	63,816	43,844	47,990.86
14. Recruitment & Development	17,442	14,221	18,195	3,561	6,685.25
15. Water & Sewer Systems	13,277	22,096	25,661	38,172	
16. Depreciation	144,000	144,000	144,000	*	*
17. Capital Campaign	135,801	39,175	7,500	0.00	653,771.22
18. Cono Expense	92,285	377,865	302,737	**	**
Total Expense	\$ 2,069,005	\$ 2,316,144	\$ 2,303,831	\$ 1,716,911	\$ 3,510,068.59
Net Ordinary Income (loss)	\$ 260,399	\$ 303,174	\$ 351,467	\$ 561,156	\$ 287,416.00
* Depreciation is on the Balance Sheet.					
** Cono and Brevard are combined above.					

**REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP
2023 PROPOSED BUDGET**

BUDGET EXPLANATORY NOTES

The RUF Mission:

Reformed University Fellowship has the goal of building the church now and for the future by reaching students for Christ and equipping students to serve.

I. Economic Considerations and General Ministry Factors

- ◆ This budget reflects our continuing growth as we develop new RUF works on campuses nationwide. For 2023, we project to have over 185 campus ministries worldwide.
- ◆ The proposed 2023 budget for the entire ministry is \$51,826,288.
- ◆ There is a net increase in ministry expenses of 4% from the 2022 modified budget. See below for explanation on budget changes.
- ◆ The total number of full-time equivalent staff budgeted for 2023 is 470.
- ◆ An overall net increase of 4% for salaries and related adjustments to benefits is assumed for all existing staff positions. That includes aggregate of cost of living, merit and benefit adjustments.

II. Major Changes in Budget

- ◆ Two significant changes to budget in 2023, is the exit of our RUF church plants and a planned capital campaign. The capital campaign is the main driver behind a 16% increase in contributions from 2022 to 2023. The exit of RUF church plants is driving a decrease in programming and facilities.

III. Income Streams

- ◆ Income for the 2023 budget is projected to come from contributions (89%), medical fund (7%), conference revenues (2%) and other revenue (0.2%).

IV. Major Ministry Items Not Implemented

- ◆ The only major ministry item planned for 2023 is a continuing capital campaign.

V. Notes to Budget Line Items

- ◆ The major areas of increase/decrease are: 1) Conferences at 30% as we ramp back up to pre-Covid norms. 2) Programming and Facilities are showing a decrease due to the exit of RUF church plants. All other categories are projected at a moderate 3-5%.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP						
PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET						
	Ministry Program	Administration	Fundraising	Designated	Total	% of Total
Income						
Ministry Contributions	50,523,000	0	0	0	50,523,000	86%
Unrestricted Contributions	0	0	1,900,000	0	1,900,000	3%
Interest Income	0	0	0	650,000	650,000	1%
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Assets	0	(3,000)	0	0	(3,000)	0.0%
Medical Fund Income	0	0	0	4,148,550	4,148,550	7%
Conferences	1,300,000	0	0	0	1,300,000	2%
Other Revenue	75,000	25,000	0	0	100,000	0.2%
Total Income	51,898,000	22,000	1,900,000	4,798,550	58,618,550	100%
Expenses						
Personnel	29,923,388	5,136,012	1,235,600	0	36,295,000	70%
Audit/Bank and Payroll Fees	484,650	136,000	0	0	620,650	1%
Denominational Costs	146,400	30,000	0	0	176,400	0.3%
Committee Expense	81,250	50,000	0	0	131,250	0%
Conferences	1,295,000	5,000	0	0	1,300,000	3%
Depreciation	0	90,000	0	0	90,000	0.0%
Fundraising	325,875	0	210,150	0	536,025	1%
Honorarium	105,000	0	0	0	105,000	0.2%
Insurance-Liability	0	122,063	0	0	122,063	0.2%
Marketing	45,600	0	30,000	0	75,600	0.1%
Ministry Relations	1,018,000	137,000	0	0	1,155,000	2%
Misc	105,000	0	0	0	105,000	0.2%
Ministry Support	262,500	0	0	0	262,500	1%
Professional/Personal Development	525,750	15,000	0	0	540,750	1%
Programming	1,945,000	0	0	0	1,945,000	4%
Facilities	1,615,000	30,000	0	0	1,645,000	3%
Service Contracts	205,000	110,000	0	0	315,000	1%
Travel	77,500	500,000	0	0	577,500	1%
Recruitment/Assessment/Training	940,000	740,000	0	0	1,680,000	3%
Medical Claims & Expenses	0	0	0	4,148,550	4,148,550	8%
Total Expenses	39,100,913	7,101,075	1,475,750	4,148,550	51,826,287	100%
Consolidated Surplus or Deficit	12,797,087	(7,079,075)	424,250	650,000	6,792,263	
Coordinator's 2022 Salary is \$212,180 and benefits are \$57,443.						
Coordinator's 2023 Salary is projected to be \$212,180 and benefits are \$60,315.						

APPENDIX C

REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP						
BUDGET COMPARISON STATEMENT						
FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET						
	2021	2022	2023 GA	Budget	2022 to 2023	2022 to 2023
Consolidated	Audited	Modified	Proposed	% of	Change in \$	Change in %
Budget Comparison	Actual	Budget	Budget	Total		
Income						
Contributions	44,875,780	45,000,000	52,423,000	89%	7,423,000	16%
Interest Income	821,211	650,000	650,000	1%	0	0%
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Assets	(51,676)	(3,000)	(3,000)	0.0%	0	0%
Medical Fund Income	3,950,201	3,951,000	4,148,550	7%	197,550	5%
Conferences	174,283	1,000,000	1,300,000	2%	300,000	30%
Other Revenue	5,400,293	100,000	100,000	0.2%	0	0%
Total Income	55,170,091	50,698,000	58,618,550	100%	7,920,550	16%
Expenses						
Personnel	33,543,646	34,971,000	36,295,000	70%	1,324,000	4%
Audit/Bank and Payroll Fees	562,963	591,110	620,650	1%	29,540	5%
Denominational Costs	155,084	168,000	176,400	0.3%	8,400	5%
Committee Expense	98,482	125,000	131,250	0%	6,250	5%
Conferences	685,054	1,000,000	1,300,000	3%	300,000	30%
Depreciation	90,042	90,000	90,000	0.2%	0	0%
Fundraising	486,182	510,500	536,025	1%	25,525	5%
Honorarium	(6,587)	100,000	105,000	0.2%	5,000	5%
Insurance-Liability	96,478	116,250	122,063	0.2%	5,813	5%
Marketing	10,024	72,000	75,600	0.1%	3,600	5%
Ministry Relations	1,082,680	1,100,000	1,155,000	2%	55,000	5%
Misc	96,422	100,000	105,000	0.2%	5,000	5%
Ministry Support	241,299	250,000	262,500	1%	12,500	5%
Professional/Personal Development	489,753	515,000	540,750	1%	25,750	5%
Programming	4,458,089	1,950,000	1,945,000	4%	(5,000)	-0.3%
Facilities	1,212,298	1,950,000	1,645,000	3%	(305,000)	-16%
Service Contracts	228,219	300,000	315,000	1%	15,000	5%
Travel	465,683	550,000	577,500	1%	27,500	5%
Recruitment/Assessment/Training	1,498,594	1,600,000	1,680,000	3%	80,000	5%
Medical Claims & Expenses	3,779,866	3,951,000	4,148,550	8%	197,550	5%
Total Expenses	49,274,272	50,009,860	51,826,288	100%	1,816,428	4%
Consolidated Surplus or Deficit	5,895,819	688,140	6,792,263			
Coordinator's 2022 Salary is \$212,180 and benefits are \$57,443.						
Coordinator's 2023 Salary is projected to be \$212,180 and benefits are \$60,315.						

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP					
FIVE YEAR COMPARISON STATEMENT					
FOR PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET					
	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual
Income					
Contributions	33,290,150	38,347,042	42,304,277	43,489,957	44,875,780
Interest Income	1,106,545	(497,553)	2,059,320	1,416,633	821,211
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Assets	(1,286)	(25,853)	(2,426)	(1,293)	(51,676)
Medical Fund Income	249,104	3,199,561	3,522,355	3,718,287	3,950,201
Conferences	988,379	1,026,496	1,285,399	280,955	174,283
Other Revenue	64,561	84,751	101,295	89,243	5,400,293
Total Income	35,697,453	42,134,444	49,270,219	48,993,783	55,170,091
Expenses					
Personnel	25,533,239	28,373,554	30,375,447	32,133,387	33,543,646
Audit/Bank and Payroll Fees	372,263	459,968	511,379	574,046	562,963
Denominational Costs	102,280	111,552	140,419	55,651	155,084
Committee Expense	962,487	1,303,632	1,219,166	102,623	98,482
Conferences	888,138	926,038	1,239,204	468,740	685,054
Depreciation	90,035	87,553	71,987	58,479	90,042
Fundraising	548,156	595,002	637,214	486,931	486,182
Honorarium	48,336	138,416	78,669	16,163	(6,587)
Insurance-Liability	36,969	69,609	82,958	86,449	96,478
Marketing	39,634	19,451	34,646	22,674	10,024
Ministry Relations	762,867	856,022	871,755	602,312	1,082,680
Misc	128,055	272,135	159,737	119,257	96,422
Ministry Support	5,573	36,556	236,183	296,353	241,299
Professional/Personal	248,700	246,539	255,857	312,075	489,753
Programming	993,049	1,374,126	1,368,303	1,626,749	4,458,089
Facilities	851,817	1,045,201	1,106,179	1,127,939	1,212,298
Service Contracts	402,112	364,541	416,411	113,166	228,219
Travel	725,234	814,341	729,790	365,420	465,683
Recruitment/Assessment/Training	835,032	1,010,991	1,164,502	388,683	1,498,594
Medical Claims & Expenses	206,684	3,384,078	3,536,857	2,815,231	3,779,866
Total Expenses	33,780,660	41,489,305	44,236,663	41,772,328	49,274,272

THE 2023 PARTNERSHIP SHARES STATEMENT FOR THE PCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINISTRIES

PREFACE

The working definition under which the 2023 Partnership Share Budgets have been calculated is as follows.

As a general statement, “Partnership Shares” describes the amount of money needed to cover the anticipated total expenses of a ministry minus earned income and minus funds designated to specific individuals who are missionaries, church planters, campus ministers, and staff (unless the ministry also guarantees the full compensation of the employee), as well as specific capital funds or similar designated monies. This portion of the approved expense budget is dependent on contributions from the PCA churches and individuals. In every case the “Partnership Share” is permitted to be at least the General Administrative and Overhead portion of the particular ministry’s total budget.

Two important numbers for each participating ministry are provided by the Partnership Share and Ministry Ask calculations. First, the numbers located in the column labeled “Per Capita Calculation” are obtained by a per capita giving formula, which divides the Partnership Share Fund amount for each General Assembly Ministry by the total number of communicant members last reported to and accumulated by the Office of the Stated Clerk.

A second set of numbers under the column labeled “Ministry Ask” is provided for churches. The “Ministry Ask” is the amount of money each Committee or Agency is asking the churches of the PCA to give if the church would like to give to PCA Ministries on a “per member” basis. The amount listed in this column is generally an estimate of what each Committee and Agency needs to receive from each *donor* church per member in order for the Committee or Agency to raise their full budget approved by the PCA General Assembly.

These two numbers provide churches and individuals with important factors as they seek to decide how to give to the PCA General Assembly Committees and Agencies. All PCA Ministries struggle to raise Partnership Share funds, and none of the PCA ministries would be sustained without generous donors who give far beyond the Partnership Share. Please assist as generously as you are able.

In short, the Partnership Shares calculation is based on the inaccurate assumption that all churches have the same giving capacity per member and that all churches will give to all committees and agencies. The Ministry Ask is a more realistic figure.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**2023 Budgeted Partnership Shares and Ministry Asks
of PCA Ministry Partners
by the Participating General Assembly Ministries**

Participating Ministries of the PCA	2023 Total Expense Budget	2023 Partnership Share Fund			Ministry Asks \$ Per Member
		P.S. Fund	% of Total	Per Capita Calculation	
AC ¹	\$3,565,831	\$1,921,000	5.51%	\$6.46	\$8
CDM	\$2,046,000	\$840,000	2.41%	\$2.83	\$7
CC ²	\$33,266,734	\$2,000,000	5.74%	\$6.73	\$10
CTS	\$9,817,286	\$2,000,000	5.74%	\$6.73	\$10
MNA	\$23,538,168	\$8,943,571	25.66%	\$30.09	\$26
MTW	\$66,284,400	\$9,351,690	26.83%	\$31.46	\$30
RUF	\$51,826,287	\$8,576,825	24.60%	\$28.85	\$18
RH	\$3,329,000	\$1,225,000	3.51%	\$4.12	\$4
TOTALS	\$193,673,706	\$34,858,086	100.00%	\$117.27	\$113

The total number of Communicant Members according to the PCA Administrative Committee was 297,239 as of December 31, 2021.

GENERAL NOTE

Gifts designated “spread per Partnership Shares” (or some equivalent) and the totally undesignated gifts (which amount to less than \$3,000 a year) will be spread according to the “Ministry Ask” column (by percentages of the total).

SPECIFIC COMMITTEE AND AGENCY NOTES

1. The PCA Administrative Committee requests that you contribute on the basis of 0.35% of total tithes and offerings (excepting contribution to capital campaigns for such efforts as new buildings). Please support us in this way if you are able to do so.
2. By giving \$10 per member to Covenant College, churches qualify for the Church Scholarship Promise program at Covenant College.

APPENDIX D

REPORT OF DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

“... so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

(Ephesians 3:17-19 ESV)

The General Assembly has tasked the Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM) to strengthen the local church to make disciples by connecting leaders to the people and resources they need. Our desire is to see PCA churches develop ministries that are Word-based and relationally-driven. His Word is a means of grace to enable us “more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness” (WSC 35). Relationships are the avenue for the fruitful application of God’s Word to equip and encourage us as we follow Jesus.

As PCA churches are adapting discipleship ministry to a post-pandemic environment, CDM seeks to provide opportunities for leaders to gather in person at regional and national conferences after the “relational wilderness” of pandemic lockdowns. There is spiritual blessing in physical proximity. It leads to deeper encouragement and mutual learning. Paul tells the Romans, “I long to see you that...we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (Rom. 1:11-12). In addition to these face-to-face gatherings, CDM continues to expand what it offers through digital means. Over the past year, CDM has focused ministry efforts across the areas of discipleship ministry to children, youth, men, and women.

Discipleship Ministry to Children

- The CDM staff and Children’s Ministry (CM) Team continue to add resources to the GROW web site (grow.pcacdm.org) designed to help staff and volunteers with training and encouragement.
- GROW virtual conference in August 2021 provided 3 plenary session, 7 workshop videos, and 8 live webinars. These resources were available to participants for 6 months. Over 250 individuals from 80

churches participated in the virtual conference. The CM Team is planning another virtual conference to launch August 19-20, 2022.

- The CDM Connect Children Facebook group continues to grow, providing a place for CM workers to share ideas, ask questions, and gain encouragement.
- The CDM CM Certification program continues to bless individuals and churches. The 2021 class was the largest so far, with 38 students completing the requirements (see Attachment 1). Over 100 leaders are now certified. They have come from 31 states, Puerto Rico, and Canada. Students have ranged from 22 to 68 years old, representing churches of all sizes. Though most are PCA, there have also been participants from other denominations: Baptists, ECO, ARP, Non-denominational, and Acts 29 network.
- 2022 marks a transition for Ms. Sue Jakes. After more than 20 years of service to the PCA as Children's Ministry Coordinator, Ms. Jakes has passed the baton of leadership to Ms. Katie Flores, who is a member of Covenant PC in Birmingham, AL.

Discipleship Ministry to Youth

- The Nextgen Ministry Team, led by team facilitator TE Matt Luchenbill, is working to connect student ministry leaders around the denomination and strengthen cooperative relationships with other like-minded student ministries.
- Team members have launched a podcast ("**PCA Nextgen**" on iTunes and Spotify). Recent topics include isolation in ministry, working with hard people, leadership in student ministry, and resilience in student ministry. Members are also uploading resources to the Nextgen website (www.pcanextgen.com).
- Upcoming training opportunities include a conference for student ministry workers **October 10-13, 2022**, hosted by **New City PC** in Ferndale, MI (Detroit area). Team members are also working on an online certification program to begin in late 2022.

Discipleship Ministry to Men

- The Men's Ministry Team is developing a coaching program to help churches begin or revitalize a discipleship ministry to men that is Word-based and relationally-driven.
- Team members are using the information gained from the 177 leaders who completed the survey at the 2021 General Assembly to design a year-long cohort-based training that uses a series of virtual meetings to teach and coach leaders in ministry to men.

Discipleship Ministry to Women

- The Women’s Ministry Team led by Ms. Karen Hodge continues to nurture relational connections and provide resources for the women of the PCA.
- Since the Summer 2021, almost 5,000 women have used the CDM study *What’s SHE Doing Here? The Messy Women in Jesus’ Genealogy*. For 2022, CDM will offer *Breathe*, which is a book and video study on the Lord’s Prayer. Ms. Heather Molendyk has adapted part of her *Little Pillars* study to be a companion study for children.
- The *enCourage* blog and podcast (encourage.pcacdm.org) continues to be a blessing for many. The blog has over 8,250 monthly readers from around the world, and the podcast averages 1,250 listeners weekly.
- The Women’s Team is working a new website (women.pcacdm.org) to better serve the women of the PCA, as well as other women around the world.
- In the Fall of 2021, CDM launched the “WE” ministry (“Wives of Elders”). Ms. Meaghan May now serves on the staff as the PCA Elders’ Wives Liaison. In that role, she partners with other PCA Committees and Agencies to equip and encourage the wives of teaching and ruling elders. To get more information about the opportunities of this new ministry, go to pcacdm.org/we/.

Connecting People to Resources

The PCA Bookstore (pcabookstore.com) provides a wide variety of resources. CDM staff members review items included in the PCA Bookstore and consider how the resource(s) might be used by people serving in the PCA. Some customers have expressed gratitude for a place where they can focus their search for resources and escape the somewhat overwhelming results from searches on the Internet. Additionally through the PCA Bookstore, CDM passes along the discounts we receive in order to provide churches greater discounts, especially for group orders (5 or more books).

Recent CDM Resources and Publications

<i>Abide in Me</i> , CDM Women’s Team	31 day devotions on John 14-17
<i>A Body for the Lord</i> , PCA General Assembly	papers on Human Sexuality
<i>Breathe</i> , Karen Hodge	study on the Lord’s Prayer
<i>Building on the Lord’s Prayer</i> , Heather Molendyk	Lord’s Prayer children’s study
<i>Del Jardin a la Gloria</i> , Courtney Doctor	tr. <i>From Garden to Glory</i>
<i>Frog’s Rainy Day curriculum</i> , Lisa Updike	study on wisdom for children
<i>Lead Me to Zion</i> , Heather Molendyk	Covenant Theology for children
<i>Lead Me to Zion</i> (coloring), Heather Molendyk	companion workbook
<i>Naomi: Reason to Hope</i> , Deb McQuilken	study of Ruth
<i>Survey of the Old Testament</i> , Jack B. Scott	revised & updated
<i>The Good King’s Feast</i> , Elizabeth Harwell	Lord’s Supper study for children
<i>What’s SHE Doing Here?</i> , Susan Tyner	women of Jesus’ genealogy

In late 2019, CDM purchased VBS Reachout Adventures (vbsreachout.com), a Reformed VBS curriculum that has been used by several PCA churches for many years. The 4 rotating themes provide a unique and engaging way to study Joshua, Luke, Genesis, and Jonah. CDM will offer one theme every year. In 2020 and 2021, CDM offered the theme to coincide with the Summer Games. In 2022, more churches have restarted a VBS program using the *Genesis 1: Space Probe* theme. CDM is working with children's ministry leaders to revise and adapt the four themes to better meet the post-pandemic needs of churches.

In the CDM budget, the PCA Bookstore and VBS Reachout Adventures are treated as separate cost centers designed to operate on at least a "break-even" basis (i.e., the cost of inventory, staff salaries, floor space, postage, etc., is covered by sales revenue). Not surprisingly, VBS sales have yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. Bookstore sales, however, increased \$148,000 in 2021, driven greatly by the response to the Summer Women's study. By the end of the year, the PCA Bookstore not only "broke-even" but also contributed over \$75,000 to the overall CDM ministry.

Financial Review

The ministry of CDM is funded through a combination of revenue sources:

1. giving from churches,
2. giving from individuals,
3. revenue from the sale of resources,
4. revenue from conference fees, and
5. reimbursements for ministry expenses.

CDM ended 2021 with an operating surplus of \$263,000 (13.5% of total revenue). This surplus was primarily due to the following: 1) the PPP loan forgiveness of \$143,000, 2) the net growth in the financial markets which provided a \$42,000 gain in CDM investments, and 3) and strong participation in the virtual Women's Leadership Conference in February 2021. God continues to provide in unexpected ways, as we wait upon Him. The members of the permanent committee rejoice at God's provision. Nevertheless, they are hesitant about ministry expansion until there is greater participation by PCA congregations and resulting growth in the primary revenue sources (contributions from churches and individuals).

Since the beginning of the denomination, CDM's primary source of income has been support from PCA congregations (*BCO* 14-1). However, just under 30% of PCA particular churches contribute financially to the ministry of CDM. This reality is discouraging to the members of the staff and permanent

committee, as CDM has been hindered in providing a full range of support and resources for churches, especially in ministry to youth, men, and older adults.

Conclusion to the CDM Report

The Committee on Discipleship Ministries strengthens the church by connecting you to the people and resources you need for discipleship ministry. We are thankful for the opportunity to help PCA churches develop discipleship ministries that are based on God’s Word and designed to nurture relationships in the covenant community.

Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the meetings of the Permanent Committee for the Committee on Discipleship Ministries on September 9-10, 2021; and March 10-11, 2022.
2. That the General Assembly receive the 2021 Audit performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith, and Jordan, and approve the same firm for the 2022 Audit.
3. That the General Assembly encourage churches and individuals to contribute generously to the “**Love Gift Legacy**” (pcacdm.org/wm-love-gift). For 2021, the funds were used by CDM to produce accessible Bible studies and digital training resources for women and children like *Breathe: The Life-Giving Oxygen of the Lord’s Prayer* (pcacdm.org/breathe). For 2022, CDM will promote and expand the new ministry to the wives of elders (“WE”).
4. That the General Assembly encourage individuals, local churches, and presbyteries to utilize the many free resources available on the CDM website (pcacdm.org/resources /[ministry-tool-box/](http://pcacdm.org/ministry-tool-box/)). Ministry specific sites include: grow.pcacdm.org (children’s), women.pcacdm.org (women’s), pcanextgen.com (student), and pcabookstore.com (books and resources).
5. That the General Assembly encourage local churches to consider and use **VBS Reachout Adventures** from CDM for Summer programming (vbsreachout.com). This Reformed and covenantal curriculum was written by PCA members. In 2022, the theme is *Genesis One Space Probe* which looks at the early chapters of Genesis. The 2023 theme is *Summer Seaquest*, a voyage into the book of Jonah.
6. That the General Assembly encourage individuals and local churches and church plants (which receive a year free) to consider and utilize the excellent print and digital curricula from Great Commission Publications (GCP), e.g., *Show Me Jesus* and *Kids’ Quest Catechism Club* for children, *G2R Genesis to Revelation* Bible studies for preteens to teens—including

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the new *G2R God's Promises*—and *So What?* Bible studies for youth. GCP also provides excellent training resources for your staff and volunteers. (See Attachment 2.)

7. That the General Assembly give thanks to Ms. Sue Jakes for over 20 years of service to the churches and covenant children of the PCA, especially in her role as Children's Ministry Coordinator for CEP/CDM.
8. That the General Assembly give thanks to TE Rick Downs, RE James Murphy, and TE Phillip Palmertree for their faithful service as members of the Permanent Committee.
9. That the General Assembly re-elect TE Stephen Estock to serve as the Coordinator for the Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM).
10. That the General Assembly approve the 2023 CDM budget as presented by the Administrative Committee.

Attachment 1**RECIPIENTS OF THE CDM
CERTIFICATION FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY****The 2021 Class**

The 2021 certification class completed their course work in January 2022. After receiving the final projects and the recommendations of mentors and elders, the CDM permanent committee in March 2022 authorized the CDM staff to present certificates of completion to the 38 students listed below. This certification acknowledges the recipient has demonstrated competency in the knowledge, skills, and character necessary for children's ministry leaders in the PCA.

Name	Church	City, State
Rebecca Becker	Lexington PC	Lexington, SC
Sabrina Booth	Redeemer PC – East Side	Bronx, NY
Sam Bright	Oak Mountain PC	Birmingham, AL
Ashley Brown	New Life PC	Yorktown, IN
Deborah Bukovietski	Christ Church Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids, MI
Charis Byun	City Reformed	Pittsburgh, PA
Kelly Eastman	Covenant Ch of Naples	Naples, FL
Emily Edling	Redeemer Ch of Montclair	Maplewood, NJ
Ashley Eveland	Orangewood Church	Oviedo, FL
Katie Fernandez	New City Church	Hamilton, ON, Canada
Rebecca Griffen	Covenant PC	Harrisonburg, VA
Melinda Hanko	Christ the King PC	Roanoke, VA
Shannon Hansel	Christ Church Intown	Jacksonville, FL
Georgianna Hildebrand	Redeemer PC	San Antonio, TX
Sarah Hilton	Crosspoint Comm Church	Boone, NC
Jone Holroyd	Westminster PC	Muncie, IN
Camille Honan	Grace Evangelical Church	Memphis, TN
Melanie Hsieh	Redeemer PC	San Antonio, TX
Erin Illian	Redeemer PC	Eddy, TX
Sarah Kalichman	Covenant PC	Harrisonburg, VA
Irene Lee	New Life PC Escondido	Escondido, CA
Missy Lowery	Community PC	Asheville, AL
Marianne Maarsingh	Christ Community Church	Wellington, FL
Paige Malkus	Fourth PC (EPC)	Bethesda, MD
Lindsey Matulia	New Hope PC	Grand Island, FL
Paige McClure	Cornerstone PC	Huntsville, AL
Kim Mesa	Skyview PC	Centennial, CO

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CDM Certification, continued

Hope Meyer	Hilton Head PC	Bluffton, SC
Meagan Mott	Rincon Mountain PC	Tucson, AZ
Cynthia Newton	Faith Christian Fellowship Ch	Baltimore, MD
Mary Penton	First PC of Prattville	Prattville, AL
Gabby Peterson	University PC	Orlando, FL
Cindy Reinoso de Aguilar	Peachtree Corners PC (ARP)	Norcross, GA
Ebony Robinson	Grace Church	Merrillville, IN
Angela Sierk	Southwood PC	Huntsville, AL
Kristin Sullivan	Christ Central Church	Durham, NC
Jamie Turner	Church of the Redeemer	Peachtree Corners, GA
Joel Trigger	River Oaks Church	Lake Mary, FL

Attachment 2

REPORT FROM THE PUBLISHING MINISTRY OF GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS

Great Commission Publications (GCP) is the official publishing ministry of the PCA and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). This joint publishing ministry was established by their respective General Assemblies in 1975. GCP publishes high-quality Reformed and covenantal curriculum for all ages. This full-orbed system of curriculum is based solely upon the **Bible as the Word of God** and conforms to the **Westminster Standards**.

GCP is governed by a twelve-member board of trustees, all teaching or ruling elders. Six are elected by the PCA CDM and six by the OPC Committee on Christian Education (CCE). Additionally, the PCA CDM Coordinator and the OPC CCE General Secretary serve as ex-officio, non-voting trustees. In 2021 Mark Lowrey, a PCA teaching elder, was appointed as Executive Director, after serving as Director of Publications for over 25 years. The GCP Director of Business Operations is a PCA ruling elder. The president of the board of trustees for 2022 is PCA teaching elder David Stewart. (This position alternates annually between the PCA and OPC.)

During the Covid pandemic, many churches that were able to regather for worship offered limited or no children's ministries through summer 2021. As a result, GCP saw at least a 50% drop in sales during this time. GCP's operations are based on sales, and we are grateful to report that God providentially cared for GCP through the retirement of two staff members who were not replaced, as well as cuts to other staff positions and various financial adjustments. GCP is financially sound and stable as it moves forward.

From March 2020 through September 2021, GCP pivoted to provide free Bible story videos, downloadable parent pages, and coloring page PDFs to meet the needs of the church across the PCA and beyond. The weekly lesson videos served both children's ministries and families at home, assisting everyone from large churches with children's ministry staff to one-pastor churches with parents/volunteers. GCP continues to offer weekly video devotions on Mondays for encouragement and support on Facebook as well as tips and helps.

Show Me Jesus (flexible for toddlers through 4th grade) is GCP's foundational curriculum. This Bible-based curriculum of four departments teaches God's story of redemption, showing how Jesus is the fulfillment of his covenant promises.

G2R (Genesis to Revelation) Bible Survey for preteens is an exciting journey through every book of the Bible, helping students integrate its stories through a historical-redemptive study of Scripture. **G2R God's Promises** (grades 7–9) zeroes in on God's unfolding covenant promises. Both G2R series are flexible to meet the needs of middle school/teens. Free lesson samples, the scope and sequence, and free training videos are at www.gcp.org.

So What? youth Bible studies offers 10 different studies focusing on books of the Bible (John, Romans, Philippians) and topics such as *Identity & Purpose*, *The Christian Mind*, and more. Visit www.sowhatstudies.org for free lesson samples, video previews, and more.

Kids' Quest Beginning and Elementary curricula teach *First Catechism*—basic Bible truths in a Q/A format. A free Summer Download Kit with planning guides, social media, t-shirt logos, and more is available to serve churches. *First Catechism* is also available in two parallel language editions: English-Korean and English-Spanish—excellent for our churches in bilingual contexts and outreach.

Digging Deeper is the newest curriculum, launching fall 2022. It teaches the Shorter Catechism in two years, taking both youth and anyone who wants to go deeper in the Reformed faith through such crucial biblical truths as what to believe about God and how to live out the duties God requires. It provides a lifelong framework for living as citizens of Christ's kingdom.

The Pilgrim's Progress teaches the gospel using the classic adventure story. The curriculum includes a fully illustrated chapter hardback book, audiobook with character voices and sound effects, music, teacher manual, and student activities for elementary ages. For sample lessons, visit www.childrenspilgrimsprogress.org.

GCP also publishes the *Trinity Hymnal*, a resource that enriches worship with its collection of over 700 hymns. It includes the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Shorter Catechism*, as well as the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. Orchestrations are available for all of the hymns.

Further, GCP is the exclusive distributor of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, a joint publication of the OPC and the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA). GCP is also the exclusive distributor of *Liturgical Forms and Prayers* and *Creeds and Confessions* for the URCNA. These relationships have been positive for all parties involved.

For samples of any materials or to place an order, visit www.gcp.org. You also may call **800-695-3387** to speak to a curriculum specialist.

APPENDIX E

REPORT OF COVENANT COLLEGE TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Covenant College community, I offer this annual report on the 2020-2021 academic year. Not surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the operations of the college. Every aspect of campus life, from classes to chapels to student events, were restricted (or sometimes canceled) due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, God proved himself faithful, providing the college with the resources necessary to fulfill its mission while also protecting the college from serious outbreak of disease.

Academic Affairs Report

New Faculty Members

- Mrs. Michaela Kourmoulis, Assistant Professor of Sport Management with an MBA and an MSBM from the University of Central Florida DeVos Sport Business Management Program

Selected faculty publications from the 2020-2021 academic year:

- Barham, R. E. (2021). A true account. *Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*. [forthcoming]
- Barham, R. E. (2020, February 24). Beautiful things: Another workday. *River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative*. Retrieved from <https://www.riverteethjournal.com/blog/2020/02/24/anotherworkday>
- Davis, W. C. (2021, June-July). Medical technology: A blessing not to be idolized [Review of the book *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians* by G. Meilaender]. *Ordained Servant*. Retrieved from https://opc.org/os.html?article_id=901
- Davis, W. C. (2021, April). The importance of Biblical anthropology. [Review of the book *What it means to be human* by O. C. Snead]. *Ordained Servant*. Retrieved from https://opc.org/os.html?article_id=887
- Davis, W. C. (2021, May 5). Honoring and protecting the elderly. *Tabletalk*. Retrieved from <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/honoring-and-protecting-the-elderly/>
- Drexler, J. L., & Bagby, A. H. (2021). Defining and assessing spiritual formation: A necessity for Christian schooling. *International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal*, 16(1).

- Fikkert, B. T., Kabiswa Kyazze, J. H., & Sytsma, A. (2021). *Helping without hurting in Africa: Facilitator manual*. Wheaton, IL: Oasis International Publishers.
- Stotz, G.C., Cahill,...Garris H.W., et al (2020). Not a melting pot: Plant species aggregate in their non-native range. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, 29(3), 482-490. Retrieved from doi.org/10.1111/geb.13046
- Hecker, N. M. (2020). Grammar next to Godliness: Prescriptivism and the tower of Babel. In D. Chapman, & J. D. Rawlins (Eds.), *Values and multiplicity: Identity and fluidity in prescriptivism and descriptivism*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters.
- Horne, C. D., Robinson, K., & Lloyd, M. (2020). The relationship between contributors' domestic abuses and peacekeeper misconduct in United Nations peacekeeping operations. *International Studies Quarterly*, 64(1), 235–247. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz06>
- Jackson, A. K. (2021, December). *The Recovered Life of Isaac Anderson*, University Press of Mississippi. [forthcoming]
- Jackson, A. K. (2021). [Review of the book *Soul liberty: The evolution of black religious politics in post emancipation Virginia* by N. M. Turner]. *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, 27(1), 116–117. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jappastud.27.1.0116>
- Jones, S. C. (2021). Job: Introductory essay. In S. L. McKenzie, et al (Ed.), *HarperCollins Study Bible, third edition*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature. [forthcoming]
- Jones, S. C., Cooper, A., Nasuti, H., Gillmayr-Bucher, S., & Knowles, M. (2021). Psalms 1-41. In *Psalms I-II*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. [forthcoming]
- Jones, S. C. (2021). Job. In W. Kynes (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Wisdom and the Bible*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Kapic, K. M. (2021). Retrieving Owen. In C. Gibben, & J. Tweeddale (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to John Owen*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. [forthcoming]
- Kapic, K. M. (2021). Gunton and Owen. In M. Habets, & A. Picard (Eds.), *T & T Clark Handbook of Colin Gunton*. London, England: T & T Clark.
- Kourmoulis, M., Polite, F., Waller, S. (2021). Building brand identity via sports. In Lee, J. W., Cianfrone, B. A., & Gregg, E. A. (Eds.), *Branding in higher ed: Every university tells a story*. Durham, NC: Carolina.

- Madueme, H. L. (2021). *The evolution of sin? Sin, theistic evolution, and the biological question—a theological account*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. [forthcoming]
- Madueme, H. L., & Wood, T. C. (2021). Bridging ideological divides: Why Christians still disagree about evolution and what we should do about it. [forthcoming]
- Madueme, H. L. (2021). Mea Culpa: An apology for original guilt. *Mid-America Journal of Theology* (forthcoming). [forthcoming]
- Madueme, H. L. (2021). The theological problem with evolution. *Zygon*, 56(2), 481–499.
- Pennington, R. E. (2020, February). Assessment as science and story: A roadmap for Christian higher education. *Christian Higher Education*. Retrieved from doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2020.1712560
- Quatro, S.A. (2021). From Abad to Kainos: The agency of corporate strategy in God’s world. *Unio Cum Christo*, 7(1). [forthcoming]
- Tate, W. C. (2021, March). Richard Wilbur’s book of nature. *Pro Rege*, 49(3), 41-50.
- Tate, W. C. (2020, December). To mean what once we said: Richard Wilbur celebrates the fourth of July. *Christianity and Literature*, 69(4), 549-567.
- Tate, W. C. (2021). Labor of love: Richard Wilbur’s “A plain song for comadre.” *Scintilla*, 24, 71-80.
- Tate, W. C. (2020, Fall). Stalled by our lassitude: Time and attunement in Wilbur’s lying. *Renascence*, 72(4), 231-248.
- Tinholt, E. T. (2020). Caring for new teachers once they leave campus. In P. Shotsburger, & C. Freytag (Eds.), *How shall we then care? A Christian educator’s guide to caring for self, learners, colleagues, and community*. Eugene, OR: Wifp & Stock.
- Vos, M. (April 2021). ‘Thugs’ in context: why dividing people into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is a bad idea.” *Journal of Sociology and Christianity*, 11(1), 70-75.
- Washburn, D. A. (2020). Animal Minds in the Media: Learning outcomes for a critical-analysis assignment for students of comparative psychology. *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 33. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/content/qt21k1w62s/qt21k1w62s.pdf>.
- Weichbrodt, E. Y. (2021, June). Museums matter: Art museums are reopening, here’s why you should visit one. *Current*. Retrieved from <https://currentpub.com/2021/06/11/museums-matter/>

- Weichbrodt, E. Y. (2021, February). The perfect home? Do Ho Suh on longing and displacement. *The Asian American Christian Collaborative Reclaim Magazine*.
- Retrieved from <https://www.asianamericanchristiancollaborative.com/article/the-perfect-home>
- Weichbrodt, E. Y. (2021, January). The bonus march: The unexpected black hero in a Japanese American painting. *The Asian American Christian Collaborative Reclaim Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.asianamericanchristiancollaborative.com/article/the-bonus-march-unexpected-black-hero>
- Yue, C. L. (2020). Improving learner metacognition and self-regulation. In T. Ober, E. Che, J. Brodsky, C. Raffaele, & P. Brooks (Eds.), *How we teach now: GSTA guide to transformative teaching*. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.
- Zuidema, D. R., & Zuidema, R.H. (2021). From passive observers to active participants: Using interactive remote demonstrations to increase student involvement in online chemistry. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 98, 843.
- Zuidema, D. R., Stimart, J.A., & Jian, X. (2020). Teaching an introductory organic chemistry class for high school students. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 97, 4303.

Admissions & Marketing

In the fall of 2020, we welcomed 224 new students who came from 33 states and 7 countries. This was our smallest incoming class in over a decade. We were in the middle of a rebuild of our admissions office and recruitment process when COVID-19 shut down on-campus operations and dealt the entire higher education market a blow. Over the course of the 2020-21 academic year, we welcomed 1214 prospective student visitors to campus from 41 states and 5 countries, though COVID-19 protocols prevented us from hosting overnight visitors.

Campus & Facilities

During the 2020-2021 year, Facilities Management completed air quality improvement projects in Sanderson Hall, Jackson Hall, and The Kirk. Major pieces of mechanical equipment were replaced in Maclellan/Rymer and Andreas Residence Halls as well as continued integration of building automation systems across campus. The Chapel received new house lighting and controls.

Development & Finances

Donors generously gave over \$6.1 million to Covenant during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, including gifts to the IMPACT Endowment Campaign, scholarships for students, and support for operations of the college. The number of churches that gave to Covenant remained steady with 180 churches participating in our Church Scholarship Promise program through their faithful giving to the school. The total amount given by churches in 2020/21 was \$824k.

Covenant saw positive overall financial results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, with a small decrease in unrestricted net assets of about \$48 thousand. Total assets grew significantly, increasing by almost \$13.4 million to \$122.7 million.

Student Life

During the Fall 2020 Semester, Nesha Evans, Associate Dean of Students for Student Life, hosted conversations about Culture & Race every other Wednesday. In the spring, the series expanded to include conversations about sexuality and mental health, creating a space for students to wrestle with and ask questions about difficult topics. Select faculty, staff, and friends of Covenant were invited to join these conversations.

Athletics at Covenant College continued to experience significant levels of success on all fronts. Some quick highlights included: discipleship, academics, recruiting, and the pursuit of excellence remained the tools for the evaluation of coaches; 3.21 average GPA for all athletes in the spring 2020 semester (which was the second-highest on record); Student Athletes were found to graduate at a 7% higher rate than non-athletes (71% vs. 64%).

In the Chapel Department, the COVID-19 restrictions during Fall 2020 severely affected the community mission of chapel - encountering Jesus *together* in community. So, while the mission remained the same, the mode of chapel changed. Chapels were conducted outside on the chapel lawn, singing with masks on, sitting in distanced lawn chairs, and being encouraged by wonderful speakers.

In the spring of 2021, chapel was back inside, but due to COVID-19 protocol, the attendance was drastically reduced (from roughly 800 students to roughly 100 students). Therefore, most chapels shifted to be more conversational approaches to the bible and biblical topics.

Conclusion

We are grateful for the oversight of the PCA as we seek to remain faithful to our mission to explore and express the preeminence of Jesus Christ in all things. Thank you for your continued partnership in the work God is doing through Covenant College.

Yours in Christ,
J. Derek Halvorson ('93), Ph.D.
President

Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly thank and praise God for the excellent work and faithfulness of the Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff of Covenant College in serving the Presbyterian Church in America by shaping students for lives of service in the Kingdom of God.
2. That the General Assembly commend the faculty and staff of the college for the faithful and God-honoring manner in which they responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic, rendering excellent service to the student body—and through it, the church—in a time of great uncertainty and difficulty.
3. That the General Assembly encourage congregations of the PCA to support the ministry of Covenant College through encouraging prospective students to attend, through contributing the Partnership Shares approved by the General Assembly, and through prayer.
4. That the General Assembly approve the budget for 2022-2023, as submitted through the Administrative Committee.
5. That the General Assembly adopt “The Covenant College and Supporting Foundation Consolidated Financial Statements” dated June 30, 2021, as prepared by Capin Crouse LLP.
6. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees for October 14-15, 2021 and March 17-18, 2022.
7. That the General Assembly receive as information the foregoing Annual Report, recognizing God’s gracious and abundant blessing and commending the College in its desire to continue pursuing excellence in higher education for the glory of God.
8. That the General Assembly designate Sunday, October 16, 2022 as a Lord’s Day on which churches of the denomination are encouraged to highlight the ministry of Covenant College and to pray specifically for the College in its mission and ministry.

APPENDIX F

REPORT OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA JUNE 2022

**Founded on Scripture, Centered on Christ,
Compelled by Grace—for Gospel Growth and God’s Glory**

*For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
JOHN 1:16*

As the coronavirus pandemic continued throughout 2021, the students, faculty, and staff of Covenant Seminary were grateful for God’s continued gift of grace that provided for us in so many ways. From the smooth transition to a new President and the monetary blessings resulting from last year’s completion of our *Hope for the Future* capital campaign to the hiring of a new faculty member and the launching of several new Graduate Certificate programs and the continued strength of our on-campus, online, and hybrid educational options, the Lord had his hand on the Seminary this year in profoundly evident ways. We praise him for his faithfulness, and we ask humbly for his continued guidance as we seek to steward wisely and well the material and human resources he provides to us for accomplishing our mission of training pastors and ministry leaders for his church.

A New President at the Helm

A major part of God’s gracious provision this year was the smoothly executed transition from our fifth President, Dr. Mark Dalbey (now President Emeritus), to our sixth, **Rev. Dr. Thomas C. “Tom” Gibbs**, who was elected by our Board in January 2021 and assumed his post on July 1, 2021. Dr. Gibbs brings to his new role a great love for the Bible and pastoral ministry, having served as a pastor for 24 years. After graduating from Covenant Seminary in 1997, he started a Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) chapter at Baylor University that continues to this day. He then planted Redeemer Presbyterian Church of San Antonio, Texas, in 2002, where he served as Senior Pastor until taking the helm of the Seminary. Dr. Gibbs also brings to his ministry experience a commitment to fostering church planting and organizational leadership, as

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

evidenced in the subject of his 2015 Covenant Seminary Doctor of Ministry dissertation, which focused on how founding pastors in Presbyterian churches negotiate leadership challenges in transitioning from church plants to organized congregations.

In addition to planting Redeemer and the Baylor RUF, Dr. Gibbs oversaw numerous church plants through his role as the chairman of the Southwest Church Planting Network, which encompasses more than 60 churches across four states. He also founded and led Reach South Texas, an organization focused on strategic church planting in South Texas, to reach a rising generation amidst the nation's changing demographics. Dr. Gibbs also currently serves at the denominational level as Church Planting Assessment Director with Mission to North America (MNA). His work of mentoring church planters and ministry leaders will see further fruition as president of Covenant Seminary.

Dr. Gibbs was inaugurated on September 24, 2021. Faculty, staff, students, Seminary board members and donors, dignitaries from various PCA agencies and committees, and representatives from sister theological institutions gathered (with appropriate COVID safety precautions) in Rayburn Chapel as Dr. Gibbs delivered his inaugural address. **The address focused on three main themes that have guided the Seminary in its mission** since the beginning and will continue to do so under his tenure:

- the **foundation** of our ministry on the **Bible as the Word of God**,
- the **center** of our ministry as **Christ himself at the heart of all we do**, and
- the **compelling consequences** for our ministry as we **go and show the gospel** to the world.

These themes reflect, first, our conviction that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inerrant Word of God, the only rule of faith and practice. This anchoring conviction makes genuine theological inquiry and education possible for an institution like Covenant that is dedicated to the training of pastors and other ministry leaders for the church. Second, the themes reflect our bedrock conviction that Christ himself is the center not only of the Scriptures but of every aspect of the Christian life. He is the heart of everything the Seminary does and teaches as we seek to mold our students into gospel-focused men and women motivated by Christ-like love and known for Christ-like character. Third, the themes reflect our conviction that our Christian faith has consequences for our lives, that it compels us to go and

show the gospel to others—through our words and our deeds—in every sphere and every calling. Though the means and methods we use to accomplish our mission have sometimes changed or adapted to meet the challenges of our times, these core convictions continue to ground us in God’s Word and work, and remind us that it is his grace alone that gives power and promise to what we do.

Dr. Gibbs emphasized the Seminary’s ongoing commitment, even in these changing times, to our core purpose of preparing gospel-centered pastors for the PCA and beyond. This commitment is evidenced in our continued efforts to seek out, recruit, equip, mentor, and support promising pastorally minded students whose potential to impact our churches and our world for Christ will be multiplied as they in turn identify, mentor, and recruit new generations of church leaders through the ministries to which God calls them. Through this growing network of alumni, and through ongoing relationships and partnerships with our sister PCA agencies and committees, we also desire to nurture deeper connections with our denominational brothers and sisters and foster a spirit of unity as we all seek to love and serve our Lord together.

Dr. Gibbs has been married to his wife, Tara, for 28 years. They have four children: Anna Catherine, Thomas, Lucy, and Caroline. For more information about Dr. Gibbs, visit <https://www.covenantseminary.edu/sixth-president/>.

A Year of Further Adaptation

For the second year in a row, the Seminary found ways to adapt to the changes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. We were blessed to be able to return to in-person classes in the fall of 2021, but we were also blessed to continue serving a growing number of online and hybrid-learning students, many of whom are currently involved in full- or part-time ministry and unable to leave for an extended period. In addition, many of our on-campus courses also included an online option to accommodate differing levels of comfort with pandemic precautions. These varied methods enabled us to reach those who might not otherwise have opportunities to be better equipped for the service to which God calls them.

Both online and hybrid courses include components of group interaction, and hybrid courses require a series of on-campus study weeks—all to enhance the quality and depth of the online learning experience. This enables us to bring a taste of the Christ-centered, relational ethos of the Seminary to students across the country or around the world while also maintaining a strong campus community life that seeks to mold and shape our students for ministry in deeply personal ways.

A Series of New Graduate Certificate Programs

To further equip lay leaders in the church, enhance our ability to reach new audiences, and provide additional potential on-ramps for students with different interests or needs, the Seminary this year launched a series of **eleven new Graduate Certificate (GC) programs** to join our existing GC in Biblical and Theological Studies.

These certificate programs, built around flexibility and designed to equip lay leaders in the Bible, theology, and ministry, can be ideal for people who do not need a full theology degree but would still like to learn from world-class seminary faculty about the topics that would be most beneficial for their Christian growth and ministry. The GC could be helpful for ruling elders, deacons, and ministry staff, providing an introduction to their particular areas of ministry interest.

The GC may be completed through a variety of learning formats—on campus, fully online, or hybrid—making the programs flexible, accessible, and affordable. Should students decide to go further with their studies, the classes in these certificates may be counted directly toward some of the Seminary’s master’s degree programs.

Residential or online GC program options:

- *GC in Biblical and Theological Studies* — 20 credits with no specific course sequence; credits may come from any areas the student chooses.
- *GC in Biblical and Systematic Theology* — 15 credits drawn from our systematic theology curriculum.
- *GC in Bible and Society* — 11-credit minimum drawn from our apologetics and Bible curricula.
- *GC in Church History* — 8 credits minimum drawn from our church history curriculum.
- *GC in Church Planting* — 9 credits drawn from our church planting and apologetics curricula.
- *GC in Greek Studies* — 12 credits drawn from our Greek language/New Testament curriculum.
- *GC in Hebrew Studies* — 11-credit minimum drawn from our Hebrew language/Old Testament curriculum.
- *GC in New Testament Studies* — 9 credits drawn from our New Testament curriculum.
- *GC in Old Testament Studies* — 11-credit minimum drawn from our Old Testament curriculum.

Residential or hybrid GC program options:

- *GC in Apologetics and Outreach* — 11-credit minimum drawn from our apologetics and communications curricula and including Covenant Theology.
- *GC in Counseling Ministry* — 12 credits drawn from our counseling curriculum and including Covenant Theology.
- *GC in Educational Ministries* — 11 credits drawn from our educational ministries and applied theology curricula.

A few GC programs were available to start in the Spring 2022 semester; most will be available by Summer 2022.

A Limited Return to Community Events and Activities

After a year of doing campus life mostly by Zoom and other creative methods, it was a welcome change to return—cautiously and with appropriate health and safety measures in place—to some of our usual in-person events in 2021. Though some popular activities were again cancelled this year due to health considerations and some were again held virtually, the Lord enabled us to manage a still limited but more active campus life.

- **2021 Commencement.** We held an outdoor commencement ceremony on campus in June. Though attendance was somewhat limited in order to accommodate safe social distancing, the event allowed us to honor our graduating class in a more personal and celebratory way than last year’s online-only recorded service. Outgoing President Dr. Mark Dalbey delivered the commencement address. Instead of a Baccalaureate, which normally takes place the evening before commencement, we again held a parade in which graduates drove through the campus while faculty and staff lined the route and cheered them on.
- **48th PCA General Assembly in St. Louis.** Missouri Presbytery hosted the 2021 General Assembly in St. Louis, and many Covenant Seminary faculty, staff, and students were involved in the planning and execution of the event, either through their connection with the Seminary or through the involvement of their local churches. Despite some planning challenges caused by COVID, the event ultimately took place as scheduled, with the largest attendance of any General Assembly in the PCA’s history. We extend our deepest thanks to the Host Committee, led by RE Phil VanValkenberg of Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church, to the PCA Administrative Committee, and to all the hundreds of local volunteers who helped to make the event possible.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **MNA Assessment Center on Campus.** In July 2021, the Seminar was pleased to host a full MNA Church Planting Assessment on our campus for the first time. Previously we have hosted only seminar forms of the assessment. This was the perfect opportunity for students considering church planting to benefit from the full range of resources offered by MNA without having to leave campus. Plans are in place to host the Assessment Center again in the summer of 2022.
- **Weekly Chapel Services and Special Themed Chapels.** Our usual Friday chapel services began again with the start of the fall semester, with a livestream option for those uncomfortable with attending in person. As restrictions eased somewhat throughout the school year more of the campus community has taken advantage of these opportunities to gather for worship and praise of our Lord. Additionally, we held a series of chapel services celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month in October 2021) and Black History Month in February 2022, which included special services led by our Hispanic and Black Student Fellowships. Black History Month also included a panel discussion with minority students and guest preachers of color from local and regional churches. Another special service was led by our Asian Student Fellowship.
- **Virtual Preview Days.** To facilitate campus visits by prospective students in light of COVID, our Admissions and Student Life teams conducted Virtual Preview Days online during the last academic year. For 2022, we were again able to offer the Preview Days in person. Visitors have the opportunity to meet faculty, staff, and students; sit in on a class or two; worship with us in Chapel; tour the campus; and participate in conferences or other events taking place on campus at the time.
- **Men's Leadership Breakfast.** This popular event, which draws a variety of men from our surrounding community, features a light breakfast and Bible teaching by members of our faculty. MLB was able to meet in person while continuing to offer a livestream option for those who preferred it. The studies this year featured a wide variety of our faculty teaching on key points from their areas of concentration, including theology, leadership, history, evangelism, and more.
- **Covenant Seminary Preaching Lectures.** The 2021 edition of the Preaching Lectures featured Rev. Russ Whitfield, pastor of Grace Mosaic, a cross-cultural church that he helped to plant in Northeast Washington, DC. Rev. Whitfield, who also preached at the PCA General Assembly in June, spoke on the theme of "Doxological Diversity: Preaching in Pursuit of Cross-Cultural Love." In addition

to his pastoral duties, he is the Director of Cross-Cultural Advancement for Reformed University Fellowship and a Guest Lecturer in Practical Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary's Washington, DC, campus. As a writer he has contributed to *Heal Us, Emmanuel: A Call for Racial Reconciliation, Representation and Unity in the Church* (White Blackbird Books, 2016), *All Are Welcome: Toward a Multi-Everything Church* (White Blackbird Books, 2018), *The Pursuit of Gospel Unity: The PCA Papers on Racism and Racial Reconciliation* (PCA CDM Publishing, 2019), and *9Marks Journal*. The speaker for the 2022 Preaching Lectures is yet to be determined at the time of this writing.

- **Church Planting Field Trip to Colorado.** Dr. Robert Kim, the Philip and Rebecca Douglass Chair of Church Planting and Christian Formation, led a group of students and potential church planters on the annual Church Planting Trip in October 2021, this time to Denver and Colorado Springs. The group met with and learned from church planters in those cities, worshiped with some of the church plants, and generally got a taste of what it's like to be church planters. We were thankful to partner with the Western Church Planting Network on this trip. Church Planting Field Trips are a regular part of the curriculum for our Church Planting Track.
- **Keith and Kristyn Getty Christmas Concert.** In December 2021, we were once again honored to help bring to St. Louis an evening with Christian hymn writers and recording artists Keith and Kristyn Getty. The Gettys' Irish Christmas Concert, held at the area's Faith Church, was a wonderful way to usher in Christmas with the true message of the season based on Scripture and set to glorious music.
- **11th Annual Theological Conference.** In January 2022, the student-led Theological Fellowship at Covenant Seminary held its 11th Annual Theological Conference, at which numerous Covenant students presented papers they had written on a variety of biblical and theological topics. The plenary speaker for the event was **Dr. Atria Larson**, Associate Professor of Medieval Christianity and Theological Studies at St. Louis University, whose address was titled "Patience, Penance, and Penalty: The Role of Patientia in God's Execution of Justice in the Medieval Glossa Ordinaria on the Bible." The faculty advisor for the Fellowship is Professor of New Testament Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough.
- **Francis Schaeffer Institute Events.** The annual Schaeffer Lectures were not held in the fall of 2021 due to COVID concerns, but we do

plan to host them in the fall of 2022 (speaker and theme to be determined). Meanwhile, FSI was able to host a couple of other significant events this spring.

- **Divine Action in Historical and Contemporary Context.** This weekend conference in March 2022 was hosted jointly by FSI and the Carl Henry Center for Theological Understanding of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, the Creation Project, and the John Templeton Foundation. Featured speakers included Covenant’s own **Dr. C. John “Jack” Collins**, Professor of Old Testament, along with **Dr. Lydia Jaeger** (Faraday Institute for Science and Religion), **Dr. Michael McClymond** (Saint Louis University), **Dr. Brian Matz** (Fontbonne University), **Dr. S. Joshua Swamidass** (Washington University in St. Louis), and many others. The conference explored questions about and modern challenges to the Christian understanding of God’s miraculous actions in history, offering a compelling and faithful dialogue between Scripture and science.
- **Scattered Together: Global Voices in Education and Mission.** This special FSI weekend course in April 2022 featured more than 20 presenters representing 10 countries and focusing on various aspects of what God is doing in the world and how we can play a part. Speakers included **Dr. Donald Guthrie** (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School); **Dr. Leopoldo Sanchez** (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis); Covenant’s own **Prof. Jessie Swigart** (Assistant Professor of Educational Ministries), **Dr. Tasha Chapman** (Professor of Educational Ministries), and **Dr. Mark Ryan** (Director of FSI); as well as many others. Our ministry partners for this event included Langham Partners, Third Millennium Ministries, Mission to the World, Equipping Leaders International, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

A Set of Special Seminary Publications

This past year saw both of our regular Seminary publications produce special issues of note.

- **Covenant Magazine.** The 2021 edition of our flagship publication featured a tribute section **honoring retiring President Emeritus Dr. Mark Dalbey** (see “Faculty and Staff Updates” below) and his legacy at the Seminary. The issue also contained a **celebration of the 30th**

Anniversary of the Francis Schaeffer Institute, featuring interviews with FSI founding Director and the first occupant of the Schaeffer Chair of Apologetics Prof. Jerram Barrs and current FSI Director Dr. Mark Ryan, as well as historical pieces about the Institute.

- ***Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review***. The fall 2021 issue of our twice-yearly academic journal offered a *festschrift* in honor of **Professor Emeritus of New Testament Dr. Hans F. Bayer**, who retired last year after 27 years with Covenant Seminary. The issue featured articles on topics in Greek and New Testament Studies by, and a collection of tributes from, colleagues and former students of Dr. Bayer, whose long career as a pastor-scholar, mentor, and man of faith has had a lasting impact on our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

A Continuing Blessing from Our Donors

As we noted in last year's report, our *Hope for the Future* Capital Campaign concluded by coming in \$2 million over our stated goal of \$40 million. This was a tremendous blessing from the Lord! His gift of donors whose hearts for our mission and desire to give toward it by supporting this campaign enabled us to:

- Eliminate more than \$2.25 million in student debt by establishing new or expanding existing scholarships for future pastors and other church leaders,
- Establish or complete several endowed faculty chairs,
- Establish the Church Planting Track to further prepare church planters for our denomination and beyond,
- Expand our Field Education program with additional mentored training opportunities and resources,
- Establish six new online learning programs so that students who wish to study the Bible may do so from anywhere in the world,
- Upgrade our classroom and campus technology systems to better facilitate on-campus and online learning, and
- Nearly double our institutional endowment from \$20 million to \$37 million to enable a more stable yearly operating budget.

The impact of this campaign for future students and the churches they will pastor or serve in other ways is profound. We continue to thank God for his grace in this, and we continue to seek his guidance as we implement and develop further many of the initiatives growing out of the campaign.

A Year of Blessing through Our Faculty, Staff, and Boards

The Lord's greatest gift to Covenant Seminary is the people who serve here as faculty, staff, or trustees. We have been particularly blessed in this regard. Notable staffing updates or changes for the past year are listed below.

Faculty/Staff Updates

- **Dr. Mark Dalbey**, retired from his post as President at the end of the 2021 academic year, becoming President Emeritus and moving into an advisory role as Dr. Tom Gibbs took over as our sixth President in July 2021. Dr. Dalbey remained close to the Seminary through the transition period before stepping back in the new year to pursue other ministry opportunities and enjoy time with his family. We are grateful for Dr. Dalbey's many years of faithful service to the Seminary in many capacities (see last year's report for a more complete biography) from 1999 to 2021, and for the many innovations and advances made under his tenure, including new degrees and delivery methods, new extension sites and field education opportunities, a new Church Planting Track, increased scholarships and other support for students, and expanded partnerships with churches and other institutions that help the Seminary meet the educational challenges of a digital age and a global pandemic. We wish Dr. Dalbey and his wife, Beth, many blessings in the latest chapter of their life together.
- **Prof. Aaron Goldstein** is now **Dr. Aaron Goldstein**—having completed his studies and dissertation for a PhD in biblical studies through Concordia Seminary in St. Louis—and was **promoted to Assistant Professor of Old Testament and Director of Online Learning**. Dr. Goldstein began teaching at Covenant in 2015 as a Visiting Instructor in Old Testament, then served as Associate Director of Online Learning and Assistant Professor of Old Testament. Prior to his time at Covenant, Dr. Goldstein taught religion at Lindenwood University. He also served as a pastor in a local congregation for eight years.
- **Dr. Andrew J. “Drew” Martin** joins our faculty in the summer of 2022 as Associate Professor of Systematic Theology. Dr. Martin is the embodiment of the pastor-scholar model prized at Covenant Seminary. He has served as a PCA pastor and church planter for 15 years, including as pastor of West Charlotte Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, a church he co-founded. He brings a wealth of experience in teaching systematic theology and church history at the seminary level, including his most recent teaching post at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Charlotte campus. He also brings

both a strong academic focus as well as a deep personal commitment to Reformed theology and the Westminster Standards. Prior to his time at Gordon-Conwell, Dr. Martin taught at Vanderbilt University and the School of Theology at Sewanee: The University of the South. As a pastor, he has served in three congregations. His passion for intercultural ministry led him to co-plant West Charlotte Church, considered to be the first church in the Presbyterian Church in America to be planted from a mother church with an African American senior pastor. Dr. Martin holds a BA in political science and psychology from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; an MDiv and MA in theology from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; and a PhD in religion and historical studies from Vanderbilt University. His PhD dissertation focused on the development of covenant theology in the post-Reformation period. His most recent book, part of Crossway's Theologians on the Christian Life series, explores the practical ethics of prominent black pastor and theologian Francis Grimké and is due out this fall. His work also includes contributions to *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology*, and *Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy*.

- **Dr. Brad Matthews**, Associate Professor of New Testament, was named **Dean of Faculty** for the Seminary in 2021. Matthews steps into the position previously held by Dr. Jay Sklar, who continues to serve in his other roles as Professor of Old Testament and Vice President of Academics. Dr. Matthews began his professional life as a mechanical engineer before coming to Covenant for a Master of Divinity degree. He holds a PhD from the University of Durham, England. He joined Covenant's faculty in 2008 as Assistant Professor of New Testament and served as Field Education Director for several years.
- **Mr. John Ranheim**, VP for Advancement, stepped down from his role at the end of 2021 to pursue other opportunities in fundraising and financial consulting. A 2006 MDiv graduate of Covenant, Mr. Ranheim joined the Development staff in 2005 to assist with the *By His Grace, for His Glory* capital campaign—which raised funds for major campus improvements, including the construction of Founders Hall, the main classroom and office building—and he stayed on to eventually lead the Seminary's Development team through several more such campaigns. These include a mini-campaign around ten years ago that supported the renovation and expansion of the campus's Community Center, and the recently completed *Hope for the Future*

campaign, which raised more than \$42 million—two million over the original stated goal—to provide additional scholarship support for students, establish and expand existing endowed faculty chairs, strengthen long-term support for faculty, establish the Church Planting Track, support much-needed campus and technological improvements, and provide for the growth and development of the Seminary’s online/hybrid learning programs, as well as expanded resources for leadership training for the church. John’s work to advance the mission of Covenant Seminary has led to the expansion of our support base of individual donors, foundations, and churches. He especially enjoyed finding ways of connecting donor passions with specific institutional needs for advancing the gospel. We are grateful for his years of service and dedication to our Covenant community, wish him well in his new endeavors, and look forward to benefitting from his wisdom as he continues to consult with the Seminary.

- **Prof. Mark Ryan**, is now **Dr. Mark Ryan**, having completed his Doctor of Ministry at Covenant in 2021, with a focus on cultural apologetics and communication. Dr. Ryan is Adjunct Professor of Religion and Culture and Director of the Francis Schaeffer Institute. Before joining our faculty part time in 2010, then full time in 2013, Dr. Ryan served with L’Abri Fellowship in Boston and Vancouver, a ministry begun by the late Francis Schaeffer, and has pastored congregations in Australia and the USA.
- **Prof. Jessie Swigart**, Dean of Academic Administration and formerly Adjunct Professor of Educational Ministries, was named **Assistant Professor of Educational Ministries** in 2021. In her role as Dean, Prof. Swigart develops and oversees the academic goals of the Seminary, including the teaching and learning experience for the Seminary’s online education students. Prof. Swigart also teaches courses in the Educational Ministries curriculum as well as a Capstone course for Master of Arts students.
- **Dr. Michael D. Williams**, Professor of Systematic Theology, recently retired from Covenant Seminary after 26 years on our faculty. We are grateful for Dr. Williams’s many years of service to our Seminary community and to the broader church. An adult convert to Christianity who once served as a U.S. Army Ranger, Dr. Williams came to Covenant in 1996 after serving six years as Professor of Theology at Dordt College. While at Covenant, he also taught extensively at our Missional Training Center–Phoenix site, and at churches, conferences, and seminars locally, nationally, and internationally. His research and writing focused particularly on the areas of the nature of theology and

theological method, biblical and theological anthropology, and history. His publications include *This World Is Not My Home: The Origins and Development of Dispensationalism*, *Why I Am Not an Arminian* (with former Covenant colleague Dr. Robert A. Peterson), and *Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption*. Dr. Williams holds an MTS from Harvard Divinity School, an MDiv from Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Toronto. He and his wife, Jackie, have two sons.

Board/Advisory Board Updates

- **New Board of Trustees Members**
 - **Rev. Dr. Brian Cosby**, Senior Minister, Wayside Presbyterian Church, Signal Mountain, TN. Elected to first term for class of 2025.
 - **Dr. Donald Guthrie**, Executive Director of the Center for Transformational Churches, Director of the PhD (Educational Studies) Program, and Professor of Educational Ministries, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL. Elected to first term for class of 2025. Had been serving on Advisory Board.
 - **Mr. Ron McNalley**, President/Owner, Employee Benefit Resources, Inc., Dallas, TX. Elected to partial term to fill a vacancy in class of 2022. Had been serving on our Advisory Board.
 - **Dr. Otis Pickett Sr.**, Assistant Professor of History, Mississippi College, Jackson, MS. Elected to first term for class of 2025.
 - **Dr. C. Scott Shidemantle**, Professor of Biblical Studies and Coordinator, Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA. Elected to first term for class of 2025.
- **Board Members Re-Elected to a Second Term**
 - **Mr. Samuel Graham II**, President and CEO, Diversified Trust Company, Memphis, TN. Elected to second term for class of 2025.
 - **Dr. Miles Gresham**, Vice President of Clinical Affairs, Gastro Health Alabama, Birmingham, AL. Elected to second term for class of 2025.
- **New Advisory Board Members**
 - **Mr. Carlo Hansen**, Retired, Former Senior Director, Global Process Support, Ralston Purina. Serving on Advisory Board after completing two consecutive terms on Board of Trustees.

- **Rev. John Haralson**, Senior Pastor, Grace Church Seattle, Seattle, WA. Serving on Advisory Board after completing term on Board of Trustees in 2021.
- **Rev. David Richter**, Senior Pastor, City Church of East Nashville, Nashville, TN. Serving first term on Advisory Board.
- **Ms. Brittany Smith**, Campus Staff, Reformed University Fellowship, Tucson, AZ. Serving first term on Advisory Board.
- **Mr. Walt Turner**, Chairman and Vice President, Turner Dairy Farms, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA. Serving on Advisory Board after completing two consecutive terms on Board of Trustees.
- **Retiring Advisory Board Members**
 - **Mr. Jim Ewoltdt**, Retired, Former Partner, Arthur Andersen, LLP, St. Louis, MO.
 - **Mr. Craig Stephenson**, Executive Vice President, Cary Oil Co., Inc., Cary, NC.

A Year of Blessings through Faculty Publications and Kingdom Service

The Lord has blessed Covenant Seminary with a distinctive and distinguished faculty whose academic excellence and pastoral focus make them uniquely qualified to prepare the next generation of leaders for Christ's church and Kingdom. Our faculty's influence reaches far beyond the classroom: professors mentor and disciple students, participate in the life of local congregations, share their teaching and preaching abilities with the larger church in the U.S. and around the world, and engage with our culture and the pressing issues of our day from a biblically sound and gospel-centered perspective. Below is a small sampling of their publications and other Kingdom service since our last report. For much of the last year, COVID restrictions have meant more limited in-person involvement in various activities than usual for many of our faculty.

- **Prof. Jerram Barrs**, Professor of Christian Studies and Contemporary Culture, Senior Scholar-in-Residence for the Francis Schaeffer Institute, and Francis Schaeffer Chair of Apologetics
 - Preached and taught in local churches and participated in various Presbytery and General Assembly activities.
- **Prof. Suzanne Bates**, Assistant Professor of Counseling
 - Published endorsements for books by two Covenant alumnae, Stephanie Hubach's *Parenting and Disabilities: Abiding in God's Presence*, and Jenilyn Swett's *Singleness: Living Faithfully*.
 - Served on Board of Restore St. Louis ministry for New City Fellowship.

- Spoke at 2021 General Assembly breakout session on “The God Who Sees.”
- Served as panel speaker for two breakout sessions on “Overcoming Anxiety and Sexual Issues Women Face” for The Gospel Coalition Women’s Conference 2021.
- Offered presentations on suicide prevention and other mental health issues at the Seminary and a variety of other venues.
- **Dr. David B. Calhoun**, Late Professor Emeritus of Church History
 - Published *A Sheep Remembers*, a personal reflection on Psalm 23 (Banner of Truth, 2021).
- **Dr. David W. Chapman**, Professor of New Testament and Archaeology
 - Served on the boards of the Near East Archaeological Society and Presbyterian Mission International, also as Vice President of PMI.
 - Recorded interview about Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* for *Based on a True Story* podcast.
 - Recorded week-long series of interviews about archaeology and the *ESV Archaeology Study Bible* for a major syndicated Christian radio show.
- **Dr. Tasha Chapman**, Professor of Educational Ministries
 - Worked with the PCA’s RBI to redesign, proofread, and field test national “Women in Vocational Ministry Wellbeing Assessment” for ongoing ministry resilience research.
 - Published Spanish translation in 2021 of *The Politics of Ministry* (IVP, 2019), co-written with Bob Burns and Donald Guthrie.
 - Taught Zoom workshops for RUF women’s staff regional retreat in March 2021, at RUF national staff training and leadership training for women in December 2021, along with workshops open to all.
 - Spoke at Women’s Ministry Leadership Conference for the PCA’s Committee for Discipleship Ministries in February 2022.
 - Spoke at FreshHope Ministries with alumnus Jason Moore as part of retreat for local pastoral couples on resilience and self-stewardship.
 - Coached national leader with Assemblies of God on sustainability researching.
- **Dr. C. John “Jack” Collins**, Professor of Old Testament
 - Published “Freedoms and Limitations: C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer as a Tag Team,” in *Theofilus*, a Nordic open-access academic journal in the fields of theology, philosophy, and culture, <https://theofilos.no/>.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Published “Romans 1:20—‘From the Creation of the World’ (ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου),” in *Presbyterion* 47, no.2 (fall 2021), as part of *festschrift* for Hans F. Bayer.
- Presented “‘The Testimony of the Lord is Sure’: Science and the Place of Extra-Biblical Literature in Biblical Thinking” at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation.
- Published “Introduction” and “Concluding Thoughts,” in *Sapientia* symposium on Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind* (April 2021), and served as host and editor for the symposium.
- Presented “An Exegetical Response to William Lane Craig, *In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Cost-Benefit Analysis*” to Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in November 2021.
- Published various book reviews, book endorsements, and blog posts.
- Held Regional Discussion Fellowship for Carl Henry Center in spring and fall 2021.
- Recorded “Translating the Old Testament” podcast interview for Crossway publishing in August 2021.
- **Dr. Dan Doriani**, Vice President at Large and Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology
 - Published blog posts for The Gospel Coalition, the Alliance for Confessing Evangelicals, and the Seminary’s *Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy*.
 - Published *Work That Makes a Difference* (P&R, 2021).
 - Published *Matthew* in the ESV Expository Commentary volume *Matthew—Luke* (Crossway, 2021).
 - Published *Romans* in the Reformed Expository Commentary series (P&R, 2022).
 - Published “Love and the Law: Meditations on Romans 13:8–14,” in *Presbyterion* 47, no. 2 (fall 2021), as part of *festschrift* for Hans F. Bayer.
 - Hosted podcasts for the Center for Faith and Work throughout the year and appeared on several podcasts as guest, mostly on topics of work or interpretation.
 - Preached and taught at local churches many times, including summer sabbatical preaching for a local pastor, and as stated supply for another local church.
- **Dr. Thomas C. Gibbs**, President and Associate Professor of Applied Theology
 - Published “The Foundation for Our Ministry: The Bible as the Word of God,” “The Charge That Shapes Our Ministry: Christ at the Center of All We Do,” “The Compelling Consequences for

Our Ministry: Go and Show the Gospel,” on the Seminary’s *Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy* blog.

- **Dr. Michael Goheen**, Professor of Missional Theology and Director of Theological Education at the Missional Training Center–Phoenix
 - Published “Agents and Structures of Mission,” in *The Oxford Handbook for Mission Studies*, ed. Kirsteen Kim, Knud Jørgensen, and Alison Fitchett-Climenhaga (Oxford University Press, 2021), 184–201.
 - Published “Lesslie Newbigin and a Missionary Encounter with Western Culture,” *Mere Orthodoxy*, no. 1 (Fall 2021): 20–29.
 - Published “Foreword,” to Greg Perry, *The Drama of Discipleship* (Wipf and Stock, 2021).
 - Published “Foreword,” to Mongolian translation of Goheen, *The True Story of the Whole World: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Drama* (Ulan Bator, Mongolia: InterVarsity Press, 2021).
 - In addition to teaching at MTC–Phoenix and in Vancouver, spent two months training church leaders in South America.
- **Dr. Aaron Goldstein**, Assistant Professor of Old Testament and Director of Online Learning
 - Completed studies and PhD dissertation in biblical studies at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.
 - Taught an Old Testament survey course (online, synchronous) for Covenant Bible School in Singapore.
- **Dr. Robbie Griggs**, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology
 - Taught seminar at PCA GA on the Antioch Incident in Acts and debates over homosexuality.
 - Preached and taught numerous times at churches in St. Louis and other cities.
- **Dr. Robert Kim**, Assistant Professor of Applied Theology and Church Planting, Philip and Rebecca Douglass Chair of Church Planting and Christian Formation
 - Appointed to board of Serge and served on MNA Committee of Missouri Presbytery.
 - Published “For Such a Time as This—2022” on the Seminary’s *Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy* blog.
 - Consulted with Illiana Presbytery, Midsouth Church Planting Network, Conflux (a network of minority pastors).
 - Involved in sports activities to build relationships with students and non-Christians.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **Dr. Paul Loosemore**, Assistant Professor of Counseling
 - Published “Emergent Spiritual Formation” on CTS’s *Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy* blog.
 - Spoke at several conferences on counseling topics, provided clinical supervision for counseling students/interns, and continued support of Joy FM Radio as it develops counseling scholarships and partnerships in the community.
- **Dr. Mark Pfuetze**, Associate Professor of Counseling and Interim Co-Director of Counseling
 - Served on board of FirstLight ministries and as counseling consultant/director for Global Counseling Network.
 - Provided sexual abuse training for youth group ministry at Restoration Community Church (PCA) in St. Louis.
- **Dr. Jeremy Ruckstaetter**, Associate Professor of Counseling and Interim Co-Director of Counseling
 - Served on board of Presbyterian Mission International (PMI).
 - Served as Support Group Coordinator for Chesterfield Presbyterian Church.
- **Dr. Mark Ryan**, Director of FSI and Adjunct Professor of Religion and Culture
 - Completed DMin at Covenant Seminary.
 - Published various posts on cultural issues for CTS’s *Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy* blog.
 - Served as board member for Fellowship of Former Christian Scientists, Ebenezer Trust, Sage Christianity, and as advisory board member for ReThink3:15.
 - Served on Credentials Committee and various ad hoc committees and ordination commissions for Missouri Presbytery, and consulted with area churches regarding pastoral dilemmas and outreach practices/initiatives.
- **Prof. Jessie Swigart**, Assistant Professor of Educational Ministries and Dean of Academic Administration
 - Presented workshop “Hospitable Teaching and Learning for Redemptive Community Life” at PCA GA in 2021.
 - Designed and led workshop on “Women in Freestanding Schools” for ATS Women in Leadership Fall Summit.
 - Served on panel for Oikonomia Network webinar “Embracing the Slash after COVID,” about tensions experienced by faculty administrators.
 - Attended virtual ATS School for Peer Reviewers in preparation for becoming peer reviewer on an ATS site visit in 2023.

- **Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough**, Professor of New Testament
 - Completed revised 4th edition of *Encountering the New Testament* for publication.
 - Served as Editor for *Presbyterion*, the Seminary’s academic journal, including a *festschrift* honoring Professor Emeritus of New Testament Hans F. Bayer in the fall 2021 issue.
 - Published numerous book reviews in *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, and *Presbyterion*, and wrote commendations for many recent books by noted scholars.
 - Serves as Editor for *Presbyterion*, the Seminary’s academic journal.
 - Preached and taught at various local churches and taught Zoom courses with pastors in South Africa.
- **Dr. Dan Zink**, Professor of Counseling
 - Published “Fix Marriage and we Fix the Fractured Family” in *byFaith*, Qtr. 2, no. 71 (2021) and in *byFaith* online.
 - Served on board of Catalyst Teaching, a ministry of CTS graduate Ed Killeen.

An Ongoing Desire for Denominational Growth and Unity

We are grateful to be the denominational seminary for the PCA and value the partnerships we have in ministry with our sister PCA agencies and churches. It is a joy and a blessing to serve our denomination with them. We look forward to further exploring these partnership opportunities and planning together for the future as we seek to foster greater denominational unity for the good of the church and the expansion of the gospel. Our sincere desire is to glorify the Lord together as we all seek to bless Christ’s people, grow Christ’s church, and expand Christ’s Kingdom—all for Christ’s glory. Thank you for your support and prayers, and thank you for sharing with us in the exciting things the Lord is doing in and through the PCA and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Gibbs
President

Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary; for its faithfulness to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith, and the Great Commission; for its students, graduates, faculty, staff, and trustees; and for those who support the

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Seminary through their prayers and gifts.
2. That the General Assembly encourage the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America to support the ministry of Covenant Theological Seminary by contributing the Partnership Shares approved by the Assembly, and by recommending Covenant Seminary to prospective students.
 3. That the General Assembly ask the Lord to bless Covenant Seminary's new President, Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Gibbs, and grant him and the Seminary's leadership team, faculty, and Board of Trustees great wisdom, biblical faithfulness, and clear vision as they lead the institution forward in training fruitful pastors and other ministry leaders. Pray also for President Emeritus Dr. Mark Dalbey, as he moves away from his consulting role with the Seminary and into retirement as of the end of the 2021–2022 academic year, that the Lord would provide many opportunities for him to minister to God's people in new ways.
 4. That the General Assembly ask God to guide Covenant Seminary's ongoing efforts at recruiting new students, evaluating and strengthening our programs, and seeking to make the Seminary a greater resource for the church both locally and globally.
 5. That the General Assembly ask God's blessing on the Seminary's planning and fundraising efforts, and on its attempts to recruit a new generation of dedicated pastor-scholars to train new generations of leaders for Christ's church and Kingdom.
 6. That the General Assembly praise God for his provision during the ongoing pandemic, and that he would guide the Seminary's leaders as they seek to maintain the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff while at the same time continuing to build on the new and effective ways to carry out our mission developed during the challenges of the pandemic. Praise him for the gift of resilient and creative people who enable the institution to function so well during an unusual time.
 7. That the General Assembly pray for unity among the brethren of the PCA and ask the Lord to work in all our hearts to foster a deeper desire to engage with one another and the world in compassionate and gospel-centered ways, and that we might bear strong witness to the truth and power of God's redeeming grace.
 8. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the stated and called meetings of the Seminary's Board of Trustees and Executive

APPENDIX F

Committee of the Board of Trustees for 2021–2022 as follows:

- *Stated Board Meetings:* April 30, 2021; September 24, 2021; January 28, 2022
 - *Called Board Meetings:* None
 - *Stated Executive Committee Meetings:* April 20, 2021; September 17, 2021; December 3, 2021; January 27, 2022
 - *Called Executive Committee Meetings:* August 18, 2021; October 27, 2021; January 17, 2022
9. That the financial audit for Covenant Theological Seminary for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, by Capin Crouse LLC, be received.
 10. That the proposed budget for 2022–23 for Covenant Theological Seminary, as presented through the Administrative Committee, be approved.

APPENDIX G

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. John 17:22-23

MNA Calling and Vision: Strengthening the Church to Serve, Grow, Multiply.

The calling of MNA is to equip Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) presbyteries, congregations, and members for the kingdom work of extending the church in the United States and Canada. So, MNA provides resources **strengthening** them to **serve, grow, and multiply**. We submit and commit all that we do in prayer for a great advancement of the Gospel throughout North America, so that the PCA will be *called a house of prayer for all the nations* (Mark 11:17), and that our unity would be an alluring witness to the world that Jesus is Lord (John 17:20-23). Our prayer is for a growing Holy Spirit empowered commitment to kingdom mission across the PCA that results in increased church planting and church vitality. Our vision is summarized by five kingdom commitments:

- Kingdom Diversity – advancing the gospel among all people groups.
- Kingdom Prayer – building a house of prayer for the nations.
- Kingdom Evangelism – growing through people coming to Christ.
- Kingdom Engagement – acting justly, seeking mercy, walking humbly with God.
- Kingdom Mobilization – advancing the gospel through lay people.

We offer the challenge that every church trust God for growth in at least one of these kingdom commitments. MNA Ministries offers robust resources that churches and church members may use toward that end.

MNA Coordinator Transition:

2021 was a year of leadership transition for Mission to North America (MNA). January 1, 2021, saw RE Brent Anderson step in and admirably serve as Interim MNA Coordinator following the resignation of TE Paul Hahn. On September 1, 2021, TE Irwyn Ince began serving as MNA Coordinator *Pro*

Tempore following a unanimous vote by the MNA Committee. TE Ince is the first African American to serve as Coordinator of a PCA Committee or Agency. He brings extensive experience in serving the PCA at the General Assembly level as well as in organizational leadership through his corporate work prior to pastoral ministry.

In their search for a new Coordinator, the MNA Committee expressed a desire for MNA to help cultivate new wine skins of gospel faithfulness and creativity as we emerge from a post-pandemic world with new dreams, hopes, and prayers about how God will make the PCA a faithful missionary church in and for a rapidly changing North America.

MNA Thanksgiving:

- The challenges of adjustments in ministry during the Pandemic continued in 2021. We praise the Lord for keeping MNA Staff and Volunteers in his care, particularly through COVID infections experienced by many. Where 2020 saw a necessary shift to virtual training and equipping across many MNA Ministries, in 2021 the shift was to more of a hybrid model. There is more agility now for MNA Ministries, as well as expanded opportunity since progressed well in offering many resources through electronic media to advance God's work even in the midst of restricted travel and meetings.
- Please join us in rejoicing in God's gracious financial provision for MNA. God provided major funding for MNA Ministries through designated giving, along with significant income to support the MNA General Fund in 2021. The MNA General Fund provides support services to the MNA Ministries and projects so that all designated giving is applied 100% to the ministry, church plant, or project to which the gifts are designated. Developing sufficient income for the General Fund, most of which is provided through PCA church giving in response to the Ministry Ask (Partnership Share), continues to be one of our greatest challenges. While giving to the General Fund was substantive, we closed 2021 with \$163,097 in 2021 expenses not covered by 2021 income. God has graciously provided over the years such that this single-year loss was covered by General Fund reserves. As we strive to grow in our ability to serve the PCA for greater missional health we will need more of our churches to participate in the Ministry Ask. We trust the Lord for his continued provision through the gifts of churches and individuals.

MNA Resources to Strengthen Churches and Presbyteries: MNA began with dreams that God, by his grace and for his own glory, would transform the PCA into a grassroots church planting culture. We hoped to see:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- All PCA churches become houses of prayer for all the nations and embrace a Great Commission vision,
- People coming to Christ from the many diverse communities and people groups of North America,
- The PCA impact the centers of influence in North America, and Gospel and Reformed churches planted in all regions of North America.

The “on the ground” pursuit of these hopes took shape differently through the years. In the early years of the PCA, MNA focused primarily on welcoming churches transferring into the PCA from other denominations. In its next generation, MNA recruited and sent church planters to the field through a centralized system. In recent years, MNA has moved steadily toward a resourcing and training role as churches and presbyteries continue to develop local and regional systems for planting and strengthening churches. We long for the Spirit to continue the good work of MNA. **For the detail of services and resources available for this pursuit through MNA Ministries, visit: pcamna.org.**

MNA Church Planting Resources: MNA continues to coordinate church planting services in the seven phases of church planter and other ministry leadership development:

- Developing and recruiting church planters and church planting teams (**Develop and Recruit**)
- Assessing church planter candidates and their spouses (**Assess**)
- Training and assisting church planters in their fundraising (**Fundraise**)
- Seeking God’s guidance in placing the church planter (**Placement**)
- Providing church planter training (**Train**)
- Supporting and encouraging the church planter through coaching and mentoring (**Coach and Mentor**)
- Celebration and Renewal, reflecting on God’s great work thus far and looking to him for greater works in the future. (**Celebrate and Renew**)

Over the course of our life as a denomination, God has blessed the PCA with a strong sense of calling to church planting. However, we have seen a downward trend over the last three years. Certainly the pandemic has played a major role in this decrease. **2019 saw God’s blessing in sending 37 church planters to the field to begin a new mission church in 2019, 26 in 2020, and 16 in 2021 across the United States or Canada (See Attachment 1 for the list of the church planters placed in 2021).** We are grateful to the Lord for these new mission churches, and we are trusting him for more. MNA continues to move toward an even greater focus on serving churches and presbyteries in their development of stronger local and regional church planting systems. As one of the core services that MNA provides, we continue

offering MNA Church Planter Assessment Centers for church planting candidates. In 2021 we assessed 51 couples and 4 individuals through 10 assessments (8 full Assessment Centers and 2 Personalized). Additionally, MNA Church Planter Readiness Seminars are an equipping resource for those who are still in training and not yet ordained.

MNA 2021 Selected Highlights:

- **Ministry among Ethnic Minority Groups** saw growth through church planters, pastors, and ministry candidates added to the PCA among African American, Hispanic, Korean American, Native American, and Haitian Americans.
- **The PCA Unity Fund** has awarded a total of 274 seminary scholarships. In 2021 the amount awarded for minority candidates seeking ordination rose to \$3,250 each. At the Unity Fund's inception those scholarships were \$1,100 each. Additionally, the Unity Fund provided 22 scholarships to assist minority Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders to attend the 48th General Assembly.
- **Refugee and Immigrant Ministry**, led by Director Pat Hatch responded to increased interest resulting from the evacuation of 70,000+ Afghans to the U.S. by providing connections to the nearest refugee resettlement agencies in their areas, online resources, print resources and training options.
- **English as a Second Language (ESL)**, led by Director Nancy Booher, saw 26 New ESL Ministries launched through 33 ESL Trainings during 2021 (21 in-person, 12 virtual). Additionally, an MNA ESL Zoom School was designed for students who live in foreign countries.
- **Engaging Disability with the Gospel**, led by Director Ashley Belknap conducted 315 consultations with individuals and churches. A variety of live and recorded trainings were conducted for church disability ministry leaders, children's ministry leaders and others.
- **MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries**, led by Director Mark Casson, added a new regional director for Central Florida, and conducted 15 trainings with 49 mentors trained. Over 15 ministry presentations were conducted, resulting in over 100 new volunteers for either Correspondence Ministry or in-person mentoring.
- **MNA Disaster Response**, led by Director Arklie Hooten, continued the annual practice of mobilizing thousands of volunteers to respond to the needs of people experiencing hurricanes, tornadoes, fires and floods.

Warehouse service was expanded by opening a new site in Dallas. Even with some travel and meeting restrictions continuing during 2021, major volunteer responses were mobilized after hurricanes, tornadoes and flooding throughout the year.

- **Chaplain Ministries**, led by Coordinator Jim Carter, currently endorses the highest number ever of military chaplains and chaplains serving in civilian institutions. See **Attachment 2** for the Chaplain Ministries annual report.

MNA Stewardship and Finances: 2021 Progress

A. Ministry Ask/Askings Giving:

MNA was supported in 2021 by 1,120 churches giving \$3,712,750 and 2,972 individual donors giving \$3,507,671. MNA was supported in 2020 by 1,025 churches giving \$3,038,790 and 2,465 individual donors giving \$2,749,685. MNA requests that churches give the Ministry Ask of \$26 per member, if giving on a per capita basis. If all churches gave \$26 per member, all projects would be funded without individual fundraising by project leaders.

MNA requests that churches give to all PCA Committees and Agencies at the Ministry Ask level. Because many churches do not contribute at the Ministry Ask level, MNA senior staff members seek designated support for their personal support and programs. Churches have responded generously to these additional requests for support, providing significantly greater resources for ministry. Contact MNA Associate Coordinator TE Fred Marsh <fmarsh@pcanet.org or 404-307-8266> or MNA Church Relations Director RE Stephen Lutz <slutz@pcanet.org or 828-242-1440> for further information on financial support for MNA.

B. Funding for Church Planting and Other Projects:

- All church planters are supported by gifts designated for their particular church planting projects.
 - Church planters who do not have a strong personal PCA network require a special priority for project support as we trust God for much greater ministry among the many people groups of North America. MNA strongly encourages churches to give a high priority to church planters who do not have a background in the PCA.
 - Five Million Fund for Church Buildings: providing interest-free loans of up to \$100,000, this fund continues to be a helpful source for churches as they put together funding packages for their initial building programs. This is a revolving fund, supported by loan repayments, as well as by donations.

C. Thanksgiving Offering: MNA is grateful to the Lord for more than \$35,000.00 given to the 2021 Thanksgiving Offering, and commends to PCA churches the opportunity to support, through the annual MNA Thanksgiving Offering, the training of men and women for leadership in ministry among the ethnic groups of our communities.

For the full list of MNA Staff and Ministries, please visit our website, www.pcamna.org. Please consider a gift to one of our ministries, to The PCA Unity Fund, or to the MNA General Fund. To give online, go to www.pcamna.org and select the “Support MNA” tab. You may also mail donations to: MNA, PO Box 890233, Charlotte NC 28289-0233.

We ask your prayers for God’s leading and blessing in MNA’s ongoing commitment in providing resources to churches and presbyteries for **Strengthening the Church to Serve, Grow, and Multiply**.

TE Irwyn L. Ince Jr,
MNA Coordinator *Pro Tempore*

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That being well satisfied with his testimony and qualifications, and that having reviewed his work as MNA Coordinator *Pro Tempore* beginning September 1, 2021, according to the General Assembly guidelines, the MNA Permanent Committee recommends that the General Assembly, elect **TE Irwyn L. Ince Jr.**, as Coordinator of Mission to North America. The MNA Committee gives thanks to the Lord for TE Ince’s leadership of MNA during 2021-2022. (**Attachment 3** provides a complete list of MNA staff; see **Attachment 4** for the list of MNA Permanent Committee members.)
2. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of RE Brent Andersen from his service as MNA Interim Coordinator effective August 31, 2021, with thanksgiving to God for his faithful leadership of MNA and the progress of MNA ministry from January 1, 2021 – August 31, 2021.
3. That the Mission to North America Permanent Committee 2023 budget, as presented through the Administrative Committee, be approved by the General Assembly and commended to the churches for their support.
4. That the General Assembly adopt the 2021 MNA Audit.
5. That TE CH (COL) Steve William Prost, USA, and TE CH (LTC) James Cotton Pakala, USA, Ret. be appointed to serve as PCA

members of the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC) for the Class of 2026.

6. That the MNA Permanent Committee answer Overture 2021-13 to the 48th General Assembly, “Endorse Lifeline Children’s Services,” (see Attachment 5 for text of overture) as follows: “The MNA Permanent Committee has explored the advisability of endorsing Lifeline Children’s Services as a possible resource for PCA churches, and in lieu of endorsement, recommends that the General Assembly commend Lifeline Children’s Services to its churches as a sound agency in its mission to equip the Body of Christ to manifest the gospel to vulnerable children through pregnancy counseling, domestic and international adoption, foster care, global orphan care, and education and counseling.”

RATIONALE:

1. In summary, the MNA Permanent Committee believes that the framework of endorsement that defined the relationship between the PCA and Bethany Christian Services (which Overture 13 seeks to replicate with Lifeline Children’s Services succeeding Bethany Christian Services), is no longer a workable framework for defining the relationship of an outside agency with the PCA.
2. The MNA Permanent Committee has the highest regard for Lifeline Children’s Services and having reviewed its reports and interacted with its executive leadership, strongly commends this organization for its work in equipping the body to manifest the gospel to vulnerable children. The MNA Permanent Committee understands that Lifeline leadership perceives that Lifeline will suffer harm should the PCA not approve endorsement, but in no way does the MNA Permanent Committee’s recommendation seek to assert or imply any deficiency of this organization in its mission or value.
3. The MNA Permanent Committee’s understanding of the nature of “endorsement” is that it creates an exclusive bond between the outside organization and the PCA, one which would grant quasi-denominational status to the endorsed organization as if it were one of the PCA’s own agencies. Without prejudice to Lifeline Children’s Services, the MNA Permanent Committee believes that such a relationship between the General Assembly and any organization is unwise.
 - a. The one and only agency endorsed by the PCA was Bethany Christian Services, which enjoyed endorsement in some

APPENDIX G

manner from the 11th General Assembly in 1983 through the 46th General Assembly in 2018.

- b. In its report to the 13th General Assembly in 1985, the MNA Permanent Committee noted [*emphasis added; note that the paragraph numbering is copied from the General Assembly Minutes cited*]:

11. During the year Bethany Christian Services has graciously and correctly asked the Committee the meaning of our endorsement of Bethany. We have been asked to devise a strategy for the implementation of that endorsement. We expect to address that in the near future and perhaps bring back a report to the next General Assembly. In considering the use of Bethany's services by PCA members and adherents, it is evident that Bethany has extended itself for the benefit of our denomination without commensurate financial response. We take the opportunity of this report to encourage individuals, churches and presbyteries to use, encourage and support Bethany Christian Services at a time of national and international crisis occasioned by the rapid growth of humanism, the immorality and the exploding scandal of abortion. Bethany's report to the Assembly is Attachment D. (Recommendation 14).

- c. In its report to the 14th General Assembly in 1986, the MNA Permanent Committee offered the following recommendation to define the meaning of endorsement [*note that the paragraph numbering is copied from the General Assembly Minutes cited*]:

8.a. That the Assembly adopt the following as the meaning of 'endorse'

- (1) Endorsement includes accreditation. The agency is declared a valid and worthy ministry. Endorsement goes beyond accreditation, however.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(2) Endorsement of any agency is a statement that the General Assembly will not duplicate the agency's service and will seek to actively support it from its resources.

(a) Individual donor level: an endorsed agency shall have access to the denomination's mailing list on a schedule approved by the MNA Permanent Committee on Administration which shall also approve the content of the mailing with the concurrence of GA MNA.

(b) Local church level: The GA MNA Permanent Committee shall formally recommend that the endorsed agency receive support from local churches and presbyteries.

(c) General Assembly Level: develop a plan of cooperation with the endorsed agency to aid its expansion in areas of PCA strength. (See Attachment C ,II,c,l,a. p. 368) *Adopted*

8.b. That Bethany Christian Services be considered an endorsed agency under this definition. *Adopted*"

- d. According to this definition, endorsement involves:
- i. Accreditation (which was not defined by the MNA Permanent Committee in this recommendation), but see below.
 - ii. Exclusivity: the GA will not duplicate the agency's service.
 - iii. Resourcing (access to mailing lists, resources, recommendation that churches and presbyteries provide financial support).
 - iv. Partnership: to help the agency expand.
- e. In its report to the 31st General Assembly in 2003, the MNA Permanent Committee offered the following recommendation which contained additional criteria for endorsement [note that the paragraph numbering is copied from the General Assembly Minutes cited]:

6. That the General Assembly express thanks to God for the long and effective ministry of Bethany Christian Services in the area of pregnancy counseling and adoption, encourage continued support and participation by churches and presbyteries. Upon annual review and recommendation through a PCA Permanent Committee, the PCA may endorse agencies based on the following criteria. Currently, Bethany Christian Services is the only agency so endorsed, upon review and recommendation by the MNA Permanent Committee:
 - The endorsed agency has a statement of faith, which includes, or at least does not require individual staff members to contradict, the historic reformed creeds and confessional standards; all key staff in the endorsed organization are required to profess their personal commitment to this statement of faith.
 - The endorsed agency has a long-standing history of ministry, a minimum of five years, and has demonstrated consistency and stability of ministry through those years.
 - The endorsed agency's staff and governing board, while ecclesiastically independent, has an intentional commitment to appoint PCA members in key leadership roles.
 - The PCA Committee through whom the endorsement is carried, reviews the endorsed agency's board minutes, major policy changes at the board level, total annual budget, audit, and annual fund raising plan to ensure that they meet the same standards as do PCA Committees and Agencies.
 - Upon review and recommendation from the PCA Committee through whom

endorsement is carried, the PCA General Assembly renews the endorsement annually by vote.

- The CEO of the endorsed agency, or his designee, reports annually in-person to the PCA Committee through whom the endorsement is carried.
 - The endorsed agency provides services via an actual staff or trained volunteer presence in multiple locations throughout North America, especially in areas where the PCA is strong and PCA members can directly benefit from the agency's services, as well as support and participate in the services provided by the endorsed agency.
 - The PCA does not have an agency that addresses the same need as that addressed by the endorsed agency and has no current plans to begin such a ministry. *Adopted*
- f. This recommendation served to further clarify the criteria for accreditation and the procedure for endorsement.
- i. The criteria sets a high bar for agencies seeking endorsement.
 - ii. It also places a substantial burden on the PCA Committee through whom endorsement is carried, which must annually ensure that the endorsed agency is in compliance with the same operating standards of PCA Committees and Agencies. Should there be any lack of compliance, the sole remedy is persuasion, in that the General Assembly has no ownership or authority to direct the endorsed agency to take any specific actions.
 - iii. It also specifies that the "PCA does not have an agency that addresses the same need as that addressed by the endorsed agency" which implies (to the MNA Permanent Committee) that the GA should not consider other endorsements that overlap or compete with the endorsed agency's scope of services.
4. The MNA Permanent Committee is not convinced that the PCA is in need of an agency to succeed the relationship it had with Bethany Christian Services.

APPENDIX G

- a. The endorsement of Bethany Christian Services was reaffirmed annually through a recommendation from MNA to General Assembly. MNA staff did the work of due diligence related to the endorsement criteria, which the MNA Permanent Committee routinely affirmed. There was a season during which this relationship was fruitful both for the PCA and for Bethany, but that season ended in 2018 when Bethany requested that its endorsement not be put before the Assembly for affirmation.
- b. There is a multiplicity of agencies serving the needs of vulnerable children and providing adoption services throughout the country, each with its own geographical scope, service emphases, and preexisting relationships with local churches. The MNA Permanent Committee is not convinced that the PCA would be best served through a singular relationship with one to the exclusion of others.
5. The MNA Permanent Committee is concerned that the requirement of the MNA Permanent Committee and its staff to annually evaluate an outside agency for endorsement is untenable, especially within our current cultural context in matters that include dealing with state regulatory and licensing bodies.
6. The MNA Permanent Committee is concerned that endorsement may subject the General Assembly to unanticipated legal liability.
7. The MNA Permanent Committee notes that Lifeline Children's Services currently enjoys the favor of being one of MNA Recommended Ministries.

[Note: End of Rationale for Overture 13 response.]

MNA RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

7. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the MNA Permanent Committee meetings that were not approved at previous General Assemblies due to administrative oversight: October 11, 2018 (called meeting); March 6-7, 2019; September 11-12, 2019; March 4-5, 2020; September 16-17, 2020, November 19, 2020 (called meeting); December 3, 2020 (called meeting); March 3-4, 2021.
8. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the MNA Permanent Committee meetings July 27, 2021 (called meeting); October 20 - 21, 2021; and February 24, 2022 (called meeting).

Attachment 1

2021 CHURCH PLANTERS PLACED ON THE FIELD

This church planter list is compiled by MNA staff through contact with the presbyteries and attempts to identify every church planter who moved to the field prior to December 31, 2021. In listing these mission churches, MNA does not intend to imply that MNA had direct involvement with each and every mission church. The majority of the listed mission churches utilized MNA services; others were established solely by presbyteries or sponsoring churches. Teaching Elders assigned to a new site of a multi-congregation church are included in this list as church planters placed on the field. Some church planters listed here may have been placed in previous years but not reported at the time.

Presbytery	First Name	Last Name	Location
Arizona	Brad	Chaney	Scottsdale AZ
Central Florida	Stephen	Speaks	The Villages FL
Central Florida	Heath	Zuniga	Kissimmee FL
Central Indiana	Mike	McBride	Greenwood IN
Grace	Mark	Horn	Ocean Springs MS
Great Lakes	Steve	VanNoort	Sterling Heights MI
Houston Metro	Taylor	Leachman	Houston TX
Houston Metro	Nolan	Williamson	Huntsville TX
Korean Southeastern	Jae	Lee	Clarksville TN
	Hee II	Lee	Clarksville TN
Metro Atlanta	Tony	Thomas	Johns Creek GA
Palmetto	Jason	Cornwell	N. Augusta SC
Providence	Adam	Venable	Huntsville AL
Rocky Mountai	Steve	Stanton	Colorado Springs CO
Susquehanna Valley	Angelo	Valle	Alexandria PA
Tennessee Valley	Curt	Stapleton	Athens TN
Wisconsin	Luis	Garcia	Waukesha WI

Church Plants Not Previously Reported

Heritage	William	Stern	Garnet Valley PA
Korean SWOC	Joe	Oh	Fullerton CA
Korean SWOC	Sang Chul	Lee	Irvine CA
New River	Alan	Hagar	Buckhannon WV
Ohio Valley	Josh	Crawford	Richmond KY
Pacific	Chris	McNerney	Calabasas CA
Pacific Northwest	Tim	Teopilus	Woodinville WA
Potomac	JT	Tarter	Reston VA

Attachment 2

MNA CHAPLAIN MINISTRIES REPORT ON 2021 ACTIVITIES

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE: We are thankful for the generosity of God’s people as our 2021 operating expenses were covered with gifts from churches, presbyteries, individuals, and PRCC Denominations. We are also thankful for the generosity of MNA’s administration in managing databases, payroll, website, printing support, and much more. Their devotion and dedication have made a significant impact in empowering our Chaplain Ministry.

As of December 31, 2021, the PCA had a total of 173 endorsed Chaplains Military Chaplains and Seminary Candidates (an increase of 7 over last year), and 67 Civilian Chaplains (an increase of 10 over last year), 5 of which who are both Military and Civilian Chaplains). The PRCC continues to endorse PCA Military and Civilian Chaplains in a variety of settings including those of the additional 6 denominations in the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains (PRCC):ARPC, KAPC, KPCA, OPC, RPCNA, the URCNA. I serve as the Endorser for these denominations as well as the for the PCA. The PRCC endorses and supports a total of 321 Chaplains (up from 312 last year).

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Despite the Covid pandemic we held the largest PRCC Chaplain Training Event ever! We had 72 Chaplains, 32 spouses, and 52 children participate. Like so many ministries, we have tried to adjust using virtual platforms to stay in touch with our PRCC Chaplains. We hosted a round of virtual PRCC Chaplain Meetings and were able to “virtually visit” over 130 PRCC Chaplains. Between that virtual effort, our Chaplain Training Event, our New Chaplain Training Event, and traveling to visit Chaplains we were able to “visit” a total of 194 Chaplains in 2021 (64%).

Civilian Chaplain Population: We are blessed to see our Civilian Chaplain ministry continue to grow. Whether they be Hospital, Corrections, Retirement, Hospice, Law Enforcement, workplaces, and other types, we are encouraged to see our gracious Lord growing this ministry and for so many Teaching Elders entering this special calling in paid and volunteer positions.

Chaplain Recruitment: Our goal in 2021 was to add 25 new Chaplains or Chaplain Candidates and the Lord added exactly 25 in 2021. For the third year

in a row, we were blessed to end 2021 with the largest number of PCA and PRCC Chaplains & Candidates ever at 321!

PRCC Staff: It is a blessing to serve with three other godly Teaching Elders and one godly Ruling Elder who make up the Chaplain Staff. TE Mack Griffith, TE Mike Stewart, TE Don Samson, Mrs. Bekah Lawing and RE Gary Hitzfeld are a true blessing. These folks are outstanding servants and make significant contributions to the pastoral care of our Chaplains.

CHURCH AND PRESBYTERY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Congregational Sponsorship: It is our goal to enlist three sponsoring congregations for every full-time military and civilian Chaplain. The primary purpose of the Sponsorship Program is to enlist prayer support for the Chaplain, his ministry, his family, and for those he serves. The sponsoring Chaplain, in turn, will provide at least three update reports per year with prayer requests to the congregation or presbytery.

Presbytery Chaplain Advocacy Program: We have had many Ruling and Teaching Elders that have a particular heart for our Chaplains to volunteer to serve as Chaplain Advocates within their presbyteries. These men agree to (1) keep in touch with the Chaplain members of his presbytery – keeping track of their current addresses and family circumstances and informing the Stated Clerk of changes, (2) bring these Chaplain brothers up in prayer each meeting, (3) invite Chaplains to pray or share an update occasionally when they are able to attend or send a video or letter, (4) stay aware of PRCC/MNA Chaplain Ministries by reading and praying through The Guardian Prayer Calendar (our tri-annual publication of brief Chaplain reports), (5) and update the presbytery of any current PRCC/Chaplain Ministries needs or activities of which he is made aware. (i.e., the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #38370) each fall)

Missions Conferences: More and more congregations are asking us and our Chaplains to preach and speak at mission conferences, and this has been a blessing. We encourage our ministers and congregations to ask our Chaplains to come and speak. The Chaplaincy is about fulfilling the Great Commission and we deeply desire to spread the gospel of Christ.

PLEASE JOIN IN PRAYER FOR THESE CURRENT REQUESTS

For Ministry Boldness: Pray that our Chaplains will continue to boldly represent our faith. Our Chaplains have the First Amendment liberty to boldly proclaim the gospel, and we are thankful that they are standing firm. They are able to cooperate with other groups but without compromise.

For Spiritual Strength: Please pray for our Chaplains as many are deploying; pray, too, for family members left behind. Also, pray for our Civilian Chaplains who pour themselves out in service to the King and face much pressure to conform to the spirit of this world.

For Increased Giving: As our ministry grows and we expand our number of Chaplains, it is critical that we increase our budget to sustain the pastoral care to our growing number of Chaplains. Our budget needs to be above \$500,000 in order to properly care for this growing ministry. This will fund our necessary travel and help us recruit more godly ministers to serve as Chaplains.

For more information on ministry opportunities with MNA Chaplain Ministries, please contact me, Dr. James R. “Jim” Carter at jcarter@pcanet.org or 954-850-2448 or my administrative assistant RE Gary Hitzfeld at Chaplainministries@pcanet.org or 678-825-1251 or visit our website at www.PRCC.co.

Attachment 3

MNA STAFF MEMBERS

TE Irwyn Ince MNA Coordinator, Pro Tempore
TE Fred Marsh MNA Associate Coordinator

AAM Ministries

TE Wy Plummer African American Ministries Coordinator
TE Howard Brown African American Ministries Associate Coordinator
TE Charles McKnight African American Ministries Associate Coordinator
Kellie Brown African American Ministries Operations Director
Jenell Chavis African American Ministries Content and
Communications Specialist

Bent Tree Fellowship

TE David Wilson Bent Tree Fellowship Director
TE Clif Wilcox Bent Tree Fellowship Associate Director

Chaplain Ministries

TE Jim Carter Chaplain Ministries Director
TE Mack Griffith Chaplain Ministries Associate Director/PRCC
Chief of Staff
RE Gary Hitzfeld Chaplain Ministries Administrative Assistant
Bekah Lawing Chaplain Ministries Administrative Assistant
TE Don Sampson Chaplain Ministries Associate Director,
Military Chaplaincy
TE Michael Stewart Chaplain Ministries Associate Director,
Civilian Chaplaincy

Church Planter Assessment Center

Mary Ellen Garofalo Church Planter Assessment Center Administrator
Jenny Dorsey Church Planter Assessment Center Assistant

Church Planter Recruiting and Development

TE Drew Bennett Regional Church Planter Development
Stefanie Dunnington Church Planting Administrative Assistant
TE Alan Foster Church Planter Recruiting Director
TE Jim Hatch Church Planter Development Director
TE Harrison Spittle Regional Church Planter Development
TE Doug Swagerty California Regional Associate

Church Planting Coaching

TE Vinny Tauriello MNA Coaching Specialist

APPENDIX G

Church Planting and Renewal Ecosystem

TE Chris Vogel MNA Ecosystem Development Director

Church Relations

RE Stephen Lutz MNA Church Relations Director

Engaging Disability with the Gospel

Ashley Belknap Engaging Disability with the Gospel Director
Cheryl Erb Engaging Disability with the Gospel Assistant
Kristin Harnly Engaging Disability with the Gospel Associate Director,
Congregational Ministry
Joel Wallace Engaging Disability with the Gospel Associate Director,
Ministry Development

English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministries

Nancy Booher MNA English as a Second Language (ESL)
Ministries Director
Don Baret MNA English as a Second Language (ESL)
Assistant Director
Kristy Holliday MNA ESL Teacher Trainer

Haitian American Ministries

TE Dony St. Germain MNA Haitian American Ministries Coordinator

Hispanic Ministries

TE Hernando Sáenz MNA Hispanic Ministries Coordinator

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

TE Ted Powers Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Director
Ann Powers Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Administrator

Korean American Leadership Initiative (KALI)

RE Alex Jun Korean American Leadership Initiative (KALI) Coordinator
TE Moses Lee Korean American Leadership Initiative (KALI)
Communications Director
TE Owen Lee Korean American Leadership Initiative (KALI)
Operations Director

Leadership and Ministry Preparation (LAMP) Ministry

TE Brian Kelso MNA Leadership and Ministry Preparation (LAMP) Director

Metanoia Prison Ministries

RE Mark Casson MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Director
RE Mark Andrews MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Regional Director, NC
TE Jason Dalton MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Regional Director,
Central FL/MINTS Seminary in Prison Director

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Steven Howell
Facilitator
TE Tim McCracken
TE Paul Miller
Shelly Marshall
TE Anthony Rogers
RE Barry Smith

MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Mentor Ministry
MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Regional Director,
Central CA
MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Regional Director, North
TX
MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Correspondence
Course Facilitator
MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Regional Director, SC
MNA Metanoia Prison Ministries Regional Director, TN
MINTS Seminary in Prison, National Coordinator

Ministry to State

TE Chuck Garriott
TE Stephen Bostrom
TE Jonathan Craig
TE David Durant
TE Thomas Eddy
Robert Hasler
TE Del Farris
TE Doug Lee
Adam Smith
William Stockdale
TE Darin Stone
TE Ron Zeigler

Ministry to State Director
Ministry to State, State Capitol Minister-Montana
Ministry to State, State Capitols Minister, Florida
Ministry to State, Operations Director
Ministry to State Associate Director, State Capitols
Ministry to State, Communications and Ministry Associate
Ministry to State, State Capitols Minister, Colorado
Ministry to State, Operations Director
Ministry to State Resident Assistant
Ministry to State Ministry Associate
Ministry to State, State Capitol Minister – North Carolina
Ministry to State, State Capitol Minister - Pennsylvania

MNA Disaster Response

RE Arklie Hooten
Laura Ammons
RE Mark Becker
DE Andy Eisenbraun
Lisa Hellier
DE Marty Huddleston
RE Mike Kenamer
Sherry Lanier
DE Rick Lenz
DE Keith Perry
RE Evan Scroggs
DE Mark Willett

MNA Disaster Response Director
MNA Disaster Response Administrative Assistant,
Volunteer Scheduling
MNA Disaster Response, Associate Specialist
South Central Region
MNA Disaster Response Specialist, Midwest Region
MNA Disaster Response Administrative Assistant
MNA Disaster Response Specialist, Logistics
MNA Disaster Response Specialist, TAG and MNA
Disaster Response Warehouse Director
MNA Disaster Response Facilitator
MNA Disaster Response Specialist, South Central
MNA Disaster Response Specialist, Florida
MNA Disaster Response Specialist, Gulf Coast
MNA Disaster Response Specialist, Mid-Atlantic

APPENDIX G

MNA ShortTerm Missions

RE Arklie Hooten	MNA ShortTerm Missions Director
Sherry Lanier	MNA ShortTerm Missions Facilitator
TE Curt Moore	MNA ShortTerm Missions Specialist

MNA Korean Ministries

TE Bill Sim	MNA Korean Ministries Coordinator
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MNA Media

Don Baret	MNA Media Producer
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MNA SecondCareer

RE Arklie Hooten	MNA SecondCareer Acting Director
Sherry Lanier	MNA SecondCareer Acting Facilitator
RE Patrick Maddox	MNA SecondCareer Regional Specialist, Mid-Atlantic
RE Gregg Noll	MNA SecondCareer RV Specialist

Network of Portuguese Speaking Churches

TE Renato Bernardes	Network of Portuguese Speaking Churches Coordinator
TE Darcy Caires	Network of Portuguese Speaking Churches Associate Coordinator

Native American and First Nations Ministry

RE Jeb Bland	MNA Native American/First Nations Ministries Coordinator
TE Josh Charette	Rocky Mountain Native American Ministries Director
TE Chris Granberry	Northwest Native American Ministries Advisor

Refugee and Immigrant Ministry

Pat Hatch	MNA Refugee and Immigrant Ministry Director
Osman Jama	MNA Refugee and Immigrant Ministry, Church Engagement Specialist
Leslie Johnson	MNA Refugee and Immigrant Ministry, Cross-Cultural Specialist
Sarah Kalichman	MNA Refugee and Immigrant Ministry, Refugee Children's Ministry Specialist

The PCA Unity Fund Committee

TE Scott Bridges	The PCA Unity Fund Committee Development Coordinator
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Urban and Mercy Ministries

TE Randy Nabors	MNA Urban and Mercy Ministries Coordinator
Chris Blackman	MNA Urban and Mercy Ministries Assistant
Robert Blevins	MNA Urban and Mercy Ministries Community Development Ministry Director

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MNA Support Staff

Shirley Cano-Tai	MNA Donor Services Specialist
Heather Dussack	MNA Database Facilitator
Michelle Foster	MNA Finance and Human Resources Director
John Franco	MNA Donor Services Specialist
Jill Gamez	MNA Account Services Manager
Stephanie Glander	MNA Financial Services Manager
Kristin Holliday	MNA Financial Services Specialist
Tracy Lane-Hall	MNA Strategic Assistant to the Coordinator
Charlotte McKnight	The PCA Unity Fund Committee Facilitator
Summer Rojas	MNA Event Planner
Themerace Tyson	MNA Financial Services Manager

Attachment 4

MNA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

TE Murray Lee, Chairman and Financial Specialist
TE Bob Sawyer, Vice-Chairman
RE Jason Kang, Secretary

TE Blake Altman
RE Brent Andersen
TE Roland Barnes
TE Bob Cargo
TE Lyle Caswell
RE Keith Goben
RE Bob Howell
TE Hansoo Jin
RE Tim Murr
TE Alex Shipman
RE Ernie Shipman
TE Bob Willetts

Attachment 5

Overture 13 to the 48th General Assembly

OVERTURE 13 from Mississippi Valley Presbytery (to MNA)
“Endorse Lifeline Children’s Services”

Whereas the Presbyterian Church in America has responded to sanctity of life issues through its work and actions not only in thesis but in deed; and

Whereas the PCA has a deep concern for not only opposing abortion but in providing positive alternatives to abortion for those women who experience unwanted pregnancies; and

Whereas one avenue of implementing alternatives was in the endorsement of Bethany Christian Services for the past several decades; and

Whereas BCS did not pursue the endorsement of the PCA at the 47th GA; and

Whereas there is value for PCA churches in knowing who the denomination endorses in ministering to women in distress; and

Whereas there is currently a ministry in place available to provide assistance for these situations; and

Whereas Lifeline Children’s Services is such a ministry which was birthed out of the ministry of Briarwood Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Alabama, in 1983;

Be it therefore resolved that the MNA Permanent Committee explore the advisability of endorsing Lifeline Children’s Services as a possible resource for PCA churches.

*Adopted by The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley at its stated meeting,
February 4, 2020*

Attested by /s/ TE Roger G. Collins, stated clerk

APPENDIX H

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO THE WORLD TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Vision: *The gospel of the kingdom advancing throughout the world*

We want the gospel to spread throughout the world, the Church to grow, Satan's kingdom destroyed, and Christ's reign extended to the ends of the earth.

Mission: *Making disciples among all nations*

We are called to be obedient to the Great Commission by teaching people to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior, to be baptized, and to obey all that Jesus commands.

Values:

- *Church*
The establishment, growth, and maturity of the Church in all our ministry efforts.
- *Grace-based*
Community life and ministry shaped by God's grace for us in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- *Reformed and Covenantal*
A ministry that is guided, inspired, and shaped by our theology.
- *Mercy, Justice, and the Love of God*
A love for God that is demonstrated through acts of mercy and justice.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

James 1:17

We are grateful that in the midst of significant change, our God does not change. His faithfulness and gracious love toward us are steadfast. This is our comfort as we face various challenges and struggles in our service to God and His kingdom mission.

Because our work is so important and the challenges are so great, we are constantly seeking ways to improve our service to current and future missionaries.

New Missionary Onboarding Process — This past year we revamped our onboarding process for new missionaries. In the past, we held a week-long orientation when missionaries were first approved and then provided various training events prior to departure. Our new onboarding process, which we are calling Kingdom Foundations, begins with a week-long orientation but then continues with cohorts of four to five new missionary units meeting together for mentoring, training, and mutual encouragement for 10 months. Each group will be going through several training modules facilitated by a cohort leader. We are praying that this approach will better equip our new missionaries for kingdom service. Please pray that all the missionaries who will be experiencing this new onboarding process will grow in their faith and deepen their love for our Savior and His mission.

Praxis Global Gathering — As the training modules were being developed for Kingdom Foundations, a question emerged: “What ties all of our training modules together?” While we certainly have been directed by our MTW policy manual and our church constitution, we thought it would be helpful to draft a philosophy of ministry document that connects our standards, vision, mission, and values to local implementation of missions. This is not a directive document, but an informative one that will be used to help those creating our training.

In early December 2021, we hosted our first all-MTW virtual meeting called Praxis. It was an opportunity for both missionaries and staff to come together around the philosophy of ministry document drafted by our Field Leadership Team and discuss its practical implications. The conference had both plenary sessions and breakout groups. In addition, each region had opportunities to gather and reflect on the presentations. We have received encouraging feedback from the event and are continuing to perfect our “living” philosophy of ministry document from the feedback we’ve received. Please pray for unity around our shared values and the implementation of them in our global mission work.

New Missionary Compensation Structure — Another milestone was the implementation of a much-needed change to our missionary compensation structure, which went into effect in January 2022. Our old compensation model was very complex, required a lot of administration from both missionaries and U.S. staff, and prevented us from being able to compensate both husband and wife (if both were eligible and desired compensation). A guiding coalition of missionaries, as well as key U.S. staff members, worked together to implement the change. Our new and simplified compensation structure will: (1) allow our

missionaries to spend less time on administration and more time in ministry; (2) be more flexible by allowing missionaries to raise only what they need; (3) demonstrate value to both spouses; and (4) put personal financial decisions into the hands of our missionaries. Some were concerned that these changes would double the amount missionaries have to raise, but the net effect of the transition is a modest 9% increase. We believe these changes will better position us to support the growth we've prayed for. We give thanks to God for all who have contributed to this good work over the past 18 months. Let us give thanks to God for His faithfulness in helping us with this implementation and His faithful provision for our missionaries.

Lloyd Kim, Coordinator

2022 GLOBAL MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

ASIA-PACIFIC

Union with Christ in the Face of Persecution — In 2018, an East Asian country began enforcing new religious regulations that resulted in increased regulation, harassment, and persecution for Christians. Partner churches have been raided, pastors' lives threatened, church leaders imprisoned, computers confiscated, and missionaries kicked out. This is the new reality of the church in this country. One of MTW's partners suggests pastors are faced with a theological and existential crisis:

The loss of our pastors, the loss of decent church buildings, the loss of libraries, the loss of classrooms, the loss of many tangible connections with other churches, the loss of tangible connections with brothers and sisters abroad, the loss of opportunities to be built up at conferences or forums. One day, we may even lose the opportunity for online gatherings. In fact, we are now being called to reexamine the nature of the church, and the relationship between the church and the gospel When all the church's external support systems have gone or are diminished, we must ask: What resources does the church stand on? Union with Christ provides the answer.

What a glorious truth! In this era of fever-pitch persecution, our missionaries stand by our brothers and sisters in East Asia while they restate the

implications of the gospel for church and theology. The PCA would do well to listen and learn. Read more here: <https://www.housechurchtheology.com/church-in-the-wilderness>.

Please pray for those experiencing ongoing persecution. Pray they will remain firm in Christ's grip. Pray He will be exalted in this persecution, His Church will be refined and purified, and Satan's schemes will be subdued through the salvation of sinners and the strengthening of their faith. Pray also that the PCA will be a blessing and encouragement as we stand beside our persecuted brothers and sisters.

No Success Without Succession — Oyumino Church (Presbyterian Church in Japan) was the first church planted by the MTW Tokyo Chiba Team. For more than 10 years the church prayed regularly for God to raise up an indigenous Japanese pastor. Japan is known for its critical shortage of pastors, but MTW missionaries were still discouraged as they waited on the Lord and labored with hopeful expectation. One Japanese pastor even said to them, "I don't think any Japanese pastor will want to become the pastor of Oyumino Church. It is too big, too different, too messy. ... " As of Sunday, January 9, 2022, Oyumino Church now has not one, but six ordained Japanese pastors. Three of these men were raised up from within the church in the past 15 years. Today, this multi-site church has five Sunday worship services meeting in three church-owned buildings. Over the last eight years, God has raised up two more Japanese pastors from within the church. These pastors were installed at a recent joint congregational meeting while another Japanese pastor answered the call to plant a new daughter church in the city center area of Chiba City. Thank the Lord for these pastors! May God help us and encourage us to persevere in the hard work of raising up local pastors. Please continue to pray for MTW's church planting and evangelism efforts in the second most unreached people group in the world.

A Season of Lament — Christian suffering looks different in the post-Christian nation of Australia than it does in East Asia. Our MTW team leader in Perth shares that if this pandemic season has taught their team anything, it is that ministry not only consists of highs and victories, but also of lows and failures. As they have seen churches grow, partnerships strengthened, and people finding salvation in Christ, they have also seen relationships break down, death invade, and division arise in churches over less important issues. Being honest with themselves—and those they are walking with and witnessing to—is important. God gives His people a language of lament to carry them through the valley of darkness, and this team relies on those laments greatly. In this place of lament, God gives the team peace and assurance that He is still on the throne and working His will for His glory in order to bring

His kingdom. Amen. Please pray for those who are experiencing hardship, failure, relational death, and physical death in their churches during this season. Pray their honest lament will function as a means of God drawing His people closer to Himself and their honesty and vulnerability will speak to the communities in which they serve.

EUROPE

Refugees “At Home” in Athens — Refugee ministry looks different in a pandemic world; however, it has not ceased entirely! In January 2021 Phillip Luther (Team Leader in Athens, Greece) reflected on the progress of his team’s “At Home” ministry:

Through our young church in Glyfada, Greece, our “At Home” ministry for refugees provides housing, for a limited time, along with help finding work, job training, help with asylum documents, medical assistance, and teaching English and Greek. Alongside these efforts, we also offer Bible studies, personal conversations about Christ, special sermons and worship services, and inclusion in our church events and worship. The goal of this ministry is to assist them in integrating into Greek society and moving toward financial independence, along with incorporating them in a Christian fellowship. We aim for this to take around 18 months, in two or three phases. These past several months, three families have “graduated” from this progression and are now living independently and functioning well in society and in fellowship with other believers. Previously, several other families had completed the process and are on their own. We praise God for this opportunity to serve, and we rejoice in seeing the progress they have made, anticipating the significant difference this will make in the lives of their children for decades to come. We also rejoice in and pray for their continued witness for Christ with their friends and families from their homelands.

Strategic Planning Process — Each spring the Europe Strategy Team (EST - comprised of the international director, regional directors, assistant to the international director, and two advisors) spends time setting goals and plans for the coming year. This year the Lord challenged the EST to cultivate a more intentional mindset through the strategic planning process. How do we lead in such a way that we become a community which catalyzes a Reformed church-planting movement in Europe? The vision set forth in the newly-minted MTW

Europe Strategic Plan is: “We dream of becoming a more God-dependent community which catalyzes a Reformed church-planting movement to impact all of Europe and equips all missionaries to thrive in their particular role. We desire to plant new churches, reach new cities, form new partnerships, and launch new missionaries.”

In striving toward this vision, the EST set tactics for 2021–2022 in the areas of member care, leadership development, roles, and mobilization. As we end the year, we rejoice as we look back to see many of the initial tactics set during the planning process have been completed and are impacting ministries across the continent. Pray that this bold vision for Europe would grow to become a deeper part of our regional ethos, and that our workers would experience a unity of purpose and direction as together we seek to fulfill our calling.

Tensions in Eastern Europe:

As 2021 drew to a close, our workers in Ukraine were faced with the possibility of history repeating itself: Russia was once again threatening to invade Ukraine.

As of this writing (April 2022), that invasion has become a reality and is now entering a third month of full-blown war, the scale of which no one imagined possible. Millions of Ukrainians have fled to neighboring countries in Europe and beyond. In the early days of the war, Lviv became the base of operations for MTW’s work; however as the hostilities intensified most of our personnel relocated to Poland and Romania. Field personnel in Slovakia have been meeting displaced Ukrainians at the border, taking them to temporary housing, then shuttling them to Krakow, Poland, which has become the gateway to resettlement in other countries. MTW missionaries in Romania have been caring for those from the south who are passing through. Our missionaries in Krakow regularly take van loads of supplies across the border into Lviv, returning to Poland with the vehicles full of people escaping the ravages of war. Emails have been blazing between teams in Eastern and Western Europe, searching for churches and people willing to care for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. Since most refugees are women and children, they are further threatened by human traffickers as they cross the continent in search of safety. The news you have seen is horrific; the reality is even more devastating.

God’s people across the globe have risen to help and to date have given our Ukraine Crisis Church Fund nearly \$6 million to provide humanitarian aid to those fleeing from the war; a portion of these funds are also designated to assist with rebuilding churches and homes after the war has ended.

Pray that this conflict will come to an end, that evil will be restrained, and that the Ukrainian people will again be able to return to their homeland. Pray, too, that many will come to saving faith in Jesus in the midst of this devastation.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

International Director — With the COVID-19 pandemic still present, International Director Victor Nakah continued to organize monthly COVID-19 disaster response meetings. Toward the end of the year, it was decided to change the meetings from COVID-19 updates to regional prayer meetings. The first regional prayer meeting was held in November, led by member care coordinators Dan and Janet McBride.

Victor engaged in coaching training and development and submitted his application for certification from the International Coaching Federation. Additionally, he realigned and restructured his area with the appointment of two regional directors, Frank Sindler in East Africa and Jim W.* in West Africa.

Women’s Ministry — In late 2020, Victor asked Pamela McGinty, missionary in South Africa, to coordinate a women’s ministry for Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2021, she recruited a team of seven women from across the region to serve on the leadership council for what is now called SALT (Sub-Saharan Africa Ladies Together). The purpose of SALT is to encourage, equip, share resources, promote, and develop women’s ministry, both for MTW women and national partners. Meeting monthly in 2021, the SALT Council developed a philosophy of ministry outlining its values, vision and mission, and practical ways to encourage and equip women in Africa. Through SALT, PCA Love Gift 2020 funds were disbursed to each region for use in their women’s ministries. These funds were a catalyst for launching a new women’s ministry in Burkina Faso.

Member Care — Victor appointed Dan and Janet McBride to serve as the Sub-Saharan Africa member care coordinators effective October 1, 2021. The McBrides serve as the member care representatives for MTW West Africa. They recruited member representatives for the following regions/countries: John and Helene Stambolie for Southern Africa, Bruce and Pam Sinclair for Uganda, and Andy and Bev Warren for Ethiopia. Beginning in April 2021, the team met monthly via Zoom to encourage and pray for one another and discuss member care needs and practices.

Bryan and Rebe McReynolds — Following a painful closure of MTW's work in Nosy Be, Madagascar, in March 2021, the McReynolds returned to the U.S., needing rest and healing in the wake of a series of traumatic events stemming from the impact of COVID-19 and mandated restrictions. Initially they rested at a family ranch in Texas; then in July they relocated to Charlottesville, Virginia, where Rebe is teaching at a local Christian school. The McReynolds feel they and their children are in a stable and healthy situation. They planned to transition to Addis Ababa to lead the development of a missionary training hub. They are processing the past, praying, and seeking the Lord for His calling for the future regarding where and when they will serve.

Ethiopia — The ministry in Addis has been difficult and suffered disruptions due to both the COVID-19 pandemic and armed conflicts between the government and a coalition of opposition forces. Based in Nashville, Tennessee, Andy and Bev Warren have been working in U.S. Operations for Ethiopia ACT. Andy made a short-term visit to the field in the fall. He reports that national team members have resolutely moved forward with the ministry despite current difficulties. Team Leader Jason Polk and his wife, Liz, have been on HMA in 2021. The Polks welcomed daughter Phoebe as the newest member of their family in August. Due to the current instability and some medical and family issues, they are extending their HMA until late Spring 2022. Tim and Laura Love were also on HMA and returned to Soddo Christian Hospital in October, only to be evacuated once again in early November as opposition forces moved steadily closer to Addis Ababa. Molly De Bruin has an invitation and is raising support in hopes of joining the work in fall of 2022. The church plant team has developed a new three-year vision. Pray for peace, stability, wisdom, and protection.

Senegal — Jim W.* transitioned to the regional director role for West Africa, and he continues as the team leader for the work in Senegal. The new multi-purpose building in the Mbao area of Dakar, although not totally completed, began to be used in early December for worship services, housing for the Safe Girls Home Ministry, and the Timothy House teaching venue. This year marked the second year of the first cohort of the Timothy House ministry, a residential church-planting training program led by Jim W.* and Mamadou, pastor in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Senegal (EPS). The program proved to be effective and fruitful both for the men in training and their wives, confirming the value of this model of church plant training for West Africa. In the fall, Collin and Zury J.* (RUF/MTW) received the official and final approval from the EPS to move forward and establish a university ministry in Dakar. They have begun meeting with an EPS couple, Sebastian (Timothy

House trainee) and his wife, Angele, to plan the RUF ministry to be launched in 2022. Collin and Zury J.* began the long, complicated, and slow process of adopting a Senegalese child. Donnie and Kara W.* returned to Dakar after a three-year extended HMA. Their focus on language learning was disrupted due to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sierra Leone — Revitalization of the Presbyterian Conference of Sierra Leone continues. In June 2021, a team of MTW missionaries, PCA Pastor Bob Davis, Gambian Teaching Elder (TE), Edrissa Colley, and two English Language Institute instructors spent two weeks in Sierra Leone. They taught on the qualifications and responsibilities of elders, workplace ministries (formerly called Business as Mission), and agri-business; discussed a preliminary plan for elder training; and reaffirmed the 21-step plan for revitalization developed during a 2020 visit made by three MTW TEs. Additionally, they identified venues for remote learning centers and provided the resources and equipment they needed. Furthermore, they discovered a need for interim pastors who can serve the churches until PCSL elder candidates are ordained—preferably TEs from English speaking countries. In the meantime, the visiting TEs administered communion and baptism on two separate Sundays.

Since then, the PCSL has identified potential interim pastors from Zimbabwe and Uganda, as well as elder candidates. The visiting TEs also administered the sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and baptism on two consecutive Sundays. (The PCSL has no ordained elders.) PCA TE Tom Cox has agreed to work closely with the PCSL to mentor them as they progress towards ordination.

South Africa — The COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause significant disruption to the work in South Africa. A number of our missionaries contracted COVID-19. New team members Shaun and Becky Hurrie, who arrived in March, recovered from difficult cases. Shaun, a PCA teaching elder, is a dual citizen of South Africa and the U.S. He will be involved in theological education and church planting alongside national pastors. While Hunter Quinn completes his thesis for his Th.M., he and his wife, Laura Quinn, have received a call from the South Africa team and are raising support for them. Hunter plans to be ordained by mid-2022. They attended the Southern Africa regional retreat in November in South Africa. The Southern Africa region gathered for a retreat and enjoyed meeting their new pastoral associate couple, Reverend and Mrs. Vince Wood. Vince served as the retreat speaker. Team Leader and Regional Director Tim Galage chaired the Southern Africa Reformed Ministry Board meeting in March and December. Two new church planting projects in South Africa were approved.

Malawi — Confex and Mwai Makhaira serve as missionaries to Blantyre. In hopes to help families at the church, Mwai recently began a master’s degree in education with a special needs emphasis. The church plant currently has three men in training as prospective ruling elders. They hope to ordain them in early January 2022. Despite COVID-19 the church plant saw many visitors in 2021, and evangelism continues as well. On the flipside, core church members lost their income and a couple of substance abuse cases surfaced (a growing problem in the city).

East Africa — In 2021 Frank Sindler transitioned from his role as regional director for West Africa to regional director for East Africa. He has begun recruiting for the region. He raised funds with help from Ambassadors for a pastoral training center in Rwanda. Purchase of a center in Kigali is being finalized in partnership with Trinity Center for World Missions, Associate Reformed Presbyterian, and other PCA organizations. Classes will begin at the training center in March 2022. The agricultural development program conducted a well-attended “train the trainer” event in Zimbabwe in 2021. Interest in the program is significant. We expect that 30 people in 12 countries will be working in it by March. A request has been made to expand the program to 30 more countries via a Reformed Baptist network of churches. Frank is also working with Al Massira on expansion of Muslim outreach training. Frank also assisted the Reformed Churches of East Africa denomination in the planning phases of their early 2022 vision conference.

AMERICAS

South America: Colombia — Iglesia El Redentor (Church of the Redeemer) held its first Lord’s Day worship service on October 31, 2021. Many attended and gave encouraging feedback about the depth and structure of a Reformed worship service. One recent attendee said, “I’ve never had a worship service touch my heart the way it does in this church.” The leaders of the Iglesia El Redentor want the church to be known for worshipping the Lord in Spirit and in truth. Whether the church grows, plateaus, or shrinks, may the Lord continue to be praised and glorified. Current prayer is for a Colombian or Latino who will become the pastor of this church—hopefully to be identified this year.

University ministry continues to be a challenge with the many COVID-19 restrictions and obstacles in the way of having a campus presence.

Caribbean: Bahamas — By God’s grace, Covenant Life Presbyterian Church’s worship, work, and witness are becoming enriched, even in the midst of this pandemic. CLPC exists within a world filled with ideologies that compete for the minds and hearts of all residents in the Bahamas. As a young church plant, CLPC continues to experience an encouraging retention rate of those who attend our worship services and Bible studies as they seek to make Jesus central in everything that is said and sung each Lord’s Day. We rejoice that three new ruling elders have been ordained and installed.

Many residents continue to seek food assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. Thankfully, we have been able to resurrect our feeding ministry to include two churches in Grand Bahama and three in Abaco. We thank the Lord for the necessary funding that we were able to obtain for this ministry. By God’s grace, we are able to support the effort to reconstruct the home of a 79-year-old widow and her children, an urgent need in the community.

Mexico: Institute Centro para la Plantación de Iglesias (CPI) —Dan Young has been meeting with church planters in Northern Mexico to learn how they are responding to the realities of church planting in a season of pandemic. Many are experiencing “Zoom fatigue” and yearn to have people gathered in person to worship, study God’s Word, and fellowship together. Eduardo Martorano, a Venezuelan, was recently ordained and installed as the pastor of La Vid PCA in Laredo. Jorge Aleman, Rafael Rodriguez, Charlie Davidson, and Dan traveled to Chihuahua recently to investigate the possibility of planting two churches there next year. Recently The Crossing, a church planted by South Texas Presbytery and led by Gama Pozos, has grown in number and moved from the Pozos’ living room to a banquet room in a restaurant nearby.

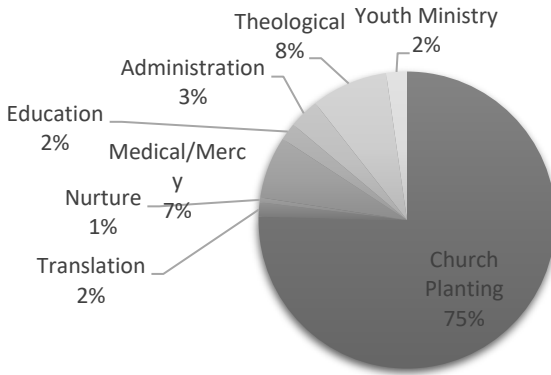
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MTW MISSIONARY STATISTICS

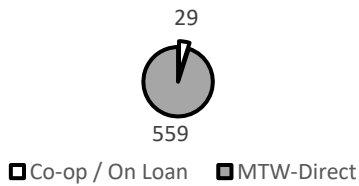
As of December 31, 2021, the MTW missionary family consisted of the following:

1. CHURCH PLANTING		414
MTW-Direct	405	
Campus Ministries	5	
Cooperative Ministries	4	
2. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION		48
MTW-Direct	46	
Cooperative Ministries	2	
3 OTHER		114
MTW-Direct	71	
Administration	9	
Education	9	
Medical 20		
Nurture/Counseling	3	
Mercy Ministry	17	
Next Generation Ministry	13	
Cooperative Ministries	23	
Administration	10	
Education	2	
Medical 2		
Translation/Support	9	
Project Missionaries	20	
4 LEAVE OF ABSENCE		12
TOTAL LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES		588
COUNTRIES		105
SHORT-TERM		397
Two-Year	59	
Salaried Fellows: 2–11 Months	10	
Global Service Volunteers	38	
Volunteer Trip Participants	255	
Medical Volunteer Trip Participants	35	
NATIONAL PARTNERS		980
Indigenous church-planting partners		

Long-Term Missionaries - Ministry Type

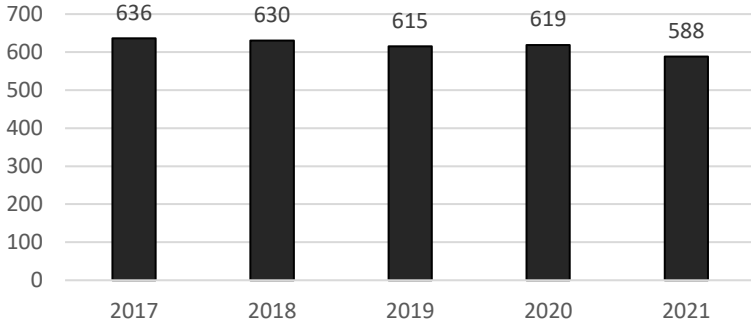


MTW-Direct vs. Co-op/On-Loan Missionaries

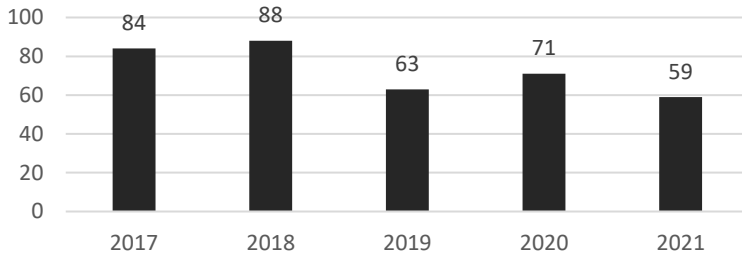


MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Long-Term Missionaries

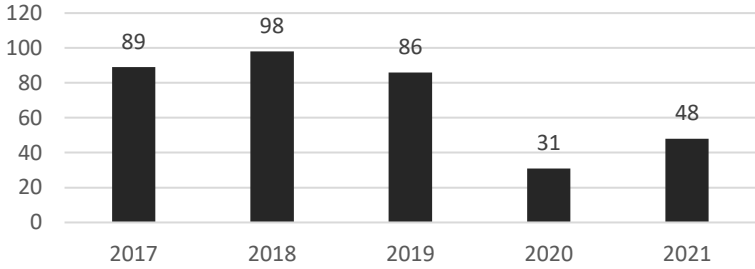


Two-Year Missionaries

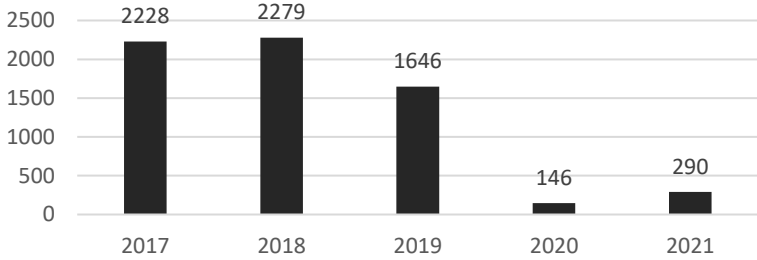


APPENDIX H

Interns (2-11 months)

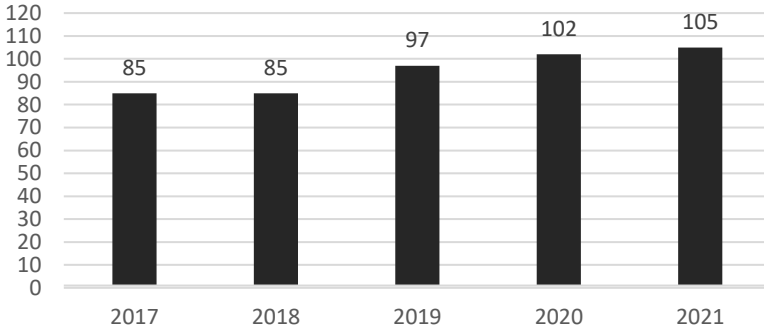


1-3 Week Trip Participants

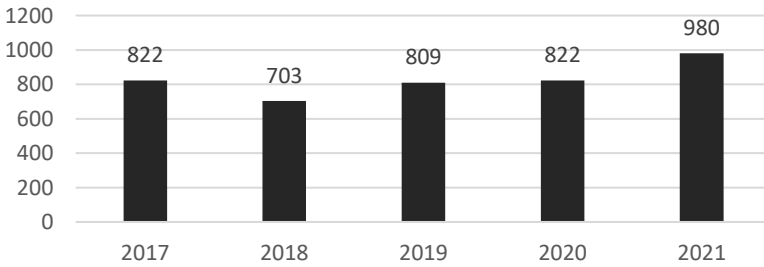


MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Countries



National Partners



RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the General Assembly urge churches to set aside the month of November 2022 as a month of prayer for global missions, asking God to send many more laborers into His harvest field. (MTW will offer a 30 Days of Prayer Calendar, which your church can download from mtw.org in the fall, as well as other prayer resources);
2. That the General Assembly urge churches to set aside a portion of their giving for the suffering peoples of the world; to that end, be it recommended that a special offering for relief and mercy (MTW Compassion Offering) be taken during 2022 and distributed by MTW;
3. That the General Assembly urge churches to set aside Sunday, November 6, 2022, as a day of prayer for the persecuted church worldwide;
4. Having performed an annual review of our coordinator, we give thanks to our sovereign Lord for his gift to the Church in the person of Dr. Lloyd Kim, who continues to serve and lead humbly and effectively in the glorious cause of missions around the world. CMTW enthusiastically recommends that Dr. Kim be re-elected Coordinator.
5. That the proposed 2023 budgets and the proposed 2022 budget of MTW, as presented through the Administrative Committee, be approved;
6. That the minutes of the meeting of CMTW of March 10-11, 2021, be accepted; and
7. That the minutes of the meeting of CMTW of September 29-30, 2021, be accepted;
8. Regarding MTW's 2020 Financial Audit: That the Committee of Commissioners reviewed the financial audit for calendar year ending December 31, 2020. They also noted per CMTW's minutes that CMTW had accepted the audit.

Respectfully submitted,
TE Patrick Womack, Chairman
Committee on Mission to the World

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Attachment 1

LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES (as of December 31, 2021)

Adams, Rev./Mrs. Trey (Kiki)
Aeschliman, Rev./Mrs. Richard (Betsy)
Alms, Ms. Bethany
Ambrose, Dr./Mrs. Mark (Laura)
Aschmann, Rev./Mrs. Rick (Betty)
Bailey, Rev./Mrs. Richard (Teresa)
Bakelaar, Mr./Mrs. Peter (Diane)
Bales, Rev./Mrs. Cartee (Colleen)
Barnett, Ms. Ellen
Bauserman, Ms. Rachel
Baxley, Rev./Mrs. Andrew (Kelly)
Bersach, Rev./Mrs. Manny (Terri)
Bocanegra, Mr./Mrs. Mark (Megumi)
Boling, Mr./Mrs. Peter (Jenny)
Bond, Mr./Mrs. Stephan (Rachel)
Bonham, Rev./Mrs. Nathaniel (Nikki)
Bolton, Ms. Rosemary
Brink, Mr./Mrs. Daniel (Katy)
Brinkerhoff, Ms. Jane
Brock, Rev./Mrs. Chris (Donnette)
Brooks, Mr./Mrs. David (Gwen)
Brown, Ms. Roberta
Buerger, Rev./Mrs. John (Ellen)
Burkemper, Mr./Mrs. Jamie (Jennifer)
Burklin, Ms. Kay
Burnham, Mr./Mrs. Bob (Andrea)
Burrack, Ms. Pamyla
Cain, Mr./Mrs. Adam (Michelle)
Cain, Rev./Mrs. Brooks (Riva)
Call, Rev./Mrs. Ray (Michele)
Canales, Rev./Mrs. John (Mary Jo)
Carr, Rev./Mrs. Bill (Susan)
Carter, Ms. Brenda
Carter, Rev./Mrs. Michael (Cathalain)
Cary, Ms. Elisabeth
Chambers, Mr./Mrs. Garry (Anita)
Chapin, Mr./Mrs. Craig (Yumiko)
Chase, Mr./Mrs. Matt (Carly)
Cho, Mr./Mrs. Dale (Sunny)
Chung, Ms. Grace
Church, Rev./Mrs. Ben (Kim)
Clow, Mr./Mrs. John (Kathy)
Cobb, Rev./Mrs. Donald (Claire-Lise)
Coddington, Rev./Mrs. Lewis (Elsbeth)
Coluccia, Rev./Mrs. Vincenzo (Judit)
Congdon, Rev./Mrs. Joe (Felicity)
Conroy, Mr./Mrs. Dennis (Rhonda)
Cordell, Mr./Mrs. Bradley (Sara)
Cosner, Rev./Mrs. Mike (Chrissy)
Coulbourne, Rev./Mrs. Craig (Ree)
Craig, Mr./Mrs. Scott (Kathy)
Crane, Rev./Mrs. Richard (Robyn)
Crocker, Ms. Cheryl
Crusey, Rev./Mrs. Todd (Liz)
Culmer, Dr. Dave
Davidson, Dr./Mrs. Charles (Bonita)
Davila, Mr./Mrs. Rodney (Jana)
Davis, Mr. David
Davison, Mr./Mrs. Jonas (Christina)
DeWitt, Dr./Mrs. Charles (Carol)
DeWitt, Mr. Jim
Diaso, Dr./Mrs. David (Dawn)
Dillon, Mr./Mrs. Scott (Meghan)
Dinkins, Ms. Ruth
Dishman, Rev./Mrs. Peter (Lauren)
Dix, Mr./Mrs. Taylor (Katherine)
Dortzbach, Rev./Mrs. Karl (Debbie)
Dougherty, Mr./Mrs. Derek (Laura)
Eastman, Mr./Mrs. Jay (Holly)
Ebbers, Mr./Mrs. Derek (Shannon)
Eide, Rev./Mrs. Jonathan (Tracy)
Elswick, Rev./Mrs. Anthony (Amber)
Etienne, Rev./Mrs. Esaie (Natacha)
Fitzpatrick, Rev./Mrs. Joe (Bev)
Flores-Klingsmith, Ms. Chery
Floyd, Mr./Mrs. Ross (Angela)
Gahagen, Mr./Mrs. Craig (Heather)
Galage, Mr./Mrs. Tim (Therese)
Garofalo, Rev./Mrs. Santo (Mary Ellen)
Gee, Mr./Mrs. Jake (Anna-Claire)
Gildard, Mr./Mrs. James (Jacki)
Gim, Mr./Mrs. John (Carol)
Goeglein, Ms. Lydia
Goodrich, Rev./Mrs. Richey (Keli)
Goodwin, Rev./Mrs. Sam (Elizabeth)
Graber, Rev./Mrs. Ben (Anna)
Grady, Ms. Miriam
Graham, Mr./Mrs. Eric (Anna)
Greete, Rev./Mrs. Richard (Crissy)
Gregoire, Mr./Mrs. Dan (Rebecca)

APPENDIX H

Grotton, Mr./Mrs. David (Danielle)
 Grubb, Mr./Mrs. Glenn (Sharlene)
 Gullett, Mr./Mrs. Foster (Laura)
 Gutierrez, Mr./Mrs. Nathaniel (Alicia)
 Hacquebord, Rev./Mrs. Heero (Anya)
 Halbert, Rev./Mrs. Aaron (Rachel)
 Halbert, Mr./Mrs. Alex (Maggie)
 Hale, Mr./Mrs. Robert (Deborah)
 Han, Mr./Mrs. Beyongseob (Kyungsoon)
 Hane, Rev. Andrew
 Harrell, Mr. Frank
 Henry, Rev./Mrs. DH (Emily)
 Henry, Mr./Mrs. Paul (Crystal)
 Henson, Dr./Mrs. Nathan (Kristen)
 Hill, Rev./Mrs. Scott (Ruth)
 Hinkle, Rev./Mrs. Lee (Shannon)
 Holliday, Mr./Mrs. Tim (Kristy)
 Honea, Ms. Ellie
 Hoot, Rev./Mrs. Trevin (Ruthie)
 Hurrie, Rev./Mrs. Shaun (Becky)
 Ilderton, Rev./Mrs. Rob (Jenny)
 Iverson, Rev./Mrs. Dan (Carol)
 Jacobs, Mr. Joshua
 Jensen, Rev./Mrs. Ben (Julie)
 Jesch, Mr./Mrs. Matt (Esta)
 Johnson, Ms. Darlene
 Johnson, Ms. Melanie
 Jung, Rev./Mrs. Jim (Claudia)
 Karner, Ms. Linda
 Kazen, Ms. Kersten
 Kelly, Mr./Mrs. Eric (Megan)
 Kim, Dr./Dr. Lloyd (Eda)
 King, Ms. Julia
 Kirkland, Rev./Mrs. Philip (Joy)
 Knowlton, Mr./Mrs. Keith (Rachel)
 Kooi, Mr. Brent
 Kreider, Mr./Mrs. Derek (Catalina)
 Lamos, Mr./Mrs. Jud (Jan)
 Larsen, Dr./Mrs. Eric (Rebecca)
 Lee, Rev./Mrs. James (Shine)
 Lee, Mr. John
 Lee, Mr./Mrs. Chris (Janna)
 Lee, Rev./Mrs. Michael (Tricia)
 Lee, Rev./Mrs. Paul (Susan)
 Lennox, Mr./Mrs. Patrick (Regina)
 Letchworth, Rev./Mrs. Bill (Mae Lee)
 Lim, Rev./Mrs. Tim (Moon Sook)
 Love, Dr./Mrs. Tim (Laura)
 Lowther, Mr./Mrs. Roger (Abi)
 Lundgaard, Mr./Mrs. Kris (Paula)
 Lupton, Rev./Mrs. Andrew (Laura-Kate)
 Luther, Rev./Mrs. Phillip (Kay)
 Lyle, Mr./Mrs. Joe (Ann)
 Mailloux, Rev./Mrs. Marc (Aline)
 Makhalira, Mr./Mrs. Confex (Mwai)
 Marlowe, Dr./Mrs. Jeff (Mischa)
 Marshall, Rev./Mrs. Verne (Alina)
 Martin, Mr./Mrs. David (Jill)
 Matlack, Rev./Mrs. Ken (Tammie)
 Matthias, Ms. Elizabeth
 May, Dr./Mrs. Andrew (Krista)
 McAlpin, Mr./Mrs. Brett (Valerie)
 McCafferty, Rev./Mrs. Brennan (Becca)
 McCall, Mr./Mrs. John (Lorena)
 McGinty, Mr./Mrs. Coby (Pamela)
 McMahan, Mr./Mrs. Mike (Robin)
 McNeill, Mr./Mrs. Don (Fran)
 McReynolds, Mr./Mrs. Bryan (Rebe)
 Mills, Mr./Mrs. Tim (Rhianna)
 Mirabella, Rev./Mrs. Tom (Karen)
 Mitchell, Rev./Mrs. Pete (Ruth)
 Moore, Rev./Mrs. Brian (Megan)
 Nairn, Mr./Mrs. Andrew (Megan)
 Nakah, Dr./Mrs. Victor (Nosizo)
 Nantz, Dr./Mrs. Quentin (Karen)
 Newkirk, Dr./Mrs. Matt (Caroline)
 Newkirk, Ms. Susan
 Newsome, Rev./Mrs. Wayne (Amy)
 Norris, Mr./Mrs. Kirk (Anna)
 Norton, Mr./Mrs. Clarke (Khrystya)
 Oh, Dr./Mrs. Michael (Pearl)
 Olivares, Rev./Mrs. Oscar (Nancy)
 Parker, Ms. Laura
 Patterson, Mr./Mrs. Jim (Mary Alice)
 Pekarek, Mr./Dr. Ryan (Katie)
 Pervis, Mr./Mrs. David (Erin)
 Pettengill, Mr./Mrs. Mike (Erin)
 Pfeil, Mr./Mrs. Jon (Sarah)
 Phillips, Ms. Carolyn
 Pike, Rev./Mrs. Mel (Martha)
 Pixley, Ms. Debbie
 Pohl, Rev./Mrs. Craig (Stacy)
 Polk, Rev./Mrs. Jason (Liz)
 Powell, Mr./Mrs. Jon (Olya)
 Powlison, Rev./Mrs. Keith (Ruth)
 Price, Ms. Robin
 Quinn, Mr./Mrs. Hunter (Laura)
 Ramsay, Rev./Mrs. Richard (Angelica)
 Rarig, Dr./Mrs. Steve (Berenice)
 Rayl, Rev./Mrs. Brett (Taylor)
 Reiter, Mr./Mrs. Ryan (Joy)
 Rice, Ms. Carrie

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Richards, Ms. Debbie
Rieger, Rev./Mrs. Joshua (Gina)
Robertson, Rev./Mrs. Steve (Amy)
Roby, Mr./Mrs. Brian (Sheryl)
Rockwell, Mr./Mrs. Larry (Sandra)
Romer, Mr./Mrs. Mikael (Zuzanna)
Rudd, Mr./Mrs. Marcus (Heather)
Rug, Rev./Mrs. John (Cathy)
Russell, Dr./Mrs. Julian (Christiana)
Sabin, Mr./Mrs. Mike (Eli)
Sale, Mr./Mrs. Zach (Joy)
Saunders, Mr./Mrs. Jeff (Katie)
Schafer, Mr./Mrs. Jason (Mandy)
Sexton, Mr./Mrs. John (Elizabeth)
Shadburne, Mr./Mrs. Andy (Missy)
Shepherd, Rev./Mrs. Doug (Masha)
Sinclair, Rev./Mrs. Bruce (Pam)
Sindler, Rev./Mrs. Frank (Cindy)
Smith, Rev./Mrs. Luke (Sokha)
Sproull, Mr./Mrs. Todd (Cindy)
Stannard, Mr./Mrs. Luke (Michelle)
Stanton, Rev./Mrs. Dal (Beth)
Stava, Rev./Mrs. Jonas (Pattie)
Stephens, Rev./Mrs. Noah (Karleigh)
Stevens, Ms. Carla
Stewart, Mr./Mrs. Robert (Lisa)
Stoddard, Rev./Mrs. David (Eowyn)
Stodghill, Mr./Mrs. John (Karen)
Stogner, Rev./Mrs. Phil (Wendy)
Swanson, Mr./Mrs. Joel (Stephanie)
Sweet, Mr./Mrs. Robbie (Lydia)
Tafferner, Mr./Mrs. Mario (Elsbeth)
Tanzie, Rev./Mrs. Bob (Joanne)
Taylor, Rev./Mrs. Nate (Erin)
Thomae, Rev./Mrs. David (Jan)
Traub, Rev./Mrs. Will (Judi)
Troxell, Mr./Mrs. Mike (Ashley)
Vos, Ms. Nelly
Wadhams, Mr./Mrs. Michael (Lindie)
Warren, Mr./Mrs. Andy (Bevely)
Watanabe, Rev./Mrs. Gary (Lois)
Webb, Mr./Mrs. Jacob (Suzanne)
Wessel, Rev./Mrs. Hugh (Martine)
White, Mr./Mrs. David (Robin)
White, Ms. Rebecca
Wiggs Park, Ms. Kelsey
Wilkes, Rev./Mrs. Larry (Mandy)
Williams, Mr./Mrs. Bert (Nancy)
Williams, Mr./Mrs. Steve (Rita)
Wilson, Mr./Mrs. Tom (Teresa)
Wood, Mr./Mrs. Kenton (Adriana)
Wright, Dr./Mrs. Tom (Lucy)
Young, Rev./Mrs. Dan (Becky)
Young, Rev./Mrs. Steve (Sarah)

In addition to this list there are 73 long-term missionary units serving in restricted access countries.

APPENDIX H

Attachment 2

**TWO-YEAR MISSIONARIES
(as of December 31, 2021)**

Ball, Ms. Laura	Nash, Mr./Mrs. John (Ginna)
Bean, Rev./Mrs. Dawson (Shanna)	Rabe, Ms. Rachel
Beasley, Mr./Mrs. Stan (Connie)	Sheppard, Mr. Andrew
Bentson, Mr. Tim	Smith, Mr./Mrs. Robert (Jeanne)
Bermudez, Rev./Mrs. Raul (Yai)	Sprague, Mr./Mrs. William (Jessica)
Brinkley, Ms. Elizabeth	Stovall, Ms. Lauren
Choi, Mr. David	Stugart, Ms. Rachel
Curl, Mr. Joshua	Thomas, Mr./Mrs. Jake (Courtney)
DeBoer, Ms. Shannon	Van der Swaagh, Rev./Mrs. Kirk (Barbara)
De Bruin, Ms. Molly	Velez, Mr./Mrs. Angel (Wally)
Evans, Ms. Adair	Warren, Mr./Mrs. Randy (Debra)
Jacobson, Ms. Katie	Weber, Ms. Teresa
Kim, Mr. David	Winenger, Mr./Mrs. Matt (Kathryn)
Kim, Mr./Mrs. Mark (Rachel)	Wong, Mr. Thomas
Koh, Ms. Rachel	Wright, Ms. Barbara
Kovak, Ms. Lubica	Ziehr, Mr./Mrs. Matt (Jaime)
Krieger, Ms. Karis	
Lother, Mr./Mrs. Jesse (Reba)	
Nam, Rev./Mrs. David (Susanna)	

In addition to this list there are seven short-term missionary units serving in restricted access countries.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Attachment 3

RETIRING MISSIONARIES

The following missionaries have given many years of their lives in service of world evangelization with Mission to the World. We honor these deeply committed colleagues as they enter a new phase of ministry during their retirement years.

Angert, Rev. Charles/Mrs. Barbara – Thailand
effective January 31, 2021

Chaplin, Rev. Carl/Mrs. Becky - 1826 Network – U.S.
effective December 31, 2021

Goodman, Mr. William – U.S. Staff
effective December 31, 2021

Harrell, Rev. Joe/Mrs. Becky – Colombia
effective December 31, 2021

Johnson, Mr. Johnny/Mrs. Annette - Czech Republic
effective January 31, 2021

Matsinger, Rev. Jay/Mrs. Nancy - Czech Republic
effective September 30, 2021

Meiners, Rev. Paul/Mrs. Liz – United Kingdom
effective August 31, 2021

Phillips, Rev. Alvin/Mrs. Wyema - GMM Europe
effective September 30, 2021

Summers, Rev. Marc/Mrs. Sam – Panama
effective August 31, 2021

Sundeen, Ms. Susan – Mexico
effective October 31, 2021

Wannemacher, Mr. Bruce/Mrs. Barbara – South Africa
effective April 30, 2021

APPENDIX I

**REPORT OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
FOUNDATION, INC.
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The PCA Foundation is pleased to report that, by God’s grace, the PCA Foundation engaged in 2021 in significant work of the Church as set forth in the Great Commission. We are pleased to see how the Lord continues to enable the PCA Foundation to advance and manifest His Kingdom.

Total gifts to the PCA Foundation during 2021 were \$230.3 million. These gifts include a number of gifts of appreciated non-cash property or proceeds of its sale (real estate, S corporation stock, cryptocurrency).

We are pleased to report that the PCA Foundation distributed, or granted to ministry, \$25.0 million during 2021. Distributions to PCA churches were \$14.4 million, distributions to PCA Committees and Agencies were \$2.1 million, and distributions to other Christian ministries were \$8.5 million.

We continue to look for opportunities to work with PCA churches and their members and are desirous of serving with individuals and their families in making Kingdom grants. We intend to implement in 2022 a monthly matching grants program for the benefit of every committee and agency of the PCA.

The 2021 distributions and grants to ministry by the PCA Foundation were as follows:

	<u>12/31/2021</u>
Mission to the World	\$ 323,000
Mission to North America	350,000
Committee on Discipleship Ministries	24,000
Administrative Committee	197,000
RBI-Ministerial Relief	59,000
Reformed University Fellowship	341,000
Covenant College	96,000
Covenant Theological Seminary	190,000
PCA Foundation	415,000
Ridge Haven	111,000
<i>Total Committees & Agencies</i>	\$ 2,106,000
PCA Churches	14,364,000
Other Christian Ministries	8,577,000
<i>Total</i>	\$ 25,047,000

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The PCA Foundation's total assets were \$354.8 million as of December 31, 2021, an increase of \$220.9 million over the December 31, 2020 total assets of \$133.9 million. The primary reasons that total assets increased \$220.9 million during 2021 were that gifts to the PCA Foundation to fund accounts exceeded grant distributions by \$205.2 million, and asset valuation increased \$15.7 million due to financial market gains. Much of the funds contributed to the Foundation goes out as grants within a relatively short period of time — often within the same or the following year. Therefore, the PCA Foundation may realize significant amounts as both contributions and grants in a given year, and total assets may stay about the same or experience substantial increases or decreases from year to year.

The PCA Foundation has and continues to make significant progress in serving with members and friends of the PCA. Over the last 20 years, total assets have grown from \$24.2 million to \$354.8 million. These total assets provide a sound base for future financial support of PCA Churches, PCA Committees and Agencies, and other Christian ministries.

Coincident with the growth of its assets over the last 20 years, the PCA Foundation has received \$476.5 million in gifts, and made distributions to ministries totaling \$192.7 million.

During 2021, the PCA Foundation continued its increased intentional outreach to individuals and families, churches, presbyteries and ministries.

The president of the Foundation presented at 21 presbytery meetings, and met with numerous individual donors, prospective donors, financial advisors, and church finance and stewardship personnel in the days before and after those meetings. In 2022, the Foundation will present tax-efficient giving strategies in seminars, both live and via Zoom, sponsored by individual PCA churches.

The Foundation upgraded its donor portal in 2021 to make it more intuitive and add greater functionality. The donor portal allows PCA Foundation donors to access their account information online, and also easily and quickly recommend grant distributions from their accounts.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the Foundation introduced an online giving program for PCA churches. For each church that chose to participate, the PCA Foundation provided the church with a link to a secure online giving page to which it could direct its members and donors via the church's website or email or other notification methods. The PCA

APPENDIX I

Foundation imposes a very small charge to defray part of the costs of the service, but no charge to churches that also maintain a church designated fund. Over 180 PCA churches participated in the online giving program at some point during 2021.

The PCA Foundation does not participate in the PCA's Partnership Shares or Ministry Ask Programs, nor does it rely on the financial support of churches to help underwrite its operating budget. Rather, its operations are funded primarily by account charges, earnings on investment accounts, and by charitable contributions from individuals, including current and former PCA Foundation Board Members.

Because the main focus of the PCA Foundation is not on raising funds for its own operations, or for any other particular ministry, it has a unique opportunity and niche within the PCA. We assist Christians to carry out their stewardship responsibilities and charitable desires, working with them to provide for and make substantial, effective Kingdom grants. By suggesting and facilitating tax-efficient giving strategies such as appreciated non-cash giving, we enable donors to convert significantly more income tax into Kingdom funding. Our most popular giving-granting programs are the Advise & Consult Fund® and Increase Fund, both of which are donor-advised funds. We also create, manage, and receive endowments, charitable trusts, bequests, and church, presbytery, and PCA-ministry designated funds.

In the first part of this year, the PCA Foundation completed the structuring and creation of a trust on which it worked throughout 2021, under which it will receive and hold most contributions and make most grants. The trust arrangement will facilitate conversion of the maximum amount of income tax into Kingdom funding in gifts of S corporation stock (the most common form of business wealth for giving).

The PCA Foundation is “donor driven,” which means that it engages donors to identify and recommend the grants it makes. This is grass-roots, democratized grant-making. But the Foundation also works increasingly to make those donors better grant advisors by informing them of charitable endeavors worthy of support. We provide information to individuals without pressuring them to give to the PCA Foundation for its own operations, or to any other particular ministry.

The PCA Foundation will continue to strive to effectively serve with its present and future donors and the churches, presbyteries, committees, and agencies of

the PCA to carry on the work of the PCA as set forth in the Great Commission. By God's grace, the PCA Foundation will be able to do so.

Please continue to pray that I will be faithful as the Foundation president and will experience and live out the love of Christ in this calling. Also, please pray for the board and staff of the Foundation as they seek to continue leading the PCA Foundation successfully into the future. The PCA Foundation is financially sound and is postured well for continued growth.

Recommendations:

1. That the financial audit for the PCA Foundation, Inc. for the calendar year ended December 31, 2021 by Capin Crouse, LLP be received and acknowledged.
2. That the General Assembly approve the proposed 2023 Budget of the PCA Foundation, Inc. with the understanding that it is a spending plan and will be modified as necessary by the PCA Foundation's Board of Directors to accommodate changing circumstances during the year.
3. That the Minutes of Board meetings of August 6, 2021, and March 4, 2022, be approved.
4. That the General Assembly approve amendments to the PCA Foundation's Articles of Incorporation shown in Attachment 2 to this report, to (i) clarify that its purposes are confined to and may extend as far as the purposes of the Church of Jesus Christ, including the carrying out of the Great Commission, the support of PCA churches, presbyteries, and committees and agencies, and distributions in ministry to man's needs; (ii) make the text more concise and readable, and consistent with the most commonly used, IRS-approved wording; (iii) provide for certain unlikely legal contingencies (failure of Assembly to provide for distribution upon dissolution, and IRS determination that the Foundation is a private foundation); and (iv) bar retroactive exposure of Foundation directors to civil liability, and limit director civil liability to the extent permitted by law.

Respectfully Submitted,
RE Timothy W. Townsend
President

APPENDIX I

Attachment 1

**PCA FOUNDATION
PLANNED GIVING REPORT**

January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021

New Gifts "IN"		\$230,263,000
Total Distributions Made		\$25,047,000
Distributions Made:	12/31/2021	<u>%</u>
Total C&A	\$ 2,106,000	9%
PCA Churches	<u>14,364,000</u>	<u>57%</u>
TOTAL PCA	16,470,000	66%
Other Christian	<u>8,577,000</u>	<u>34%</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$25,047,000</u>	<u>100%</u>

1980 through December 2021

Total Gifts "IN"		\$545,567,000
Total Distributions Made		\$239,409,000
Distributions Made:	<u>Amount</u>	<u>%</u>
Total C&A	\$ 51,278,000	21%
PCA Churches	<u>103,065,000</u>	<u>43%</u>
TOTAL PCA	154,343,000	64%
Other Christian	<u>85,066,000</u>	<u>36%</u>
TOTAL 1980 – December 2021	<u>\$239,409,000</u>	<u>100%</u>

**RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION, INC.
A NONPROFIT CORPORATION**

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the Corporation is:
Presbyterian Church in America Foundation, Inc.

ARTICLE II. AUTHORITY

The Corporation is organized pursuant to the provisions of the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code as amended.

ARTICLE III. DURATION

The Corporation ~~shall have~~ has perpetual duration.

ARTICLE IV. PURPOSES

The Corporation is organized ~~solely exclusively~~ for the following purposes:

(a) ~~To receive, accumulate, manage, invest and disburse any assets, or income therefrom, received by gift, bequest, devise, transfer in trust, or other conveyance, with a view to using such assets for the support of the cause of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, primarily through the Presbyterian Church in America, but also through other groups, societies, organizations, and institutions which minister in Jesus' name~~ religious, educational, and charitable purposes, within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United State internal revenue law), of the Church of Jesus Christ, including the carrying out of the Great Commission, the support of churches, presbyteries, and other committees and agencies of the Presbyterian Church in America, and distributions to or for the use of organizations exempt at the time under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law) that minister to man's spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual powers. Subject to the foregoing, the Corporation has all powers authorized for nonprofit corporations, and not prohibited to nonprofit corporations, under the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code.

APPENDIX I

~~(b) — To carry on, conduct, promote, operate, and undertake any transaction, operations, or activities commonly carried on, conducted, promoted, operated, or undertaken by nonprofit organizations engaged exclusively in religious, charitable, and educational activities within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to such organizations;~~

~~(c) — To do everything necessary for the accomplishment of the foregoing purposes, and to do all other things incidental to them or connected with them that are not forbidden by the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code, by other law, or by these Articles of Incorporation; and for any other lawful purpose not specifically prohibited to nonprofit corporations under the laws of Georgia.~~

ARTICLE V. NO MEMBERS

The Corporation ~~shall have no~~ does not have members.

ARTICLE VI. DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be elected by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America. Only members of the Presbyterian Church in America may serve as directors of the Corporation. ~~The initial Board of Directors shall consist of eight (8) members who shall be:~~
~~{list of names and addresses of initial directors}~~

ARTICLE VII. RESTRICTIONS

Section 1. No Private Inurement. No part of the net earnings or property of the Corporation ~~shall may~~ inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, ~~the its~~ directors, trustees, or officers of the Corporation, or to other private persons; except that the Corporation ~~shall be is~~ authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article IV hereof.

Section 2. No Substantial Lobbying. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation ~~shall may~~ be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, ~~and the~~.

Section 3. No Political Campaigning. The Corporation ~~shall~~ may not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Section 4. Irrevocable Dedication. The income and assets of the Corporation are irrevocably dedicated to its exclusive purposes.

Section 5. General. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles of Incorporation, the Corporation shall may not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or (b) by a corporation to which contributions are deductible under Sections 170(b)(1)(A) or (B) and Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States internal revenue law).

ARTICLE VIII. POWERS

Section 1. General. The Corporation has all the rights and powers customary and proper for tax exempt nonprofit corporations, including the powers specifically enumerated in Section 14-3-302 of the Georgia Code as amended.

Section 2. Charitable Trusteeship Etc. The Corporation is empowered to hold or administer property for the purposes stated in Article IV, including the power to act as trustee.

ARTICLE IX. DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Liquidation. Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provisions must pay or make provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, and distribute any assets held by the Corporation upon condition requiring return, transfer, or other conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, in accordance with such requirements. Thereafter, the Board of Directors must distribute A all remaining assets shall be distributed to such organizations and institutions as are selected by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, provided, however, that such selection shall may include only organizations which qualify as and institutions organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, literary, or scientific purposes as at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and at the time are described in Section 170(c)(2) of such Code, and whose the purposes and activities of which are

not inconsistent with the purposes of this Corporation, as the Board of Directors determines.

Section 2. Contingent Provision. If any such assets are not so disposed of, the appropriate court of the county in which the principal Georgia office (or if none the Georgia registered office) of the Corporation is then located will dispose of such assets exclusively for the purposes stated in Article IV herein, and exclusively to such organization or organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes and at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under such Section 501(c)(3), as said court determines.

~~IX.~~

~~[initial registered office information]~~

ARTICLE X. CONTINGENT RESTRICTIONS

~~The names and addresses of the incorporators are:~~

~~_____ [list of names and addresses of the incorporators]~~

Section 1. Contingent Restrictions. In the event that the Corporation is determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be a private foundation within the meaning of Section 509 of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States internal revenue law), and only during the period during which such determination applies, notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles of Incorporation, this Article X applies and the Corporation must: (1) not engage in any act of "self-dealing" (as defined in Section 4941(d) of the Internal Revenue Code) that would subject the Corporation to tax under Section 4941 of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) distribute its income for each taxable year for the purposes specified in Article IV herein at such time, in such manner, and in such amounts as are necessary to avoid subjecting the Corporation to tax under Section 4942 of the Internal Revenue Code; (3) not retain any "excess business holdings" (as defined in Section 4943(c) of the Internal Revenue Code) and subject the Corporation to tax under Section 4943 of the Internal Revenue Code; (4) not make any investments that would jeopardize the carrying out of any of the exempt purposes of the Corporation (within the meaning of Section 4944 of the Internal Revenue Code) and thereby subject the Corporation to tax under Section 4944 of the Internal Revenue Code; and (5) not make any "taxable expenditures" (as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Internal Revenue Code) that would subject the Corporation to tax under Section 4945 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 2. Definition. Each reference in this Article X to a section of the Internal Revenue Code includes the corresponding provisions of any future United States internal revenue law.

ARTICLE XI. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

Section 1. Limitation. No director shall have any personal liability to the Corporation for monetary damages for breach of duty of care or other duty as a director, by reason of any act or omission occurring. The liability of a Director to the Corporation or its members, if any, for monetary damages for any action taken, or any failure to take any action as a Director on or subsequent to the date when this provision becomes effective is hereby eliminated, except that this provision shall not eliminate or limit the liability of a director for (a) (i) for any appropriation, in violation of his duties, of any business opportunity of the Corporation; (b) (ii) for acts or omissions which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of laws; (c) (iii) for the types of liability set forth in Georgia Code Sections 14-3-860 through 14-3-864 of the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code as amended; or (d) (iv) for any transaction from which the dDirector received an improper personal benefit.

Section 2. Amendment. Any repeal or modification of the provisions of this Article will be prospective only, and will not adversely affect any limitation on the personal liability of a Director of the Corporation with respect to any act or omission occurring prior to the effective date of such repeal or modification. In the event of any amendment of the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code to authorize the further elimination or limitation of liability of directors, then the liability of a Director of the Corporation will be limited to the fullest extent permitted by the amended Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code, in addition to the limitation on personal liability provided herein.

Section 3. Severability. In the event that any provision of this Article (including a clause) is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, void, or otherwise unenforceable, the remaining provisions are severable and will remain enforceable to the fullest extent permitted by law.

APPENDIX J

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PCA RETIREMENT & BENEFITS, INC. TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

We are pleased to present the 2021 Report to the General Assembly on behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of PCA Retirement & Benefits.

President's Report

2021 marked the first year of RBI's three-year strategic plan and my first full year as President. We have seen and heard from many of you and your churches regarding the challenges that have persisted for the church and her ministers this year. As an agency of the denomination our call is to serve you as you serve our Savior. To that end we have sought to provide support, encouragement, and new initiatives to assist you in your ministries.

Matthew's account of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount begins with the beatitudes. All of us have been taught that "Blessed are they..." describes the character qualities of the Kingdom of God. It serves to describe the "Upside Down kingdom" in stark contrast to the kingdom of this age. The poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the peacemaker, all juxtaposed with the proud, loud, and argumentative. These seven-character traits, with the eighth describing the one who possesses the other seven, are descriptive of what thriving souls look like. These internal qualities are what mark men and women who are growing in Christ. They thrive as they cultivate humility, mercy, and peace. We have the privilege to come alongside pastors and ministry workers and provide the necessary resources to help them pursue these character traits. Here at RBI our vision is clear, we believe the gospel advances and the church thrives as men and women who serve PCA ministries grow spiritually and financially healthy. Spiritual and financial health are two separate yet connected realities. We believe both are necessary for individuals to thrive. We believe God has called us to provide church workers with resources and opportunities to focus on cultivating these attributes and lead others in them. Here are a few ways we have done this this year.

New Name – Geneva Benefits Group

Last November, our board approved a name change. After twenty years of being PCA Retirement and Benefits, Inc. we are now Geneva Benefits Group. We are thrilled with our new name as it tethers us to our Reformed tradition and acknowledges our vital role in the financial wellbeing of PCA workers. We wanted a name that captured more of who we are and what we do. Our holistic view of the benefit needs of our pastors and ministry workers go beyond simply retirement and traditional benefits. Geneva enables us to build on this.

New Services

Several years ago, we launched ServantCare, a counseling ministry for PCA pastors. In 2021 we converted that Relief ministry program into an enrolled employee benefit. We currently have 335 enrolled and an average of 61 sessions being used each month (since inception). Perhaps never in the recent past has the need for counseling pastors and ministry workers been so great. As referenced below, in 2022 we will significantly redesign the counseling benefit. The new benefit will be more affordable and provide more subsidized counseling sessions.

Over the past year we have begun to expand our work in pastoral wellbeing. To this end, we have conducted research to learn what programs and products will best help our pastors and ministry workers thrive. We have also consulted with presbyteries, sessions, and pastors on life-giving practices such as sabbaticals, access to counseling and coaching, and other practices. We are exploring more formal programs to provide access to coaching, sabbaticals, peer cohorts, and more. In this vein, we are applying for a grant of one million dollars over three years from the Lilly Endowment. This money will help fund these kinds of projects. We see all of these as opportunities to partner with other PCA committees and agencies in an effort serve our church with excellence.

In 2022 we have been piloting a health plan to assess the potential of making it available to our whole denomination. While our polity makes such an effort challenging, we recognize that medical insurance is the single greatest need among our pastors and ministry workers. If there is a way for Geneva to come alongside you with affordable and effective health care coverage, we will make every effort to do so. Finally, as part of our rebrand, we have thoroughly

redesigned our website to be more user friendly and provide answers to all your questions about financial health and overall wellness.

New Partners

Over the past year, several other denominations have asked to partner with Geneva Benefits Group. In September of 2021 we enrolled over 200 Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches into the retirement plan. In January of 2022 we began enrolling Korean American Presbyterian Churches into the retirement plan. A large part of our growth this year can be attributed to the addition of these denominations. In addition, we have been blessed to partner with additional PCA churches and ministries. While the 8% increase in enrollment encourages us, we care more about the relationships they represent than the numbers. Each is a family we have the privilege of coming alongside to help them grow healthy.

We haven't simply added new partners outside of Geneva, we have added them inside. With the addition of TE Stephen Maginas to our Retirement Readiness team as one of our Financial Planning Advisors and Grace Lee to our Benefit Services team, we are better positioned to serve you. As we look ahead, we anticipate the need for more staff growth so we can better serve you. To that end, we have expanded our office space in the PCA denominational offices to accommodate additional staff and services.

Here at Geneva, we desire to see the gospel advance and the church thrive. As a part of the church, we are called to be agents of redemptive change. As we provide resources and opportunities to help you grow spiritually and financially healthy, we believe you will grow more generous in every season of ministry. This is, after all, what the Upside-Down Kingdom ought to produce in us. The righteousness which Jesus refers to in Matthew 5 is generous in humility, generous in mercy, generous in peace. In this way we here at Geneva fulfill our calling. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you and our denomination.

Market Update:

The year 2021 marked the world's second consecutive year of COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and quarantines. During this period, we experienced two variants of Covid: Delta and Omicron. While the past two years have been marked by unparalleled tragedy, the U.S. stock markets delivered extraordinary returns. Foreign markets would have delivered comparable returns if not for the strong rise in the dollar relative to most foreign currencies.

The COVID pandemic has been far-reaching and significant. The trauma we have felt -- from loss of loved ones to the real loneliness of our shared quarantine experience -- has impacted every person, community, and institution. In this report we will highlight one very significant institution, the U.S. economy. Just prior to the pandemic, the U.S. economy was experiencing its 11th year of expansion. However, the contraction introduced by COVID during the first quarter of 2020 was the fastest and deepest on record. To stave off a full-scale depression, the Federal Reserve used the full range of policy tools at their disposal. In addition, Congress provided an historic explosion of fiscal stimulus packages to stabilize the country's financial system. The result was impressive, but potentially costly.

We should all be *impressed* by how much improvement we have seen in the labor market since the beginning of the pandemic. At this time job opportunities are abundant, and unemployment has fallen sharply to 3.9%. Confidence in job prospects is so high that the frequency of those quitting jobs without firm prospects for a new job is at an historic high. The potential *cost* to the U.S. economy may come in the form of increasing inflation. The pandemic has significantly impacted the global supply chain by closing manufacturing plants and crippling transportation systems around the globe. This creates a delicate scenario for the Federal Reserve as it uses powerful monetary tools to slow the impact of rising inflation.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell is committed to guiding the U.S. economy toward long-term expansion. This will require careful use of the monetary tools available to the Fed. Given these moderate risks, we believe retirement plan participants should remain committed to their long-term investment objectives and Geneva is ready to assist you if you have any questions.

Summary of 2021 Operations

In 2021, total PCA Retirement Plan assets under management increased by 16% from \$779,154,848 to \$906,697,169. This increase can be attributed to contributions exceeding withdrawals and comparative market performance over the prior year. The PCA Retirement Plan continues to be the employee benefit plan with the largest amount of participation with over 8600 retirement accounts at year-end 2021, an account increase of almost 6%.

Participation increased by 3% for the PCA Group Insurance benefit plans offered, approaching 4500 insured employee lives.

PCA Disability Insurance, including both long-term and short-term disability options continues as the most-enrolled group insurance plan benefit. Plans. Offered through Unum, the PCA Long Term Disability Plan provides elements of top-tier group disability benefits, such as retirement income protection, cost of living adjustments, and claims payment until Social Security full retirement age. Short-term protection covers the loss in income for the period between the loss and when long-term coverage begins.

PCA Life Insurance plans experienced no plan design changes in 2021. Offered through MetLife, the PCA Life Insurance Plans include such features as will preparation, portability, estate services, accelerated benefit offerings, and limited (or no) medical underwriting for new employees.

The PCA Vision Plan design changed to one visit per calendar year (rather than one per 12-month period). There were no changes to the PCA Dental Plan. While less financially important than the disability or life insurance plans, both plans promote tax-efficient employee benefit offerings and boast large national networks.

Geneva's counseling benefit has been a very popular and well-utilized product. As we write this update, the program is undergoing significant changes. However, these changes have not yet been finalized, and any report on them would be premature. We will formally update this body at the 2023 General Assembly and will be able to provide verbal updates in 2022.

Geneva has recommended a Property and Casualty Liability insurance carrier for PCA organizations since 2000. Since January 1, 2017, Brotherhood Mutual has been recommended to PCA churches, schools, and ministries. Brotherhood Mutual specializes in providing insurance to Christian organizations and seeks to provide PCA organizations special group-affiliated pricing. Brotherhood Mutual and related companies also provide commercial auto, worker's compensation, mission travel insurance, legal assistance, and payroll processing.

Since 1973, the Relief Fund has provided pastors and their widows with critical financial assistance and support. We give thanks to God for his provision that met the increased needs of our pastors, widows, and ministry workers. In 2021, we increased financial assistance to PCA ministry servants, distributing \$682,922 through 413 financial assistance awards. We were able to meet more short-term needs (27% increase) and make more long-term commitments (9% increase). Through our Cherish program, 88 wives of PCA

teaching elders were able to begin meeting with a qualified Christian counselor. We invested \$53,805 in this much-needed program to provide pastors' wives with access to 715 counseling sessions.

In 2021, we published the findings of our research into the wellbeing of PCA pastors. We have distributed over 1,000 copies of the findings and met with numerous presbyteries and sessions to raise awareness and educate our churches on the practices that lead to pastoral wellbeing. As referenced above, we are currently applying for a grant from the Lilly Endowment which will enable us to fund programs to enhance pastoral wellbeing and help our pastors grow in financial literacy.

We are grateful to report that as needs increased, so did generosity. In 2021, generous individuals, churches, and private foundations gave \$1,038,984 to the Ministerial Relief Fund. We thank every church that supports Ministerial Relief whether through gifts or participating in our special Look After offering in support of retired pastors and widows at Christmas time. We invite all PCA churches to prayerfully consider sharing about Ministerial Relief with your congregations and initiating them to participate in a special offering in support of our retired pastors, widows, and ministry workers in need. We will provide you with everything you need.

Relevant Legislative and Regulatory Updates (Source: Conner & Winters, LLC)

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021

President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 into law on December 27, 2020 (the "CAA"). The CAA includes several provisions impacting employee benefit plans, including the following:

- Restrictions on surprise medical billing.
- Mental health parity requirements.
- Temporary flexible spending account ("FSA") flexibility.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the COVID-19 relief legislation known as the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ("ARPA"). Among many other provisions, the ARPA contains a temporary COVID-19 subsidy for continuation coverage premiums under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act ("COBRA") or state laws that are similar to COBRA, along with a temporary increase of the limit on the amount that can be excluded from income through a dependent care FSA.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”).³ The IIJA mainly includes provisions relating to infrastructure but also includes a few provisions impacting employee benefit plans, including the following:

- **Automatic Deadline Extensions for Disasters:** The IIJA provides for an automatic extension of 60-days for specified Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) filing deadlines resulting from certain federally declared disasters. As a result, taxpayers will no longer be required to wait for the IRS to grant certain deadline extensions. The automatic extension applies to the deadlines for individual tax filings, qualified retirement plan contributions, excess IRA contribution distributions, recharacterizing IRA contributions, and completing 60-day rollovers.
- **Federally Declared Disasters:** The IIJA also amends the definition of “federally declared disaster” to include a “significant fire” as one of the disasters for which the IRS can extend tax filing deadlines on a discretionary basis.

FSA, HRA, and HSA Guidance

The CARES Act permits FSA, HSA, and health reimbursement arrangement (“HRA”) to reimburse expenses for over-the-counter drugs and health care products that are incurred on or after January 1, 2020.

The IRS also stated that amounts paid for personal protective equipment for the primary purpose of preventing the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., masks, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes) are eligible for reimbursement under FSAs, HSAs, and HRAs.

The IRS also reminded taxpayers that the cost of home COVID-19 testing is a medical expense eligible for reimbursement under health FSAs, HSAs, and HRAs.

Limits for 2022

The cost-of-living and required statutory limit adjustments applicable to retirement plans for 2022 are as follows:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Contribution limit for defined contribution plan under Code § 415(c)	\$61,000 (\$3,000 increase)
Elective deferral limit under Code § 402(g)	\$20,500 (\$1,000 increase)
Age 50 catch-up contribution limit under Code § 414(v)	\$6,500 (<i>unchanged</i>)

Staff

The RBI staff is thankful to the Lord for His faithfulness and everlasting love to His Church this past year and eagerly awaits the opportunities and challenges in store for our future. We believe that God will continue to bless our ministry to others as we remain faithful to Him. We welcome the prayers and partnership of participants and churches this year and into the future. It is our privilege to serve those who minister in the Presbyterian Church in America.

Donald S. Aldin, Director of Retirement Readiness and Data/Technology
David L. Anderegg Jr., Senior Financial Planning Advisor
Andrew E. Beiriger, Staff Accountant
Thomas P. Bryant, Benefits Advisor
Gary D. Campbell, Investment Specialist
Heather S. Chambliss, Director of Business Operations
Paul S. Chi, Financial Planning Advisor
Edward W. Dunnington, President
Peggy N. Henry, Retirement Planning Administrator
Ingrid Krein, Retirement Planning Specialist
Grace Lee, Benefits Advisor
Chester R. Lilly III, Vice President of Operations
Stephen M. Maginas, Financial Planning Advisor
Jonathan B. Medlock, Vice President of People and Culture
Mark S. Melendez, Director of Benefit Services
Bonita K. Nowak, Customer Service Manager
Vickie M. Poole, Operations and Relief Assistant
Teresa Reese, Director of Finance
Sophia M. Rivera, Marketing Coordinator
Sandra N. Robertson, Benefits Advisor
Stephanie S. Simpson, Staff Accountant
Emily E. White, Donor Relations Assistant
Christine M. Zurbach, Director of Philanthropic Giving and Marketing

Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings dated September 17, 2021, November 19, 2021, and March 11, 2022;
2. That the General Assembly receive the 2021 Audited Financials as reviewed by Capin Crouse LLP;
3. That the General Assembly approve the 2023 Operating Budget with the understanding that it is a spending plan and will be adjusted as necessary by the Board of Directors to accommodate changing conditions during that fiscal year;
4. That the General Assembly approve the 2023 Trustee Fee Agreements for the 403(b) Retirement Plan Trust, the Health and Welfare Benefit Trust, and the Ministerial Relief Trust;
5. That the General Assembly exhort PCA Presbyteries, churches, and related ministries to review and utilize the 2022 PCA Call Package Guidelines in creating compensation packages for Teaching Elders;
6. That the General Assembly urge member churches to participate in an annual offering to Ministerial Relief or to budget regular benevolence giving to support relief activities through the Ministerial Relief Fund.
7. That the General Assembly be informed that during early 2022 the PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc. agency under the direction of the Board of Directors, as permitted in RAO 4-3, changed its civil corporate name from “PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.” to “Geneva Benefits Group, Inc.” (also known as Geneva Benefits Group or Geneva); and that the General Assembly expressly authorize and ratify such incorporation.

It is our privilege to serve those who minister in the Presbyterian Church in America.

Respectfully Submitted,
RE Jim Wert
Chairman, Board of Directors

TE Ed Dunnington, CFP®
President

APPENDIX K

REPORT OF REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

Ministry to colleges represents an essential part of the mission of the Presbyterian Church in America. The college years have increasingly become a time for questioning authority, scrutinizing absolutes, throwing out old premises, and reinventing the self. Students must learn to navigate the milieu of converging thought, and Reformed University Fellowship is thankful to be part of this unfolding campus narrative to reach students for Christ and equip them to serve. The passion and vigor of college students have proved, over the last 200 years, to affect the Church globally, significantly engaging the world with mission and purpose. The story of redemption playing out is more significant than any story that we can imagine.

Reformed University Fellowship goes to the campus with a fixed theology (The Bible and Westminster Standards) and a flexible methodology that allows us to contextualize to suit various campus personalities and demographics. We are not limited in how and where we preach the Gospel, and we know that a large percentage of people come to faith in Jesus between the age of 18 and 25.

To engage the current academic culture, Reformed University Fellowship sends ordained PCA ministers, credentialed in local presbyteries, to serve on the college campus, preach the Gospel of Christ, build Christ's Church, and ultimately prepare students to live all of life under the Lordship of Christ. This is a concrete expression of our commitment to our covenant children and our obedience to the Great Commission to reach students for Christ and equip them to serve.

The Permanent Committee for Reformed University Fellowship wishes to thank all of our churches, presbyteries, and the General Assembly for their oversight, financial support, prayers, and encouragement for our campus ministers, staff, and interns, who have served on 176 campuses across America.

REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) offers the truth of God's Word to covenant children, students who are searching as well as equipping believers. By working within the context of the Church, we follow Christ's leadership as He builds His Kingdom. Students are instructed in Evangelism and Missions, Growth in Grace, Fellowship and Service, and a Biblical World-and-Life View. An ordained PCA minister leads each RUF, actively working to accomplish goals in these four major areas. RUF strengthens the Church by reaching students who may not know Christ, as well as equipping those who know Him to serve, and to love Jesus for a lifetime. (See Attachment for a list of RUF, RUF-I, and Global campus ministers, campuses served, and Presbytery committees.)

REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

There are currently 18 RUF-International campus ministries. We recently started our 18th ministry at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. RUF-I has 17 ordained campus ministers, six campus staff, two campus minister assistants, five interns, and two seminary interns. Chris Morrison is the first RUF-I Area Coordinator, and he began on June 1, 2020. We have a total of 33 people now working with RUF-International. Chris oversees 13 of the RUF-I campuses, and I oversee 5 of the campuses.

In January, we had our annual ONLY-RUF-International Staff Training in Denver. We brought in someone to speak to us about how to minister to Indian students on campus and several practical seminars on international student ministry. We also brought in the PCA's RBI to spend a morning with us, which was very well received.

We are looking to start a new RUF-I work in California (we have significant seed money for a campus in California), the University of Washington, New York University, Carnegie-Mellon University (Pittsburgh) Vanderbilt University, Emory University, Washington University in St. Louis, Virginia Tech, and Arizona State University.

REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP GLOBAL

There are currently 7 RUF-Global campus ministries worldwide (Mexico City, Mexico, Bogota, Colombia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Dakar, Senegal, Tokyo, Japan, L'viv, Ukraine, and Granada, Spain). In Bogota, we have two Colombian interns and two American interns serving on the team. In the summer of 2021, we lost our RUF-Global campus minister, Cody Janicek, to a new work at Montana State University with RUF-National.

I spent a significant amount of time in 2021 talking with MTW and Serge teams about potential RUF-Global opportunities. The most promising conversations are about RUF-G in Toronto, Canada (the Eastern Canada Presbytery and a possible 15-year plan for three new RUFs), Vienna, Austria, Uganda, Malawi, South Africa, Sydney, Australia, and Medellin, Colombia. I have recently been in conversation over the last two months with MTW Europe about potential opportunities in Europe.

MINISTRY DISTINCTIVES

Weekly large group, small groups, and one-on-one staff-student meetings provide the structure for campus ministry. Each type of meeting is essential in ministering to college students. In large group meetings, students gather to sing, pray, and hear the good news of Jesus taught from the scriptures. Small groups focus on study, prayer, and fellowship, and many are led by junior and senior students, under the direction of the campus minister, campus staff, and interns. One-on-one meetings between students and staff members offer in-depth discipleship, evangelistic encounters, and accountability in trust-confidence relationships, as well as counseling. RUF emphasizes the development of a biblical world-and-life view. As students learn to think biblically, they will make a lasting difference in the Church and the world. A key distinctive of RUF is its connection to the Church. Through exhortation by their campus minister, attendance with friends at local churches, involvement in the campus community, and exposition of Biblical truth, college students learn to love the Church and develop a lifelong commitment to involvement with God's people. RUF provides a bridge maintaining (or establishing) connection to the Church as students make the transitions from home to college to work and family life. RUF does not exist to perpetuate a campus ministry but to grow the Church.

CAMPUS INTERNS AND STAFF

Launched in 1980, the Intern Program has trained over 900 interns. In the last 30 years, the program has grown at a rate of 13% per year. This year we have 167 full-time and ten part-time young men and women (all recent college graduates) that currently work directly with a campus minister and receive on-the-job training in evangelism, small group leadership, and one-on-one ministry. While interns minister to college students, they also participate in a study program focusing on biblical and theological training. After their internship with Reformed University Fellowship, interns move into both vocational ministry and the broader marketplace with a deepened understanding of God's Word and experience in His service. The campus

intern, as well as campus staff, are equipped to be “an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” (II Timothy 2:21). (See submitted Attachment)

The Campus Staff program within RUF exists to provide a long-term vocational ministry position for women who desire to work on the college campus. While most of our Campus Staff come directly from serving two years as an RUF intern, we have begun expanding outside of that channel to bring in qualified candidates to meet the growing demand on campus. The RUF Campus Staff department held its annual assessment in February of 2022. Thirteen candidates were assessed, and all 13 passed and were hired for the campus staff position starting in June 2022. Casey Cockrum, Director of Campus Staff, led the three-day assessment and had seven other staff join her to help determine the candidate’s fit for the program. We are so encouraged by these women joining the campus staff ranks. Their addition will bring the anticipated campus staff number up to 58 across the ministry. The Lord continues to bring us amazing women to serve in the campus staff role, and we’re grateful for the continued growth.

SUMMER CONFERENCE Summer Conference May 2022:

After two years, we are so excited to be back at Laguna Beach Christian Resort for SuCo2022! We will be welcoming RUF students from all over the country for four weeks this summer, with Harvard University Campus Minister Michael Whitham serving as the Summer Conference Director.

Week 1 - May 2-7

Week 2 - May 9-14

Week 3 - May 16-21

Week 4 - May 22-27

WIVES RETREAT

National:

We are incredibly grateful for the role wives play in RUF’s ministry to college students, and Wives Weekend plays a vital role in encouraging them in their marriages and ministry. On January 14th and 15th, National Wives Weekend was held in San Antonio Texas and was a welcome return for all who came. Chris Gordon and Hope Blanton lead the wives through a series of mediation, lament and rest both corporately and individually. Former Campus Minister, Michael Novak of Trinity Grace Church, taught about the hope of the Gospel

and encouragement in the work of the wives of RUF. There were times for prayer, dinner and lunch groups which facilitate more time of celebratory togetherness.

West:

On February 4th, West wives weekend had the privilege of hearing from a former RUF wife and now author, Ashley Hales, as she taught through her book, *A Spacious Life*. Having lived and ministered in the West, Ashley was able to bring an understanding of the wives from the area that was insightful and encouraging. West wives love Palm Springs and the community nature of the weekend lends itself more towards group activities and time for them to connect on a deeper level with one another. We are thankful that these trainings were able to happen in person this year.

STAFF TRAINING

December training in Denver for Campus Ministers and Campus staff had 220 people in attendance. As I said in the fall, RUF training attends to the development of the entire person to create healthy ministers and ministries. The stated purpose of training is “to train pastors/staff, so they learn to understand and do ministry faithfully and fruitfully.” To that end, David Jones (former Stanford campus minister and current pastor at Grace Palo Alto) spent a day teaching on the RUF principle of Scripture and the secular ministry context. We also had sessions on Ministry Dynamics to Asian American Students, Understanding Anxiety and Staff Management (The Rest Initiative), and Resiliency in Ministry (Tasha Chapman). RUF-I staff training took place the first week of January in Denver and focused on evangelism.

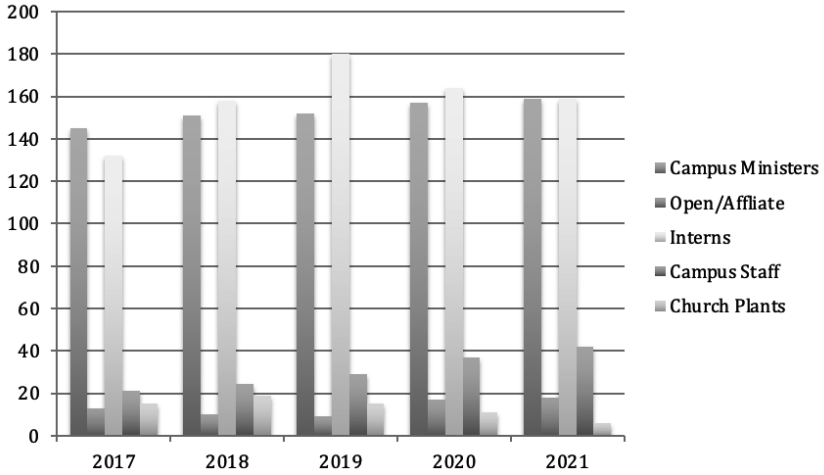
RUF ASSESSMENT

On Feb 8-10, RUF held its largest winter assessment in Atlanta, GA, with 18 campus minister candidates and 11 female campus staff candidates. Our first pilot program for regional assessment was March 9-11 at Covenant Seminary in St Louis with ten campus minister candidates. I continue to collaborate with area coordinators and national staff to enhance the necessary hard skills and emotional and cultural intelligence elements of assessment. Pre-screening protocol has helped to say “no” in the application stage and reduced unnecessary assessments’ costs and labor. We will hold our second regional assessment July 12-14 at RTS-Charlotte and anticipate up to 20 candidates. We are building an assessor list of current and former campus ministers and wives to help with the increased staffing needs of regional assessments. Finally, we instituted a zoom assessment orientation meeting for all new assessors, which we will continue going forward.

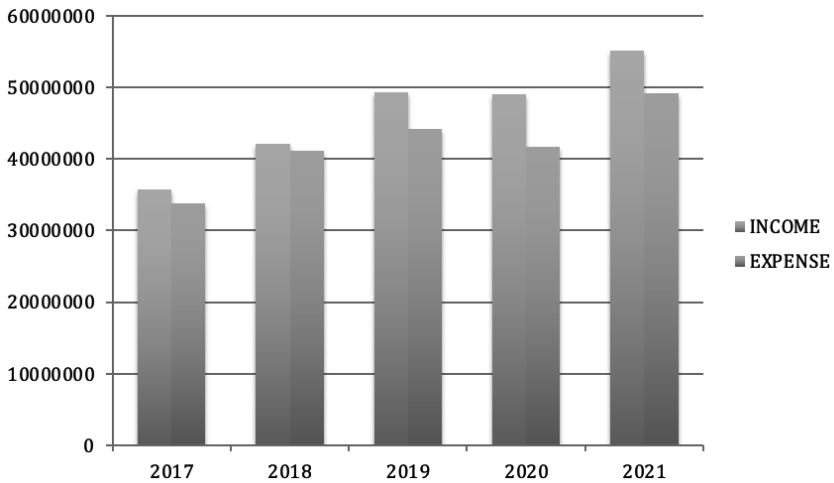
**RUF CROSS-CULTURAL ADVANCEMENT –
ASSISTANT COORDINATOR RUSS WHITFIELD**

These last few months have brought rich encouragement to our cross-cultural efforts despite the continuing restraints that the COVID situation brings. As a point of praise and celebration, I want to highlight the potential fruit of our recruiting efforts on the cross-cultural front and a new partnership that we are fostering. We currently have six black campus ministers serving in RUF. And I'm very pleased to note that we currently have four excellent African American candidates who will likely join us in the next 1-2 years as campus ministers. The momentum factor here is very significant and encouraging. In addition, we are in the final stages of solidifying a partnership with LDR (Leadership Development Resource), a ministry of MNA that targets the cultivation and retention of African American leadership in our denomination. I believe this is a very import ministry that will provide wonderful opportunities for cultivating future black leaders to serve with RUF and throughout the PCA. Recruiting for cross-cultural diversity has always been a challenge for RUF, but this partnership with LDR holds out lots of opportunities for us to place gifted brothers and sisters on the college campus who will help us to reach the diversity of our campuses, extending our mission and providing momentum to our vision. I remain hopeful and encouraged about our direction and welcome your prayers for the Lord's blessing on our work.

GROWTH
HEADCOUNT GROWTH - OVERALL MINISTRY



INCOME GROWTH vs. EXPENSES YEAR TO YEAR - OVERALL MINISTRY



RUF'S VISION FOR THE CHURCH

RUF continues to be a pipeline for leadership in the PCA. Currently, over 90 former RUF Campus Ministers are serving our Church as church planters, pastors, associate pastors, assistant pastors, and denominational staff. Thousands of RUF Alumni are serving in the Church, enforcing the fact that RUF is not just about perpetuating campus ministry but about enriching the Church. We are unwinding RUF's University Church Initiative that will end in 2022. We are working with MNA to provide similar opportunities for campuses and for campus ministers who feel called to plant churches.

CONCLUSION

God is at work through the ministry of RUF. RUF strives to engage the culture and carry out the kingdom's priorities of the Church. God brings together students and ministers from many different walks of life to accomplish His purposes. We hope that each person influenced by Reformed University Fellowship will, in turn, affect many other people in the course of his or her life. The Church is strengthened as students learn to love and seek out the Church and are trained to serve as future church leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the meetings of the Committee on Reformed University Fellowship for October 5, 2021.
2. That the General Assembly adopt the Financial Audit for Reformed University Fellowship for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021 by Carr, Riggs, & Ingram, LLP.
3. That the General Assembly receive as information the submitted attachment.
4. That the General Assembly re-elect RE Will W. Huss, Jr. as National Coordinator of Reformed University Fellowship for the 2022/2023 term.
5. That the Assembly approve the 2023 RUF budget as presented through the Administrative Committee.

Attachment

**REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP
CAMPUS MINISTRIES**

(For the Year Ending December 31, 2021)

PRESBYTERIES

CAMPUS AND STAFF

**Alabama Joint Committee on
Campus Work (Evangel, Southeast
Alabama, Warrior, Providence and
Gulf Coast*)**

Evangel Presbytery

Jacksonville State University

TE Daniel Hightower

Samford University

TE Walt Davis

**University of Alabama-
Birmingham**

Open

Birmingham Southern College

TE Gary Purdy

Southeast Alabama Presbytery

**Auburn University & RUF
Affiliate**

TE Tanner Crum

TE Michael Alsup (RUF)

Warrior Presbytery

University of Alabama

TE Stewart Swain

Providence Presbytery

Alabama A&M University

Marcus Nobles

**University of Alabama –
Huntsville**

TE Vinnie Athey

Arizona Presbytery

University of Arizona

TE Dan Smith

Calvary Presbytery

Anderson University

TE John Boyte

Clemson University & RUFIAffiliate

TE Reid Jones

TE Brian Howard (RUFIAffiliate)

Erskine College

TE Jonathan Cook

Furman University

TE Tom Hart

Wofford College

TE Matt Patrick

Catawba Valley Presbytery

Davidson College

TE Andrew Goyzueta

Central Carolina Presbytery (NC)

Johnson & Wales University

Kevin Kaye

Queens College (ARP Affiliate)

TE Josh Grimm

University of North Carolina-Charlotte

John Baber

**Central Georgia – Savannah River
Joint Committee**

Central Georgia Presbytery

Mercer University

TE Marlin Harris

Valdosta State

TE John Gordy

Savannah River Presbytery

Georgia Southern University

Nathanael Miller

Savannah College of Art & Design

TE Martin Antoon

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Central Indiana Presbytery	Indiana University TE Eric Whitley Purdue University Open
Chesapeake Presbytery	Johns Hopkins TE Jacob Jasin (RUF1) University of Maryland – Baltimore County TE Trip Beans
Chicago Metro Presbytery	Northwestern University TE Chris Colquitt TE Ian Hammond (RUF1)
Eastern Carolina Presbytery	Duke University TE Matt Mahla East Carolina University Skylar Adams North Carolina Central University TE Kris Cooper North Carolina State University TE Chuck Askew University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill TE Simon Stokes University of North Carolina – Wilmington Sam Kennedy
Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery	Lehigh University TE Michael Goodlin
Fellowship Presbytery	Winthrop University TE Mark Ashbaugh

Florida Joint Committee on Campus Work (Central Florida, Gulf Coast, North Florida, Southern Florida, Sun Coast and Southwest Florida)

Central Florida Presbytery	University of Central Florida TE Hardy Reynolds
Gulf Coast Presbytery	Florida State University TE Kelly Jackson University of South Alabama Open
North Florida Presbytery	University of Florida TE Brian Thomas University of North Florida TE Tommy Park
Southern Florida Presbytery	University of South Florida TE Aldo Mondin
Suncoast Presbytery	Florida Gulf Coast University TE Lucas Tanner
Southwest Florida Presbytery	Florida Atlantic University TE Jeff Lee
Great Lakes Presbytery	University of Michigan TE Robert Knuth
Heartland Presbytery	Kansas State University TE Jonathan Dunning
Heritage Presbytery	Delaware State (HBCU) TE Daryl Wattle University of Delaware & RUFIAffiliate Joey Barnet TE Rick Gray (RUFIA)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Highlands Presbytery

Appalachian State University
TE Rob Herron
Western Carolina University
TE Andrew Shank

Hills and Plains Presbytery

Oklahoma State University
Wilson Van Hooser
University of Arkansas
TE Austin Royal
University of Oklahoma
TE Scott Morris
University of Tulsa
TE Caleb Harlan

Houston Metro Presbytery

Rice University
Open
University of Houston
TE Brooks Harwood

Low Country Presbytery

College of Charleston
TE Jacob Lee

Metropolitan New York Presbytery

Columbia University and RUFIAffiliate
TE Eric Lipscomb
TE Andrew Terrell (RUFIAffiliate)
NYC City Campus
TE Matthew Terrell
TE Wei Ho

**Mid-South Joint Committee
(Covenant, Grace, and Mississippi Valley)**

Covenant Presbytery

Arkansas State University
TE Austin Braasch
Delta State University
TE Ro Taylor
Rhodes College
TE John Craft

Covenant Presbytery, cont'd	Mississippi State TE Joe Johnson University of Memphis TE John Crosby University of Mississippi TE Brian Sorgenfrei
Grace Presbytery	University of Southern Mississippi TE Davis Morgan
Mississippi Valley Presbytery	Belhaven University TE Bentley Crawford Jackson State University TE Anthony Forrest Mississippi College TE Jeff Jordan
Missouri Presbytery	University of Missouri TE David Barnes Washington University at St. Louis Tim Price
Nashville Presbytery	Austin Peay State University Will Cote Belmont University TE Kevin Twit Middle Tennessee State University TE Weston Duke Tennessee Tech University TE Gavin Breeden Vanderbilt University TE Richie Sessions Western Kentucky University TE James Jardin
New Jersey Presbytery	Rowan University Open

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New River Presbytery

West Virginia University

TE Peter Green

**North Georgia Joint Committee
(Georgia Foothills, Metro Atlanta,
NW Georgia)**

Georgia Foothills Presbytery

University of Georgia

TE Ben Coppedge

TE Jeff Thompson (RUF1)

Metro Atlanta Presbytery

Emory University

TE George Hamm

Georgia Tech & RUF1 Affiliate

TE Michael Phillips

TE Tracey West (RUF1)

Northwest Georgia Presbytery

Kennesaw State University

Open

North Texas Presbytery

Baylor University

TE Way Rutherford

Southern Methodist University

Open

Fee Kennedy (RUF1)

Texas Christian University

TE Bradford Green

Texas Tech University

TE Davis Sweatt

University of North Texas

TE Justin Smith

University of Texas-Tyler/Tyler

Junior College

TE John (JB) Wilbanks

RUF1 University of Texas –

Dallas

TE David Billingslea

University of Texas - Arlington

TE Nate Waddell

Northern California Presbytery

San Jose State

TE Brian Tsui

Stanford University

TE Crawford Stevener

**University of California –
Berkeley**

TE Chase Daws

University of Hawaii

Open Campus

Northern New England Presbytery

University of Vermont

TE John Meinen

Ohio Presbytery

Kent State University

TE Nate Bower

Ohio Valley Presbytery

University of Kentucky

TE Sam Taaffe

University of Louisville

Open

Pacific Presbytery

**University of California – Los
Angeles**

TE Matthew Trexler

**University of California – Santa
Barbara**

TE Johnathan Keenan

**University of Southern
California**

TE Alex Watlington

Pacific Northwest Presbytery

Boise State

TE Jay Denton

University of Washington

TE David Birnie

Western Washington University

Open

Oregon State University

TE Drew Burdette

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Palmetto Presbytery	University of South Carolina & RUFU Affiliate TE Sammy Rhodes TE Scott Andes (RUFU)
Piedmont Triad Presbytery	Wake Forest University TE John Bourgeois Winston Salem State TE Jonah Hooper
Pittsburgh Presbytery	University of Pittsburgh TE Derek Bates Indiana University of Pennsylvania TE Oliver Pierce
Platte Valley Presbytery	University of Nebraska TE Thomas Kuhn
Potomac Presbytery	George Mason University RUFU Affiliate TE Matthew DeLong (RUFU) Howard University TE Cyril Chavis University of Maryland TE Chris Garriott
Rio Grande Presbytery	New Mexico State University TE Jonathan Clark University of Texas El Paso Ed Ovalle
Rocky Mountain Presbytery	Colorado State University TE Wes Calton US Air Force Academy TE Jeff Kreisel Montana State University TE Cody Janicek
Siouxlands Presbytery	University of Minnesota TE Brandon Haan

South Coast Presbytery	University of California – Irvine TE Derek Rishmawy
South Texas Presbytery	Texas A&M University & RUFIAffiliate TE William Bondurant TE Titus Bagby (RUFIAffiliate) Texas A&M University Corpus Christi Open Trinity University TE Ross Lockwood University of Texas – Austin & RUFIAffiliate TE Jordan Griesbeck TE Terry Dykstra (RUFIAffiliate) University of Texas-San Antonio TE Lee Wright
Southern Louisiana Presbytery	Louisiana State University TE Ande Johnson Tulane University TE Josiah Carey
Southern New England Presbytery	Boston University TE Nathan Dicks Brown University/RISD Open Harvard University TE Michael Whitham MIT TE Solomon Kim University of Connecticut TE Lucas Dourado
Susquehanna Valley Presbytery	Millersville University TE Chris Peter Pennsylvania State University & RUFIAffiliate TE Cameron Smith TE Richard Smith (RUFIAffiliate)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Tennessee Valley

Carson Newman University

TE Chandler Rowlen

**University of Tennessee –
Chattanooga**

TE John Mark Scruggs

**University of Tennessee
Knoxville & RUFIAffiliate**

TE Mike Ford

TE Lee Leadbetter (RUFIA)

**Virginia Joint Committee (Blue
Ridge, Tidewater, and James River**

Blue Ridge Presbytery

James Madison University

TE Joe Slater

University of Virginia

TE Robert Cunningham

Virginia Tech

TE Heath McLaughen

Liberty University – Lynchburg

TE Ben Spivey

Washington and Lee University

TE Lewis Lovett

Tidewater Presbytery

Christopher Newport University

TE Jeff David Lee

College of William and Mary

TE Ben Robertson

James River Presbytery

**Virginia Commonwealth
University**

TE Peter Lyon

Westminster Presbytery

East Tennessee State University

TE Will Barbour

Wisconsin Presbytery

**University of Wisconsin –
Milwaukee**

TE Nick Bratcher

Wisconsin Presbytery, cont'd.

**University of Wisconsin –
Madison**

TE Cameron Brown

MTW Affiliations

**National Autonomous University
of Mexico**

Barush Sanchez

Bogota, Columbia

TE Peter Dishman

L’VIV, Ukraine

TE Kirk Norris

Malaysia

TE Curtis Shields

West Africa

TE Collin Jennings

Tokyo, Japan

Jeff Saunders

Serge

Granada, Spain

Aaron Gray (2019-present)

**Reformed University Fellowship
Current Interns and Staff**

1st Year Interns:

Maggie Aldin - Texas A&M	Sam Johnson - Alabama
Emily Anderson - UTK	Isaac Jones - UNC
Rachel Anderson - Boise State	Nicholas Manley - UT Austin
Tim Benton - Southern Miss	Mark McDonnell - Memphis
Peyton Boucek - TCU	Susan McElroy - Wake Forest
Megan Brobst - Christopher Newport	Zac McGee - Florida Atlantic
Lucy Burton - Trinity	Valerie Meck - Maryland
Joshua Campbell - MTSU	Jessica Mercer - GA Tech
Meliah Campbell - MTSU	Scott Moore - UAH
Maria Caprio - UT Austin	Kimmy Mota - Houston
Emily Cartledge - JMU	Beck Muse - Clemson
Mamie Clark - VA Tech	Will Nabholz - Indiana
Andrew Collins - NCSU	Sophia Navarro - SMU (RUF-I)
Ellie Cunningham - U. of KY	Jeffrey Neikirk - Tennessee Tech
Madison Daniels - College of Charleston	Andrew Newman - UCSB
Jarrett Delozier - UTK	Mari Nordeen - Hawaii
Jacob Dirrim - OK State	Clare Obenchain - Samford
Cody Duncan - Western Carolina	Abby Plott - UT Tyler
Janelle Eggleston - Colombia (RUF-G)	Everett Pollard - Arkansas
Calais Eledui - Penn State	Christina Ribbens - Michigan
Jasmine Espinosa - USA	Jeremiah Rinehart - UGA
Etta Farlow - Belmont	Leah Riser - Tulsa
Gabriel Garcia - Houston	Sarah Rogers - App State
Ben Gilbert - Washington & Lee	Sophie Rooks - UConn
Sam Griffin - Winthrop	Daniel Schwertz - UCLA
Taylor Gumm - UConn	Elle Shuford - Florida
Noah Hamstra - Arizona	Laws Smith - Washington & Lee
Makenzie Harper - Minnesota	Lizzie Smith - Alabama
Rebecca Hatton - Arkansas	Helena Snow - OK State
Logan Hewitt - Oklahoma	Rebekah Taylor - Arizona
Harrison Holmes - Texas A&M	Olivia Thurman - Rice
Leslie Howe - W. KY (RUF-I)	Jeffrey Timmers - Auburn
Christian Huff - UC Berkeley	Ben Tucker - Northwestern
Hannah Humphreys - Belhaven	Sean Walsh - Samford
Jon James - UAB	Morgan Watkins - Purdue
	Haley Williams - NYC City Campus

2nd Year Interns:

Caroline Agan - Stanford
 Kate Anderson - WCU
 Natascha Anderson - U. of MO
 Caysie Ashton - UGA
 Jameson Barnes - UK
 Hannah Baugher - Jacksonville
 State
 Annalee Bell - UCF
 Jamison Brown - Vanderbilt
 Anne Michael Carter - MS State
 Grant Carter - MS State
 Austin Cassel - CO State
 Kathryn Cavin - Washington U.
 (STL)
 Connor Childers - U. of Tulsa
 Joshua Coleman - Rice
 Caroline Cotten - Wofford
 Amanda Cunningham - LSU
 Matthew Dabiero - Millersville U.
 James Depret-Guillaume - Mercer
 Nicholas DeVusser - Queens U.
 Jay Dial - South Alabama
 Joanna Disch - ECU
 Andrew Donnell - Stanford
 Kaylee Epps - U. of MS
 Izzy Essary - Southern California
 Molly Farrell - UTK (RUF1)
 Thomas Fleming - Western KY
 Annie Frazier - U. of North TX
 Ali Gosselin - U. of WA
 Katie Halsey - Alabama
 Graham Harmon - Baylor
 Kathryn Hoffecker - Louisville
 Samantha Hubbard - Clemson
 Cole Jones - UVA
 Sarah Jayne Kennelly - U. of VT
 Clare Knudsen - SCAD
 Joseph Lau - Emory
 Dakota Lee - Wake Forest
 David Leffler - U. of MN
 Kate Mahafza - Duke
 Victoria Marsh - FL State
 Christian McConnon - James
 Madison
 Blaire McFadden - Vanderbilt
 Hannah Michalchuk - TCU
 Ben Milam - U. of MS
 Aldo Mondin - North FL
 Kelley Murphree - Southern Miss
 Lucy Myers-UNCW
 Emily Owen - KS State
 Jonathan Pickell - TX A&M
 Emily Plattner - UCF
 Grace Potter - Kennessaw State
 Sergio Prieto - Bogota, Colombia
 Joshua Putrasahan - Vanderbilt
 Nathan Rackers - Brown
 James Rantzow - Rhodes College
 Eva Ravenel - Houston
 Catherine Remington - CO State
 Madelaine Robinson - NM State
 Merrianna Robinson - Emory
 Paulina Rodriguez - Bogota,
 Colombia
 Weldon Saunders - UVA
 Mollie Schmidt - Mercer
 Tucker Scruggs - Duke
 Joy Soas - UAH
 Ryan Taylor - FL State
 Grace Valenti - Meredith College
 Heather Walters - UCSB
 Anne Webb - Auburn
 Matt Williams - Wake Forest
 Maddie Willis - U. of MS
 Abby Windsor - Washington & Lee
 Deborah Wisner - NM State

3rd Year Interns:

Katie Allen – Memphis
Cathy Clark – Western Kentucky
Paul Davis – U. of Washington
Molly Delaney – U. of Oklahoma
Trevor Heffner – UGA
Caleb Jakana – LSU
Serena Jones – Boston
Zenny Jua – Pittsburgh

Andrew Kawata – Hawaii
Brad Myers – UNC Wilmington
Noah Rinehart – Wash. St. Louis
Grace Ann Rothwell – Kentucky
Josh Shaner – Maryland
Caroline Terry – South Carolina
Lizzy Williams – Arkansas

RUF Campus Staff:

Latasha Allston – Jackson State
Katherine Ashbaugh - Winthrop
Joy Beans - UMBC
Alex Bosgraf – Boise State
Kathleen Chitty – Stanford
Grace Ann Clark – Vanderbilt
Catherine Cook – Harvard
Amanda DeYoung – Wesleyan
Lauren Dishman - Bogota
Bethany Ekdorn - Tulsa
Carrie Everitt - Mercer
Mary Henley Green - UT Austin
Janelle Grove – George Mason RUF
Norah Harvey - Western
Washington
Hanna Hammond - Northwestern
RUF
Heidi Hill - SMU RUF
Grace Hoyme - UCSB
Amy Hudson – UAB
Leslie Janikowsky – Rhodes College
Ellis Keifer – Wake Forest

Chelsea Kelly – William & Mary
Morgan Kendrick - UC Berkeley
Jennifer Kent – Clemson
Hailey Kim - UC Irvine
Ava Ligh - Columbia
Callie Miller – Pittsburgh
Jenny Ott - UTK RUF
Jamie Pastori – UT Chattanooga
Kelly Sanford - UCLA
Monse Santiago - Cal State San
Marcos
Laura Sharrett – Emory
Brittany Smith – U. of Arizona
Savannah Medvedev – College of
Charleston
Cayla Sherrell – James Madison
Olivia Shields – Baylor
Katie Stapleton - UNC
Kristen Thompson - Wash U.
Wendy Twit - Belmont
Carissa Waller - App State
Zurielly Jennings - Senegal

RUF National Staff:

National Coordinator, Will Huss
Associate Coordinator, John Pearson
Coordinator Emeritus, Rod Mays
Chief Financial Officer, Kathy Leedy

APPENDIX K

Chief Operating Officer, Dennis Shackleford
Chief Advancement Officer, Kevin Teasley
Assistant Coordinator RUF-N, Keith Berger
Assistant Coordinator RUF-I & G, Chad Brewer
Assistant Coordinator of Interns & Campus Staff, Mitch Gindlesperger
Assistant Coordinator of Cross Cultural Advancement, Russ Whitfield
Area Coordinator, JR Foster
Area Coordinator, Pat Roach
Area Coordinator, Michael Gordon
Area Coordinator, Justin Clement
Area Coordinator, Jason Little
Area Coordinator, Britton Wood
Area Coordinator, Brent Corbin
Area Coordinator, Andy Wood
Area Coordinator, SJ Lim
Area Coordinator, Chris Morrison
Director of Ministry, Communication and Events, Emily Miller
Director of Interns, Emily Nixon
Director of Campus Staff, Casey Cockrum
Director of Accounting, Cheryl Lundy
Director of Annual Giving, George Crook
Director of Donor Services, Michelle Stone
Director of Marketing, Elisabeth Givens
HR & Benefits Administrator, Courtney Hulteen
Assistant Director of Advancement, Caroline Jones
Assistant Director of Communications & Events, Jake Wynn
Assistant Director of Accounting, Davia Lester
Assistant Director of Donor Services, Donna Ellis
Intern Recruiting Associate, Jayna Duckenfield
Accounting Associate, April Sutton
Donor Service Associate, Amy Work
Donor Service Associate, Sojin Chi
Executive Assistant, Anna Brown
Intern and CS Assistant, Caroline White
Intern Care Assistant, James Post
Intern Care Assistant, Daniel Tortorici
Administrative Assistant, Ainsley Huddy
Administrative Assistant, Kristy Hard
Administrative Assistant, Meredith Brooks
Administrative Assistant, Andrea Hendrix
Administrative Assistant, Deborah Oakley
Administrative Assistant, Reagan Ta

APPENDIX L

RIDGE HAVEN BREVARD, NC – CONO, IA REPORT TO THE 49th PCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

We are reminded, yet again, of the Lord's faithfulness to us. It is with great joy that we are able to report an encouraging year at Ridge Haven. Emerging from two summers greatly affected by COVID, we strive to not take for granted what an honor it is to serve in God's Kingdom work and see His hand moving among our youth.

In 2021 we hosted over 12,000 campers and guests. As we reflect on the past eight years, we see that God brought over 78,000 people through the ministry of Ridge Haven. Please join us in prayer that our Lord would continue to use this camp, conference, and retreat center as a place of rest and encouragement for His Church.

Additionally, we are looking forward to a full summer in 2022 as we already are seeing a 54% increase in summer registrants compared to this time last year. Unfortunately, this means we have already had to waitlist many camp sessions. Similarly, we are experiencing a great increase in our staff applicants and are eager to get back to a fully staffed and attended summer at Ridge Haven.

Over the past two years our staff has been stretched and challenged in ministry. COVID has brought "trials and tribulations" for everyone and through it all the Lord has supplied mercy and strength for our staff to continue in His work. In light of 2021 being a strong year, we were able to bring on several additions to our full-time staff that should help anchor Ridge Haven as we prepare for another record year in 2022.

We are thrilled to announce the launch of a new Gap Year Program. Paired alongside our year-round Internships, the Gap Year Program provides high school graduates, college students and graduates an opportunity to engage in our ministry while assessing how the Lord has gifted them for further work in His Kingdom. A lot of our youth are struggling with the pressure of finding their call and we hope to help provide a chance for them to reflect on the Lord's gifting, while gaining practical experience in ministry.

Many camps are struggling to continue finding staff to engage in summer work, and Ridge Haven is no exception. However, we do report great encouragement with the eagerness of our high school students to freely give their time towards ministry. Our Camp Summer Internship (CSI) program has continued to grow each summer. This is an opportunity for high school students to join our team and invest in camp ministry while growing in their walk with the Lord through increasing their knowledge of Him, experiencing a community of like-minded believers, and serving in His Kingdom work. In order to minister to this demand, we are restructuring our staff to provide ample support, encouragement and oversight for this ministry. While we are fortunate to have so many important ministries, our CSI program is perhaps our favorite, as it allows young men and women with ministry gifts to find their way towards life-long ministry work.

Our expanding camps and staff are a wonderful problem to have and something that by God's grace is being supported through our Capital Campaign. At this point, we have been able to raise 91% of our 5.1-million-dollar Capital Campaign. Please take a moment to praise God for His graciousness and providence, as we have felt His goodness every day this past year. We have begun construction on our 10,000 plus square foot multi-purpose gym. Our previous largest indoor meeting space seated 250 and thus has greatly limited our year-round ministry. This new space will provide a space for over a thousand people to meet, which is great news for the multiple groups of over 400 people planning to attend this year. Hopefully, by the time of our General Assembly gathering, the new gym will be completed and serving thousands throughout the summer. In addition to this multi-purpose gym, we are adding additional camper and staff housing for the upcoming summer. Our aim is to have three additional cabins supplying 56 additional beds.

For the first time, we hosted over 1,000 people during 2021 at Ridge Haven Cono. Our Jr. High and High School programs are in their second year with nine students and our RH Cono Homeschool Coop serves 15 students. We have also averaged 14 students from a pool of 22 students that attend our weekly youth gatherings. As Ridge Haven strives to serve the PCA throughout our country we are grateful for the opportunity we have to connect with our churches in the Midwest and serve the communities of Walker, Iowa and the surrounding area.

Brothers and sisters, please be praying for Ridge Haven, alongside all the other PCA Agencies. We need the church's prayers for God's blessings here at

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ridge Haven. Pray that the Lord will continue to grow our campers, guests, and staff in their knowledge of Him and an ever-deepening love for His Son. Pray for wisdom and safety for our youth as we grow, and that God would protect His people. We are pursuing stricter child protection policies than ever before and recognize our ultimate reliance on His mercy and grace in all areas. Finally, please pray for the conclusion of our Capital Campaign, and that we seek our Heavenly Father's will for Ridge Haven and give Him the glory for his overwhelming blessings and providence.

Recommendations:

1. That the Ridge Haven 2023 Budget as presented through the AC Budget Review Committee be approved.
2. That the 2020 audit dated August 23, 2021, performed by Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan, be received.
3. That the following minutes of the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven be approved: March 8-10, 2021, and September 27-29, 2021.
4. That February 19, 2023, be a day for our churches to pray for the ministries of Ridge Haven.

APPENDIX M

REPORT OF THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES COMMITTEE TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The Cooperative Ministries Committee (CMC) is designed to unite the leaders of our various agencies and institutions with the elected leaders of the General Assembly in coordinated ministry to advance the mission of the PCA as a whole. The simple goal is to have all the horses in the harness pulling in the same direction. That goal is achieved by relational camaraderie as well as by ministry strategizing, denominational assessment, and shared insights regarding best practices and resources for advancing Christ's mission in our challenging times.

The Cooperative Ministries Committee met on January 19, 2022. Committee and Agency leaders shared challenges, goals, and prayers. The committee rejoices to report that many examples of interagency cooperation, communication, and collaboration were shared (*RAO 7-3*).

Committee members are also seeking to have more coordinated communication with the denomination through *byFaith*, and have asked one of their members, Dr. Murray Lee, Pastor of Cahaba Park PCA and MNA Chairman, who has a Ph.D. in organizational management, to help them consider together how better to coordinate energies and efforts for the good of all (cf. *RAO 7-3.c*).

Members of the CMC are the chairmen and chief administrative officers of the General Assembly permanent Committees and Agencies. The current Moderator and the immediate past five moderators of the General Assembly are advisory members, having six-year terms.

APPENDIX N

REPORT OF THE INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Membership

TE Kevin Rogers, E. Canada 2022

RE Paul Richards, Nashville, 2022

TE E. Marvin Padgett, Nashville 2023

RE James D. Walters, Calvary 2023

TE L. Roy Taylor, Calvary, 2024

RE James B. Isbell, TN Valley 2024

TE Scott Reiber, Alt.

RE Dennis Watts, MS Valley Alt.

TE Bryan C. Chapell, N. Illinois, *ex officio*¹

TE Billy Park, AC/SC Korean Relations Representative, advisory member

TE Cartee Bales, MTW Senior Director Field Operations, advisory member

Meetings (both electronic meetings via Zoom call)

- September 8, 2021
- April 12, 2022

Role of the IRC

- The IRC relates to other branches of the Church Universal (*WCF* Chs. 25-26).
- The PCA is a member of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Counsel (NAPARC). NAPARC is a council of Presbyterian and Reformed denominations in North America.
- The PCA is a member of the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF). The International Reformed Fellowship (IRF) began at a 1994 meeting of the World Evangelical Alliance with PCA participation. The IRF became part of the WRF in 2000. The PCA was a constituting member of WRF in 2000. The WRF includes Reformed denominations, congregations, institutions, and individuals who adhere to the WRF Statement of Faith.
- The PCA is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE); the NAE is a member of the World Evangelical Alliance. The NAE is composed of evangelical denominations, congregations, institutions, and individuals who adhere to the NAE Statement of Faith. The Stated Clerk of the PCA is a member of the Board of Directors of the NAE by virtue of his office.

Items Discussed

- Delegates to the 2021 NAPARC meeting. The PCA will host the November 2022 NAPARC meeting in the Greater Atlanta Area.
- The Reformed Churches (Liberated), Netherlands, report on their 2021 Synod meeting and an additional communication that the Reformed Church (Liberated), Netherlands, and the Netherlands Reformed Churches intend to merge in 2023. The united denomination will be known as the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (known as de Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerken in Dutch). The Interchurch Relations Committee of the united denomination will be known as the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad.
- Video presentations by fraternal delegates and ecclesiastical observers will be made to the Forty-ninth General Assembly.
- RPCNA's video report to the Forty-Eighth General Assembly. Some comments have been received.
- The election of IRC officers for 2022-2023.
- RBI's extending coverage to the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC) and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP).
- Dr. Bryan Chapell's sending video greetings to the Presbyterian Church of Korea, Hapdong.
- An invitation from the ARP to send a fraternal delegate to the ARP General Synod at Bonclarken June 7-9.
- Appointing a fraternal delegate to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church General Assembly June 8-14 at St. David's, PA.
- Appointing delegates to the General Assembly of the World Reformed Fellowship, October 27-30 at the First Presbyterian Church (EPC) of Orlando, FL.
- Appointing a fraternal delegate to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil July 24-31 in Cuiaba, Brazil.
- Appointing a fraternal delegate to the Presbyterian Church of Mexico July 18-21 in Tabasco, Mexico.
- Authorizing the chairman and Stated Clerk to appoint fraternal delegates to other General Assemblies and General Synods as invitations are received.
- Authorizing the chairman and Stated Clerk to write the IRC report to the General Assembly.
- Reminding committee members of their responsibilities of hosting fraternal delegates to the PCA Forty-ninth General Assembly.
- Response to Overture 2022-3 from Pee Dee Presbytery.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Actions taken by the IRC

- Elected delegates to the November 9-11, 2022 meeting of NAPARC
 - TE Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk
 - TE L. Roy Taylor
 - RE James B. Isbell
 - RE E. Marvin Padgett
- Elected officers for 2022-2023
 - Chairman – L. Roy Taylor
 - Vice-chairman – Marvin Padgett
 - Secretary – James D. Walters
- Elected the Stated Clerk to be the fraternal delegate to the ARP General Synod at Bonclarken June 7-9.
- Elected TE Nicolas Hathaway to be the fraternal delegate to the OPC General Assembly June 8-14 at St. David's, PA.
- Elected TE Bryan Chapell and TE L. Roy Taylor to be part of the PCA delegation to the General Assembly of WRF at the First Presbyterian Church of Orlando, FL October 27-30 and authorized the chairman and Stated Clerk to appoint others in the Greater Orlando Area to complete the PCA delegation.
- Elected the Stated Clerk as fraternal delegate to the Presbyterian Church of Mexico July 18-21 in Tabasco, Mexico.
- Authorized the chairman and Stated Clerk to write the IRC report to the General Assembly.
- Authorized the chairman and Stated Clerk to appoint fraternal delegates to other General Assemblies and General Synods as invitations are received.
- Decided that the minutes of April 12, 2022 would be circulated to the committee and approved by email.

Recommendations

1. That Fraternal Delegates, Corresponding Delegates, and Ecclesiastical Observers be welcomed and that the Assembly hear their greetings.
2. That visiting ministers be introduced to the General Assembly (*BCO* 13-3).
3. That the minutes of September 8, 2021, be approved without exception.
4. That the minutes of April 12, 2022, be approved without exception.
5. That Overture 2022-3 from Pee Dee Presbytery, "Withdraw from the National Association of Evangelicals" be answered in the negative based on the following grounds:

Grounds:

- 1) Overture 2022-3 repeats several arguments of Overtures 2011-12 and 2019-23 from Central Carolina Presbytery that the General Assembly has answered in the negative twice.

- 2) The PCA's being a member of the NAE is consistent with our Lord Jesus' prayer of John 17.
- 3) The PCA's being a member of the NAE is consistent with our theology of the Church as expressed in the *Westminster Confession*, Chapters 25 and 26.
- 4) The First General Assembly gave Mission to the World permission to join the NAE to benefit from the NAE's services and expertise of the World Relief Commission, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, and the Chaplains Commission (*MIGA*, 1973, p. 39). In 1973, military chaplains were under MTW, but were later transferred to MNA.
- 5) In 1986, after several years of study, the IRC recommended that the PCA as a denomination join the NAE, citing six reasons.ⁱⁱ Those reasons are still valid. The General Assembly approved the PCA's joining the NAE as a denomination (*MIGA*, 1986, pp. 323-324).
- 6) The PCA General Assembly has spoken to issues that have moral and ethical implications including:
 - a. Abortion
 - b. Homosexuality
 - c. Biblical Marriage between one man and one woman
 - d. Religious Liberty
 - e. Racial Reconciliation
 - f. Nuclear War
- 7) The NAE is not a synod or council (*WCF* 31-5, *BCO* 3-3); it is an association of denominations, institutions, congregations, and individuals. The NAE does not speak to all political issues, (see <https://www.nae.org/for-the-health-of-the-nation/>) but only to issues that have moral or ethical implications such as
 - a. Abortion
 - b. Homosexuality
 - c. Biblical Marriage between one man and one woman
 - d. Religious Liberty
 - e. Racial Reconciliation
- 8) The actions of the General Assembly do not reflect the unanimous opinions of all members of the PCAⁱⁱⁱ any more than the actions of the Board of Directors of the NAE reflect the opinions of every individual member of the NAE member denominations. There are different opinions on political issues that have moral and ethical implications by individual members of both the PCA and the NAE. The NAE, like the PCA, reflects a constituency not a monolith.
- 9) Overture 2022-3, like Overture 2019-23 alleges that the NAE "has changed its stance on the death penalty." Actually, the action taken

- October 19, 2015 was simply to recognize that there are differences among Evangelicals regarding the death penalty because of racial and economic inequities in the use of the death penalty, the costs to the state of decades of appeals (it is cheaper to give life sentences without parole), and that innocent people have been executed. There are those in the PCA of the same opinion. Overture 2019-23's asserting, as a new argument, that the NAE "has changed its original stance on the death penalty" could be understood as the NAE's going on record as opposing the death penalty in every instance. *That interpretation is factually incorrect.* The Washington Post article referenced in Overture 2019-23 acknowledges that the NAE's 2015 position is more nuanced than its 1973 position. However, the 2015 resolution *did not* say that there are no circumstances in which the death penalty is appropriate. The article simply pointed out that with the advances in DNA technology to prevent innocent persons from being executed, the facts that African-American, Hispanic, and low-income prisoners are more likely to be executed, and the generational differences in perspectives make the death penalty a more complex issue today than in 1973. Our confessional position is that the state has the power of the sword to punish evildoers, which may include capital punishment (WCF 23-1). Neither the NAE 1973, nor 2015 resolutions are contrary to our confessional position that the state has the power of the sword.
- 10) Overture 2022-3 repeats the allegation of Overture 2019-23 that the NAE passed a motion entitled, "Fairness for All." The NAE Board of Directors did *not* approve a motion for "Fairness for All." The Executive Committee, prior to the Board meeting, discussed the issue as a legal protection for Christian colleges October 11, 2018. However, when discussed by the Board, the Board did *not* approve a motion for "Fairness for All." As of October 11, 2018, no congressional representative or senator had introduced a "Fairness for All" legislation in the Congress.
- 11) Like Overtures 2011-12 and 2019-23, Overture 2022-3 repeats the same allegation that the RPCNA withdrew from the NAE in 2009 for theological reasons. The minutes of the General Synod did not cite the grounds for the action. The alleged theological compromise with Muslims was not communicated to the President of the NAE until a year after the RPCNA withdrew from the NAE. The RPCNA's IRC did *not* recommend that the RPCNA withdraw from the NAE; that motion came from the floor by one of the commissioners. See the endnote v for further details.^{iv}

ⁱ An *ex officio* member has both a voice and a vote, *RONR* (12th ed.) 49:8-9, 50:16.

ⁱⁱ The six reasons were: 1. Joining the NAE will give us the opportunity to express our oneness with brothers and sisters without the implications of a Church Council or doing ecclesiastical functions. It will strengthen our identity as a biblical voice on the American scene where the name "Presbyterian" frequently is associated with theological liberalism. Our confession of one holy catholic church needs to be more than a mere confession (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapters 25 and 26); — our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be o n e ..." (John 17:20); and, the Apostle Paul wrote, "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body ..." (Ephesians 4:2-4). 2. Joining the NAE will magnify our voice in speaking to the moral issues of the day as we unite with 15 million other believers and 47 other NAE denominations; — by uniting with Christians from other communions, we will be in a better position to put "feet" to our prayers for national righteousness (Proverbs 14:35) and to our help for the world's poor and hungry, doing together what none can do alone. 3. Joining the NAE will enrich our fellowship and help to break down caricatures of the Reformed position and have our own caricatures of other communions corrected; — we cannot afford the luxury of remaining apart in the face of the materialistic paganism in America. Our brothers and sisters who love Christ and honor His Word need to know that we are interested in having fellowship beyond our narrow Reformed family. 4. Joining the NAE will enable us to express our voice and theology in helping to formulate and articulate a Christian world and life view within the NAE; — by uniting with Christians from other communions, we will have the opportunity to dialogue on central theological issues (e .g., the Sovereignty of God, the extent of the atonement, the kingdom of God). 5. Joining the NAE will enable us to take up our responsibilities for the ministries of the NAE commissions/affiliates from which the PCA presently benefits; — membership in the NAE will make the PCA a part owner of the World Relief Corporation, a wholly owned corporation of the NAE. 6. Joining the NAE will give us the opportunity to be linked with a worldwide group of evangelicals; — each national evangelical association around the world is a member of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). Both the NAE and the WEF will provide a much needed sense of support to the PCA as she seeks to fulfill her Lord's command to go into all the world and make disciples.

ⁱⁱⁱ We have Chapter 45 in the *BCO*, "Dissents, Protests, and Objections," which is often employed at the General Assembly as the Minutes of the General Assembly record.

^{iv} The RPCNA's withdrawal from the NAE needs to be understood in its context.

- The RPCNA was a member of the NAE since 1949. Dr. Jack White of the RPCNA was Secretary of the Board and Dr. D. Howard Elliott of the RPCNA was President for a time.
- RPCNA concerns were expressed to the NAE Board Chairman that a statement on Creation Care could be misunderstood as radical environmentalism. The Creation Care portion of the Health of the Nation document was carefully crafted

(with PCA representative input) so that it would be a biblical and responsible statement and did not endorse a radical position, either right or left. Moreover, the NAE staff was instructed by the board not to go beyond the NAE's adopted position.

- The President (Leith Anderson) and Board Chairman (Roy Taylor) met with representatives of the RPCNA at an NAE Board meeting in Orlando in March 2008 and discussed RPCNA concerns.
- The RPCNA delegation asked the advice of NAPARC regarding participation in the NAE at the November, 2008 meeting. The PCA delegation (Craig Higgins and Roy Taylor) discussed the matter with the RPCNA brothers.
- The RPCNA's Interchurch Relations Committee did *not* recommend to the General Synod that the RPCNA withdraw from the NAE; rather they recommended that the Synod discuss the matter. After fifteen minutes of discussion, a motion from the floor was made that the RPCNA withdraw. The motion secured a majority vote (*Minutes of the RPNCA General Synod*, June 24, 2009, pp. 120-121). No grounds for the action were specified in the Minutes.
- The RPCNA reported to NAPARC at the November 2009 meeting, "We wish to thank the Council for the discussion held one year ago on membership in the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). We found it helpful but our committee was still not persuaded one way or another, therefore, we asked our Synod for a discussion of the matter to see whether the delegates would give us a clear indication on whether to continue our membership. Instead a motion was offered from the floor calling for an end to this membership and the motion passed" (RPCNA Report to NAPARC, fall, 2009).
- *In August 26, 2010, over one year after the RPCNA General Synod's action*, a member of the RPCNA Interchurch Relations Committee informed the NAE President and Board Chairman of the Synod's 2009 action and mentioned NAE President Dr. Leith Anderson's participation in a conference of Christians, Jews, and Muslims held at Yale University, (July 2008) and the document entitled "Loving God and Neighbor Together" (November, 2007) that was the basis of the conference. The letter mentioned other unspecified concerns. The letter concluded by saying, "We are not closing the door to future cooperation and/or membership with the NAE, but we pray that our action may be a means that God will use to help to encourage the NAE to be faithful to its commitment to 'cooperate without compromise.'"
- On September 13, 2009, the President of the NAE responded to the RPCNA Interchurch Committee. He stated that the Yale Conference of 2007 was not mentioned by the RPCNA delegation in the meeting with them and the NAE President and Chairman in 2008. Dr. Anderson also mentioned that at the Yale Conference he had clearly given a straightforward explanation of biblical evangelical doctrine on God and salvation only through the Lord Jesus Christ. So clear was the NAE president's explanation, that salvation was only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that a Jewish rabbi, strongly objected.

APPENDIX O

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

I. Introduction

The Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) met prior to the 49th General Assembly at the PCA Administrative Offices in Lawrenceville, GA on April 25, 2022.

Attendance at the meeting was as follows:

Teaching Elders

Chris Florence – Present

Larry Hoop, chairman – Present

Scott Phillips – Present

Joel St. Clair – Present

Robert Cathcart (Alt.) – Present

Ruling Elders

Matt Fender – Present

Tom Harley – Present

Fredric Marcinak – Present

Edward Wright – Present

Bryce Sullivan (Alt.) – Present

General Assembly Stated Clerk, TE Bryan Chapell was also present.

II. Advice to Proposed Changes to the Constitution and the *RAO*

The Stated Clerk referred the following overtures to the Committee:

- A. Overture 2 from Tennessee Valley Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 22-3 to allow Assistant Pastors to file Complaints against Sessions”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 2 **creates conflict** with *BCO* 43-1 which states that “It is the right of any communing member of the Church in good standing to make a complaint against any action of a court to whose jurisdiction he is subject.” Although the inclusion of this new language in *BCO* 22-3 would provide for Assistant Pastors to file complaints against the Sessions they serve, it is in direct conflict with what *BCO* 43-1 stipulates, which is that complaints must be under the jurisdiction of the court to which he is filing a complaint. Assistant

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Pastors are under the jurisdiction of the presbyteries of which they are members. *Adopted by the CCB*

- B.** Overture 6 from Nashville Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 Regarding Suspensions during Process or Delay”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 6 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- C.** Overture 7 from Nashville Presbytery: "Amend *BCO* 42-6 Regarding Suspending Judgment during Appeal”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 6 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- D.** Overture 8 from Houston Metro Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 33-1 and *BCO* 34-1 Establishing Percentage Threshold for Original Jurisdiction Requests”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 8 is **in conflict** with the principle that every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine, etc., in *BCO* 11-4 and 31-2, as this proposed motion would potentially allow other courts to assume original jurisdiction before the appropriate lower court has exercised its right. *Adopted by the CCB*

- E.** Overture 9 from Calvary Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 34-1 Establishing Threshold for Original Jurisdiction Requests”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 9 is **in conflict** with the principle that every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine, etc., in *BCO* 11-4 and 31-2, as this proposed motion would potentially allow other courts to assume original jurisdiction before the appropriate lower court has exercised its right. *Adopted by the CCB*

- F.** Overture 11 from Korean Capital Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 25-2.e and Add a New Item *BCO* 25-2.f, New Percentage Threshold for Calling Large Church Congregational Meetings”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 11 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- G.** Overture 12 from Hills and Plains Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding a New Paragraph *BCO* 16-4 with Wording from the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 12 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. CCB notes that Overtures 23, 20, and 29 contain similar language to amend *BCO* 16-4. *Adopted by the CCB*

- H.** Overture 14 from Westminster Presbytery: “Change the Composition of the SJC by Amending *BCO* 15-4 and *RAO* 17-1; 3 Amend *OMSJC* 5.1 and 6.1”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 14 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. However, CCB notes that the final adoption of the amendment to *BCO* 15-4 proposed by the overture would need to occur before the adoption of the amendments to the *RAO* and *OMSJC* in order to avoid a conflict with the existing provisions of *BCO* 15-4. Additionally, the adoption of the changes proposed by the overture may warrant additional changes to the *OMSJC* with regard to numbers of members required for certain actions.

Adopted by the CCB

- I.** Overture 15 from Westminster Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 7 to Disqualify from Office Men Identifying as Homosexual”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 15 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution.

Adopted by the CCB

- J.** Overture 16 from TE Ted Lester: “Amend *BCO* 25-2 to Require Annual Congregational Meeting and Reporting Standards”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 16 **creates conflict** with *BCO* 29-2, 36-3, 36-4, 36-6, and 37-4. The added language of the overture that states “and a disclosure of the status or outcome of any judicial actions involving the Session or its members” is in conflict with:

1. *BCO* 29-2, in that some offenses are private and some are public. If the language in this Overture was to be adopted, then all offenses would become public.
2. *BCO* 36-2, which states that “For private offenses, censure should be administered in the presence of the court alone, or in private by one or more members of the court.”

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

These offenses were never meant to be made public before a congregational meeting.

Additionally, *BCO* 36-2 states that “In the case of public offenses, the degree of censure and mode of administering it shall be within the discretion of the court.” The language of this overture would suggest the Session would be required to bring these censures to bear in front of the entire congregation and they would no longer have discretionary powers regarding mode of administration.

3. *BCO* 36-3, which states that the “Censure of Admonition should be administered in private by one or members of the court if the offense is known only to a few and is not aggravated in character. If the offense is public the Admonition should be administered by the moderator in presence of the court and may also be announced in public should the court deem it expedient.” This overture does not distinguish between public and private offenses, and it also removes any notion of discretion by the court as to how to bring the Admonition to bear (privately or publicly). *BCO* 36-3 states that the Court may announce the censure in public. It is not compulsory.
4. *BCO* 36-4, which states that for Definite Suspension, “public announcement thereof shall be at the court’s discretion.” Again, the language of this overture would force the Session make the censure public.
5. *BCO* 36-6, which states that for the censure of Excommunication, can “be inflicted in public as the court may decide.” The language of this overture would force the court to make this censure public.
6. *BCO* 37-4, which states that when restoring an excommunicated person, it “may be done in the presence of the court, or of the congregation as seems best to the Session.” The language of this overture would force the public disclosure of this removal of censure.

Adopted by the CCB

- K.** Overture 17 from TE Ted Lester: “Amend *BCO* 32-3 to Require Open Proceedings for Trials”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overtures 17 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution.

Adopted by the CCB

APPENDIX O

- L. Overture 18 from Pacific Northwest Presbytery: “Amend *RAO* 3-2 by Adding an Administrative Responsibility for the Stated Clerk’s Office Regarding the Processing of Allegations.”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 18 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- M. Overture 19 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 15-2 Regarding Presbytery Commission Membership and Quorum”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 19 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- N. Overture 20 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications for Ordination”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overtures 20 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. CCB notes that Overtures 12, 23, and 29 contain similar language to amend *BCO* 16-4. *Adopted by the CCB*

- O. Overture 21 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery: "Amend *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 Regarding Timing of Filing a Complaint”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 21 is **ambiguous**, in that it does not stipulate what would occur if the complaint were filed less than 7 days in advance. Although the intent of the overture is clearly stated in the Whereas clauses, it is not clearly stipulated in the actual language of the proposed amendment. If a complainant files a complaint less than seven days in advance of a stated meeting of the court, it assumes that the complaint does not need to be acted upon at that stated meeting, but the language of the amendment does not stipulate when it can be deliberated. It is assumed it would be the meeting following that stated meeting, or a called meeting, but this is not stipulated by the language of the overture. *Adopted by the CCB*

- P. Overture 22 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery: “Amend *RAO* 3-2.h, Making Statistical Data Digitally Accessible”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 22 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The CCB also advised the Stated Clerk that the Administrative Committee's response to Overture 22 is **not in conflict**.

Adopted by the CCB

- Q.** Overture 23 from Southeast Alabama Presbytery: "Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications for Ordination"

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 23 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. CCB noted that Overtures 12, 20, and 29 contain similar language to amend *BCO* 16-4. *Adopted by the CCB*

- R.** Overture 24 from Houston Metro Presbytery: "Amend *RAO* 11-2 and 11-10 to Clarify Who May Submit an Overture"

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 24 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- S.** Overture 25 from Houston Metro Presbytery: "Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 to Clarify Role of Presbytery Commission"

In the opinion of CCB, Overture 25 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- T.** Overture 27 from Potomac Presbytery: "Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 To Clarify Role of Presbytery Commission"

In the opinion of CCB, Overture 27 is **not in conflict** with other parts of the Constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

- U.** Overture 28 from Pittsburgh Presbytery: "Amend *BCO* 8-7 by Adding Chaplain Endorsement Requirements and Recommendations"

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 28 is **in conflict** with *BCO* 11 and 13. *BCO* 11-4 states that "the Presbytery [exercises jurisdiction] over what is common to the ministers, Sessions, and churches within a prescribed district..." and "every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline..." *BCO* 13-9.a makes clear that the Presbytery holds the power to "receive under its care candidates for the ministry; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to receive, dismiss, ordain, install, remove and judge ministers;" For most chaplains an endorsement is a job requirement

that must be maintained and, in many cases, renewed. The result is that a chaplain would have two linked oversight organizations: Presbytery and PRCC. This Overture, as written, would require all PCA chaplains to obtain and maintain an ecclesiastical endorsement exclusively with a single organization that is linked but separate from the denomination. The conflict arises when such a requirement is placed upon Presbyteries infringing upon their power to ordain chaplains in their own regional situations as well as diminishing their original jurisdiction over questions of doctrine and discipline.

Adopted by the CCB

- V. Overture 29 from Pittsburgh Presbytery: “Amend *BCO 16* by Adding 16-4 Regarding Qualifications for Church Office”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 29 is **not in conflict**. CCB notes that Overtures 12, 23, and 20 contain similar language to amend *BCO 16-4*.

Adopted by the CCB

- W. Overture 30 from Pittsburgh Presbytery: “Amend *BCO 6-5, 20-3, 25-1, and 24-3, Allowing Congregations to Establish Voting Age Restrictions*”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 30 is **internally inconsistent and vague while also in conflict** with *BCO 25-7*.

Overture 30 is ambiguous and internally inconsistent in two ways. First, the new paragraph 6-5 would read in part, “The congregation may also; at its discretion, set a different minimum voting age for different matters provided it is not greater than eighteen (18) year of age. This sentence does not explain what the phrase “for different matters” means, and it is unclear.

Second, the new version of paragraph 25-1 would read: “The congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, but only those given the right to vote (*BCO 6-5*) are entitled to vote.” This is circular and internally inconsistent. If this overture were to be enacted, communicant members would have the right to vote by default unless limited by the local church. They would in no case be “given the right to vote” by new *BCO 6-5*. New *BCO 6-5* might allow a limitation of voting rights, but under no circumstances would that proposed provision grant any member the right to vote.

Further, in the case of incorporated churches, this overture would create a conflict with *BCO* 25-7, which provides in relevant part: “All communing members on the roll of that church shall be members of the corporation. The officers of the corporation, whether they be given the title trustee or some other title, shall be elected from among the members of the corporation in a regularly constituted congregational meeting.”

Additionally, the conflict identified above also points to complex issues of state law that may arise if some members of the church corporation are disenfranchised. *Adopted by the CCB*

- X. Overture 31 from Pittsburgh Presbytery: “Amend *BCO* 21-4 and 24-1 by Adding Paragraphs Regarding Requirements for Ordination”

In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 31 is **not in conflict**.

Adopted by the CCB

- Y. Proposed *RAO* Amendment from the Administrative Committee: “Amend *RAO* 10-6 to Authorize a Virtual Meeting Protocol”

In the opinion of the CCB, the proposed amendment to *RAO* 10-6 is in conflict with the *RAO*’s 1-1 in that *RAO* 1-1 requires the Lord’s Supper to be celebrated at any GA meeting. The CCB advises the AC that an amendment to *RAO* 1-1 adding “(except when a Condensed version of the meeting is being held as stipulated in *RAO* 10-6)” would resolve this conflict. *Adopted by the CCB*

III. Advice to Stated Clerk

The CCB received a request for advice from the Stated Clerk regarding an Overture from the Presbytery of Tennessee Valley concerning whether an amendment to *RAO* 8.4, as written, violates *BCO* and *RAO* standards in ways that should be communicated to the Overtures Committee.

The CCB advised the Stated Clerk that the overture as written is **in order** and **not in conflict** with other portions of the Constitution; however, including biographical excerpts for nominees is inadvisable because it appears the Presbytery is advancing certain candidates.

Adopted by the CCB

IV. Non-Judicial References

The CCB received no requests for advice regarding non-judicial references.

V. Advice to the Overtures Committee

The CCB received no requests for advice from the Overtures Committee.

VI. Minutes of the Standing Judicial Commission

The CCB examined the minutes of the Standing Judicial Commission meetings on July 13, 2021; February 1, 2022, and March 3, 2022. The CCB also examined the minutes of the meetings of SJC officers on May 27, 2021; September 15, 2021; October 20, 2021; November 23, 2021, and December 17, 2021. The minutes were found to be in order without exception with notations reported to the SJC. *Adopted by the CCB*

VI. Election of Officers for 2022-2023

The following were elected as officers of the Committee for 2022-2023:

Chairman – TE Larry Hoop
Secretary – TE Joel St. Clair

Submitted by:

/s/ TE Larry Hoop, Chairman

/s/ TE Chris Florence, Secretary

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Introduction

The Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) met prior to the 49th General Assembly by video conference on June 16, 2022.

Attendance at the meeting was as follows:

Teaching Elders

Chris Florence – Present
Larry Hoop, chairman – Present
Scott Phillips – Present
Joel St. Clair – Present
Robert Cathcart (Alt/) – Present

Ruling Elders

Matt Fender – Present
Tom Harley – Present
Fredric Marcinak – Present
Edward Wright – Present
Bryce Sullivan (Alt.) – Present

General Assembly Stated Clerk, TE Dr. Bryan Chapell was also present.

II. Advice to Proposed Changes to the Constitution and the RAO

- A. Advice was requested on items referred to the 49th General Assembly Overtures Committee that were held over from the 48th General Assembly.

The CCB reports the advice on Overtures 19, 20, 21, 34, 35, 40, and 41 from the 48th General Assembly to the Overtures Committee of the 49th General Assembly. (See Attachment.) *Adopted by the CCB*

- B. Advice was requested concerning a change to RAO 16-4c proposed by RPR.

In the opinion of the CCB, the proposed change to RAO 16-4c is **not in conflict** with other portions of the constitution. *Adopted by the CCB*

III. Advice to Stated Clerk

The CCB received a request for advice from the Stated Clerk regarding the process for floor nominations for the PCA Stated Clerk and Program Coordinators for MNA, MTW, and RUF.

APPENDIX O

It is the opinion of the CCB that Committees of Commissioners (CoC) may only approve or disapprove a Permanent Committee's recommendation for coordinator, but may not nominate a substitute coordinator (*RAO 4-9*). CCB also notes that the Assembly is free to suspend its rules according to *RAO 20* to receive a nomination for a program coordinator from a CoC.

Adopted by the CCB

The CCB provided the following advice regarding nominations from the floor for Stated Clerk:

1. The nomination of the Clerk is *parallel* (though not identical) to the way other nominations that involve *potentially contested elections* come to the floor: a committee reviews the qualifications of potential nominees and recommends one candidate. In the case of the election of the Clerk, the nominee is put forward by the Administrative Committee (*RAO 3-4*); in all other instances of potentially contested elections, the nominees are put forward by the Nominating Committee (*BCO 14-1.11*).
2. Additional nominations for Clerk or for other potentially contested offices are put forward by an *identical* procedure (last sentence of *RAO 3-4*; cf *RAO 8-4.i*).
3. However there is an *additional* procedure for Clerk nominees to undergo before they can be elected: they must be examined and approved by the TEC (*RAO 4-9*). *Adopted by the CCB*

IV. Minutes of the Standing Judicial Commission

The CCB approved the minutes of the Standing Judicial Commission meeting of October 21, 2021, with the following notations: page 8, line 23 – the second vote tally should read 21-0-0. *Adopted by the CCB*

The CCB examined the minutes of the Standing Judicial Commission meeting on April 30, 2021. The minutes were found to be in order without exception or notation. *Adopted by the CCB*

(See Attachment 2 for the Committee's rationale regarding April 30, 2021 minutes and Attachment 3 for a Minority Report regarding the April 30, 2021 minutes.)

Submitted by:
TE Larry Hoop, Chairman

TE Chris Florence, Secretary

Attachment 1

**ADVICE FROM THE CCB
TO OVERTURES COMMITTEE OF 49th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
on
OVERTURES FROM THE 48th GENERAL ASSEMBLY FORWARDED
TO THE 49th**

	SUBJECT	ADVICE TO 48th GA	PRESBYTERY
2021-19	Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-1 & 42-2 to Allow Appealing a Censure in a Case without Process	In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 19 is not in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. CCB notes that if the amendments proposed by Overture 19 and Overture 34 are both adopted, they would be in conflict regarding the right of appeal or the right of complaint.	Pacific Northwest
2021-20	Amend <i>BCO</i> 31-10 and 33-4 on Pre-trial Non-Disciplinary Suspensions	In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 20 is not in conflict with other parts of the Constitution.	Pacific Northwest
2021-21	Amend <i>BCO</i> 42-6 on Vote Required for Maintaining Censure during an Appeal	In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 21 is not in conflict with other parts of the Constitution.	Pacific Northwest
2021-34	Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-1 re Confession Timing for Case Without Process	In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 34 is not in conflict. CCB notes that if the amendments proposed by Overture 19 and Overture 34 are both adopted, they would be in conflict as to the right of appeal or the right of complaint.	Pacific Northwest
2021-35	Amend <i>BCO</i> 38-1 re	In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 35 is not in conflict	Pacific Northwest

APPENDIX O

	Counsel for Case Without Process	with other parts of the Constitution.	
2021-40	Amend <i>BCO</i> 32-13 and 35-5 to Allow Victim Protection Provisions	In the opinion of CCB, Overture 40 is not in conflict with other parts of the Constitution.	Tennessee Valley
2021-41	Amend <i>BCO</i> 35-1 to Expand Potential Witness Eligibility	In the opinion of the CCB, Overture 41 is not in conflict with other parts of the Constitution. CCB notes that adopting Overture 41 would create the possibility of a witness being qualified, but refusing to take the vow outlined in <i>BCO</i> 35-6.	Tennessee Valley

Attachment 2

CCB RATIONALE for Conclusion Regarding April 30, 2021, Minutes of the Standing Judicial Commission

Rationale for the CCB's conclusion that the Minutes of the April 30, 2021, meeting of the SJC did not show a violation their *Operating Manual* or *RAO* 17 which should be reported as an exception:

Three principal actions were taken by the SJC at its April 20, 2021, meeting:

1. The SJC rescinded the Officers' previous *OMSJC* 11.1.e ruling that the Record in Case 2020-12 is "complete and sufficiently documented," thereby suspending the Officers' ruling that the Case is "judicially in order." The CCB concluded there was no violation of the *OMSJC* in this action. The SJC is governed by the provisions of the *RAO* and its Manual is printed as an appendix to that document (*RAO* 17-5). *RAO* 19-1 says: "Except as otherwise specifically provided in these Rules, *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised, shall be the standard in parliamentary procedure." *RONR* (12th ed.), 35:6 lists three actions that cannot be rescinded; of those actions, the only one that one might argue as *possibly* applicable is "when something has been done, as a result of the vote on the main motion, that is **impossible** to undo." [emphasis added]. As it is not impossible to reopen the Record of the Case in a case of process, and there is no provision in the *RAO* of *OMSJC* prohibiting this, the CCB concluded the action was in order.
2. As the Record was no longer "judicially in order," and thereby open to deletion or addition in order to perfect it, the SJC determined to exercise its prerogative as the hearing body under *OMSJC* 7-4.b to "require the addition of material to the Record that is relevant to the Case." The CCB has concluded that the SJC properly adduced the standard for such an addition as being the same it would apply in a hearing on a request from a party to add or delete material from the Record: "whether in fairness and justice the Record of the Case should be corrected" (*OMSJC* 7.4.e.(3)). So long as these changes were reported to the parties and they were given opportunity to address them, which they were, the CCB concluded there was no violation of the *OMSJC* in any of these actions.

APPENDIX O

3. The materials added to the Record were drawn from answers to a list of 25 questions the SJC adopted and sent to the Presbytery's Representative with a request that he invite TE Johnson to consider providing written answers to the questions. We concluded it was proper to invite TE Johnson to provide these answers even though, technically, he was not a party to the case, because it was the Presbytery's investigation of his views that was the subject of the Complaint. The SJC clearly expressed its understanding that it was Presbytery's Representative who was empowered to represent Presbytery in the perfection of the Record and one of the questions called for a response directly from him. We further concluded that the drafted questions did not add new evidence to the Record, but rather clarified the existing Record. This conclusion was based on information we solicited from the SJC. The SJC introduction to the 25 questions read as follows:

The SJC believes it is necessary to attempt to clarify the Record of the Case because its magnitude (over 600 pages covering multiple years of writing, speaking, and judicial processes) makes it difficult to ascertain if specific representations of perspectives of TE Johnson are his actual or present theological convictions. We understand from the Record:

- he has acknowledged some of his perspectives have matured over time;
- he has acknowledged some were poorly stated due to time limits, situational pressures, or extemporaneity;
- some representations of perspectives are made unclear by imprecision or disagreement over what aspect of sin is being referenced in specific statements;
- some representations have been extrapolated by critics but denied by Johnson.

Thus, the SJC offers TE Johnson the opportunity to answer questions with reference to the specific Allegations in the Complaint now before the Commission. Below are 25 questions arranged by the Allegations, with a fifth category titled "Additional/ General."

In other words, soliciting a response to these questions was intended to bring greater clarity to material already existing in the Record, which we conclude to be material "relevant to the case."

Finally, these additional facts should be noted concerning the April 30, 2021, SJC Minutes:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. They are the minutes of an adjourned meeting; that is, they were the minutes of a meeting that was the continuation of an earlier meeting. That earlier meeting was held on March 25, 2021, which included the hearing of Case 2020-12 by the entire Commission.
2. After the hearing the SJC resolved into a committee of the whole to consider recommendations regarding the proposed decision of the case. It was that Committee of the Whole that recommended the actions reflected in the April 30 Minutes. At the time the Parliamentarian of the SJC advised that the action approved April 30 was in order. All of this was recorded in the March 25 Minutes.
3. Last year, the CCB unanimously concluded that the March 25 2021, SJC Minutes (which, as reflected above, detailed the SJC's intention to complete the ROC by seeking clarifications from TE Johnson) contained no exceptions, and reported the same to the General Assembly. In other words, the GA was informed of these matters last year. and no questions were raised as to the propriety of CCB's conclusion.

Attachment 3

**MINORITY REPORT
from the June 16, 2022, Meeting
of the Committee on Constitutional Business
on CCB Conclusion Regarding April 30, 2021, SJC Minutes**

At its called meeting on June 16, 2022, the Committee on Constitutional Business (“CCB”) reviewed the minutes (the “Minutes”) of the April 30, 2021, meeting of the Standing Judicial Commission (“SJC”). Those minutes concern certain actions taken in SJC case 2020-12 *Speck v. Missouri Presbytery*. The CCB reviewed these minutes in accordance with *RAO 17-1* for conformity to the *Operating Manual for the Standing Judicial Commission (“OMSJC”)* and *RAO 17*.

While the majority of the CCB, by a 6-2 vote, decided to find no exceptions to the Minutes, we respectfully dissent. We would find two exceptions to those minutes as listed below.

- 1) The Executive Session Summary that is included in the minutes records that, “The SJC rescinded the Officers’ previous *OMSJC 11.1e* ruling that the Record in Case 2020-12 is “complete and sufficiently documented.” *OMSJC 11.3* and *11.5* specifically prescribe a series of actions that “shall be done” after the *OMSJC 11.1e* determination has been made. The *OMSJC* does not contemplate or allow the addition of material to the record after that point, and doing so in the case was clear error.
- 2) The Executive Session Summary that is included in the minutes also records that “The SJC agreed to send a letter to Presbytery’s Respondent, adopting the procedure outlines therein for responses to questions and supplemental briefs, per the authority of *OMSJC 7.4.b* and *7.4.e(3)* below.” The Executive Summary further records that “The SJC adopted the Committee’s list of questions for TE Johnson, as amended, to be sent to Presbytery’s Representative.”

It is our view that the SJC acted *ultra vires* when it directed what amounts to written interrogatories to TE Greg Johnson, thus creating new evidence in the case that was never presented to the lower court. The CCB interprets *OMSJC 7.4.b*, which provides that, “The hearing body may also require the addition of material to the record that is relevant to the Case,” to permit the SJC’s collection of new evidence from TE Johnson. We conclude the proper

interpretation of this provision is one that permits the SJC to supplement the record with existing material that already existed at the presbytery level prior to the case coming to the SJC and which was omitted when the presbytery clerk and the parties compiled the initial record of the case. We reach this conclusion because new evidence—which TE Johnson’s answers to the SJC’s written interrogatories obviously was—cannot be part of the “record” since it was never before the lower court. A “record” is “a written memorial . . . intended to serve as evidence of something written, said, or done.” (Black’s Law Dictionary 2d Ed.) The record of the case is the compilation of written materials that formed a part of the case. New evidence can in no way become a part of the compilation of what was presented in the case.

In addition to being compelled by the plain language of *OMSJC* 7.4b, this interpretation comports with the role of an appellate court. The appellate court is charged with review of the lower court’s actions. By adducing additional evidence that was never presented to the lower court, the SJC in practice exercised original jurisdiction (but without formally taking original jurisdiction over the case and permitting the parties to present evidence—not argument, but evidence) rather than reviewing the lower court’s decision for error. Allowing TE Johnson, a non-party, to tailor responses to specially crafted interrogatories while free from competing rebuttal evidence (not argument, but evidence) or questioning by the parties to the case goes beyond the SJC’s role.

For these reasons, we would find that the SJC did not act in conformity with the *OMSJC* and would report an exception to the General Assembly (see *RAO* 17-1). We respectfully dissent from the CCB’s decision to the contrary.

Respectfully Submitted,
RE Matthew D. Fender
RE C. Fredric Marcinak

APPENDIX P

MINUTES OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA March 26, 2022

The Nominating Committee of the General Assembly convened in Atlanta, GA on Saturday, March 26, 2022. Chairman TE Art Sartorius called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. TE Dave Abney of North Florida Presbytery opened with prayer. The chairman then led the Committee in a devotional on Psalm 90.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was declared. The Chairman welcomed the Committee and recognized two guests from the PCA Administrative Committee Office – TE Bryan Chapell, Stated Clerk, and Ms. Angela Nantz, Operations Manager. Sixty-four committee members were in attendance as follows, and five additional members submitted preliminary ballots.

Members attending:

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Class</u>
Arizona	TE Kelley Hand	2023
Ascension	TE Jared Nelson	2022
Blue Ridge	TE Roland Mathews	2022
Calvary	RE Melton Ledford Duncan	2022
Central Carolina	TE Derek Wells	2024
Central Florida	RE Gabriel E. Williams	2022
Central Georgia	RE John Mitchell	2024
Central Indiana	TE Charles Anderson	2023
Chesapeake	RE Bradley James Chwastyk	2023
Chicago Metro	RE Don Kooy	2024
Columbus Metro	TE Justin Charles Grimm	2023
Covenant	TE Sean Lucas	2022
Eastern Carolina	TE Christopher M. Garrett	2024
Evangel	RE Miles E. Gresham	2023
Fellowship	TE John Franklin	2024
Grace	TE Jim McCarthy	2024
Great Lakes	TE Jon Saunders	2024
Gulf Coast	TE Gary R. Cox	2022

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Heartland	TE Rick E. Franks	2024
Heritage	TE H. Scott Winchester	2022
Hills and Plains	RE Thomas Kirkeby	2024
Houston Metro	RE Dave Cias	2024
Illiana	TE Alex Eppstein	2023
James River	RE Robert Rumbaugh	2022
Korean Capital	TE Steve Sun Kyo Yoon	2024
Korean Northeastern	TE Hoochan Paul Lee	2024
Lowcountry	RE Ron Woernle	2022
Metro Atlanta	TE Hace Cargo	2023
Metropolitan New York	TE E. Bruce O'Neil	2024
Mississippi Valley	RE James Elkin	2024
Missouri	RE John Ranheim	2024
Nashville	TE Matthew Todd Bradley	2022
New Jersey	TE Stephen O'Neil	2023
New River	TE Michael VanDerLinden, Sec.	2023
North Florida	TE Dave Abney	2023
North Texas	TE Benjamin Wheeler	2023
Northern California	TE Bob Crossland	2023
Northern Illinois	TE Justin Coverstone	2023
Northern New England	RE Ernie Shipman	2022
Northwest Georgia	RE Jonathan Stuckert	2022
Ohio	RE Scott Wulff	2022
Pacific Northwest	RE Micah Meeuwsen	2024
Pee Dee	TE Matthew Dallas Adams	2022
Philadelphia	TE Maranatha Chung	2023
Philadelphia Metro West	RE Nathan Carlson	2024
Piedmont Triad	TE Brian K. Deringer	2022
Pittsburgh	RE Timothy Baird	2023
Platte Valley	TE Andrew Lightner	2023
Potomac	RE Eric Jan	2023
Providence	RE Frank Cohee	2024
Rocky Mountain	RE Jim Franks	2022
Savannah River	RE James D. Scarbrough	2024
Siouxlands	TE Arthur Sartorius, Chairman	2022
South Texas	TE Ben Michael Hailey	2024
Southeast Alabama	TE Parker Johnson	2024
Southern Louisiana	TE Ricky M. Glenn	2023
Southern New England	TE Robert Steven Hill	2024
Southwest Florida	TE Jonathan Winfree	2022
Suncoast Florida	TE Dwight L. Dolby	2023
Susquehanna Valley	RE Douglas Sharp Jr.	2022

APPENDIX P

Tennessee Valley	TE Brian Cosby	2022
Tidewater	TE Benjamin Cameron Lyon	2023
West Hudson	TE Christopher Michael Diebold	2022
Westminster	TE Robert E. Dykes	2024

Preliminary vote tallies were discussed by the Committee. The Committee approved a slate of nominees for each of the Standing Committees, Agencies, and Commission to be presented to the General Assembly.

MSP for the Chairman to have the appointed subcommittee report of the evaluation of the current weighted voting system be presented to the committee at the March 25, 2023 meeting. The Committee will consist of (Convener) TE Charles Anderson, RE Frank Cohee, TE Michael VanDerLinden.

Nominations were entertained for Chairman and Secretary of the 2022-2023 Nominating Committee. The Committee elected RE Frank Cohee, Providence Presbytery, to serve as Chairman and TE Mike VanDerLinden, New River Presbytery, as Secretary.

The Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Nominating Committee will be at General Assembly in Birmingham, AL, on Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at the close of business. The 2023 meeting will be on Saturday, March 25, 2023.

MSP The Committee adjourned at 12:40 pm with prayer by TE Jim McCarthy and the singing of the doxology.

Respectfully Submitted,

TE Art Sartorius, Chairman

TE Michael VanDerLinden, Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders

Ruling Elders

Class of 2025

TE Roger G. Collins, MSValley

RE Richard Dolan, Georgia Foothills

TE Steve Jeantet, Suncoast Florida

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Class of 2024

TE Robert F. Brunson, Metro Atlanta RE Frank Cohee, Providence
RE Pat Hodge, Calvary

Class of 2023

TE Jerry Schriver, Metro Atlanta RE Jon Ford, C. Indiana
TE Kevin DeYoung, C. Carolina

Class of 2022

TE Bill Sim, Korean Southeastern RE J. Lee McCarty, Evangel

Alternates

TE Marty Crawford, Evangel Vacancy

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2026

1 TE and 1 RE

Alternates

1 TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2026

TE Michael Grey Dixon, Fellowship RE Danny McDaniel, Houston Metro

Alternates

TE Jon C. Anderson, Blue Ridge RE Alan Walters, MS Valley

D. Biographical Sketches:

TE Michael G. Dixon: *Fellowship.* '01 Graduate of Covenant College; M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte ('05); Th.M. & Ph.D. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (expected '23). Served twice as Moderator of Fellowship Presbytery; Served on Administration, Fellowship, Membership, Missions, and Nominations and Sessional Records Committees for Fellowship Presbytery; Served repeatedly on PCAGA COC on Administration, Covenant College, Interchurch Relations, Overtures, and RBI.

RE Danny McDaniel: *Houston Metro.* BS & BA Auburn University, CPA licensed in Texas and Alabama. Past chairman, vice chairman, and secretary of Permanent Committee on Administration. Chairman of the

APPENDIX P

2014 General Assembly host committee in Houston. Past Moderator of Houston Metro Presbytery and South Texas Presbytery Past stated clerk of Houston Metro Presbytery and South Texas Presbytery. Member of Candidates and Credential committee of Houston Metro Presbytery, Candidates and Credentials committee. Session member of Spring Cypress Presbyterian Church.

TE Jon Anderson: *Blue Ridge*. BA, MT, University of Virginia; MDiv, Reformed Theological Seminary. Served churches in MS and TX, and currently serving as Senior Pastor of Grate Community Church in Charlottesville, VA. Stated Clerk of South Texas Presbytery from 2007-2017. Served on PCAGA CoCs, Covenant Theological Seminary and Administrative. Served 15 years on the Committee for the Review of Presbytery Records (2006-2020) including multiple years as an officer and one as chairman.

RE Alan Walters. *Mississippi Valley*. Mississippi State University, B.S. Banking and Finance, 1975; Harvard Business School, M.B.A., 1979. Retired 12/31/2021 from a 40+ year career in banking. Served as founding CEO of First Commercial Bank in Jackson, MS. Continue to serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors. Ordained as a RE in January, 1997. Served on the Presbytery Administrative Committee since 2019, and began serving as Chairman of the Administrative Committee in January of 2022.

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders:

Ruling Elders:

Class of 2025

TE J. Scott Phillips, MS Valley

RE Matt Fender, James River

Class of 2024

TE Joel Craig St. Clair II, Potomac

RE Fredric Marcinak, Calvary

Class of 2023

TE Larry C. Hoop, Ohio Valley

RE Edward L. Wright, Chesapeake

Class of 2022

TE Christopher Florence, Fellowship

RE C. Thompson Harley, Sav. River

Alternates

TE Robert D. Cathcart Jr., Calvary RE Will P. Thompson, MS Valley

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2026

1 TE and 1 RE

Alternates

1 TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2026

TE Jason Piland, Ohio RE Bryce Sullivan, Nashville

Alternates

TE Robert D. Cathcart, Calvary RE Chris Shoemaker, S. New England

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Jason Piland. *Ohio.* Belmont University (Nashville): BBA; Belmont University (Nashville): JD; Reformed Theological Seminary (Charlotte): MDiv. Redeemer Church (Hudson, OH) -Assistant/Associate Pastor (2019-present). PCAGA Review of Presbytery Records ('21-'22), AC CoC ('21); Member of the presbytery's Executive Committee (2019-present); Serves as an Advisory Member, Ohio Presbytery Bylaws Review Committee (2021-2022)

RE Bryce Sullivan. *Nashville.* BS, Psychology, Georgia State University; MA, Psychology, and Ph.D. Clinical Psychology, Ohio State University (1997). Dean and Professor, Belmont University. RE Covenant Presbyterian Church Nashville. OC (2016, 2017, 2018); CC Board (2014-2018); RPR (2012, 2019-present); Chair, CoC CTS (2012); and CCB (Alternate, 2021-2022). Nashville Presbytery Committees and Commissions: Campus Ministry (2010-2016), Leadership Development (credentialing, 2020-present), Judicial (2021-present), and Standing Rules. Covenant Presbyterian Church Committees: Personnel, Discipleship, Missions, Congregational Care, and Church Corporation. Member, National Association of Parliamentarians.

TE Robert D. Cathcart, Jr. *Calvary.* 1990-1994: University of South Carolina, Bachelor of Music Education; 1995-1996: Southeastern Baptist

Theological Seminary; 1996-1998: Reformed Theological Seminary-Charlotte, NC, Master of Divinity; 2004-2007: Erskine Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry from the Institute for Reformed Worship. Presently serving on the Sessional Records Committee at the presbytery, and Calvary's Recording Clerk. General Assembly Committees: Christian Education and Publications (2010), Covenant College (2012), PCA Foundation (2013), General Assembly Nominations Committee (2015-18)

RE Chris Shoemaker. *Southern New England.* BS Physics, MS Computer Science, Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Chris is CTO of a software development agency. He has been in the PCA since 1990, and a RE and Clerk of Session since 2009. He has served Southern New England Presbytery as Moderator for several years and has served GA on RPR, IRC, OC and various CoCs.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT COLLEGE

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders:

TE Bradley J. Barnes, S. New England
TE Alexander Brown, Sav. River
Vacancy

Ruling Elders:

Class of 2025

RE David Caines, TN Valley
RE Mark Griggs, TN Valley
RE Bradley M. Harris, Covenant
RE Drew Jelgerhuis, Great Lakes

Class of 2024

TE Matthew David Fray, N. Texas

RE Richard T. Bowser, E. Carolina
RE Robert Curtis, SW Florida
RE Duncan Highmark, Missouri
RE Martin A. Moore, GA Foothills
RE William H. Ryan, South Florida
RE Stephen E. Sligh, SW Florida

Class of 2023

TE William B. Barclay, C. Carolina
TE Robert S. Rayburn, Pacific NW
TE Kevin Smith, TN Valley
Vacancy

RE Bruce W. Terrell, Metro New York
RE John Truschel, S. New England
Vacancy

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Class of 2022

TE Howard A. Brown, C. Carolina	RE Rob Jenks, South Coast
TE J. Render Caines, TN Valley	RE Towner B. Scheffler, Ascension
	RE Sam Smartt, TN Valley
	RE Robert F. Wilkinson, Missouri
	RE R. Craig Wood, Blue Ridge

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2026

7 members total (TE or RE)

One may be from another NAPARC denomination

Class of 2025

1 member (TE or RE)

Class of 2023

2 members (TE or RE)

C. Nominations

Class of 2026

TE Thomas K. Groelsema, C. Carolina	RE Donald G. Mellott, Pacific NW
TE Lance E. Lewis, N. California	RE Towner B. Scheffler, Piedmont T.
TE W. Gregory Marshall, Fellowship	RE Gordon Sluis, MS Valley
TE Sean McGowan, Gulf Coast	

Class of 2025

RE Sam Smartt, TN Valley

Class of 2023

TE Scott Seaton, Potomac	RE Craig Wood, Blue Ridge
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D. Biographical Sketches:

TE Thomas K. Groelsma: *Central Carolina.* Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; M.Div. Westminster Seminary California, Escondido, California. Executive Pastor, Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, North Carolina. Serves on the Administrative Committee of Central Carolina Presbytery and on the Boards of Westminster Seminary California and Word Partners ministry. One of his four children, Nathan, is a graduate of Covenant College.

TE Lance E. Lewis: *Northern California.* B.A., Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Chesapeake Theological Training Center. Pastor, New City Fellowship, Sacramento, California. Serves on the Discipleship Committee of the Northern California Presbytery; previously served as Chairman of the presbytery's MNA Committee. Served on the Board of Trustees of Covenant College from 2012 until 2020.

TE W. Gregory Marshall: *Fellowship.* Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia; M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina. Pastor, Temple Presbyterian Church, Clover, South Carolina. Serves on the Christian Education Committee and chairs the Campus Ministry Committee of Fellowship Presbytery. Previously served on the Christian Education Committee of Palmetto Presbytery. Serves on the planning team of The Edge, an annual Jr. High youth conference centered on Reformed theology and held at Covenant College. The oldest of his four children, Timothy, is a freshman at Covenant College.

TE Sean McGowan: *Gulf Coast.* B.S. Religion and Biblical Studies, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia; M.A. Theological Studies, Reformed Theological Seminary; pursuing MTh. Scottish Church History and Theology, University of Glasgow, Edinburgh Theological Seminary. Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Serves on Ministers and Candidates Committee of Gulf Coast Presbytery. Previously taught for 12 years at the Alternative School of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Westminster Christian Academy of Huntsville, Alabama.

RE Donald G. Mellott: *Pacific Northwest.* B.A. Liberal Arts, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois; B.S. Civil Engineering, Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania. Licensed professional engineer and owner of civil engineering firm. Serves on the Board of Sacred Road Ministries (a ministry of Pacific Northwest Presbytery serving Native American populations) and as Chairman of the Board of Covenant High School (a ministry of Faith Presbyterian Church, Tacoma). Also serves on the Advisory Board of the School of Engineering and Technology of the University of Washington-Tacoma. A member of Faith Presbyterian Church; the two oldest of his four children attend Covenant College.

RE Towner B. Scheffler: *Piedmont Triad.* B.A. Chemistry, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia; PhD. Analytical Chemistry, University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi; M.S. Organizational Leadership, Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. He is a former

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

professor and is a retired Research Chemist. Served on Committee of Commissioners for Covenant College. Served as Moderator and Vice Moderator of Presbytery of the Ascension. Active for many years in youth and college ministries. Developed and taught a 12-month church officer training curriculum. He and his wife are members of Christ Church Greensboro; they have two grown children and three grandchildren.

RE Gordon Sluis: *Mississippi Valley.* Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia; M.D., Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Baltimore, Maryland; Pediatrics Residency, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is a retired pediatrician. Served 8 years as Alumni Advisor to the Board of Trustees of Covenant College, and served on the Board from 2013 until 2021, chiefly by way of the Student Development Committee. Also served on Committee of Commissioners for Covenant College. He and his wife are members of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Vicksburg; they have three grown children, all graduates of Covenant College.

RE Sam Smartt: *Tennessee Valley.* B.S. Business, University of Georgia. He is retired from his family's logistics business but continues to serve on its board. He has also served on the boards of Chattanooga Christian School and Bible in the Schools. Served previously on the Board of Trustees of Covenant College, and currently chairs the college's Development Committee and serves on the Covenant Foundation Board. He and his wife are members of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church; they have three grown children, one of whom is a graduate of Covenant College. They have 9 grandchildren.

TE Scott Seaton: *Potomac.* B.A. Political Science, University of Virginia; Reformed Theological Seminary; Covenant Theological Seminary; Covenant Theological Seminary. Pastor, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Arlington, Virginia. Served as International Director (for Muslim outreach) of Mission to the World. Served Potomac Presbytery as chair of the Program Committee and chair of the Committee on Mission to North America. Has served on the Overtures Committee and on committees of commissioners for Covenant College and Mission to the World. He and his wife have three children, two of whom attend Covenant College.

RE Craig Wood: *Blue Ridge.* B.A. English and M.Ed. Administration, University of Virginia; J.D. Washington and Lee University School of

APPENDIX P

Law. Retired education and employment attorney. Served 3 previous terms on the Covenant College Board, is its current Chairman, and was previously its Vice Chair, and chaired its Business and Finance Committee, Advancement Committee, Audit Committee, Policy Committee and was a member of its Executive Committee. Serves on the Covenant Foundation Board. He and his wife are members of Trinity Presbyterian, Charlottesville, and have five grown children, one of whom is a Covenant College graduate. They have seven grandchildren.

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders

TE W. Scott Barber, Providence
TE Dean Williams, MS Valley

Ruling Elders

Class of 2026

RE Dan Barber, C. Indiana

Class of 2025

TE Thomas M. Harr Jr., New Jersey
RE J. Lightsey Wallace, James River
RE Jeremy Whitley, South Texas

Class of 2024

TE Charles Johnson, Nashville
TE Dave Lindberg, New Jersey
RE Dennis Crowe, SE Alabama

Class of 2023

TE Danny Kwon, Korean Eastern
RE Bill Bolling, Chesapeake
RE Jack Wilkerson, Piedmont Triad

Class of 2022

TE Richard E. Downs Jr., S. New Engl
TE Phillip J. Palmertree, MS Valley
RE James D. Murphy, Potomac

Alternates

TE Dave A. Vosseller, Sav. River
RE Taylor Clement, Missouri

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2027

1 TE and 2 RE

Alternates

1 TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2027

TE Lee Hutchings, Ohio

RE Taylor Clement, Missouri

RE Bruce Narveson, E. Carolina

Alternates

TE Richard L. Burguet, C. Florida

RE Aaron Raines, Hills ad Plains

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Lee Hutchings: *Ohio.* B.A. The University of Akron, Akron, OH; MDiv Reformed Theological Seminary Jackson, MS; DMin candidate Biblical Counseling Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA. Church Planter and Senior Pastor, Trinity Church PCA, North Canton, OH. Ohio Presbytery Moderator (2021), Chairman of the Pastoral Care Committee (2021-present); Executive Committee (2020-present), OH Presbytery; Chairman Provisional Session for Faith PCA, Akron, OH (2021-present); Candidates and Credentials Committee (2022-present); CMC Subcommittee of the “Rising Generation of Leaders”, General Assembly (2016-2020); Review of Presbytery Records, GA (2019-2020); Committee of Commissioners Covenant Seminary, GA (2016); CoC MTW (2021); CoC AC, (2022)

RE Taylor Clement: *Missouri.* B.A., Samford University; M.A. Lipscomb University. Head of Kirk Day School (2015-present). Session, Kirk of the Hills, St. Louis, MO. Current alternate CDM. Convener, Committee of Commissioners for CDM.

RE Bruce Narveson: *Eastern Carolina.* B.S. Civil Engineering University of Wisconsin, Platteville, WI. Retired, past career in sales and marketing of construction, forestry, and mining equipment. Session, Redeemer Presbyterian Church (2015-present). MNA church planting committee, Eastern Carolina Presbytery. Served as commissioner for Covenant College, MTW, and CDM.

TE Richard L. Burguet: *Central Florida.* B.A. Christian Education, Belhaven University; M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary (1982). Senior Pastor, New Hope PCA, Eustis FL. Past member and Chairman of CE committee, Palmetto Presbytery; past MNA committee member,

Grace Presbytery; past chair of Administrative committee of Chesapeake Presbytery; past Moderator, Central Florida Presbytery. Church revitalization work. Author *The Covenant Disciples Workbook, Parent's Guide to the Covenant Disciples Workbook*.

RE Aaron Raines: *Hills and Plains*. Assistant to the Pastor, Christ Church, Bentonville, AR. Currently ministry intern under care Hills and Plains Presbytery. Clerk, Administrative Committee, Hills and Plains Presbytery.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders

TE Brian Cosby, TN Valley

Ruling Elders

Class of 2025

RE Samuel N. Graham, Covenant
RE Miles E. Gresham, Evangel
RE Donald Guthrie, Chicago Metro
RE Otis Pickett, MS Valley
RE Curtis S. Shidemantle, Ascension

Class of 2024

TE Hugh M. Barlett, Missouri

RE William Bennett, Evangel
RE Jonathan P. Seda, Heritage
RE Paul R. Stoll, Chicago Metro
RE Gif Thornton, Nashville
RE Frank Wicks Jr., Missouri

Class of 2023

TE Brian C. Habig, Calvary
TE Fredric Ryan Laughlin, Missouri
TE Doug Serven, Hills and Plains

RE Brewster Harrington, Rocky Mtn
RE Robert B. Hayward Jr., Susq. Valley
RE John Plating, TN Valley

Class of 2022

TE Robert K. Flayhart, Evangel
TE David G. Sinclair Sr., Calvary

RE Mark Ensio, Southwest
RE William B. French, Missouri
RE Dwight Jones, Central Georgia
RE Ron McNalley, North Texas

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2026

6 members total (TE or RE)

One may be from another NAPARC denomination

C. Nominations

Class of 2026

TE David Sinclair, Calvary

RE James Albritton, Evangel

TE Russell St. John, Missouri

RE Douglas Hickel, Missouri

RE Ron McNalley, North Texas

RE Walt Turner, Pittsburg

D. Biographical Sketches

TE David Sinclair: *Calvary.* Clemson University; MDiv, Covenant Theological Seminary; DMin, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS. Pastor in Residence, Oconee Presbyterian Church, Seneca, SC. Exp: founding campus minister, RUF, Clemson; assisted in church plant, Clemson Presbyterian Church; more than 25 years of pastoral ministry.

TE Russell St. John: *Missouri.* BA History, Washington State University; MDiv, Covenant Theological Seminary; DMin Homiletics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; PhD Homiletics, Middlesex University (London School of Theology). Senior Pastor, Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church, Ballwin, MO. Exp: Visiting Instructor of Homiletics, CTS; Correspondent, WORLD Magazine; Guest Lecturer for George Truett Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Bible Institute of South Africa; former member/vice chair, theological examining committee, Susquehanna Valley Presbytery; member, MTW committee, Missouri Presbytery; former CoC member, Administrative Committee, Covenant College; member, various ad hoc Presbytery committees.

RE James Albritton: *Evangel.* Vanderbilt University; MDiv, Covenant Theological Seminary; PhD, University of Alabama. Educator and Chairman of the History Department, Briarwood Christian School. Exp: CTS Advisory Board (2020); Admin. Director, Francis Schaeffer Institute (CTS); Asst. Headmaster, Trinity Presbyterian School; Assoc. Professor (History), Huntingdon College; Headmaster, Mars Hill Academy. He deeply understands the apologetic and evangelistic mission of Covenant Seminary's Francis Schaeffer Institute and its impact on the entire educational atmosphere.

RE Douglas Hickel: *Missouri.* BA Business/Economics and Bible/Theology, Wheaton College; JD, St. Louis University. Attorney, Summers Compton Wells, St. Louis, MO. Exp: CTS Advisory Board (2014); member, CTS capital campaign steering committee; partner and member of management committee at law firm; board member including secretary and member of executive committee, Kirk Day School; former board member, Ditto Upscale Resale. His law practice includes representing several churches and reformed Christian schools; previously awarded the Dr. Warren Solomon Civic Virtue Award from the Missouri Bar for volunteer work with various civic and law education programs.

RE Ron McNalley: *North Texas.* President/Owner, Employee Benefit Resources, Inc., Dallas, TX. Exp: previous board member, executive committee member, chair of academic committee, CTS board; member, ministerial relations, nominating, and theological examining committees, North Texas Presbytery; previous board member, Missionary Health Plans. He has worked for many years in the employee benefits field, providing employee benefits brokerage and consulting services through his own company since 1988.

RE Walt Turner: *Pittsburgh.* BS, Michigan State University. Chairman/Vice President, Turner Dairy Farms, Inc. Exp: member, CTS board (since 1995); chairman, CTS board (1998-2002, 2003-2008, 2014-2015); member, Advancement, Trustee Development, Board Governance committees, CTS board; former member, discipleship and youth ministry committee, various commissions, Pittsburgh Presbytery; former member on board and education and personnel committees, Trinity Christian School, Pittsburgh.

COMMITTEE ON INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders

Ruling Elders

Class of 2024

TE L. Roy Taylor, GA Foothills

RE James Isbell, TN Valley

Class of 2023

TE E. Marvin Padgett Jr., Nashville

RE James D. Walters Jr., Calvary

Class of 2022

TE Kevin Rogers, E. Canada

RE Paul Richardson, Nashville

Alternate

TE Scott L. Reiber, MS Valley

RE Dennis Watts, MS Valley

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2025

1 TE and 1 RE

Alternates

1 TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2025

TE H. Wallace Tinsley, Fellowship

RE William (Billy) Ball, Evangel

Alternates

TE David P. Gilleran, Blue Ridge

RE Dennis Watts, MS Valley

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Wallace Tinsley: *Fellowship.* Davidson College BA (Phi Beta Kappa); Westminster Theological Seminary MDiv, ThM OT. Ordained 1977; Assistant Pastor, Associate Pastor, 1977-1981 at Second Presbyterian, Greenville, SC, under Paul Settle. Senior Pastor of Filbert PCA, York, SC since 1981. Active churchman within the PCA, 40+ years of leadership in Fellowship & Calvary Presbytery committees.

RE William (Billy) Ball: *Evangel.* Retired Executive Vice President and Chief Transmission Officer, Southern Company. BS (Mississippi State University) and MBA (University of Southern Mississippi). RE Briarwood Presbyterian Church, served as Chairman of Leadership Team Committee, Chairman of Board Directed Ministry Commission, Chairman of the Board of Briarwood Christian School, and a member of the Shepherding Team Commission. Previously served as RE Parkview Church in Lilburn, GA and Deacon First Presbyterian Church in Gulfport, MS. Involved in RUF at Mississippi State University. Currently serving on Evangel Presbytery Credentials Committee, served on MN"A Committee of Commissioners (2021 GA) and appointed to serve on RUF Committee of Commissioners (2022 GA)., Engineering Advisory Council

APPENDIX P

at Mississippi State University, and Department of Energy and National Institute of Standards and Technology advisory committees.

TE David P. Gilleran: *Blue Ridge.* Ordained June 1981 by Evangel Presbytery. Stated Clerk of Presbytery for the last eleven years. 40 years of pastoral ministry; Hope Presbyterian Church in Martinsville. Stated Supply at Draper's Valley Presbyterian Church in Draper, VA. Retired Lt. Col. Army Chaplain. Founder Youth Life SW Virginia. I have served on different committees of Presbytery (examination, leadership, and Christian Education). I have served on GA Committee of Commissioners (Standing Judicial Business. PCA Foundation, Inter Church Relations. Review of Presbytery Records.

RE Dennis Watts: *Mississippi Valley.* Ole Miss BA, DPhil post grad certificate Harvard. Currently serving as Alternate RE on the Interchurch Relations Committee (elected on the floor of the 48th General Assembly); Ruling Elder Madison Heights (Charter member), experience in Christian Education, Missions. Extensive service in Mississippi Valley Committees and denomination leadership.

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders:

Ruling Elders:

Class of 2026

TE Roland Barnes, Savannah River

RE Brent Andersen, C. Carolina
RE Jason Kang, Metro Atlanta

Class of 2025

TE R. Lyle Caswell Jr., SW Florida
TE Robert A. Willetts, Tidewater

RE Ernie Shipman, N. New England

Class of 2024

TE Murray W. Lee, Evangel

RE Keith W. Goben, Pacific NW
RE Timothy L. Murr, Grace

Class of 2023

TE Robert A. Cargo, Metro Atlanta
TE Blake A. Altman, Hills & Plains

Vacancy

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Class of 2022

TE Alex M. Shipman, Providence RE Robert Howell, Palmetto
RE Robert Sawyer, S. New England

Alternates

TE Hansoo Jin, Korean Capital Vacancy

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2027

2 TE and 1 RE

Class of 2023

1 RE

Alternates

1 TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2027

TE Dean Faulkner, C. Carolina RE Timothy M. Threadgill, MS Valley
TE Hansoo Jin, Korean Capitol

Class of 2023

RE Lance Kinzer, Heartland

Alternates

TE Robert Penny, MS Valley RE Bruce Wells, E. Carolina

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Dean Faulkner. *Central Carolina.* BS Electrical Engineering, NC State University, M.Div. Gordon-Conwell, D.Min. RTS-Charlotte. 2cd career pastor. Senior pastor of South Charlotte Presbyterian, planted Church of the Redeemer, Indian Trail NC, Director, Center for Church Planting, and Guest Lecturer, RTS-Charlotte. Past Chairman of MNA Central Carolina Presbytery, MNA liaison for Church Planter Readiness Seminar (Charlotte) and MNA Church Planting Assessor. Speaker MNA National Conference (2017). Actively working with MNA in various issues. Helped start and build Metrolina Ministries/Christ Covenant. Active Coach for church planters, churches and presbyteries.

TE Hansoo Jin. *Korean Capital.* Pfeiffer University, Misenheimer, NC, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Reformed Theological Seminary,

Washington DC, Masters of Divinity. Pastor/Church planter Harris Creek Community Church, Baltimore MD, church planting resident at Harvest Presbyterian Church in Clarksville, MD and Abbott Memorial Presbyterian Church Baltimore, MD, Assistant pastor, with a focus on youth ministry, at Calvary PCA in Towson, MD. Served in Korean Capital Presbytery as Assistant Stated Clerk, Vice Moderator, MNA Committee, Shepherding Committee. Served on Committee of Session Record, Chesapeake Presbytery. Involved in GA, CMNA alternate, Nominating Committee, Overtures, CoC committees of MTW, Admin, RUM, COM, MNA.

RE Timothy M. Threadgill. *Mississippi Valley.* Part of core group that helped start Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Oxford, MS. First Presbyterian Church, Jackson MS, serving on church's MNA Committee, Chaired First Pres' MNA Church Plan subcommittee their MNA Committee. Currently serving on MS Valley Presbytery's Campus Ministries Committee. Served at First Pres-Jackson as a Deacon. Practiced management-side labor and employment law for 31 years in Mississippi.

RE Lance Kinzer. *Heartland.* Graduate of Wheaton College (IL) and the University of Kansas School of Law. Serving as Ruling Elder Redeemer Presbyterian Church Overland Park, KS, Clerk of Session. Previous member of the OPC. Active in teaching Sunday School, leading studies in biblical and systematic theology, and home fellowship group. Currently serve on the Candidates and Credentials Committee for Heartland Presbytery. Involved in two church plants in the KS area. 4 years Active Duty U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. 16 years Associate/Partner in a law firm dealing with civil litigation. Served 5 terms in the Kansas House of Representatives. Chaired the House Judiciary Committee for 6 of those years. Served as President of Kansans for Life. Currently on the board of Advice & Aid, a Pregnancy Resource Center in Kansas. Director of Policy and Government Relations for 1st Amendment Partnership, focused on state level religious freedom legislation.

TE Robert Penny. *Mississippi Valley.* Adjunct professor African Bible College, Kampala, Uganda. Chairman of our presbytery's MNA Committee. Serve on the Executive Committee of the Mid-South Church Planting Network. Served as Chairman of the Administration Committee and Stated Clerk of Covenant Presbytery, Served on GA RPR CoC. Instrumental in distributing MNA funds and caring for disaster relief workers after hurricane Katrina. Involved in standing against abortion

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

providers and establishing crisis pregnancy center in Mississippi. Three adult children involved in church plants in California, Alabama, and Mississippi.

RE Bruce Wells. *Eastern Carolina.* Graduate of University of NC at Chapel Hill. Served as an acting RE at Grace Church, PCA church plant. Currently attending Missio church plant. Served on MNA Committee in Eastern Carolina Presbytery. Served on staff with Second Careers ministry of MNA. Served on staff of Open Doors with Brother Andrew. Director of food ministry at Church of the Good Shepherd. Involved with Society of St. Andrew a gleanng ministry in the Carolinas. Worked as District manager with GE capital, Regional manager US Chamber of Commerce Washington. Currently retired.

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO THE WORLD

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders

Ruling Elders

Class of 2026

TE Shaun M. Nolan, Pittsburgh

RE John E. Bateman, North Texas

TE Oscar R. Aylor, E. Carolina

Class of 2025

TE Brett W. Carl, Tidewater

RE Byron Johnson, Metro Atlanta

TE William E. Dempsey, MS Valley

Class of 2024

TE James E. Richter, TN Valley

RE Daryl Brister, Huston Metro

RE Norman Leo Mooney, Missouri

Class of 2023

TE Patrick J. Womack, Suncoast FL

RE Hugh S. Potts, Jr., MS Valley

TE Theodore Hamilton, South Coast

Class of 2022

TE Kyle Hackmann, E. Canada

RE Robert A. Caldwell, Calvary

RE Oliver Trimiew, TN Valley

Alternates

TE H. Thomas Patton III, Evangel RE David Moore, Central Florida

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2027

2 TE and 1 RE

Alternates

1 TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2027

TE Maranatha Chung, Philadelphia RE Theo Hagg, Westminster
TE Owen Lee, Korean Capital

Alternates

TE Dan Seale, E. Carolina RE David Kliewer, Rocky Mountain

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Maranatha Chung: Philadelphia Metro. B.S., M.S. Electrical Engineering, Texas A&M University; M.Div., Th.M., Westminster Theological Seminary. Director of Chinese Ministry, Northeast Community Church, Philadelphia, PA. Serves on Credentials Committee for presbytery; served on Committees of Commissioners at GA for Covenant Theological Seminary, Overtures, Mission to the World.

TE Owen Lee: Korean Capital. M.Div., Westminster Theological Seminary. Senior Pastor, Christ Central Presbyterian Church, Centreville, VA. Short-term missionary in Philippines with MTW 2005-2006, teaching in Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Assessor for MNA Church Planters Center; Director of Operations for Korean American Leadership Initiative for MNA.

RE Theo Hagg: Westminster. M.D., Ph.D. Neuroscience, UCSD. Professor of Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University, oversees NIH-funded biomedical research laboratory. Member at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Johnson, TN; Chair of Missions Committee multiple years; several visits to missions work in Africa; started a charitable non-profit foundation to support vulnerable children in Africa.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE Dan Seale: Eastern Carolina. B.S. Math, James Madison University; M.Div. Westminster Theological Seminary. Senior Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, NC. Encouraged support for MTW at two different churches; led missions trips to Appalachia and Mexico; taught in seminary in India, China, visited missionary in Japan. Served on Committees of Commissioners for MTW at GA.

RE David Kliever: Rocky Mountain. B.S. Business Administration, University of N. Colorado; M.A. Bank Operations, University of Wisconsin. Consultant for Sales, Marketing, Business Development. Served on Associate Staff with Navigators; led Missions Ministry at Riveroaks Reformed Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN. Member at Village Seven Presbyterian Church, Colorado Springs, CO; served as moderator of presbytery twice; helped establish Western Church Planting Network; Nominating Committee for PCA, MNA Committee; assisting with church planting efforts in Uganda.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION, INC.**

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders

TE Martin Wagner, Evangel

Ruling Elders

Class of 2025

RE Willis L. Frazer, Covenant

Class of 2024

TE Patrick W. Curles, SE Alabama

RE John Alexander, Metro Atlanta

RE Rob W. Morton, Central Georgia

Class of 2023

TE Robert Bryant, Palmetto

RE William O. Stone Jr., MS Valley

Class of 2022

RE Owen H. Malcolm, GA Foothills

RE W. Russell Trapp, Providence

DE Andrew Schmidt, C. Carolina

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2026

3 members (TE, RE or DE)

C. Nominations

Class of 2026

RE Owen H. Malcolm, GA Foothills DE Andrew Schmidt, C. Carolina
RE W. Russell Trapp, Providence

D. Biographical Sketches

RE Owen H. Malcolm: *Georgia Foothills*. BS Finance, Berry College MBA Entrepreneurship, Kennesaw State University Professional Certified Financial Planner Registered Investment Advisor. Insurance Agent Georgia Certifications: FI NRA Series 65. Ruling Elder -Old Peachtree Presbyterian Church (ordained 2006). Chair, Capital Campaign Committee -Old Peachtree Presbyterian Church (2009-2015). PCA Foundation, Board and Investor Committee Member (2016 -current). Led numerous adult and youth Sunday School classes. Board Member (prior), Good Samaritan Health Center of Gwinnett (2011-2018). Board Member (prior), Care and Counseling Center of Georgia. Vice President, Co-Head of Atlanta, Goldman Sachs (2012 (with predecessor) -present) President, Sanders Financial Management.

DE Andrew Schmidt: *Central Carolina*. Covenant College BA Business Administration MA UNC Charlotte Deacon at Cross Park Charlotte, Finance, Children's Ministry. Grant Thornton, LLP global accounting firm, AC Controls Company, Vice President. PCA Foundation member, Covenant College Alumni Advisor Board

RE W. Russell Trapp: *Providence*. FPC Tuscumbia for over 39 years serving on the Diaconate and Session for over 29 years. I have a BA from Vanderbilt University. I was employed since 1980 and until recently by Merrill Lynch, and now am affiliated with Morgan Stanley. Senior Vice President and Wealth Management Advisor. I help over 250 families manage in excess of \$300 million in assets. I hold various securities registrations, including Series 5, 7, 8, 15, 63, and 65. I hold the designation of Certified Financial Planner. Past service PCA Foundation Board

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PCA RETIREMENT & BENEFITS**

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elder

Ruling Elder

Class of 2025

TE Roderick Miles, N. California

RE Paul A. Fullerton, S. New England
RE Scott P. Magnuson, Pittsburgh

Class of 2024

TE Andrew E. Field, Metro. NY

RE Ryan Bailey, Metro Atlanta
DE Theodore J. Dankovich, Calvary

Class of 2023

RE S.E. Cody Dick, Houston Metro
RE Keith Passwater, Central Indiana
RE James W. Wert Jr., Metro Atlanta

Class of 2022

TE William Chang, Korean SWOC

RE Ken Downer, Highlands
DE Chris Rogers, Covenant

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2026

3 Members (TE, RE, or DE)

C. Nominations

Class of 2026

TE William Chang, Korean SWOC

RE Ken Downer, Highlands

DE Chris Rogers, Covenant

D. Biographical Sketches

TE William Chang: *Korean Southwest Orange County.* B.S. Finance, University of Florida; M.Div., Westminster Theological Seminary. Senior Pastor, New Life Presbyterian Church of Orange County, Fullerton, CA. Served for 11+ years in positions of increasing responsibility in financial industry, with focus on risk analysis. Served on MTW Committee 2019-2022. Moderator of presbytery; Chair of presbytery Examinations and Credentials Committee; Regional Director for KALI for MNA.

RE Ken Downer: *Highlands.* B. Business Administration, University of Georgia, Certified Financial Planner; Certified Public Accountant. Christian Financial Advisor. Member of Grace Mills River, Mills River, NC. Serves as Treasurer for Mills River Village past 7 years; 25 years in accountancy and financial planning business.

DE Chris Rogers: *Covenant.* B. Business Administration, University of Mississippi. Vice President of Diversified Trust, an employee benefits, insurance business. Five years' experience in retail banking; 27 years' experience in insurance and employee benefits. Member of Independent Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN; 11 years on Diaconate; served as Chair, Functional Needs Committee; current Chair of Diaconate.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF RIDGE HAVEN

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders:

Ruling Elders:

Class of 2026

RE Art Fox, North Florida

RE Ellison Smith, Pee Dee

Class of 2025

TE Larry Doughan, Iowa

RE John Randall Berger, E. Carolina

Class of 2024

TE David Hart Sanders, Pee Dee

RE Pete Austin IV, TN Valley

Class of 2023

TE J. Andrew White, Westminster

RE Dan Nielsen, Sav. River

Class of 2022

TE David Sasser Hall, Fellowship

RE Tom A. Cook Jr., Gulfstream

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2027

2 Members (either TE or RE)

C. Nominations

TE David S. Hall, Fellowship

TE Richard O. Smith, Susq Valley

D. Biographical Sketches

TE David Hall: *Fellowship*. B.A. Philosophy, Winthrop University; M.Div. RTS, Charlotte; D.Min. candidate, RTS, Charlotte. Senior Pastor, Filbert PCA, York, SC. Recording Clerk, Fellowship Presbytery; (2020-present) Admin Committee, Fellowship Presbytery (2019-present); Membership Committee, Fellowship Presbytery (2016-present); past chairman, Nominations committee, Christian Education Committee, Campus Ministry Committee, Fellowship Presbytery. Ridge Haven Board of Directors, (2017-present); Secretary/treasurer of Ridge Haven board (2018-present); Nominating Committee 2 terms.

TE Richard Smith: *Susquehanna*, Lead pastor Filbert PCA, York, PA. Involved at Ridge Haven since 1980s as a youth director and church pastor. Previously served on board for Ridge Haven for 3 terms.

COMMITTEE ON REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders:

Ruling Elders:

Class of 2026

TE Iron D. Kim, N. California

RE Patrick C. Fant III, Calvary
RE Rob Grabenkort, GA Foothills

Class of 2025

TE Joshua A. Martin, Calvary
TE David Osborne, E. Carolina

RE Charles Powell Jr., Evangel

Class of 2024

TE Hunter M. Bailey, Hills & Plains

RE Charles Duggan III, C. Georgia
RE Niles McNeel, MS Valley

Class of 2023

TE Ben Hurst Porter, Missouri
TE Jason Sterling, Evangel

RE Michael Martin, Blue Ridge

Class of 2022

TE James Sutton, E. Carolina

RE Jason McBride, Warrior
RE David B. Rouse, SE Alabama

APPENDIX P

Alternates

TE Jack Howell, Tidewater Vacancy

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2027

2 TE and 1 RE

Alternates

1 TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2027

TE Mike Biggs, Hills & Plains RE E. Justen Ellis, NW Georgia

TE Eric Zellner, SE Alabama

Alternates

TE Kenneth Foster, Heritage RE Tobe Alfred Hester, Lowcountry

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Martin S. C. (Mike) Biggs: *Hills and Plains*. M.Div. and MCE Reformed Theological Seminary. Senior Pastor, Christ the King Presbyterian Church in Norman, OK. RUM permanent committee (2011-2014). RUM presbytery committee in Southwest, North Texas, and Hills and Plains Presbyteries. RUF planter and campus minister, New Mexico State University (1994-2001). RUF campus minister, University of Arkansas (1987-1994). Interim RUF campus minister, Delta State University (1986-1987). RUF intern, University of Southern Mississippi (1984-1985). Part time RUF staff at University of South Carolina, Mississippi College, Belhaven College (1982-1987). Has taught and written material for RUM staff training. Seven children, all have been involved with RUF.

TE Eric Zellner: *Southeast Alabama*. M.Div. Covenant Theological Seminary; B.S. Health Promotion, Auburn University. Pastor, Christ Presbyterian Church in Auburn, AL. Alabama RUF State Committee member (2009-2012). Providence Presbytery RUF committee member (2009-2012), vice-chairman (2009-2010), and chairman (2010-2012). Oversaw the addition of RUF at Alabama A&M, first HBCU RUF in North Alabama. Called multiple campus ministers while on committee. Heart for RUF formed as student at Auburn University, where he was introduced to Reformed theology, the PCA, a biblical worldview, and a love for the Word. Served on RBI (2013-2021).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

RE E. Justen Ellis: *Northwest Georgia.* M.A. Military History, American Military University; B.A. History, University of Alabama. Pilot for Delta Airlines. Former USAF officer and pilot. RE at Grace Presbyterian Church in Douglasville, GA (2018-present). Former RE at Main Street Presbyterian Church in Columbus, MS. Served as RUF student leader in college. Served on Northwest Georgia Presbytery Judicial Commission (2021), Missions Committee (2021-present), Candidate & Credentials Committee (2022-present), Discipleship Ministries Committee (2019), and Overtures Committee (2021).

TE Kenneth Foster: *Heritage.* Senior Pastor, Grace Church (PCA) in Dover, DE. Previously served on RUF permanent committee and committee of commissioners. Helped to start RUF committee in Heritage Presbytery. Called campus ministers to University of Delaware (both RUF and RUF-I) and Delaware State University (RUF). Has served on overtures committee and committee of commissioners for MNA.

RE Tobe Alfred Hester: *Lowcountry.* Graduate of University of South Carolina. RE at Christ Church Presbyterian in Charleston, SC (2019-present). Many college-age people recent college graduates under his care. Leads and serves them in Bible study, counseling, prayer. Regularly hosts students for dinner or for fellowship between morning and evening worship services. Has a heart to disciple young men, especially college students. Married to Jenni with eight children, ages seventeen to five, one of whom is adopted from China. Owns his own fractional recruiting and HR consulting business. Previously worked in international logistics and as director of global sales at a Fortune 500 company. Served on Overtures Committee in 2021.

STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elder

Ruling Elder

Class of 2025

TE Paul L. Bankson, C. Georgia
TE David F. Coffin Jr., Potomac
TE Paul D. Kooistra, Warrior

RE Steve Dowling, SE Alabama
RE Frederick Neikirk, Ascension
RE R. Jackson Wilson, GA Foothills

APPENDIX P

Class of 2024

TE Hoochan Paul Lee, Korean NE RE Howie Donahoe, Pacific NW
TE Sean M. Lucas, Covenant RE Melton Ledford Duncan, Calvary
TE Michael F. Ross, Columbus Metro RE Samuel J. Duncan, Grace

Class of 2023

TE Carl F. Ellis Jr., TN Valley RE Daniel A. Carrell, James River
TE Charles E. McGowan, Nashville RE Bruce W. Terrell, Metropolitan NY
Vacancy RE John B. White Jr., Metro Atlanta

Class of 2022

TE Raymond D. Cannata, S. Louisiana RE John R. Bise, Providence
TE Fred Greco, Houston Metro RE EJ Nusbaum, Rocky Mountain
TE Guy Prentiss Waters, MS Valley RE John Pickering, Evangel

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2026

3 TEs and 3 REs

Class of 2023

1 TE

C. Nominations

Class of 2026

TE Fred Greco, Houston Metro RE John R. Bise, Providence
TE Arthur Sartorius, Siouxlans RE James Eggert, SW Florida
TE Guy Prentiss Waters, MS Valley RE John I. Maynard, C. Florida

Class of 2023

TE David B. Garner, Philadelphia MW

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Fred Greco: *Houston Metro.* B.A. University of Buffalo; M.A. University of Chicago; J.D. University of Michigan; MDiv Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson. Senior Pastor, Christ Church, Katy, TX. Houston Metro Moderator (2009-2011); Chair, Candidates & Credentials (2017-); Ministerial Relations (2007-). General Assembly commissioner since 1999 for MTW, Overtures and Administration. Chaired Overtures (2008, 2011). Secretary GA TEC (2004-2005). GA Nominating Committee 13 years (Chairman three times, Secretary twice). Member of the SJC since 2009 (Chairman 2014-2017 and 2019-2021). Chaired numerous panels

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

and committees (Technology, Style, Ethics). Author of numerous articles on Church Government and the BCO.

TE Arthur G. Sartorius: *Siouxlands*. B.A. Journalism University of Minnesota; J.D. University of Florida; MDiv Reformed Theological Seminary Orlando. Senior Pastor, Black Hills Community Church, Rapid City, SD (2008-). Twenty-six years as an attorney practicing in federal and state trial and appellate courts. Member of the Florida Bar Association (1982-); PCA Committee on Constitutional Business four years; Overtures Committee six years; Review of Presbytery Records (five years); Nominating Committee (2019-, Current Chairman); Chairman, Siouxlands Administration Committee (eight years); Chairman, Siouxlands Candidates & Credentials Committee; Board of Trustees John Witherspoon College (Chair 2018-2021).

TE Guy Prentiss Waters: *Mississippi Valley*. B.A. University of Pennsylvania; MDiv, Westminster Theological Seminary; PhD, Duke University. Serves as James M. Baird, Jr. Professor of New Testament and Academic Dean at Reformed Theological Seminary (2007 -). Served as Assistant Professor at Belhaven University (2002 -2007). Presbytery Parliamentarian (2015 -), Moderator (twice), Credentials Committee (member and chair), and multiple study committees. Service to General Assembly includes Overtures Committee, Theological Examining Committee (twice as chair), and the Insider Movements Study Committee. Current member of the Standing Judicial Commission, (2017 -). Author and editor of several books, including *How Jesus Runs the Church*.

RE John R. Bise: *Providence*. B.A. Economics, Vanderbilt University; MBA Harvard. Business Consultant, Accredited by National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts. Providence Presbytery Steering Committee, Moderator (2010, 2019), Candidates & Credentials (2009-2015, 2021-), Administrative Committee (2010-2011, 2019). Evangelical Presbytery Candidates & Credentials (2006-2008). PCA GA Commissioner (2002, 2005-2020); Overtures (2009-2020, Chair 2015); MNA CoC (2006, 2008); RUM CoC (2007); Committee on Constitutional Business (2011-2012, Alternate 2010); Standing Judicial Commission (2013-present) serving on multiple panels including Chair. Testified or worked in cases including national interest securities matters, bankruptcy, shareholder oppression and marital dissolution.

RE James Eggert: *Southwest Florida*. B.A. History and Philosophy, Wheaton College; J.D. University of Florida. Attorney, Managing Partner, Owens Law Group. Attorney (Florida Bar) since 1992. Practice in numerous

contested matters in private civil litigation including experience with both state and federal procedural rules. Handled several appeals, having written numerous appellate briefs, and argued before appellate panels. Ruling Elder for 27 years at Westminster Presbyterian, Brandon, FL. Southwest Florida Moderator (twice); Former member and Chair Pastoral Care Committee; Member, Examination Committee. Represented Presbytery in numerous matters taken up to the SJC, including briefs and arguments before the SJC.

RE John Maynard: *Central Florida*. B.A. Economics and History, Stanford University; MBA University of Texas, Austin. Founder, Medical Device Distributorship. Ruling Elder at St. Paul’s Presbyterian, Orlando for 24 years, servicing on Personnel, Finance, Discipline and Building Committees. Board of Trustees, Geneva School, Orlando (1998-2015). Board of Trustees, Westminster Seminary (2002-), Chair of the Governance and Executive Committees. Central Florida Presbytery Pastoral Care Committee (five years, current Chair). PCA General Assembly Overtures (2018-2021)

TE David B. Garner: *Philadelphia Metro West*. B.A. Business Administration, University of North Carolina; ThM Dallas Theological Seminary; PhD Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary. Chief Academic Officer, Vice President of Global Ministries, Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. MTW Missionary in Eastern Europe (2004-2007); Pastor of Teaching, Proclamation Presbyterian (2012-2015); Presbytery Seminary/Church Relations Chair (2009-2013); Systematic Theology Book Review Editor, Themelios Journal (2018-2021); Co-founder, The Southgate Fellowship; Candidates & Credentials (2014 – Present); PCA Overtures and MTW CoC; Chair ad interim study committee on Insider movements (2011 – 2014); Author and editor of several books and 100s of articles.

THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE

A. Present Personnel

Teaching Elders

TE Bruce Baugus, MS Valley

Ruling Elders

Class of 2024

RE Edward Currie, MS Valley

Class of 2023

TE P. Clay Holland, Houston Metro RE Richard E. Leino, James River

Class of 2022

TE Kevin Nelson, N. Florida RE Hans Madueme, TN Valley

Alternates

TE Kevin C. Carr, Siouxlans Vacancy

B. To be Elected:

Class of 2025

1 TE and 1 RE

Alternates

1TE and 1 RE

C. Nominations

Class of 2025

TE Jonathan L. Master, Calvary RE K. J. Drake, E. Canada

Alternates

TE Kevin C. Carr, Siouxlans RE Floor nomination

D. Biographical Sketches

TE Jonathan L. Master: *Calvary*. Ph.D. University of Aberdeen; M.Div. and Th.M. Capital Bible Seminary; B.S. Cairn University. President, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Former Dean (2012-2020) (2012-2020) and Professor of Theology (2011-2020), Cairn University School of Divinity. Publications include *Growing in Grace* (Banner of Truth, 2020), *On Reforming Worship*, ed. with David Hall (Covenant Publications, 2018), *The God We Worship*, ed. (P&R Publications, 2016), and *A Question of Consensus: The Doctrine of Assurance After the Westminster Confession* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

RE K. J. Drake: *Eastern Canada*. Ph.D. Historical Theology, Saint Louis University; M.Div. *summa cum laude* Covenant Theological Seminary; B.A. History, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and Latin University of Nebraska, Lincoln with Honors and High Distinction. Publications include *The Flesh of the Word: The extra Calvinisticum from Zwingli to Early Orthodoxy*, and articles in Westminster Theological Journal and Journal

of Reformed Theology. Assistant professor of history at Redeemer University, Hamilton, ON, Canada (2018-present). Visiting instructor at Covenant Seminary (2016-2021). RE at New City Church, Hamilton, ON (2018-present). RE at South City Church, St. Louis, MO (2012-2018). Served on Missouri Presbytery Candidates and Credentials Committee (2015-2018).

TE Kevin C. Carr: *Siouxlands*. D.Min. California Graduate School of Theology, Th.M. Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, M.Div. Biblical Theological Seminary, B.S. SUNY Buffalo. Minister at First Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Hinckley, MN. Previously served churches in California and New Mexico, and as a missionary to the Navajo Nation. Chairman of Siouxlands Presbytery Candidates and Credentials Committee since 1995. Th.M. studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Theology, with thesis titled *A Convincing Beam of Light: Word and Spirit in the Piety of John Flavel*. Author of 24 booklets for Christian discipleship. Has served on numerous committees of commissioners at GA, and twice on overtures committee.

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE
NOMINATING COMMITTEE
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

The Nominating Committee of the General Assembly convened in Birmingham, Alabama, at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex, on Wednesday, June 22, 2022. Chairman TE Art Sartorius called the meeting to order at 4:50 p.m., asking TE Jared Nelson to pray.

Members attending:

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Class</u>
Ascension	TE Jared Nelson	2022
Central Carolina	TE Derek Wells	2024
Central Florida	RE Gabriel E. Williams	2022
Evangel	RE Miles E. Gresham	2023
Fellowship	TE John Franklin	2024
Great Lakes	TE Jon Saunders	2024
Heartland	TE Rick E. Franks	2024
Heritage	TE H. Scott Winchester	2022

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Highlands	TE Skip Gillikin	2024
Hills and Plains	RE Thomas Kirkeby	2024
Houston Metro	RE Dave Cias	2024
Illiana	TE Alex Eppstein	2023
James River	RE Robert Rumbaugh	2022
Korean Capital	TE Steve Sun Kyo Yoon	2024
Korean Northeastern	TE Hoochan Paul Lee	2024
Korean Southeastern	TE Anthony Lee	2023
Lowcountry	RE Ron Woernle	2022
Metro Atlanta	TE Hace Cargo	2023
Mississippi Valley	RE James Elkin	2024
Missouri	RE John Ranheim	2024
New Jersey	TE Stephen O'Neil	2023
New River	TE Michael VanDerLinden, Sec.	2023
North Florida	TE Dave Abney	2023
Northern Illinois	TE Justin Coverstone	2023
Northern New England	RE Ernie Shipman	2022
Northwest Georgia	RE Jonathan Stuckert	2022
Pee Dee	TE Matthew Dallas Adams	2022
Philadelphia	TE Maranatha Chung	2023
Platte Valley	TE Andrew Lightner	2023
Providence	RE Frank Cohee	2024
Rocky Mountain	RE Jim Franks	2022
Siouxlands	TE Arthur Sartorius, Chairman	2022
Southeast Alabama	TE Parker Johnson	2024
Susquehanna Valley	RE Douglas Sharp Jr.	2022
Tennessee Valley	TE Brian Cosby	2022
Westminster	TE Robert E. Dykes	2024

Seventeen (17) floor nominations were reviewed for eligibility, of which fifteen (15) were found to be eligible.

The Chairman requested volunteers to compile and format the biographical data accompanying the Floor Nominations.

MSP that the Committee adjourn.

Chairman Sartorius adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m. and closed with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

TE Art Sartorius, Chairman

TE Michael VanDerLinden, Secretary

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS

Class of 2026 – Teaching Elder

Nominating Committee Nominee	Floor Nominee
TE Jason Piland, Ohio	TE Per Almquist, N. New England

TE Jason Piland. *Ohio.* Belmont University (Nashville): BBA; Belmont University (Nashville): JD; Reformed Theological Seminary (Charlotte): MDiv. Redeemer Church (Hudson, OH) -Assistant/Associate Pastor (2019-present). PCAGA Review of Presbytery Records ('21-'22), AC CoC ('21); Member of the presbytery's Executive Committee (2019-present); Serves as an Advisory Member, Ohio Presbytery Bylaws Review Committee (2021-2022)

TE Per Almquist: *Northern New England.* Pastor, Free Grace PC, Lewiston, ME. Served a full term on CCB (2017-2020). Served three times as chair of Committee on Review of Presbytery Records, and three times as vice-chair. Served as time keeper for the 49th General Assembly. Also, has served on several presbytery committees. Roles have included chair, Committee of Review of Session Records; chair, Ministerial Relations Committee; recording clerk and stated clerk of Northern New England Presbytery. Represented the PCA at the Synod for the Eglise Reformee du Quebec.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COVENANT COLLEGE

Class of 2026

Nominating Committee Nominee	Floor Nominee
TE Sean McGowan, Gulf Coast	TE Thurman Williams, Missouri
TE W. Gregory Marshall, Fellowship	TE Omari Hill, Central Carolina

TE Sean McGowan: *Gulf Coast.* B.S. Religion and Biblical Studies, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia; M.A. Theological Studies, Reformed Theological Seminary; pursuing MTh. Scottish Church History and Theology, University of Glasgow, Edinburgh Theological Seminary. Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Serves on Ministers and Candidates Committee of Gulf Coast Presbytery. Previously

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

taught for 12 years at the Alternative School of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Westminster Christian Academy of Huntsville, Alabama.

TE Thurman Williams: *Missouri.* BA Chesapeake Theological Seminary; DMin Covenant Theological Seminary; Nominated by Missouri Presbytery, and unanimously recommended by the Board to serve on Covenant College. Pastor of New City Fellowship – West End. Previously served as Associate Pastor of Grace and Peace Fellowship (St. Louis), Pastor of New Song Community Church (Baltimore); Served multiple terms on MNA Permanent Committee, serving as Chairman several years; Adjunct Professor and Director of Homiletics at Covenant Theological Seminary. Serves on Credentials Committee of Missouri Presbytery. Married to Evie, father of four children.

TE W. Gregory Marshall: *Fellowship.* Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia; M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina. Pastor, Temple Presbyterian Church, Clover, South Carolina. Serves on the Christian Education Committee and chairs the Campus Ministry Committee of Fellowship Presbytery. Previously served on the Christian Education Committee of Palmetto Presbytery. Serves on the planning team of The Edge, an annual Jr. High youth conference centered on Reformed theology and held at Covenant College. The oldest of his four children, Timothy, is a freshman at Covenant College.

TE Omari Hill: *Central Carolina.* Recommended unanimously by the Covenant College Board of Trustees. MDiv from Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte. Served as founding ruling elder Christ Central Church, Charlotte. Founded Reformed University chapter at UNC, Charlotte 2009-2012. Served as associate pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Manhattan, Resurrection Brooklyn church, and on pastoral staff of Christ Central Church, before accepting his current role as High School Chaplain and bible teacher at Covenant Day School.

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

Class of 2027

Nominating Committee Nominee

TE Lee Hutchings, Ohio

None

Floor Nominee

TE David A. Vosseller, Sav. River

RE Raudel Stair, Metro Atlanta

TE Lee Hutchings: *Ohio.* B.A. The University of Akron, Akron, OH; MDiv Reformed Theological Seminary Jackson, MS; DMin candidate Biblical Counseling Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA. Church Planter and Senior Pastor, Trinity Church PCA, North Canton, OH. Ohio Presbytery Moderator (2021), Chairman of the Pastoral Care Committee (2021-present); Executive Committee (2020-present), OH Presbytery; Chairman Provisional Session for Faith PCA, Akron, OH (2021-present); Candidates and Credentials Committee (2022-present); CMC Subcommittee of the “Rising Generation of Leaders”, General Assembly (2016-2020); Review of Presbytery Records, GA (2019-2020); Committee of Commissioners Covenant Seminary, GA (2016); CoC MTW (2021); CoC AC, (2022)

TE David Vosseller: *Savannah River.* B.A. Political Science, Bucknell University. MDiv, Covenant Theological Seminary. Senior Pastor, Lakemont Presbyterian Church, Augusta, GA. Currently serving as alternate on CDM. Previously served on CoC for Ridge Haven, Covenant Seminary, Covenant College, RUF, and CDM. Secretary of CoC for CDM (2018). Past member of Christian Education Committee, Central Georgia Presbytery. Past member of Candidates and Credentials Committee (Chairman) and Shepherding Committee of Chicago Metro Presbytery. Current member of Candidates and Credentials Committee, Savannah River Presbytery.

RE Raudel Stair: *Metro Atlanta.* President of the PCA Foundation (1998-2019), RE- Christ Church Presbyterian, 2000- Current (CMT- Finance, Personnel, Treasurer, Home Fellowship Leader), RE -Tates Creek Presbyterian, 1995-1998, RE- New Life Presbyterian Church 1993-1995 (Treasurer)

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA

Class of 2027

Nominating Committee Nominee	Floor Nominee
TE Hansoo Jin, Korean Capitol	TE Paul Sagan, Hills & Plains

TE Hansoo Jin. *Korean Capital.* Pfeiffer University, Misenheimer, NC, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Reformed Theological Seminary, Washington DC, Masters of Divinity. Pastor/Church planter Harris Creek

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Community Church, Baltimore MD, church planting resident at Harvest Presbyterian Church in Clarksville, MD and Abbott Memorial Presbyterian Church Baltimore, MD, Assistant pastor, with a focus on youth ministry, at Calvary PCA in Towson, MD. Served in Korean Capital Presbytery as Assistant Stated Clerk, Vice Moderator, MNA Committee, Shepherding Committee. Served on Committee of Session Record, Chesapeake Presbytery. Involved in GA, CMNA alternate, Nominating Committee, Overtures, CoC committees of MTW, Admin, RUM, COM, MNA.

TE Paul Sagan: *Hills and Plains*. University of Mississippi, B.A. 1979, RTS-Jackson. M.Div. 1983. DMin. New Geneva Theological Seminary 2013. Church Planter of Covenant Church (PCA) Fayetteville AR in 1983 which in turn planted 3 other PCA churches, Chair of Lamb Fund (Church planting fund for several churches) and which has helped fund multiple successful church planting efforts featured in ByFaith Magazine. Has served as Moderator of Mid-America Presbytery, MNA Chairman of Covenant Presbytery. Pastoral Care Committee of Hills and Plains Presbytery. 9 years Chaplain in Army Reserve and Arkansas National Guard.

COMMITTEE ON MISSION TO THE WORLD

Class of 2027

Nominating Committee Nominee

TE Maranatha Chung, Philadelphia
RE Theo Hagg, Westminster

Floor Nominee

TE Tom Patton, Evangel
RE David Moore, Central Florida

TE Maranatha Chung: *Philadelphia Metro*. B.S., M.S. Electrical Engineering, Texas A&M University; M.Div., Th.M., Westminster Theological Seminary. Director of Chinese Ministry, Northeast Community Church, Philadelphia, PA. Serves on Credentials Committee for presbytery; served on Committees of Commissioners at GA for Covenant Theological Seminary, Overtures, Mission to the World.

TE Tom Patton, *Evangel Presbytery*, has spent the past 35 years serving the Lord in missions through the PCA. He spent 8 years as an MTW church planter in Japan and the last 25 years as missions pastor for two PCA churches in Orlando and Birmingham. His extensive travels and involvement with missionaries, and missions agencies, from across the

globe uniquely qualify him to serve in this role. He served on the CMTW for one year as an alternate. He desires to continue that service by providing strong leadership for our denomination's missions agency.

RE Theo Hagg: *Westminster*. M.D., Ph.D. Neuroscience, UCSD. Professor of Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine, East Tennessee State University, oversees NIH-funded biomedical research laboratory. Member at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Johnson, TN; Chair of Missions Committee multiple years; several visits to missions work in Africa; started a charitable non-profit foundation to support vulnerable children in Africa.

RE David Moore: *Central Florida Presbytery*. BSEE, Auburn University; MBA Rollins College. Managing director, executive committee and board of directors, Public Financial Management Inc. RE at Orangewood in Orlando 20+ years. Decades long participation in missions, financial support/fundraising, hands-on participation and personal relationships centered around Orangewood's and MTW's global ministry. Committed to missions, financial expertise, board/executive leadership and presently serves on CMTW as Alternate.

COMMITTEE ON REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

Alternate

Nominating Committee Nominee

TE Kenneth Foster, Heritage

Floor Nominee

TE Peter Rowan, Susquehanna Valley
TE James Han, Korean SW

TE Kenneth Foster: *Heritage*. Senior Pastor, Grace Church (PCA) in Dover, DE. Previously served on RUF permanent committee and committee of commissioners. Helped to start RUF committee in Heritage Presbytery. Called campus ministers to University of Delaware (both RUF and RUF-I) and Delaware State University (RUF). Has served on overtures committee and committee of commissioners for MNA.

TE Peter Rowan: *Susquehanna Valley Presbytery*. M.Div. Covenant Seminary, B.A. Western Washington University. RUF campus minister at Virginia Commonwealth University (2010-2015) Pastor of Second City Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, PA (2015-present). Member of

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Credentials Committee in the Susquehanna Valley Presbytery (2015-present). 2 terms served on RPR. 1 term served on nominating committee. 4 years served on the overtures committee.

TE James Han: *Korean Southwest.* Church Planter and Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian

Church, Los Angeles, CA since 2002. Bachelor of Science, UC Irvine. M.Div, Westminster Seminary California. Served on MTW CoC 2021-2022. Current President of Torrance United School District School Board. 38 years of involvement with Korean American Campus Ministry (KCM) throughout Southern California including UCLA, UCSD, USC, UC Irvine.

STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Class of 2026

Nominating Committee Nominee

TE Arthur Sartorius, Siouxlans

RE James Eggert, SW Florida

RE John I. Maynard, C. Florida

Floor Nominee

TE Raymond Cannata, S. Louisiana

RE EJ Nusbaum, Rocky Mountain

RE John Pickering, Evangel

TE Arthur G. Sartorius: *Siouxlans.* B.A. Journalism University of Minnesota; J.D. University of Florida; MDiv Reformed Theological Seminary Orlando. Senior Pastor, Black Hills Community Church, Rapid City, SD (2008-). Twenty-six years as an attorney practicing in federal and state trial and appellate courts. Member of the Florida Bar Association (1982-); PCA Committee on Constitutional Business four years; Overtures Committee six years; Review of Presbytery Records (five years); Nominating Committee (2019-, Current Chairman); Chairman, Siouxlans Administration Committee (eight years); Chairman, Siouxlans Candidates & Credentials Committee; Board of Trustees John Witherspoon College (Chair 2018-2021).

RE James Eggert: *Southwest Florida.* B.A. History and Philosophy, Wheaton College; J.D. University of Florida. Attorney, Managing Partner, Owens Law Group. Attorney (Florida Bar) since 1992. Practice in numerous contested matters in private civil litigation including experience with both state and federal procedural rules. Handled several appeals, having written numerous appellate briefs, and argued before appellate panels. Ruling Elder for 27 years at Westminster Presbyterian, Brandon, FL. Southwest

Florida Moderator (twice); Former member and Chair Pastoral Care Committee; Member, Examination Committee. Represented Presbytery in numerous matters taken up to the SJC, including briefs and arguments before the SJC.

RE John Maynard: *Central Florida*. B.A. Economics and History, Stanford University; MBA University of Texas, Austin. Founder, Medical Device Distributorship. Ruling Elder at St. Paul's Presbyterian, Orlando for 24 years, servicing on Personnel, Finance, Discipline and Building Committees. Board of Trustees, Geneva School, Orlando (1998-2015). Board of Trustees, Westminster Seminary (2002-), Chair of the Governance and Executive Committees. Central Florida Presbytery Pastoral Care Committee (five years, current Chair). PCA General Assembly Overtures (2018-2021)

TE Raymond D. Cannata: *Southern Louisiana Presbytery*. B.A. Wake Forest University; M.Div. and Th.M. Princeton Theological Seminary; DMin. Westminster Theological Seminary. Grace Community Church (PCA), Bridgewater, NJ: Asst/Assoc. Pastor 1997-2000; Senior Pastor, 2000-05. Redeemer Presbyterian Church of New Orleans, organizing/senior pastor, 2005-present. Moderator Metro. NY and Southern Louisiana Presbyteries. Chair, PCA Committee of Commissioners on Inter-Church Relations, 2012; Current member of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC), 2013-present. Has served on the SJC for the past 9 years.

RE E.J. Nusbaum: *Rocky Mountain*. B.S. U.S. Military Academy, West Point. Retired Captain. Owner of insurance agency. Moderator of 35th GA in Memphis. Has served on SJC for last 9 years. Re-nominated this year by Rocky Mountain to serve third term. GA Committee on Constitutional Business for 10 years prior to SJC. Chairman of GA Overtures Committee at 29th GA. Served on Overtures Committee at nine General Assemblies. Ruling Elder at Village Seven, PCA for 35 years.

RE John Pickering: *Evangel*. BA., M.B.A., Vanderbilt, J.D. University of Texas, Austin. 26 years in law practice with Balch and Bingham. John has served on the SJC for the last 10 years, chairing several SJC panels. He was nominated by Evangel presbytery this year for another term. Has served as a Ruling Elder for 18 years at Red Mountain Church where he chaired the Pastor Search Committee. Has served the presbytery on Administrative, Judicial, and Church & Pastor Care committees. Founding board member, Westminster School.

THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Class of 2025 - TE

Nominating Committee Nominee	Floor Nominee
TE Jonathan L. Master, <i>Calvary</i>	TE Guy Richard, <i>Metro Atlanta</i>

TE Jonathan L. Master: *Calvary*. Ph.D. University of Aberdeen; M.Div. and Th.M. Capital Bible Seminary; B.S. Cairn University. President, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Former Dean (2012-2020) (2012-2020) and Professor of Theology (2011-2020), Cairn University School of Divinity. Publications include *Growing in Grace* (Banner of Truth, 2020), *On Reforming Worship*, ed. with David Hall (Covenant Publications, 2018), *The God We Worship*, ed. (P&R Publications, 2016), and *A Question of Consensus: The Doctrine of Assurance After the Westminster Confession* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

TE Guy Richard: *Metro Atlanta*. MDiv (RTS Jackson, 2002), PhD, Historical and Systematic Theology (University of Edinburgh, 2006), President-RTS Atlanta. Served on Theological Exam Committee of the PCA (2010-2013), Served on Grace Presbytery Examinations Committee (2009-2017), Author- *Persistent Prayer, What is Faith? The Supremacy of God in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford*, Multiple articles in journals, 18 years of pastoral experience in three different church settings.

Alternate – RE

Nominating Committee	Floor Nominee
None	RE Joshua Torrey, <i>South Texas</i>

RE Joshua Torrey: *South Texas*. BS, University of Texas at San Antonio. Design Engineer at Apple Incorporated; Ruling Elder at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX. Serves on Candidates and Credentials Committee in his presbytery. Serves on the CoC for the Administrative Committee and has served on the CoC for the CDM.

APPENDIX Q

REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA June 2022

I. Introduction to the Committee's Work

A. Purpose and Scope of Examinations

According to our *Book of Church Order*, Teaching Elders should seek office “out of a sincere desire to promote the glory of God in the Gospel of his Son.” In this same spirit, the Theological Examining Committee (comprising 3 Teaching Elders, 3 Ruling Elders, and 2 alternates) serves the General Assembly by ensuring that candidates for positions of influence in our denomination are both gifted for and committed to promoting the glory of God by promoting the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ. Our task, according to *The Book of Church Order*, chapter 4, section 1.14, is to examine “all first and second level administrative officers of committees, boards, and agencies, and those acting temporarily in these positions who are being recommended for first time employment.”

B. Nature of Examinations

The examinations we administer resemble those for the ordination of Teaching Elders in the PCA, covering the following areas: Christian experience, theology, the sacraments, church government and the *BCO*, Bible content, church history, and the history of the PCA. Our standard procedure is to administer a written examination covering theological views, followed by an intensive oral examination, which entails not only views but knowledge in these areas.

II. Summary of the Committee's Work

In the past year, the committee has conducted two (2) examinations.

1. On **August 5, 2021**, the committee examined **TE Irwyn Ince** for the position of **Coordinator, Mission to North America**. All areas of the exam were sustained and unanimously approved by the committee.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The committee reviewed the nominee's written statement of personal differences with the Westminster Standards, included below, and, per RAO 8-3 and 16.3.e.5, deemed the differences to be more than semantic but neither hostile to the system of doctrine nor striking at the vitals of religion.

WCF 21.8, WLC 117, WSC 60 – *“The confession rightly puts the first emphasis of the Sabbath on rest. We are first exposed to Sabbath rest in Genesis 2:2. This rest is God’s rest and points forward to the certain completion of all God’s works. “The Sabbath introduces eschatology into to Scripture for the first time.” We look forward to the Sabbath rest for the people of God (Heb. 4:8-10). On the Lord’s Day we enjoy a foretaste of that eternal rest. So, the Sabbath is also a day that we are to be refreshed (Ex. 23:12; 31:17). It is not a day of drudgery, but it is a day of delight (Is. 58:13). My exception is with the Confession and Catechisms including recreations as forbidden on the Sabbath. Recreation does not equate to toil or labor. It may regularly be restful and refreshing.”*

WLC 109 – *“I take exception to the statement that the second commandment forbids “the making of any representation of God, or all or any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever.” While I would agree that we are forbidden to craft images of God inwardly or outwardly that are not in accord with those represented in Scripture, the Scripture is replete with anthropomorphisms of God that he uses to describe himself. There are examples of God condescending to describe himself to us in anthropomorphic terms. When we have an image in our minds of what is being described, we are not violating the second commandment.”*

2. On **March 10 2022**, the committee examined **Dr. Collin Messer** for the position of **Vice President of Academic Affairs, Covenant College**. All areas of the exam were sustained and unanimously approved by the committee.

The committee reviewed the nominee's written statement of personal differences with the Westminster Standards, included below, and, per RAO 8-3 and 16.3.e.5, deemed the differences to be more than semantic but neither hostile to the system of doctrine nor striking at the vitals of religion..

APPENDIX Q

WCF 4 – *“In Chapter 4, “Of Creation,” we read that “It pleased God . . . to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.” I am not certain of the Westminster Divines’ intent in using the word “day”—especially since the sun doesn’t make an appearance in Genesis 1 until the fourth day. I believe that God is certainly capable of creating the world in six 24-hour days, and I also believe that Genesis 1 allows for this reading. However, I don’t hold that the Scripture must be read in these terms. Of greater importance and cause for rejoicing is God’s prerogative in creating the world ex nihilo and that this creation was “all very good.”*

Respectfully submitted,
RE Richard Leino, Chairman

RE Hans Madueme, Secretary

APPENDIX R

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA June 2022

- I. A list of Presbytery Minutes received by the Committee (See VI below)
- II. A list of Presbyteries that have not submitted approved responses to exceptions of previous General Assemblies:
 - Columbus Metro
 - Georgia Foothills
 - Houston Metro
 - Illiana
 - Korean Northwest
 - Korean Southwest Orange County
 - Pittsburgh
 - Rio Grande
 - Rocky Mountain
 - South Florida
- III. A list of Presbyteries that have submitted Minutes after the March 15 deadline required by *RAO 16-4.d*:
 - Arizona
 - Columbus Metro (Printed Minutes, Standing Rules, Directory)
 - Eastern Carolina (Printed Minutes)
 - Evangel (Printed Minutes, Standing Rules, Directory)
 - Georgia Foothills
 - Gulfstream
 - James River (Printed Minutes)
 - Korean Capital
 - Korean Northwest
 - Korean Southern
 - Korean Southwest Orange County (Responses)
 - Metropolitan New York

New River
New York State (Printed Minutes)
Northwest Georgia (Printed Minutes)
Pacific Northwest (Printed Minutes)
Philadelphia (Responses)
South Florida
Southeast Alabama (Printed Minutes)
Southern Louisiana
Tidewater (Printed Minutes)
Warrior (Printed Minutes)

IV. Citations [Editorial Note: See Journal, p. 21 for Assembly's revision.]

1. Cite the following Presbyteries to appear before the *Standing Judicial Commission* according to the provisions of *BCO* 40-5 for “a credible report” of an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings”:
Korean Central Presbytery
Northwest Georgia Presbytery

V. General Recommendations

1. Thank Dr. Bryan Chapell, Margie Mallow, Amanda Burton, Ashley Davis, Karen Frey, Priscilla Lowrey, Angela Nantz, and the rest of the AC staff who covered their responsibilities in addition to their attentive support, friendly welcome, and support to the officers. *Adopted*
2. Commend the 2022 Committee on Review of Presbytery Records officers TE Hoochan Paul Lee, TE Stephen Tipton, TE Eddie Lim, and TE Freddy Fritz for their work. *Adopted*
3. Commend all Presbyteries for submitting minutes for review. Only 2 Presbyteries have not submitted physical copies. *Adopted*
4. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly send a letter to the Presbyteries through the Stated clerks of the Presbyteries to:
 - a. Commend those Clerks who sent records for their hard work to create, keep, and submit their records, and every Presbytery who sent delegates to serve on the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. *Adopted*
 - b. Encourage Presbyteries to establish commissions to review their records early in the year so that the records may be sent in by the deadline. *Adopted*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- c. Urge those who failed to send reports or delegates to do so in the future. Note that 68 of 88 presbyteries had representatives appointed to the committee this year, with 54 attending the meeting (including 45 TEs and 9 REs). *Adopted*
- d. Remind Presbyteries that records (both hard-copies and digital) must be submitted by the deadline of March 15 of each year. *Adopted*
- e. Remind Presbyteries that records must be submitted in one of two formats: (1) four bound, paginated hard-copies or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy (preferably as a single document). *Adopted*
- f. Urge Presbyteries, when recording an examinee's stated differences to the Confessional Standards, to record judgment on each stated difference using the wording of one of the four categories explicitly spelled out in *RAO* 16-3.e.5.a through d. *Adopted*
- g. Remind Presbyteries that the actions of their commissions are the actions of that presbytery, and the full record of each commission's proceedings must be included in subsequent presbytery minutes, either in the body of the minutes or as an addendum thereto (*BCO* 15-1). *Adopted*
- h. Remind Presbyteries that when GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary. Furthermore, remind Presbyteries to follow the guidelines for responding to GA in *RAO* 16-10. *Adopted*
- i. Remind Presbyteries that responses to GA's exceptions must be approved by the Presbytery, and such approval and the responses must be recorded in their minutes. *Adopted*
- j. Request that Presbyteries approve their responses to GA exceptions in the same calendar year in which the exceptions were taken. If not approved in the calendar year, Presbytery should supply a copy of minutes in which responses were approved. *Adopted*
- k. Remind Presbyteries that when exceptions of substance relate to items missing in the minutes, that action be taken to correct the minutes to remedy the exception. *Adopted*

APPENDIX R

- l. Ask Presbyteries, in the case when an examination for ordination refers to acceptance of an earlier licensure examination, to provide a citation of the prior minutes where that exam is recorded. *Adopted*
 - m. Remind Presbyteries that they may, if they adopt it in their by-laws, approve meetings by telephone or video conference. *Adopted*
 - n. Remind Presbyteries that some actions must be taken annually, including review of Session records, receiving reports from TEs without call, receiving reports from TEs laboring out-of-bounds, receiving reports from interns, receiving reports from candidates under care, and that record of such reports should be included in their minutes. Additionally, reports of interns by the committee charged with the oversight of interns must be received at each stated meeting. *Adopted*
 - o. Request that the directories that are supplied to CRPR include the status (Pastor, Without Call, Out-of-Bounds, etc.) of each TE in the list of TEs and their addresses since that information is necessary to determine whether or not annual reports are required. *Adopted*
 - p. Remind Presbyteries to ensure that their minutes are paginated. *Adopted*
 - q. Request Presbyteries to encourage candidates to clarify their stated differences to the Standards when writing them in their own words to accurately reflect their view as presented to Presbytery. *Adopted*
 - r. Remind Presbyteries that only actionable motions need to be recorded in the minutes. *Adopted*
 - s. Remind Presbyteries to be attentive to making the appropriate edits to the ordination/installation template according to the particular context when creating minutes of these services. *Adopted*
5. Encourage Presbytery Stated Clerks to attend the annual Presbytery Clerks' meeting in December. *Adopted*
 6. **Amend RAO 16-4.c** as follows (~~strike through~~ for deletions, underlining for new wording):
 - c. In addition to the minutes themselves, the presbytery shall submit ~~three (3) copies~~ a corresponding number of

copies, in accordance with 16-4.a. of the following items:

So that the rule reads:

- c. In addition to the minutes themselves, the presbytery shall submit a corresponding number of copies, in accordance with 16-4.a, of the following items:

Adopted

VI. Report Concerning the Minutes of Each Presbytery:

1. That the Minutes of **Arizona** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jun 15, 2021; Nov 11, 2021**.
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Aug 20, 2020 (*BCO* 38-1) – Full *BCO* 38-1 statement not recorded in minutes.
Exception: Jan 21, 2021 (*BCO* 19-2.b.3) – Candidate licensed after *BCO* exam expressly not sustained.
Exception: Apr 22, 2021; Aug 20, 2021; Nov 11, 2021 (*Standing Rules*) – No record of $\frac{2}{3}$ vote to amend *Standing Rules*.
Exception: Jun 15, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.
Exception: Jun 15, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s own words.
Exception: Nov 11, 2021 (*Standing Rules* I.C.1; *BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Meeting improperly classified as stated instead of called; purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Apr 25, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4) – Stated differences not recorded in minister’s own words.
Response: We were negligent to not record the minister’s stated differences and the ruling of Presbytery. We did however receive the minister’s stated differences and ruled on those exceptions. Presbytery ruled that his stated differences were more than semantic but not striking at the vitals of the faith. We will be more watchful in the future.
In his own words, the exception is included below.
Exception: WLC 119 & WCF XX1.8 “recreational clause on Sabbath”
Games/activities on the Sabbath.

“I believe it is lawful, and restful for people to exercise on the Lord’s Day/Sabbath, but not to the point of fatigue as it would strike at the vitals of the fourth commandment.”

Exception: Aug 23, 2019 (BCO 23-1; 13-11) – No record of congregational vote to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Response: If this exception is in regards to the record of congregation vote for TE [name omitted], who was an Assistant Pastor, no congregational vote would be needed. If, however, this particular exception deals with the record of TE [name omitted], our response is as follows:

“Per the request of TE [name omitted], and the affirmative vote of the congregation of King of Kings Church on August 4, 2019, Presbytery approves to dissolve the relationship between TE [name omitted], and [name omitted] Church.”

This action was taken, but not included properly in the minutes. This was our mistake and we will be more watchful going forward.

Exception: Aug 23, 2019 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes (“full and accurate record”).

Response: We apologize for not giving a full and accurate record of these complaints. Presbytery will amend our records accordingly and appended referenced complaints to this document.

Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020; Apr 24, 2020 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work for TEs [names omitted].

Response: All mentioned TEs were called to definite works; however we failed to include them in our minutes. These calls will be entered into the minutes in their entirety and are appended to this document.

Jan 24, 2020

1. Presbytery approved the Call to [name omitted] to undertake the office of Senior Pastor of [church name omitted].
2. Presbytery approved the Call to [name omitted] to undertake the office of Assistant Pastor of [church name omitted].
3. Presbytery approved the Call to [name omitted] to undertake the office of Church Planter (Evangelist).

Apr 24, 2020

1. Presbytery approved the Call to [name omitted] to undertake the office of Church Planter (Evangelist).

Exception: Oct 15, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – No record of dissolution of call for TEs [names omitted].

Response: We apologize for not giving a full and accurate account of the following actions taken by Presbytery:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

April 24, 2019

[1] Presbytery receives and approves of a motion from the Session of [church name omitted] to dissolve its relationship with TE [name omitted] and change his call to Without a Call, effective May 31, 2019.

August 23, 2019

[1] Presbytery receives and approves of the motion from Session of [church name omitted] to dissolve its relationship with TE [name omitted] and change his call to Without a Call.

Exception: Nov 20, 2020 (BCO 19-2) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

Response: We were negligent to not record the minister's stated differences and the ruling of Presbytery. We did however receive the minister's stated differences and ruled on those exceptions on Nov 20, 2020. Presbytery ruled that his stated differences were more than semantic but not striking at the vitals of the faith. We will be more watchful in the future.

In his own words, the exception is included below.

Stated Difference: WLC 119 & WCF XX1.8 "recreational clause on Sabbath"

"Our Lord taught, "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Based on this statement, I believe and teach that the Lord's Day should be viewed as a gift to be enjoyed rather than a burden to be endured. While I have no issue with those who choose to abstain from recreation on Sunday, I am not convinced that this practice is a Scriptural requirement

Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-11) – Minutes of Aug 20, 2020 meeting not included.

Response: We now recognize that the minutes for the Aug 20, 2020 meeting were not included for your review, but we do have the accurate minutes for this meeting. This was an oversight and we apologize for not including them. These minutes have been appended to this document.

See attachment

Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Minutes from executive session not included. Reference was made to a meeting held on Aug 20 2020 on p. 24 of the Nov 20 meeting, presumably in executive session.

Response: We now recognize that the minutes for the executive session were not included for your review, but we do have the accurate

minutes for this meeting. This was an oversight and we apologize for not including them. These minutes have been appended to this document.

Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-11) – No record of minutes of previous meetings being approved.

Response: Presbytery will establish a better system for approving the minutes of previous meetings, going forward. Below are the actions taken in 2020 regarding this exception.

1. On January 24, 2020, the Administrative Commission MSP to approve the minutes of the Presbytery Stated meeting on August 22-23, 2019.
2. On April 24, 2020, the Administrative Commission MSP to approve the minutes of the Presbytery Stated meeting on January 23-24, 2020.
3. On August 20, 2020, the Presbytery MSP to approve the minutes of the Presbytery Stated meeting on April 23-24, 2020.

Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020 (BCO 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (Christian experience, call to ministry).

Response: We did not specify in our minutes that [name omitted] had been examined on Christian experience and call to ministry. However, we are certain that these requirements of ordination were examined and approved by the candidate. We apologize for leaving them out of our records and will be more watchful going forward.

Exception: Apr 25, 2019 (BCO 13-6) – No record of individual parts of transfer exam.

Response: Regarding the minister's transfer exam, all individual parts of the exam were conducted and approved by Presbytery. To not include this record of individual parts was a mistake. We apologize and will include such records going forward.

Exception: Nov 20, 2020 (BCO 30-1) – No record of judicial action previously recorded in minutes.

Response: We now recognize that minutes for the judicial action taken on Aug 20, 2020, referenced in the minutes of Nov 20, 2020, was not included for your review, but we do have the accurate minutes for this meeting. This was an oversight and we apologize for not including them. These minutes have been appended to this document.

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

Response: We apologize that minutes for this executive session were not taken and no record of these minutes can be found. We will improve this behavior and be more watchful in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to summarize the action that was taken during Executive Session (*RONR* 9:26, 27) and record it in their minutes.

Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam from another denomination for TE [name omitted].

Response: We did not specify in our minutes that TE [name omitted] had been examined on all requirements for transfer. However, we are certain that these requirements for transfer were met by the candidate and approved by presbytery. We apologize for not providing a full and accurate record and will be more watchful going forward

Rationale: No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for TE [name omitted] (Sacraments, church government).

Response: We did not specify in our minutes that TE [name omitted] had been examined on all requirements for transfer, including Sacraments and church government. However, we are certain that these requirements for transfer were met by the candidate and approved by presbytery. We apologize for not providing a full and accurate record and will be more watchful going forward.

Rationale: No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

Exception: Apr 24, 2020 (*BCO* 13-12) – Business transacted outside the purpose of called meeting.

Response: We humbly admit that we conducted business that was outside of the stated purpose of the called meeting. We will be more diligent to conduct only stated business going forward.

Rationale: In a called meeting any action taken outside the stated purpose of that called meeting is invalid and unconstitutional and must be readdressed appropriately at a subsequent meeting. The Presbytery needs to produce records of the extraneous business having been ratified at a subsequent meeting (*BCO* 13-12).

Exception: Apr 24, 2020 (*Standing Rules*) – No bylaw/standing rule provision for electronic meetings.

Response: [1] On August 20, 2021, Presbytery approved an amendment to the Standing Rules of the Arizona Presbytery as follows:

C. 1.

- a) While matters of Presbytery are generally understood to take place in person, Presbytery may authorize a meeting to be conducted by electronic means, such as videoconferencing or teleconference, when necessary or preferred due to matters of health and safety, including pandemics or dangerous weather conditions.
- b) If a meeting is done by electronic means, such as videoconferencing or teleconference, the meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time (and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well).
- c) The right to vote in meetings done by videoconferencing or teleconference is limited to the members who are actually present on the call (or video) at the time the vote is taken.
- d) All voting members must be participating in the same method of attendance.

Rationale: No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). (Ratification of actions at proper meeting would be satisfactory).

Exception: General 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No annual review of records of church Sessions.

Response: Annual review did not take place. Presbytery will be diligent to establish a program of regular review of records of church Sessions. This will be assigned to our administrative commission and we will conduct a proper review going forward.

Rationale: No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Session minutes from 2020 must be reviewed.

2. That the Minutes of **Ascension** Presbytery: *Adopted*
 - a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 30, 2021; Apr 24, 2021; Jul 31, 2021; Nov 6, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Jul 27, 2019 (*BCO* 12-8) – Improperly citing two Sessions with exception of substance as follows: "Mention is made of a baptism having taken place but there is no evidence that Session

previously approved the baptism. (*BCO* 12-5.e; 56-2, 3)" [church name omitted] Session's November 2 response regarding it Minutes of 4/17/18: "The Session believed it was implicitly approving these baptisms when it received the parents into membership. Upon advice of the Presbytery Stated Clerk, the Session has corrected this error ..." [Nov 2 Pby Minutes, Attach 5, item 3 and Minutes p. 5 item 4.b. – No record of [church name omitted] response in 2019.] None of the three *BCO* references in Presbytery's citation require a Session to explicitly and individually approve every baptism of infants of communing member parents. As the Session rightly observes, such baptisms are implicitly approved for communing member parents. Thus, no error needs to be corrected and no citation should be issued to the Sessions.

Response: Presbytery respectfully disagrees with this exception. Perhaps the confusion comes from the inclusion of *BCO* 56-3 in the citations. We agree that the propriety of the baptism of infants of communing parents is settled at the point the Session receives the parents as members of the Congregation. Our concern is to take seriously, and to ask Sessions to take seriously, the provisions of *BCO* 15-2.e ("To exercise, in accordance with the Directory for Worship, authority over the time and place of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments....") and 56-2 ("It [baptism] is not to be privately administered, but in the presence of the congregation under the supervision of the Session.") In both of these provisions the *BCO* is clearly stating that Session (as a court) has responsibility over the administration of the Sacraments. At a minimum, that must mean that Session must take some formal action(s), not regarding whether it is appropriate to baptize any specific child of communing parents, but with regard to when and how the baptism(s) should appropriately occur. If this power does not reside in Session, as a body, then the provisions cited would have no meaning.

Further, we have advised Sessions who have inquired that there are a number of ways they can accomplish this responsibility: they can take a formal action to approve the time and date of each individual baptism; they can act informally to approve the time and date of a given baptism and ratify that action in the minutes of their next meeting; they can adopt a standard operating procedure each year that delegates to some individual or committee the responsibility for approving when baptisms will be administered; or they can add a provision to their standing rules delegating the responsibility to some individual or group. We think any of those approaches get to the letter and, generally, the spirit of the *BCO* provisions cited. What we

believe cannot happen, however, is for one individual, whether the Pastor or someone else, to approve when and how baptisms will occur without having been delegated that power by Session. If our understanding is deemed not to be correct we ask the General Assembly to help us understand what it means for Session to have “authority over the administration of the Sacraments” and to have “supervision” over baptisms.

Finally, we note that our position is strengthened by the fact that the last clause of *BCO* 56-2 does not appear in the original draft of the PCA’s Directory for Worship, nor in the parallel passages in the constitutions of the predecessor denominations. Indeed, most of the provisions in the earlier PCUSA and PCUS books explicitly state that the minister may judge when it is expedient to administer the sacrament in private homes. The PCA removed the statement about private homes and made it explicit that it is the Session that supervises the sacrament of baptism. Our concern in taking the actions we did was to help our Sessions take seriously that joint responsibility over when and how baptism is to be administered.

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (*BCO* 20-2) – Presbytery incorrectly cited a Session with an exception of substance for failing to call a congregational meeting to elect a pulpit committee for an associate pastor. The Session had recommended the congregation vote to call the man as an associate pastor, and the congregation voted to call, but a pulpit committee had not been elected. The *BCO* does not require such.

Response: Presbytery respectfully disagrees with the exception. *BCO* 22-2 states “The pastor and associate pastor are elected by the congregation using the form of call in *BCO* 20-6.” This surely indicates that the election of both pastors and associate pastors are governed by the provisions of *BCO* 20, which would include the need for a pulpit committee (20-2). It would appear that the exception taken by the 48th GA is based on the understanding that *BCO* 20-2 applies only to the election of “senior” pastors. But, if that is so, what is the mechanism for the election of associate pastors? This narrow reading of 20-2 would force one to conclude that the *BCO* has a provision for the process by which “senior” pastors are chosen (20-2) and a process for how assistant pastors are chosen (22-3), and no process for the election of associate pastors beyond that they must somehow be elected by the congregation (22-2), but with no mechanism for how the candidate gets before the congregation. That conclusion does not seem plausible. Thus, we conclude that the only

provision we have for the process by which associate pastors are brought before the congregation must be 20-2.

Finally, it would appear that the 48th General Assembly actually agrees with our interpretation. The proposed amendment to *BCO* 20-2, as adopted by the 48th GA, adds the following language “An existing assistant pastor may be elected by the congregation as an associate pastor at the recommendation of the Session without the election of a pulpit committee. (emphasis added) Clearly, this proposed language envisions that the normal pattern is that a pulpit committee is necessary for the election of an associate pastor, with the amendment providing an exception (which the General Assembly apparently does not believe currently exists) for a situation where an assistant pastor is being nominated as an associate pastor.

3. That the Minutes of **Blue Ridge** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Aug 14, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 22-23, 2021; Apr 23-24, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
 - Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021** (*BCO* 34-10) – No record of divested ministers receiving and responding to notice of divestiture.
 - Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021; Nov 5-6, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that congregation was cited to appear by its commissioners to give a statement about pastor’s resignation.
 - Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer of membership from dissolved church.
 - Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.
 - Exception: Jun 8, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice, verbatim meeting call, etc., not indicated/recorded.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
 - Exception: Jan 24-25, 2020** (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No record of Mr. [name omitted]’s exception to the *WCF* in his own words.
 - Response:** Mr. [name omitted]’s exam for licensure was approved for his exam in theology. This is what he stated in his licensure exam:
 - “I have taken exception to psalm-singing only and the recreation clause regarding the Sabbath.”
 - “In some presbyteries my analogical day view of the creation days is also considered an exception.”

SM 62-28 Mr. [name omitted] was asked for his differences with the BCO and the Westminster Confession:

“I have taken exception to psalm-singing only and the recreation clause regarding the Sabbath. M/S/P to accept as more than semantic but not touching on the vitals of religion or our system of doctrine and that it be answered with the presbytery’s standard answer.”

In some presbyteries my analogical day view of the creation days is also considered an exception. M/S/P to accept as more than semantic but not touching on the vitals of religion or our system of doctrine and that it be answered with the presbytery’s standard answer.”

In accepting his licensure exam for ordination, we also accepted his previous statements and Presbytery’s previous response. We will seek to be more careful to make sure that it is noted in the minutes when we accept a licensure exam in lieu of a fresh exam.

Exception: Aug 8, 2020 (RAO 16-3.e.5) – No record of Mr. [name omitted]’s exception to the WCF in his own words.

Response: Mr. [name omitted] holds to a ‘framework’ view of creation. (Minutes of Blue Ridge Presbytery 8-8-20. These are the words which Mr. [name omitted] used on the floor of Presbytery. Presbytery did not ask Mr. [name omitted] to explain his view any further. Presbytery will ask candidates to explain their view further than a one sentence answer.

4. That the Minutes of **Calvary** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 23, 2021; Apr 22, 2021; Jul 24, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 23, 2021 (BCO 21-5.8; 21-9) – No record of commission to install TE [name omitted] in change of call from assistant to associate pastor.

Exception: Apr 22, 2021 (BCO 13-4) – No record of quorum for installation.

Exception: Jul 24, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of $\frac{4}{5}$ majority vote of congregation or $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of Presbytery for change in call for TE from associate to senior pastor.

Exception: Jul 24, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in minister’s own words.

Exception: Jul 24, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in minister’s own words.

Exception: Oct 28, 2021 (*BCO* 34-8) – No record of $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of presbytery to remove censure of deposition.

Exception: Oct 28, 2021 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Presbytery did not have authority to approve as satisfactory [church name omitted]’s reason to not turn in executive session minutes.

d. That the following response to the 49th GA to be found satisfactory:

Exception: Jan 26, 2019 (*BCO* 25-11) – No record of 30-day notice for withdrawal vote from denomination.

Response: We appreciate the concern of RPR, but the congregation referenced here voted to withdraw from the PCA on December 31, 2018 which was six months *before* *BCO* 25-11 was amended and adopted at the 46th General Assembly (June 25-29, 2019). Therefore, the congregation and presbytery followed proper procedure and the exception of substance should be removed.

5. That the Minutes of **Canada West** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Oct 1, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Mar 5-6, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Mar 5-6, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4.f; 40-2) – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that may be hostile to our system of doctrine (*WCF* 1.1-10). More information or clarity is needed on the exception.

Exception: Oct 1, 2021 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Two sets of minutes of executive sessions not included.

Exception: Oct 1, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

Exception: Oct 1, 2021 (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-3) – Results of review of records of church Sessions not stated.

Exception: Standing Rules (*BCO* 20; Preliminary Principle 6) – The *BCO* doesn’t provide for a second vote to confirm the election of a pastor after Presbytery deliberations. *BCO* 20-10 states in part: “The Presbytery, having heard all the parties, may, upon viewing the whole case, either recommend them to desist from prosecuting the call; or may order it to be delivered to the minister to whom it is addressed”

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Oct 2-3, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.d; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination not recorded, namely, PCA History, approved degree, and theological and exegetical papers.

Response: The Presbytery, and in particular the Clerk, apologizes for not including these items in the minutes. Both the Credentials Committee of the Presbytery and the Presbytery as a whole did indeed examine the candidates in PCA History and authenticated the approved degree and approved the theological and exegetical papers for each of the candidates. For some of these candidates, these examinations were spread over several Presbytery meetings at which previous meetings had approved such portions but were not stipulated as such in the next meetings minutes. The Clerk apologizes for this oversight

Exception: Oct 2-3, 2020 (*BCO* 20-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – No record of call to a definite work, specific arrangements of call not shown to be approved.

Response: The candidates in question had already been called and were serving in ministries that were approved at previous Presbytery meetings. The candidates' calls did not change as they progressed through the various stages of their ordination from licensure to full ordination as a TE in the Presbytery. The Presbytery apologizes for not delineating the distinction that these candidates continued to serve in a previously approved call/role within their churches/Sessions that had called them.

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Sep 18, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.d) – Reason for use of extraordinary clause not explained.

Response: The use of the “extraordinary clause” was used only for the issue of PCA church governance. As the TE being examined was for the purposes of Stated Supply and would not be made a part of nor be attending Session meetings or moderating or attending any official church governance functions, it was felt that this particular issue could be exempted from the examination under this clause. The Presbytery apologizes for not making this distinction at the time of original writing.

Rationale [2022]: Ordination does not include different classes of ordinands such as, for example, one type who will serve as a pastor of a church and another who will serve as stated supply. The Presbytery's rationale for omitting parts of the exam was stated in

their response as “for the issues of PCA church governance” and that the TE “would not be made a part of nor be attending Session meetings or moderating or attending any official church governance functions, it was felt that this particular issue could be exempted from the examination under this clause.” However, the rationale from the Presbytery is an improper reason for omitting parts of the trial for ordination.

6. That the Minutes of **Catawba Valley** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Sep 28, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 23, 2021; May 25, 2021 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4)
– Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.
Exception: Sep 28, 2021 (BCO 13-11) – No record of complaint sent to Presbytery.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: May 28, 2019 (BCO 13-6; 21-4) – No record of exam in the history of the PCA.
Response: We regret the oversight. Presbytery has since corrected the minutes.
Exception: Sep 24, 2019 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (theological and exegetical papers).
Response: We regret the oversight. Presbytery has since corrected the minutes of 9-25-19 as follows: “It was M/S/A to approved the examination of Mr. [name omitted] and to ordain him as a minister of gospel, accepting his seminary degree from Reformed Theological Seminary in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages (BCO 21-4c) and accepting his theological and exegetical papers submitted to the Examination Committee.” (Approved by action of CVP 1/23/21)
Exception: Sep 24, 2019 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.
Response: We regret the oversight. This exception has been helpful in alerting us to the need to include relevant portions of committee minutes in our presbytery’s record when said committee [Shepherding] is empowered to act as a commission. We will commit to keeping this as our practice going forward. (Approved by action of CVP 1/23/21)

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (*BCO* 5-2.c; 13-10) – Presbytery dissolved a mission church without giving 60 days’ notice to the church.

Response: The dissolution of the [church name omitted] came at the end of a long and careful deliberation between the Oversight Commission and the organizing pastor that the missions was no longer viable. While CVP acknowledges that the Jan 25, 2020 minutes do not record a 60 day notification before dissolution (although *BCO* 13-10 addresses the dissolution of a particular church and not a mission), the congregation was informed regularly throughout the process and met to disperse its holdings and property, indication an agreement with the action of presbytery.

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (*BCO* 22-5; Preliminary Principle 6) – A teaching elder was appointed as Stated Supply without any record of Session’s concurrence.

Response: CVP concurs with Preliminary Principle 6 that “the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society,” so CVP did not appoint this TE as Stated Supply without concurrence of the Session: in fact, the TE was appointed at the Session’s request, but we failed to note that fact in the Jan 25, 2020 minutes and will correct the master copy to read, “The Committee recommended that TE [name omitted] be established as Stated Supply at [church name omitted] at the request of the Session–approved on voice vote.” It should be noted, however, that *BCO* 22-5 specifically addresses that “a Session with the approval of Presbytery may establish a temporary relations between the church and a licentiate called Student Supply or Ruling Elder Supply” rather than with a Teaching elder.

Exception: Jan 25, 2020; Sep 22, 2020 (*BCO* 15-1) – The full record of the minutes of a commission are not included in the Presbytery minutes.

Response: The only Commission reports mentioned on these pages refer to the [church name omitted] Commission, and the full record of this Commission is included as Appendix #7 in the Jan 25, 2020 minutes and as Appendix #8 of the Sept 22, 2020 minutes. They may have not been attached to the set of minutes reviewed by RPR, and we regret such an omission. We will make sure that they are included as part of the official record.

7. That the Minutes of **Central Carolina** Presbytery: *Adopted*
 - a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 27, 2021; May 25, 2021; Aug 28, 2021; Nov 16, 2021.**

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: May 28, 2019 (BCO 21-4.b, c) – No record of some of the required exams for ordination. No mention of parts of examination covered in licensure examination required for ordination.
Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and has corrected its minutes to reflect that no areas of weakness were noted in the Candidate’s licensure exam (Minutes 5/23/2017, p. 14), and that his May 28, 2019, ordination exam in the Sacraments and Church History included History of the PCA. Presbytery regrets its error and promises to be more careful in the future.

8. That the Minutes of **Central Florida** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 22, 2019 ES; Aug 17, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 26, 2021; Apr 27, 2021; Nov 9, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 26, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – No record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory.**
Exception: Jan 22, 2019; Apr 9, 2019 (BCO 13-11) – Executive Session Minutes not submitted for review.
Response: We agree with the exception as it relates to the Minutes of Jan 22, 2019 [p.3]. The Minutes of the Executive Session of Jan 22, 2019 were not submitted by error. The Minutes are submitted herewith.
We disagree with the exception as it relates to the minutes Apr 9, 2019 [p.29]
Minutes of Executive Session for Apr 9, 2019 [p.20] were submitted. They are found on p. 47 of the packet originally submitted.
Exception: Apr 9, 2019 (BCO 18-3) – Candidate not shown to have been examined in Experiential religion or his motives for seeking the ministry.
Response: We disagree with the exception. Two candidates for ordination were presented.
The Minute for [name omitted] reads:
[name omitted]’s testimony and calling, exegetical and theological papers, theological views paper, experiential religion and moral questionnaires, sermon, and written

exams in Bible, Theology, Sacraments, Church and PCA History, and Book of Church Order were found to be satisfactory for ordination (as required by BCO 21-4.c).

The Minute for [name omitted] reads:

[name omitted]'s testimony and calling, exegetical and theological papers, theological views paper, experiential religion and moral questionnaires, sermon, and written exams in Bible, Theology, Sacraments, Church and PCA History, and Book of Church Order were all satisfactory for ordination (as required by BCO 21-4.c).

To state that the candidates “testimony and calling” were all “satisfactory” is to state that the candidates were examined concerning experiential religion and motives for seeking ministry.

Exception: Nov 14, 2017 (BCO 46-8) – TE was divested but was not assigned to a church.

Response 2019: The Presbytery agrees with the exception. The TE involved was without call for several years and eventually chose another occupation. He remained in the church he had attended for several years.

Rationale 2019: Still not clear if he has been assigned membership in a local congregation.

Response 2020: We agree that the language did not say we “assigned” him although we did record where he was going to church. The following action was approved by the 173rd Presbytery; “Move that the minutes of Nov 14, 2017 be amended to reflect that TE [name omitted] was in effect “assigned” to [church name omitted] in Ocala.

Rationale 2020: The language of the *BCO* does not refer to which church a divested TE attends, but to which church his membership has been assigned. In order to assign a divested TE, the session would have to act to receive him by letter of transfer. The minutes should reflect that a particular church has received the divested individual.

Response 2021: Presbytery agrees with the exception, noting that “assigning” requires the demitted or deposed TE become a member of the local PCA church. As to the subject TE, he was regularly attending a PCA church as we noted in our initial response. Presbytery has learned that he did not become a member of that church. He left that church to attend another PCA church, but did not become a member. Thereafter, he departed the PCA.

Hereafter Presbytery will be more careful concerning membership assignment in such circumstances.

See attachment of Executive Session Minutes.

9. That the Minutes of **Central Georgia** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 23, 2021; Apr 9, 2021; May 11, 2021; Sep 14, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Apr 9, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

- Exception: May 11, 2019** (BCO 22-3) – Terms of call do not specify the pastoral relation.

- Exception: Sep 14, 2021** (RONR 15:5) – No record of $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote to limit debate.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: General 2019 (BCO 13-9) – No record that session minutes were examined.

- Response:** The minutes of the May and September Meetings stated that an oral report was made by the Chairman of the subcommittee on Sessional Records.

We agree the minutes did not specifically state that sessional records were reviewed; however, in fact, the Chairman did report at the September 2019 meeting that the Subcommittee had reviewed the records and reported back to the church Sessions with exceptions and notations.

In the future, the Presbytery will ensure a more detailed report will be included in the Stated Meeting minutes.

Following is a portion of the Chairman’s notes at the September 2019 meeting:

Records of all but 2 churches have been submitted to Presbytery and reviewed. Minutes from six churches were found to have had no exceptions or notations. For the remaining churches, the Subcommittee cited their exceptions or notations and provided a report to each of the church Sessions.

- Exception: Jan 11-12, 2019** (RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories—need to be more specific.

- Response:** The minutes of the meeting stated the following:

“TE [name omitted] expressed one exception to the standards regarding the Fourth Commandment as stated: “WCF 21.8 - the application of keeping the Lord’s Day - I affirm the fourth commandment that we are to set aside one day in seven as a Sabbath. I affirm that it is a day of worship and rest, and that we should refrain from our normal activities. I affirm that the primary activity of this

day should be worship both private and corporate. However, that being stated, I do not have a problem of conscience with certain activities of recreation on the Sabbath. I believe that it is within the bounds of the fourth commandment to relax/enjoy fellowship with family and friends by enjoying God and his creation.”

MSP to allow the exception to the standards expressed by TE [name omitted] as not striking at the vitals of our religion.

TE [name omitted] that none of his views have changed since taking his ordination vows.”

We are not sure what is meant by “prescribed categories” and have asked for, but not yet received, clarification from RPR. The statement in our minutes is clear about which Confession and Commandment to which the candidate has an exception. Also, the minutes are clear that the exception “does not strike at the vitals of our religion.” However, if RPR is requesting the specific *RAO* reference on which the approval is based, it is *RAO* 16-3.e.5.c - “the court judged the stated difference to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine.”

The Presbytery will be more specific in the future.

10. That the Minutes of **Central Indiana** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 12, 2021; May 14, 2021; Jun 24, 2021; Jul 15, 2010; Sep 10, 2021; Nov 12, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jul 7, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 8, 2021; Mar 5, 2021; Jun 22, 2021; Jul 7, 2021; Jul 12, 2021; Jul 30, 2021; Oct 21, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not reported.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Feb 8, 2019 (BCO 21-4.c.1.c) – No record of examination in Bible content either from previous licensure exam or during ordination exam.
Response: We apologize for the error. This was a mistake in neglecting to record the examination in Bible content from the candidate’s previous licensure exam.
Exception: Sep 13, 2019 (Standing Rules IV.A.1; RONR p. 491, I.26-32) – Standing committee created without amending Presbytery bylaws.
Response: Thank you for pointing out this error. This committee no longer meets. We will be sure that any future proposed standing committees are created by amending Presbytery bylaws.

Exception: Nov 8, 2019 (BCO 5-9) – Mission church organized into a particular church in the PCA without reflecting whether officers were elected (BCO 5-9.c, d) and without appointing a commission for an organization service (BCO 5-9.h, i).

Response: We apologize for not clearly detailing in the minutes all the steps in BCO 5 that were taken in the process of organizing this church into a particular church. We will be more diligent about detailing all such actions for future mission churches.

Exception: Jan 13, 2020; June 5, 2020; Jun 19, 2020 (RAO 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

Response: We apologize for the oversight and will be sure to include the specific language for the purpose of called meetings going forward.

Exception: Jun 5, 2020 (RAO 16-3.c.1) – Exceeded the purpose of the called meeting by taking up additional items of business.

Response: The purpose of the meeting was to vote on a bylaws amendment. Our bylaws require that, “Amendments to the bylaws will require an affirmative vote of two-thirds (67%) of the commissioners present and voting in two consecutive meetings...” At the time of the meeting, we assumed scheduling this second meeting would be within the purpose of the meeting. Thank you for pointing out this error, and we will be more diligent in not exceeding the purpose of future called meetings

Exception: Sep 11, 2020; Nov 13, 2020 (BCO 15-1) – Commission exceeded the business referred to it by creating another commission.

Response: Both of these instances happened when commissions were used to examine candidates. We no longer use commissions to examine candidates. Thank you for pointing out this error, and we will remind future commissions of the restrictions of the business referred to them.

Exception: Nov 13, 2020 (BCO 21-4.f; 13-6) – Presbytery examined and sustained an ordination examination on the Sacraments as to the candidate's views alone, without also examining his knowledge.

Response: This is an error in the minutes. The candidate was examined in his knowledge of the sacraments, and it was not properly recorded. We apologize for the error.

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b) – No record of reviewing session minutes.

Previous Response: We acknowledge and apologize for our tardiness in reviewing session minutes for 2018. We have recently changed our process for reviewing session records, hoping this will produce a more timely review.

2021 New Response: We apologize for not remedying this in 2020. A committee has begun a review of session records from 2018-2020. This committee will give a partial report on their review progress at our February 2022 Stated Meeting.

Rationale: The presbytery has still not begun the process of reviewing sessional records. Although there is a committee to work on it, it has made no progress.

Exception: General 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.b *Bylaws* III.B.i) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

Response: We apologize for not reviewing session records in 2020. A committee has begun a review of session records from 2018-2020. This committee will give a partial report on their review progress at our February 2022 Stated Meeting.

Rationale: The presbytery has still not begun the process of reviewing sessional records. Although there is a committee to work on it, it has made no progress.

Exception: Feb 8, 2019 (*BCO* 29-1; 31-2) – A committee of Presbytery gave a report concerning the Christian character of a TE without the Presbytery initiating a *BCO* 31-2 investigation or determining whether a strong presumption of the guilt existed.

Response: We apologize for the error. We have amended our bylaws to formalize a new process to handle any allegations concerning the Christian character of a TE. This new process requires the formation of a 31-2 investigative committee with a time limit for how long such an investigation can take.

Rationale: The Presbytery needs to indicate how it disposed of the report concerning the TE's Christian character.

Exception: Feb 8, 2019; May 10, 2019 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.

Response: We apologize for the oversight. We will be sure to enter the minutes of future commissions into Presbytery minutes.

Rationale: Minutes of commission must be submitted for review.

Exception: Feb 14, 2020 (*BCO* 15-1) – The full record of the minutes of a commission are not included in the Presbytery minutes.

Response: We apologize for the oversight. We will be sure to enter the minutes of future commissions into Presbytery minutes.

Rationale: The minutes of the commission must be submitted for review.

Exception: Jul 10, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes.

Response: We acknowledge this error and will be sure to include any future complaints within the minutes of the meeting where they are presented.

Rationale: Complaints must be submitted for review.

11. That the Minutes of **Chesapeake** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 11, 2021; Sep 14, 2021; Nov 9, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 12, 2021; Mar 13, 2021 (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.
Exception: Feb 13, 2021; Jul 10, 2021 (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meetings not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
Exception: Mar 13, 2021 (*RAO* 16- 3.e.1) – Reason for a moderator’s ruling on a point of order not given.
 - d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**
12. That the Minutes of **Chicago Metro** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Nov 17, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Feb 17, 2021; Aug 18, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Feb 17, 2021 (*RAO* 16-3.e.1) – Reason for a chair’s ruling on a point of order not given.
Exception: Feb 17, 2021 (*BCO* 18-2) – Use of extraordinary clause for candidate not explained.
Exception: May 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4.f; 40-2) – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that may be hostile to our system of doctrine. More information or clarity is needed on the exception.
Exception: Aug 18, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4.f; 40-2) – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that may be hostile to our system of doctrine. More information or clarity is needed on the exception, wherein the candidate expresses his belief that images of Christ may be suitable “for purposes of instruction and (with great care) **public worship**” (emphasis added).

- d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Feb 19, 2020 (RAO 16-3.e.5) – No record of candidate’s [name omitted] differences with standards.

Response: We erred in not including in our minutes the candidate’s stated differences to the standards; these differences were read at the meeting and judged as recorded in the minutes, but we failed to include them in our record. The said candidate’s differences were:

- 1) Representations of Jesus Christ in religious art (WCF 109). I am in full agreement with the Westminster Standards that at no time should God the Father or God the Holy Spirit be depicted in physical form—such is a clear act of idolatry in violation of the Second Commandment. Humans are created in God’s image; they must never create God in their image. However, because Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God, the God-man, I believe that there are occasions when it is permissible to depict his human form in religious art for purposes of instruction and (with great care) public worship. In doing so, Christians affirm and celebrate the fact that our Lord took on human flesh and is fully human like us (John 1:14; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 1:1-3). Even so, Christian leaders are wise to recognize, with Calvin, that sinful human nature “is a perpetual factory of idols” (*Institutes* I.xi.8), and that physical representations of Jesus Christ can easily be misused and become the objects of idolatrous worship.
- 2) The Christian Sabbath or Lord’s Day (WCF 21; WLC #117; WSC #59-61). From the time that I was a sophomore at university, I have set aside my schoolwork and professional duties on Sundays so that I might worship God with my family, experience spiritual refreshment and physical rest, and serve others. I have found this practice to be an immeasurable blessing, and I remain firmly committed to the “Sabbath principle” of observing a rhythm of work and rest that obeys the Fourth Commandment and reflects God’s creative work in Genesis 1 and 2 (“In the beginning God created. . . and on the seventh day he rested from all his work.”). With that said, however, I have a slight disagreement with the Westminster Standards at two points:
 - a. My present understanding of the Christian Sabbath or Lord’s Day has been significantly shaped by the theology of John Calvin who distinguished between the weekly Jewish Sabbath (observed on the seventh day; prefiguring spiritual rest in Christ; fulfilled in Christ’s life and ministry) and the Christian’s Sabbath rest (a perpetual, daily, spiritual rest

denoting freedom from sin and newness of life in Christ; cf. Hebrews 4:1-11). For Christians, the Fourth Commandment has not been abrogated; it remains in force and must be obeyed. Practically speaking, this means that Christians should set aside the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7), or Sunday, for corporate worship, biblical instruction, private meditation, works of service, and spiritual renewal, so as to celebrate and enjoy the spiritual rest that is theirs through the gracious salvation provided by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:25).

- b. I am not convinced that sins committed on Sunday or the Lord's Day are more grievous than those practiced at other times of the week (WLC #151). All sins committed by unregenerate men and women are acts of open rebellion against a holy God and deserving of his righteous wrath and condemnation (Romans 1:18-2:13). Likewise, in contrast to WLC #117 and WSC #60-61, I do not believe that "recreations" on the Lord's Day are prohibited by Scripture when they are undertaken with moderation and gratitude to God who is the giver of all good gifts. Sabbath rest was ordained not only for the spiritual health of God's people, but also for their emotional and physical well-being (cf. Mark 2:27).

Exception: Aug 19, 2020 (RAO 16-3.e.5) – No record of stated differences for transfer of TE [name omitted]

Response: We erred in not including in our minutes the stated differences to the standards of the transferring TE; these differences were read at the meeting and judged as recorded in the minutes, but we failed to include them in our record. The said candidate's differences were:

WCF 21.8; (see also LC 117, 119; SC 60, 61)

While I believe Sabbath rest is meant for the holy worship of God and the rhythms of Sabbath rest being a creation ordinance are still binding on the Christian, I believe that the restrictions of the Westminster Standards go beyond what Scripture requires. Some forms of recreation can be restful and worshipful. Why I take exception to this standard is two-fold: first, the 4th commandment does not explicitly restrict recreation. Second, what the 4th commandment does seem to restrict on the Sabbath are work and/or commerce (Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11). LC 117 states that recreations are lawful on other days and are not *inherently* unholy or worldly. I believe that recreation can be

a legitimate expression of Sabbath keeping in that it tangibly demonstrates a person's ceasing and resting from normal rhythms of work.

WLC 109 - Representations of God & the 2nd Commandment

The Confession here prohibits “the making of any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever.” I believe that the LC here goes beyond Scripture in its prohibition of images of Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, and mental images of God as portrayed in Scripture.

According to Colossians 1:15, Christ “is the image of the invisible God.” Furthermore, descriptions of God are given in several places in the Bible. Daniel 7:9–10 describes God as having hair “like pure wool.” Ezekiel 1:26–28 provides additional descriptions of God, including describing him as “a likeness with a human appearance.” It is impossible to read these passages without imagining in one's head what Ezekiel and Daniel saw

I believe, therefore, that images of the incarnate Second person of the Trinity and mental images of God as He is portrayed in His theophanic glory in the Biblical text do not violate the second commandment. We ought not, however, worship these mental images, nor form them into idols to be venerated.

Exception: Jan 17, 2018 and Apr 18, 2018 (*BCO* 13-11; *BCO* 15-2 & 3) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes, nor approval or disapproval of judgment (full and accurate record) – see also *RAO* 16-3.e.7.

2021 Response: We appointed a commission to handle the complaint but erred in not including the complaint or minutes of the commission in our meetings and did not clearly record the voting on the commission's report. The commission found the report administratively out of order and this finding was accepted by the Presbytery without debate, but this was not recorded properly in our minutes. In approving this response, the Presbytery approves the findings of the commission. The complaint and commission minutes are included with this response

Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

2021 Response: We review the previous year's session records throughout the year at our meetings and have the Presbytery approve the report of the review; the list of churches reviewed and findings are included in our minutes at each meeting. In 2018, we reviewed all

particular and mission churches under oversight of the presbytery except for one church and have been seeking to get their records for review. This church has seen turnover in leadership which has contributed to the difficulty of getting their records.

13. That the Minutes of **Columbus Metro** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Directory; Jan 19, 2021; Mar 16, 2021; Apr 20, 2021; May 18, 2021; Jun 8, 2021; Sep 4, 2021; Nov 16, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Apr 20, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Requirements for called meeting not shown to have been met.

Exception: Apr 20, 2021; May 18, 2021 (RONR 25:10; 40:6-10) – Quorum was not present – by declaration of the moderator. By failing to immediately adjourn, and instead to continue to conduct business without a quorum, the Presbytery put itself at risk that a future meeting would fail to ratify their actions. Actions taken at a meeting without a quorum are by themselves null and void.

Exception: Apr 20, 2021; May 18, 2021 (BCO 13-4) – Standing rules cannot be suspended without quorum, cannot suspend *BCO* requirements for quorum.

Exception: Apr 20, 2021; Jun 8, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational vote to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Exception: Jun 8, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice, verbatim meeting call, etc., not indicated/recorded.

Exception: Jun 8, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational vote to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Exception: Sep 4, 2021 (BCO 20-1; RAO 16-3.e.6) – Specific arrangements of call not shown to be approved.

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
 - d. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Sep 18, 2018 (BCO 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam.

Response: [Adopted, 12-0-0] The description of this exception is unclear to Presbytery. The record of the exam is included below, and after further review—to the eyes of Presbytery—the exam is in fact

complete in accordance with *BCO* 13-6 and 21-4. The transfer exam from outside of our denomination included knowledge, views and exceptions as required by these two articles in the *BCO*.

1. Transfer/Ordination Exam, *BCO* 13-6 with 21-4
 - TE [name omitted] invited Rev. [name omitted] ([church name omitted]) to introduce himself to the men of presbytery and share his sense of call and experience of Christian religion
 - TE [name omitted] then proceeded to ask the Rev. [name omitted] questions about any exceptions he might have with the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms, and then his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government, in accordance with the examination requirements set forth in *BCO* 13-6
 - Rev. [name omitted] Exception: [name omitted] declared his exception with *WLC* 109 that “the use of images of Jesus contained in pedagogical resources is not in conflict with this doctrinal statement.” In regard to Rev. [name omitted]’s exception on *WC* 109, the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 21-4).
2. TE [name omitted] continued the examination by asking questions of the candidate in his knowledge and views as set forth and required in *BCO* 21-4, as stated in 13-6.
3. TE [name omitted] opened the examination to receive questions from the floor of Presbytery.
4. **Motion:** to arrest the exam and dismiss the ordinand. **MSA**
5. **Motion:** to sustain Rev. [name omitted]’s examination. **MSA**
 TEs [names omitted] and Rev. [name omitted] were invited to the floor. TE [name omitted] read the questions from 21-5 to the three men and each answered in the affirmative. TE [name omitted] then prayed for the men and the right hand of fellowship was offered to each by the members of presbytery.
Rationale [2021]: Clarification: *RAO* 16-3.e.5 specifies: “Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must *list all specific requirements* and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, ...” The minutes should list out the various areas of examination, not just reference the overarching *BCO* sections.
2021 New Response: [Adopted, 12-0-0] The description of this exception is unclear to Presbytery. The record of the exam is

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

included below, and after further review—to the eyes of Presbytery—the exam is in fact complete in accordance with *BCO* 13-6 and 21-4.

The CMP submits this response to the 2022 RPR Committee to be received as satisfactory:

Having done a full review of the minutes of September 18, 2018, the Presbytery affirms that the TE in question was in fact examined by both Committee and Presbytery by touching on his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government (*BCO* 13-6).

In addition, the Presbytery affirms again—after full review of the minutes of September 18, 2018—that the candidate for transfer, [name omitted], was in fact examined by both Committee and Presbytery for ordination in accordance with *BCO* 21-4, *specifically* in the areas of:

- 1) his Christian experience, personal character and family management
- 2) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages; (**see exception below**)
- 3) English Bible
- 4) Theology, including basic knowledge of Bible content as described in
 - a) the Westminster Confession of Faith and
 - b) the Larger and Shorter Catechisms
- 5) the Sacraments
- 6) History of the Church
- 7) History of the PCA
- 8) The principles and rules of the government of the church: the Book of Church Order, and the government of the PCA
- 9) He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by Presbytery. (**see exception below**)
- 10) The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages. (**see exception below**)
- 11) He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote. (**see exception below**)
- 12) **Exception:** In regard to the requirements listed in 21-4.c.2-4, the Columbus Metro Presbytery voted unanimously to grant an exception to [name omitted]’s requirement for knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, theological paper, exegetical paper and

sermon preached with regard of his many years in pastoral ministry.

- 13) CMP asked if Rev. [name omitted] had any exceptions to the Standards in regard to *BCO* 21-4.f. The candidate for transfer, [name omitted], declared his exception with WLC 109 that “the use of images of Jesus contained in pedagogical resources is not in conflict with this doctrinal statement.”

- a) In regard to Rev. [name omitted]’s exception on WC 109, the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 21-4).

The Columbus Metro Presbytery requests that the 2022 RPR Committee finds this answer sufficient and satisfactory. [**Adopted: 13-0-0**]

Rationale: Presbytery has not demonstrated that their minutes are in conformity with *RAO* 16-3.e.5, either by showing where in the minutes these “specific requirements” are shown to have been individually listed or by amending their minutes to list the specifically required areas of examination. Section 2.3 indicates that the candidate was examined “in his knowledge of and views as set forth and required in *BCO* 21-4, as stated in 13-6,” but the minutes do not list these requirements individually as required by *RAO* 16-3.e.5. Furthermore, the September 18, 2018 minutes of Columbus Metro Presbytery do not contain any record of a motion to “grant an exception to [name omitted]’s requirement for knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, theological paper, exegetical paper and sermon preaching with regard of his many years in pastoral ministry.”

- e. **That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2022:**

Exception: Jan 15, 2019; Nov 19, 2019 (*BCO* 38-2; 46-8) – *BCO* 38-2 requires two meetings. The presbytery acted at the first meeting based on a letter. There was no motion to assign membership per 46-8.

Exception: Apr 2, 2019 (*BCO* 19-16) – Presbytery committee recommended approving previous experience as equivalent to internship; however, no motion or vote to do so is recorded (requires 3/4).

14. That the Minutes of **Covenant** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Feb 2, 2021; May 18, 2021; Oct 5, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: May 18, 2021 (*BCO* 19-16) – $\frac{3}{4}$ vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded. Candidate’s internship was approved after 3.5 months with no citation of extraordinary circumstances or a recorded $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.

- d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:

Exception: Feb 5, 2019 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregation/session meeting requesting Presbytery to dissolve the call of TE [name omitted] with [church name omitted]; TE [name omitted] with [church name omitted]; TE [name omitted] with [church name omitted].

Response: Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for February 5, 2019, and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: May 21, 2019 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregation/session meeting requesting Presbytery to dissolve the call of TE [name omitted] with [church name omitted].

Response: Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for May 21, 2019, and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: Oct 1, 2019 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregation/session meeting requesting Presbytery to dissolve the call of TE [name omitted] with [church name omitted].

Response: Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the two exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for October 1, 2019 and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: Oct 1, 2019 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes (“full and accurate record”).

Response: Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the two exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for October 1, 2019 and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: May 19, 2020 (*BCO* 38-2; 46-8) – No record of TE divested of offices (at his request) being assigned to membership in some particular church, subject to the approval of the Session of that church.

Response: Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for May 19, 2020 and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: Feb 4, 2020 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – No record of ordination commission report for candidate.

Response: Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for February 4, 2020, and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: Oct 6, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of two ordination candidates stating their differences with the Standards.

Response: Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for October 6, 2020, and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

15. That the Minutes of **Eastern Canada** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Feb 26, 2021; Jun 4, 2021; Oct 22-23, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Feb 26, 2021 (*BCO* 20-1) – Presbytery approved a call not from a church, Presbytery, or General Assembly without making “a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry.”

Exception: Jun 4, 2021 (*BCO* 19-1) – Presbytery permits a church’s pulpit to be regularly filled by an unlicensed minister from another denomination.

Exception: Nov 19, 2021 (*BCO* 38-1) – In a case without process under *BCO* 38, the minutes do not record that the statement of facts was approved by the accused as required by *BCO* 38-1.

Exception: Nov 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-5; 27-1, 5) – Presbytery erred in instructing a Session that “they may not impose discipline of any sort

upon a TE” when the constitution of the church defines discipline to include “the whole government, inspection, training, guardianship and control which the church maintains over its members, its officers and its courts”, cites scripture to specify steps of discipline such as admonishment and instruction in the Word prior to judicial process, and requires teaching elders to vow to submit to their brethren.

d. That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Oct 23, 2020 (RAO 16-6.c.1; RAO 16-3.e.5; BCO 21-4.f) – The Presbytery did not follow the RAO in recording one of the four options in the final amended motion (RAO 16-3.e.5).

Response: We confirm that at the October 23, 2020 meeting, the presbytery did, indeed, consider the candidate’s second stated difference and made the following judgment:

MS that the court judge the second stated difference(s) to be merely semantic (BCO 21-4).

ASC to amend the motion: that the court judge the second stated difference as not being an exception to our standards.

The exception indicates that the language of the amended motion is not one of the four options identified in RAO 16-3.e.5. We agree with the exception. Although we cannot change the minutes, as they accurately reflect the decision reached at the stated meeting, we do apologize and promise to be more careful in the future.

16. That the Minutes of **Eastern Carolina** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Dec 1, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 23, 2021; Jul 17, 2021; Oct 16, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Apr 17, 2021 (BCO 13-9.b, 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.
- d. No response to previous assemblies required.**

17. That the Minutes of **Eastern Pennsylvania** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Feb 13, 2021; Sep 11, 2021; Nov 16, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Feb 13, 2021 (BCO 19-2; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not listed (no record of sermon).

Exception: Apr 20, 2021; Sep 11, 2021; Nov 16, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

Exception: Sep 11, 2021; Nov 16, 2021 (*RONR* 9:34) – Motion approved at assembly lacking opportunity for simultaneous aural communication.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Feb 15, 2020 (*BCO* 20-2; 22-1) – The *BCO* does not recognize the pastoral relation of "Co-Senior Pastor." In addition, there is no record of a congregational vote by secret ballot with $\frac{4}{5}$ approval to call the associate pastor as senior pastor and subsequent $\frac{3}{4}$ Presbytery approval for such a call (*BCO* 23-1).

Response: The anomalous Co-Senior Pastor situation is noted and has been resolved. One of these men is now the sole pastor of this church, and the other man has taken a new call elsewhere. Regarding the calls extended to these men, the church has affirmed that both men were called by secret ballot and both received a $\frac{4}{5}$ majority. The vote by the Presbytery to approve these calls was unanimous, and so the $\frac{3}{4}$ presbytery approval was satisfied. The Presbytery has amended its minutes to reflect these votes.

Exception: Sep 12, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.c.1.g; *RAO* 16-3.5) – Record of PCA History Exam for TE is missing.

Response: The candidate was examined in PCA history both in committee and on the floor of Presbytery. The Presbytery has amended its minutes to reflect this.

Exception: Feb 16, 2019 (*RAO* 16-3) – No executive session minutes.

Response: The Eastern PA Presbytery respectfully disagrees with the exception. *RAO* 16-3.e.7 states that minutes of executive sessions "shall be recorded in the presbytery's minutes." The Eastern PA Presbytery minutes of Feb. 16, 2019 (see underlined portion below) state the actions and substance of what took place during this particular executive session, and so we believe that the *RAO* guidelines have been satisfied in this matter. However, the purpose of moving to executive session was so that sensitive information related to these actions could be shared and discussed. This was not stated in the minutes, and we have amended our minutes to clarify this:

Reference: EPP Minutes 2019-02-16 (Licensure & Ordination Team Report) "*The Presbytery voted to go into an executive session. The Presbytery approved the Team's recommendation to dissolve TE [name omitted] pastoral relationship with the [church name omitted] and to change his status to a "Teaching Elder without a call." The*

relationship being dissolved was not disputed. The Presbytery voted to move out of the executive session.”

Exception: Apr 9, 2019 (BCO 23-2) – A TE cannot simultaneously be honorably retired and an Associate Pastor (BCO 23-2).

Response: In light of the TE in question serving as Associate Pastor, the Presbytery has rescinded its action of April 9, 2019 to approve his status as “honorably retired.

18. That the Minutes of **Evangel** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 9, 2021; Feb 11, 2021 ES.**

b. Be approved with exception of form: **May 11, 2021; Nov 9, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Aug 10, 2021; Nov 9, 2021 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

Exception: Sep 14, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Minutes of called meeting not submitted.

Exception: Nov 9, 2021 (BCO 9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of session records.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Feb 12, 2019 (BCO 21-4.f) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception. Candidate was a licentiate seeking ordination and had been required to state differences with our Standards when he was examined for licensure at the 158th meeting of Evangel on May 8, 2018. It is recorded in the minutes on pp 10-11 at 5.d.vii. In the future we will cite the previous minutes.

Exception: May 14, 2019 (BCO 21-4.d; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (PCA History).

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception. Candidate was examined on PCA history as part of church history, as recorded on p.10 at 6.c.ii. We will specifically record examination of PCA history in the future.

Exception: May 14, 2019 (BCO 21-4.f) – No record of requiring stated differences with our Standards.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception. Candidate was a licentiate seeking ordination and had been required to state differences with our Standards when he was examined for licensure at the 159th meeting of Evangel on August 14, 2018. It is recorded in the minutes on pp 9-10 at 6.b.vii. In the future we will cite the previous minutes.

Exception: Feb 11, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.f) – No record licentiate in ordination exam was asked to state differences with the Standards.

Response: Candidate was a licentiate seeking ordination and had been required to state differences with our Standards when he was examined for licensure at the 164th meeting of Evangel on November 12, 2019. It is recorded in the minutes on pp 10-11 at 6.c.v. In the future we will cite the previous minutes.

Exception: Feb 11, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11) – Minutes of executive session not included in the record.

Response: Presbytery agrees with this exception. Minutes were taken and approved but mistakenly not submitted to RPR. We will approve the minutes at our next meeting and submit the minutes as a part of this response.

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: General 2019 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – Session minutes not reviewed by Presbytery (committee only).

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception. While the minutes were reviewed by the committee as required in *BCO* 13-9.b, those actions were not reported to and approved by the presbytery. The presbytery will correct this action in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to approve its review of Session records and report its action to the Assembly.

Exception: General 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – Minutes of church session not reviewed by Presbytery (committee only).

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception. While the minutes were reviewed by the committee as required in *BCO* 13-9.b, those actions were not reported to and approved by the presbytery. The presbytery will correct this action in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to approve its review of Session records and report its action to the Assembly.

19. That the Minutes of **Fellowship** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 23, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Apr 24, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Sep 23, 2021 (*BCO* 19-1) – Candidate “regularly fills pulpits in Fellowship Presbytery” while not being licensed.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**

Exception: Apr 27, 2019 (BCO 38-2) – Minister divested with no record of facts or reason for divestiture at previous meeting.

Response: Fellowship Presbytery acknowledges that its action on **April 27, 2019** to divest a minister (without censure, at his own request) appears to have been out of order in that there is no mention of the record of the facts or reason for divestiture in the minutes of the previous meeting on **January 26, 2019**. That information, however, had been reported by presbytery’s Membership Committee at presbytery’s **September 27, 2018** meeting. A minister who had been a member of presbytery for 18 years, and who had labored out of bounds for the previous 11 years, was considering requesting divestiture, and had sought the presbytery’s counsel. The committee was to report back with recommended action at the **January 26, 2019** meeting. However, because of an overloaded docket at that meeting, the scheduled report of the committee and its recommended divestiture of the minister was postponed until the **April 27, 2019** Meeting.

Exception: May 30, 2020 (BCO 11-2; Fellowship Presbytery Manual 1.04, 1.05; *RONR* (12th ed.) 25:10) – Standing Rules that protect the rights of absent members, such as this rule that requires two readings of a proposed change to the manual, may not be suspended.

Response: Fellowship Presbytery acknowledges that it erred when, in its **May 30, 2020 Stated Meeting**, it acted to suspend presbytery’s rules in order to amend its manual (bylaws) without a second reading at a subsequent meeting. Presbytery failed to recognize that *RONR* (12th ed) 25:10 specifies that “[r]ules protecting absentees cannot be suspended even by unanimous consent or actual unanimous vote.” Presbytery has remedied its error by confirming its previous amendment to its manual with a second reading and approval of the amendment at its September 23, 2021 Meeting.

20. That the Minutes of **Georgia Foothills Presbytery:** *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 23, 2021; Apr 20, 2021; Sep 21, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Apr 20, 2021; Sep 21, 2021 (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (BCO 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church; no record of 60-day notice to the local church.

Exception: General – No record that Presbytery’s responses to the 49th GA were approved by the Presbytery.

- d. **That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no approved responses were received in 2022:**

Exception: General 2019 (RAO 16-10a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA.

Exception: Jan 26, 2019; Sep 17, 2019 (BCO 13-11, 14-6.c, 40-1; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

Exception: Jun 11, 2019; Sep 17, 2019 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.

Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-9b) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (BCO 25-11) – No record of congregational vote to withdraw from the PCA.

21. That the Minutes of **Grace** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 12, 2021; May 11, 2021; Sep 14, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

22. That the Minutes of **Great Lakes** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 9, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; May 1, 2021; Sep 17-18, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: May 1, 2021 (BCO 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.
Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Session.
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Sep 19, 2020 (BCO 21-7n3) – In assistant pastor ordination commission minutes, chairman propounded questions to the congregation instead of the Session.
Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception. The secretary of the commission cut and pasted and formatted the incorrect party. Every effort will be made to see that this is corrected and resubmitted, and Presbytery will be more cautious in the future. Note: chairman propounded questions to the Session as required.

Exception: Jun 20, 2020 (BCO 13-6, 21-4.a, 21-4.d) – Transfer exam from candidate outside of the PCA without record of Bible exam or an exception granted.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exceptions, corrects its records, and promises to be more careful in the future. Note: the candidate was examined in English Bible by the Presbytery, and the candidate did not take any exceptions to the Westminster Standards

23. That the Minutes of **Gulf Coast** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Feb 9, 2021; May 11, 2021; Oct 12, 2021**.
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Feb 9, 2021 (BCO 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.
Exception: May 11, 2021 (BCO 13-11) – Presbytery recorded the particularization of a church while the previous meeting’s minutes indicate the motions to particularize were not approved.
Exception: Jun 22, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Business transacted other than that named in the notice of call meeting.
Exception; Oct 12, 2021 (BCO 18-3) – All specific requirements of a candidate exam not recorded.
- d. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Sep 8, 2020 (BCO 13-12; RAO 16-3.c.1) – Call for called meeting not in order – 10-day notice; purpose for call not stated.
Response: That Gulf Coast Presbytery respond to RPR regarding a cited exception of Substance on Sept. 8, 2020, as follows:
 - “Gulf Coast Presbytery acknowledges an exception of substance in its minutes of September 8, 2020 regarding its failure to state the purpose of said called meeting. The presbytery regrets this error of omission and determines going forward to be more circumspect in this regard.”
 - Motion was *approved*.

24. That the Minutes of **Gulfstream** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Apr 20, 2021; Oct 19, 2021**.
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (BCO 34-10, 38-2) – No record of 2/3 vote and requires two stated meetings.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 34-10, 38-1, 38-3.b) – The court did not make full record of the matter and did not notify the offender of its action.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 19-2.d, 21-4.c.(4)) – Candidate is required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery or committee thereof, upon $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.

Exception: Apr 20, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4.f) – Presbytery did not require the candidate to state specific instances in which he may differ from the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

Exception: Apr 20, 2021 (*BCO* 24-6; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Presbytery approves candidate exception whose stated difference with WCF 24.3. appears to be “out of accord,” that is, “hostile to our system” or “stik[ing] at the vitals of religion” by stating that “In regard to the Biblical prohibitions on marriage, I believe the standards go too far in forbidding marriage to ‘Papists’.” More specificity is needed from the candidate regarding the future practice of the potential spouse, the raising of children, and family worship.

Exception: Oct 19, 2021 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that congregation concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

Exception: Oct 19, 2021 (*BCO* 23-3) – No provision for elder emeritus in case of TE. Only “pastor emeritus” for TE (*BCO* 23-3) or “elder emeritus” for RE (*BCO* 24-10).

Exception: Oct 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Unclear record of ordination exam.

Exception: Oct 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Oct 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4) – Use of extraordinary clause for ordination candidate not explained.

Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church sessions.

Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9b; 40-3) – Results of review of records of church sessions not stated.

Exception: Standing Rules 6-8; 6-5 (*BCO* 15-2, *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Power of commission not constitutionally prescribed for Credentials Committee to allow TEs to move onto field prior to presbytery approval. Quorum of commission must be 2 more than half membership AND at least 2 TEs and 2 REs. Criteria not met by rules for committee and so cannot act with power of commission.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Oct 15, 2019 (BCO 13-6; 21-4.c.2-3) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination. No record of thesis, no record of exegetical paper.

Response: Gulfstream regrets the inadequacy of its minutes. In preparing its minutes, Gulfstream has always relied upon *Form 041-Checklist for Reception of Minister From Another Denomination*, as found in the Clerks Handbook. The two specific omissions have not previously been itemized on the checklist form. Gulfstream will endeavor to include these details in future minutes.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

Exception: Jan 21, 2020 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements for ordination exam not recorded; seminary degree, thesis paper/ examination on knowledge of Greek and Hebrew; did not preach a sermon.

Response: Gulfstream regrets the inadequacy of its minutes. In preparing its minutes, Gulfstream has always relied upon *Form 039-Checklist for Ordination*, as found in the Clerks Handbook. The specific omissions named in this exception have always been examined as part of the preliminary checklist, and may not have been included in the minutes. Nor have some other elements of the preliminary checklist. Gulfstream will endeavor to include these details in future minutes.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

Exception: Oct 20, 2020 (BCO 19-2.d) – Licensure exam with no mention of written sermon.

Response: Gulfstream regrets the inadequacy of its minutes. Gulfstream will endeavor to include this detail in future minutes.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

Exception: General 2020: (BCO 13-9.b) – No record of review of church session.

Response: Gulfstream agrees that there was no review of church session records during 2020. Sadly, some important activities were not achieved in the midst of the pandemic. Gulfstream has begun to catch up on the review of minutes. We acknowledge that CRPR will want to see progress in this activity before this exception is cleared, however, we do request your patience as we move forward.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

25. That the Minutes of **Heartland** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 12, 2021; Nov 5-6, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Mar 9, 2021; Apr 23-24, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:
Exception: Feb 22-23, 2019 (BCO 23-1) – No record or date of congregation voting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Response: “Heartland Presbytery acknowledges that the minutes omitted the details noted in the exception, and amends its 2/22-2/23/19 minutes as follows:

“TE [name omitted], chair of Care of Churches committee, reported that TE [name omitted] submitted a 12/2/18 letter of resignation as Pastor of [church name omitted]. The congregation at a duly called January 13, 2019 congregational meeting (i) approved the resignation of Pastor [name omitted] and dissolution of the pastoral relationship by unanimous vote; (ii) heard the session’s intent if empowered as a pulpit committee to nominate Associate Pastor [name omitted] as Pastor and thereafter nominate [name omitted] as Associate Pastor; and (iii) voted to empower the session as the pulpit committee. The Evangel congregation at a duly called February 10, 2019 congregational meeting approved the call of Associate Pastor [name omitted] as candidate for Pastor by 96%; approved the terms of the call; and identified the session RE delegates as commissioners to prosecute the call before the Heartland Presbytery at the February 22-23 meeting.”

Exception: Aug 2, 2019 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work of a transferring minister.

Response: Heartland presbytery agrees that there was no record of a call to a definite work of a transferring minister but does not believe that 20-1 is by itself the appropriate citation in the case of a transfer of an ordained TE relocating from another PCA presbytery without call. Heartland shall amend its 8/2/2019 minutes as follows:

“TE [name omitted] introduced TE [name omitted], a TE who is seeking to transfer his membership from Northern California where he was continued on the roll without call (See BCO 13-2, 13-5 and BCO 34-10). TE [name omitted] has relocated within the bounds of Heartland Presbytery, continues to seek a call to a definite work, but is currently engaged in a counseling professional position that presbytery does not now

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

view as appropriate for a BCO 8-7 call due to the secular nature and secular restraining terms of the position, which preclude TE [name omitted] in the opinion of Heartland from teaching freely. He is therefore seeking a BCO 13-5 transfer to enable his brothers and fathers in Heartland, rather than the remote transferring presbytery of Northern California, to exercise administration of BCO 27-1 "sense (a)" discipline, as well as BCO 13-2 and BCO 34-10 shepherding during his search for a definite call."

Exception: Feb 28, 2020 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work for TE [name omitted].

Response: The minutes reflect reinstatement to an uninterrupted service as chaplain begun prior to transfer to Heartland Presbytery. TE [name omitted] served as an army chaplain. In anticipation of his retirement from military service and beginning service as an organizing pastor of a mission church in Topeka, KS, Heartland received TE [name omitted] as a transfer from Nashville Presbytery, approved a call for TE [name omitted] as the organizing pastor of the [church name omitted] (February 22-23, 2019), formed a session for the mission church (November 2019) and installed him as organizing pastor (August 2019). Presbytery notes the irregularity of an anticipatory (pre military retirement) call and installation, which was viewed by Heartland Presbytery as most suitable for Heartland's oversight and MNA's support of a successful transition and startup of the Topeka mission work. Prior to TE [name omitted]'s retirement and moving onto the field in Topeka, TE [name omitted] elected not to retire from chaplaincy and submitted a resignation for the office of organizing pastor of the Topeka work. Presbytery acted to reinstate or reassign TE [name omitted] to his call to serve (continuing) as an army chaplain. However, Presbytery acknowledges that the record of reinstatement to his previous call reinstates a chaplaincy call approved by TE [name omitted]'s transferring Nashville Presbytery prior to TE [name omitted]'s transfer but not by Heartland Presbytery following TE [name omitted]'s transfer. Heartland Presbytery apologizes for this irregularity

26. That the Minutes of **Heritage** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Sep 11, 2021; Nov 20, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Jan 30, 2021; May 11, 2021 (*BCO* 25-11) – Record unclear as to when congregation withdrew from the PCA and whether 30-day notice was given.

Exception: May 11, 2021 [pp. 1, 18] (*BCO* 38-3) – No determination of a judgment by presbytery as to the withdrawal of a minister from the PCA to another body.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: General 2019 (*BCO* 12-7; 13-9.b) – No record of completion of review of 2018 Session Records of [church names omitted]. Presbytery should submit an excerpt from Minutes of a 2020 meeting at which those Records are reviewed.

Response: Updated by the Heritage Presbytery Session Record Review Team.

2018 Records

- [church name omitted]: SRRT review of 2018 records completed and findings prepared January 20, 2022. Pending Presbytery’s adoption of SRRT findings.
- [church name omitted]: 2018 records received by SRRT on November 15, 2021. Pending SRRT review.
- [church name omitted]: No longer part of the PCA.

Exception: Sep 14, 2019 (*BCO* 38-1) – TE was deposed from office after a confession at a stated meeting (i.e., without process) but Minutes don’t indicate the provisions of *BCO* 38-1 were followed. *BCO* 38-1 stipulates “a full statement of the facts shall be recorded” but there is none in the Minutes and there were no executive session Minutes filed.

Response: Attached at the end of this form are the Executive Meeting Minutes and the signed confession as requested in this exception.

(See attachment)

Exception: Nov 21, 2020 (*BCO* 12-7; 13-9.b; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – Record does not indicate that all 2019 Session Records were reviewed by Presbytery in 2020.

Response: According to the Session Records Review Team, all records submitted in 2019 were reviewed in 2020.

2019 Records.

- [church name omitted]: December 2019 – December 2020 records received by SRRT on November 15, 2021. Pending SRRT review.
- [church name omitted]: January 2019 – July 2021 records not yet received by SRRT.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- [church name omitted]: April 2019 – March 2020 records received by SRRT on May 7, 2021. Pending SRRT review.
- [church name omitted]: SRRT review of October 2019 – September 2020 records completed. SRRT findings adopted by the Presbytery on November 20, 2021.
- [church name omitted]: November 2019 – October 2020 records received by SRRT on June 28, 2021. Pending SRRT review.

See attachments

27. That the Minutes of **Highlands** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 27, 2021; Feb 27, 2021 ES; May 4, 2021; Aug 7, 2021; Aug 7, 2021 ES; Nov 9, 2021; Nov 9, 2021 ES1 and ES2.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Jan 13, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated or recorded.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory: Exception: May 7, 2019 (BCO 15-1; 15-2) – Presbytery appoints commission to investigate dissolution of pastor call, no report of commission contained in minutes.

Response: At its November 9, 2021, Stated Meeting, the Highlands Presbytery took the following action.

MSC: Respond to the Review of Presbytery Records Committee regarding the exception of substance from the May 7, 2019, minutes as follows:

The Presbytery agrees with the exception and regrets not including the report of the commission. The report has been located and is attached to the minutes. Presbytery will be more careful in the future.

Exception: Nov 10, 2020 (BCO 21-04) All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (PCA History (see also RAO 16- 3.e.5).

Response: At its November 9, 2021, Stated Meeting, the Highlands Presbytery took the following action:

MSC: Respond to the Review of Presbytery Records Committee regarding the exception of substance from the November 10, 2020, minutes as follows:

The Presbytery respectfully disagrees with the exception because the candidate for ordination had previously been licensed (as referenced in the minutes) and thus already met several of the requirements for the ordination exam. Specifically,

the minutes of the August 2019 stated meeting record that the candidate “was examined for licensure per BCO 19-2 in the areas of Christian experience, call to ministry, church government, sacraments, English Bible and theology.” Therefore, since the candidate did meet all the specific requirements for ordination, albeit during two different exams, the Highlands Presbytery refers the exception back to the Assembly.

28. That the Minutes of **Hills and Plains** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Feb 13, 2021; Oct 12, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1; *Standing Rules* 2-7; 5-3.f) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: Feb 13, 2021; May 4, 2021; Oct 12, 2021 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Exception: Feb 13, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded for honorably retired TE.

Exception: Feb 13, 2021 (BCO 15-1; 21-5) – No record of appointment of an ordination commission.

Exception: Oct 12, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational concurrence in the dissolution of pastoral relationship.

Exception: Oct 12, 2021 (BCO 21-2; 18-2) – No approval of completed internship for ordination candidate.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**

Exception: General 2019 (RAO 16-10.a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by the General Assembly.

Response: Presbytery agrees that exceptions were not acknowledged and commits to correct this in the future.

Exception: Feb 9, 2019 (BCO 13-11) – Overture received by Session as communication to Presbytery not attached.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not attached to minutes, and will include them as part of minutes in the future.

Exception: Mar 26, 2019 (BCO 13-11) – Minutes of the called meeting not included (i.e., that part of the meeting that is not in executive session).

Response: Presbytery acknowledges that minutes were recorded improperly. The called meeting minutes and executive session

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

minutes were not made separately, but as one document. This will be done correctly in the future.

Exception: Mar 26, 2019 (*BCO* 15-3; 32-15; 36-1) – Presbytery approved of a judgment of its commission calling for a specific censure against the accused. Per *BCO* 32-15, a ‘judgment’ is the determination of guilt or innocence. Per *BCO* 36-1, the infliction of a censure commences only after the individual is found guilty. Per *BCO* 15-3, a determination of guilt or innocence by a judicial commission is not final until it is approved by the presbytery. Therefore, a separate motion (even if by recommendation of the commission) would have to be made to inflict a censure.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly. The party plead guilty and the commission’s decision were received before censures were commenced. It is possible a separate motion was not made, but should have been. HPP intends to more closely follow procedure in the future.

Exception: May 4, 2019 (*BCO* 13-11) – Incomplete Record: referenced guidelines not attached to minutes.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges the oversight and will attach all proper documentation in the future.

Exception: May 4, 2019 (*BCO* 13-11; 14-6.c; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – Minutes of executive session not included.

Response: Presbytery must acknowledge that these minutes have somehow been lost. This is a grave oversight and will not happen again.

Exception: Feb 8, 2020 (*SR* 6-2.a) – Standing rules amended without record of a 2/3 vote.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will be more careful to record votes in the future.

Exception: May 5, 2020 (*BCO* 36-1; 13-11) – Minutes record the expiration of one-year definite suspension from office, yet there is no indication in the previous year’s minutes of any trial or case without process.

Response: The minutes that would indicate this have been lost, as indicated. Far stricter record keeping has been instituted since this time.

Exception: Jun 30, 2020; Aug 4, 2020 (*RAO* 16-3c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not specified.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges that the reason for the called meetings was not correctly recorded and promises to rectify this in the future.

Exception: Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11) – Petition to particularize not attached.

Response: Presbytery respectfully disagrees. The petition was attached to the minutes as an index.

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: General 2019; General 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of Session records having been conducted.

Response: Presbytery agrees that no review has been conducted. This will be rectified with a review of all session minutes from 2017 to 2021

Rationale: The minutes of Presbytery in 2021 indicate no action to fulfill its responsibility to review Session records not yet reviewed.

Exception: Feb 9, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.c.1) – No record of all of the parts of examination having been conducted for a man transferring in from another denomination.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 9, 2019; Oct 1, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.f) – No record that candidate for transfer from another denomination was required to state his differences with the *Westminster Standards* in his own words.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 9, 2019 (*BCO* 19-2) – No record of all of the parts of a licensure exam having been conducted.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion

in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 9, 2019; May 4, 2019; Oct 1, 2019 (*BCO* 19-2.f) – Candidate for licensure’s stated differences not recorded in his own words.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 9, 2019 (*BCO* 15-3; 31-2) – Presbytery formed a commission (which it calls a ‘Council’) to conduct a 31-2 investigation (referencing both 31-2 and 15-3) of a TE regarding whom the minutes state that a committee of Presbytery has met with “many parties” and “believe there is a ‘strong presumption of guilt.’” This is in contradiction to both 15-3 (which establishes a judicial commission to adjudicate a trial) and 31-2 (the purpose of which is to determine if there is a strong presumption of guilt).

Response: Presbytery acknowledges that this was not recorded correctly and will amend the minutes to rightly reflect the actions taken.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 9, 2019 (*BCO* 13-11) – No record of the moderator having appointed the “Special Judicial Council”.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges to oversight in recording this, and the record will be amended.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Mar 26, 2019 (*BCO* 15-3; 31-2; 32-2, 3) – The Presbytery received a report from the Judicial Commission that had been formed to “investigate” a matter per *BCO* 31-2. There was, at the point this

commission was formed, no “judicial case” per *BCO* 15-3 for it to adjudicate (i.e., no charges had been laid, no prosecutor has been appointed, etc.).

Response: Presbytery acknowledges that the minutes where these charges were laid, etc., have been lost. This is a grave oversight that is irremediable. However, there is a thorough email and other paper trail that shows charges were made, prosecutors appointed, and the case was handled decently and in order. The presbytery vows to never let such a grave oversight occur again.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to record in their minutes the specific matters of the judicial procedure such as the charges that were filed, who the prosecutor was, what the outcome was. (See *RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Mar 26, 2019 (*BCO* 13-11) – Per the purpose of the called meeting, a “full statement of the case and the judgment rendered” not attached to the Executive Session minutes.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not included and will amend.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Mar 26, 2019 (*BCO* 15-3; 32-15) – Presbytery approved of the judgment of its commission without there being any declaration of guilt on the part of the accused.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges that the declaration of guilt was not recorded correctly. The party did plead guilty.

Rationale: Minutes need to be amended and approved by Presbytery to reflect this declaration of guilt and resubmitted.

Exception: May 4, 2019 (*BCO* 19-2.a) – No record of candidate for licensure giving a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel (written or oral).

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: May 4, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4.c.1) – No record of examination of a candidate for ordination in Bible content or theology.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: May 4, 2019; Oct 1, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4.g) – No record that Presbytery appointed a day for ordination.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Oct 1, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4.c.1) – No record of examination of a candidate for ordination in Theology, knowledge of Greek/Hebrew, or Polity.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Oct 1, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6) – No record of all parts of a transfer exam of a man ordained in the PCA.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.f; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 21-2; 18-2) – No approval of candidate for ordination’s completed internship.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.g) – No record that Presbytery appointed a day for ordination and/or installation or established a commission for ordination and/or installation.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 8, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11) – Individual is examined and preaches a sermon with no indication in the minutes as to what he was examined for or why his sermon was arrested and sustained. (Individual is listed as a candidate and an intern, but not as a licentiate).

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 18-3) – Man is received as a candidate without being examined on experiential religion or his motives for seeking the gospel ministry.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 18-3) – Questions for candidacy not shown to have been asked or answered in the affirmative.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 19-9) – Man is received as an intern without giving statement regarding his inward call to the ministry.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 18-3) – Charge not given to candidate for ministry.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – Presbytery approves a new call for a TE within the same presbytery without first dissolving the previous call by following the steps in *BCO* 23-1.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion

in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 21-3) – Presbytery ordains a man to the gospel ministry without a call to a specific work (the man is listed as an assistant pastor in the next meeting’s roll).

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – Presbytery dissolves the call of a TE without following the steps in *BCO* 23-1.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.c) – TE is approved as a “planting Pastor” of a mission work without the approval of a new call to that work and without approving the specific terms of the call.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Aug 4, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – Pastoral relation is dissolved without citing the church to appear.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Aug 4, 2020 (*BCO* 38-3) – Presbytery transferred a TE to a denomination with whom we do not have fraternal relations without following the steps in either 38-3a or 38-3b.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded properly and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 18-3) – Man is received as a candidate without being examined on his motives for seeking the gospel ministry.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9.c, d) – No record of the nomination, training, examination, or election of Ruling Elders for a mission church being particularized.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9.f.1) No indication of a congregational meeting to elect a pastor.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9.h) – Church approved to be particularized without the establishment of a commission to organize the church.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: May 8, 2018 (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences were approved but not recorded.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this error and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: Oct 9, 2018 (*BCO* 19-2, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No specific requirements of licensure exams recorded.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this error and will amend the record.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of the records of church sessions.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges that proper review of records has not been performed and will correct this.

Rationale: The minutes of Presbytery in 2021 indicate no action to fulfill its responsibility to review Session records not yet reviewed.

29. That the Minutes of **Houston Metro** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 22, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 15, 2021; Apr 12, 2021; Nov 8, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of Session completed and approved by action of Presbytery.

Exception: Jan 15, 2021 (BCO 19-2) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. No record of requiring a statement of differences with our Standards.

Exception: Apr 12, 2021 (BCO 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in Presbytery’s minutes.

Exception: Apr 12, 2021 (BCO 21-4) – No record of stated differences in transfer exam.

Exception: Aug 20, 2021 (BCO 20-9; 38-3; 46-6) – TE mentioned as moved to Georgia and removed from directory without transfer or action to remove.

Exception: Nov 8, 2021 (BCO 18-3) – No record of questions proposed to candidate.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Jan 18, 2019 (BCO 24-6; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Presbytery approves candidate exception whose stated difference with WCF 21.7 appears to be “out of accord,” that is, “hostile to our system” or “strik[ing] at the vitals of religion” by stating that “worship on the first day of the week is a matter of church tradition and human reckoning, rather than divine revelation. Certainly, we should celebrate the Lord’s Day with and therefore on the same day as other brothers and sisters in Christ (Heb. 10:25).”

Response: Presbytery has communicated to the Teaching Elder in question the exception of substance regarding the stated difference. After review and study, the Teaching Elder now states:

“After studying and reflecting, my conscience no longer leads me to state this difference, because I no longer disagree with the language of the Westminster Standards. I now wholeheartedly affirm the underlined language below, with which I initially took issue:

WCF Ch. 21 Section 7: “As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, he has particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week: and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath:

Thus, I affirm:

- that the first day of the week is the Lord’s day, the day of his resurrection (Mark 16:9)
- that churches should worship together on the Lord’s day (Revelation 1:10, Acts 20:7)

Exception: Aug 20, 2018 (*BCO* 13.9.a; and *BCO* 38) – Removed TE from rolls without explanation.

Response: TE [name omitted] has left the PCA and is now ministering at [church name omitted] in Cypress, TX.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to designate if the TE was transferred or was removed per *BCO* 38-3

Response 2021: At August 20, 2018 Presbytery meeting, it was moved, seconded, and carried to dismiss the TE in accordance with *BCO* 38-3a, *When a member or officer in the Presbyterian Church in America shall attempt to withdraw from the communion of this branch of the visible Church by affiliating with some other branch (BCO 2-2), if at the time of the attempt to withdraw he is in good standing, the irregularity shall be recorded, his new membership acknowledged, and his name removed from the roll.*” We apologize for the lack of clarity in our minutes. M/C.

- e. **That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2022:**

Exception: Jan 17, 2020; Aug 21, 2020 (*BCO* 18-3) – Candidates not examined on their “motives for seeking the ministry.”

Exception: General 2020 – No record of January 2020 Minutes being approved by the Presbytery.

30. That the Minutes of **Illiana** Presbytery:

Adopted

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 18, 2020; May 23, 2020; Jul 21, 2020; Oct 17, 2020; Jun 28, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (Hebrew/Greek).

Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

Exception: Jan 18, 2020; May 23, 2020; Oct 17, 2020; Jan 16, 2021 (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-3) – Results of review of records of church Sessions not stated.

Exception: Jan 18, 2020; Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9) – All specific requirements of particularization of church not recorded.

Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.c; 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting to consider pastoral resignation.

Exception: Feb 18, 2020; Jul 21, 2020 (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order.

Exception: Feb 18, 2020 (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

Exception: May 23, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

Exception: General 2020 & 2021 (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: May 23, 2020; Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 15.1; *RAO* 16- 3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Exception: May 23, 2020 (*BCO* 5-3) – No record of temporary system of government appointed for mission church.

Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (PCA History exam).

Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 15-2) – Commission appointed with fewer than two teaching elders and two ruling elders.

Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4) – Use of extraordinary clause for ordination candidate not explained, and $\frac{3}{4}$ vote not recorded.

Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 22-5; Preliminary Principle 6) – No record of Sessions' approval of men serving as Stated Supply.

Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9.h; 15-1) – No organizing commission appointed for particularization of a church.

Exception: Jan 16, 2021 (*BCO* 15-1, 3) – There was a judicial commission formed at the 7/21/2020 meeting, but there was no report concerning its “full statement of the case and the judgment rendered” in 2020 or the present meeting. There is mention of the judicial commission concluding its work and the accused appealing the decision in the Stated Clerk’s Report (p. 6), but there is no record of the Presbytery’s judgment on the case.

Exception: Jan 16, 2021 (*BCO* 42-6) – Motion made pursuant to *BCO* 42-6, but there is no record of a continuing judicial process in the court’s record aside from the Stated Clerk’s Report (p. 6).

Exception: Jan 16, 2021 (*BCO* 42-6) – Sufficient reasons for preventing a TE from exercising all functions of office not recorded.

Exception: Jan 16, 2021 (*BCO* 19-9) – No record of examination for internship.

Exception: Jun 28, 2021 (BCO 13-2) – Notice for called meeting not in order (no record of 10-day notice).

Exception: Jun 28, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – No record of Presbytery from which TE is transferring within the PCA.

Exception: Jun 28, 2021 (BCO 18-2, 3) – All requirements for bringing a candidate under care are not recorded (e.g., endorsement of Session, experiential religion)

Exception: Oct 16, 2021 (BCO 15.1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of judicial commission not entered in Presbytery minutes

Exception: General (RAO 16-4.c.2) – Standing Rules not included.

Exception: General (RAO 16-10.a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA, and no responses to the Assembly concerning disposition of an exception of substance.

d. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2022:

Exception: Feb 28, 2019 (RAO 16-3.e.5) – Candidate’s differences not stated in his own words.

Exception: Nov 16, 2019 (BCO 13-12) – No evidence of proper call for meeting and reason for called meeting not stated.

Exception: General (BCO 13-9) – No record of review of session minutes.

31. That the Minutes of Iowa Presbytery:

Adopted

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General; Mar 13, 2021; July 10, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b; 40-3) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: May 8, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – 10-day notice requirement was not stated for the called meeting.

Exception: Jul 10, 2021; Nov 13, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Jul 10, 2021 (BCO 42-1.e; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.

d. That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Nov 14, 2020 (BCO 21-4.f; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.

Response: Brothers at Review of Presbytery Records,

Thank you for helping us catch the error in our minutes. On November 14, 2020 in examining [name omitted] prior to his ordination in

December of 2020, Colin was examined thoroughly. On that day, [name omitted] took the following exceptions to the Westminster Larger Catechism and Westminster Confession of Faith. Normally they would have been included in the appendix of that meeting but our clerk inadvertently failed to include them in that place.

Colin's exceptions were as follows:

WCF 21.8

This Sabbath is to be kept holy unto the Lord when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

"I do not believe that the pleasure of man Isaiah speaks of in chapter 58, the passage most often used to support the recreation clause, has recreational activities in view. It seems more likely that this is a continued critique of Israel's desire to buy and sell on the Sabbath, which is contrary to God's pattern of work and rest in creation."

WLC Q109

'What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?... the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; "

Scripture gives us word pictures describing Jesus (Rev. 1:14, Is. 53:2). We are to worship God only as he commands us to in scripture, and to that end I agree with the *WCF*. However, I do believe that it is in some instances appropriate to use pictures and dramas which can help people better understand the gospel. For pedagogical purposes I believe it is possible to use pictures of Jesus."

The presbytery voted unanimously that these exceptions were judged not to be merely symantic, but not striking at the vitals of our religion nor hostile to our system of doctrine and approved his examination.

The Lord has used Colin in great ways since his beginning to serve pastorally there at Bethany Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Know that the 2020 minutes have been updated and that both our clerk and we as a presbytery will redouble our efforts to do as we have always sought to do in the past and see to it that such differences be faithfully recorded in minutes of future meetings of Iowa Presbytery.

32. That the Minutes of **James River** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Apr 10, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 16, 20201; Jul 15, 2021; Oct 9, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Jan 19, 2019 (BCO 5-9) – It is unclear which of the steps in particularizing a new church have taken place, other than a report that the requirements have been fulfilled.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the *BCO*'s requirements for recording the steps in particularization of new churches in the future. While we followed the proper steps as written in *BCO* 5-9, we acknowledge that we failed to record the steps in our minutes

Exception: Jan 19, 2019 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination not recorded as having been approved by the Presbytery.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the *BCO*'s requirements for recording the complete list of requirements for ordination as listed in *BCO* 21-4. While the ordained elder was fully qualified, and the Presbytery completely reviewed and examined his credentials, we acknowledge that we failed to record the requirements completely in our minutes.

Exception: Apr 13, 2019 (BCO 21-1) – Presbytery did not grant permission to a TE who moved onto the field prior to transfer.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to not allow a candidate or licentiate to move onto the field prior to Presbytery's examination

Exception: Jul 18, 2019 (BCO 20-9; 23-1) – No record of dissolution of pastoral relationship before approving a minister to transfer to another presbytery.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the *BCO*'s requirements for dissolving pastoral relations before approving a minister to transfer to another presbytery

Exception: Oct 12, 2019 (BCO 18-7) – No reasons stated in the minutes of the Presbytery for removing candidates from under care of presbytery.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the *BCO*'s requirements for recording the reasons for removing candidates from under care of Presbytery.

Exception: Oct 12, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated difference received orally but were not recorded in candidate's own words.

Response: The JRP humbly disagrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance on this matter. While the candidates' own words were not written at this point in the minutes, they were included as the attachments to Leadership Development Committee's report, pp. 213-15 of the 2019 Minutes.

Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (*BCO* 15-2) – The members of the commission are not named so it is unclear whether the membership included 2 TEs and 2 REs.

Response: The JRP humbly disagrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance on this matter. While the names of the commissioners were not named at this point in the minutes, their names are recorded in the Commission Report found on page 33 of the August 2020 minutes

Exception: Aug 8, 2020 (*RONR* 9:34) – Commission held a meeting by email which does not constitute a deliberative assembly.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to allow for a deliberative assembly on all commissions and court meetings. We will strive to do better in the future.

Exception: Aug 8, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – TE status changed to without call without a record of the dissolution of previous call.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the *BCO*'s requirements for dissolving pastoral calls before changing his status to "without call". We acknowledge that we failed to record this matter in our minutes and will strive to do better in the future.

Exception: Aug 8, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.c.1.b) – No record of ordination trial for knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages nor statement that the seminary degree included study in the languages.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the *BCO*'s requirements for recording the complete list of requirements for ordination as listed in *BCO* 21-4. While the

ordained elder was fully qualified, and the Presbytery completely reviewed and examined his credentials, including his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew languages, and his acceptable seminary degree, we acknowledge that we failed to record the requirements completely in our minutes and will strive to do better in the future.

Exception: Aug 8, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – Resignation request received and pastoral relationship dissolved without citing the local church to appear.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the BCO's requirements for dissolving a pastoral relationship without citing the local church to appear. We acknowledge that we failed to record this matter in our minutes and will strive to do better in the future

Exception: Aug 8, 2020 (BCO 21-4.c.1.b) – No record of ordination trial for knowledge of the Greek language.

Response: The JRP believes this exception is the same as the exception above on Aug 8, 2020 [p. 7]. We refer to the above response

Exception: Oct 10, 2020 (BCO 5-9.d, 5-9.i.1) – It is unclear whether officers were elected for a church petitioning for particularization and whether the commission would install those officers.

Response: The JRP acknowledges and agrees with the Assembly's taken exception of substance, and expresses its commitment to comply with all of the BCO's requirements for recording the election and installation of officers for the particularizing church. We acknowledge that we failed to record this matter in our minutes and will strive to do better in the future.

33. That the Minutes of **Korean Capital Presbytery:** *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 24, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Apr 5, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Apr 5, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregation involvement when presbytery dissolved TE's call.

Exception: Apr 5, 2021 (BCO 13-11) – No Record of the February 26, 2021 Presbytery meeting.

Exception: Apr 5, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Exception: Apr 5, 2021 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission to install not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (*BCO* 25-11) – Improper approval of withdrawal of church from the PCA.

Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (*BCO* 15-2) – TE improperly installed as assistant minister. No record of formation of a commission to install.

Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Apr 8, 2019 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of a call to a definite work recorded for two TEs [names omitted].

Response: We regret not properly recording the calls for these candidates. Both candidates had definite calls which were reviewed, approved, and presented to the ordinands by the presbytery. We revised the minutes to add the record.

Exception: Oct 7, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of the approval of a theological thesis, exegesis, or seminary degree in lieu of original languages for ordination candidate.

Response: We regret not properly recording the approval of a theological thesis, exegesis, and seminary degree in lieu of original languages. The ordination candidates submitted the papers and the seminary diploma and were approved during the exam committee interview and on the presbytery floor. We revised the minutes to add the record.

Exception: Jun 29, 2020 (*BCO* 19-3; 19-4) – No record of questions for licensure asked and affirmed. Licensure not recorded in proper form.

Response: We regret not properly recording the licensure questions being asked and affirmed and not recording the licensure in the proper form. The candidate was asked the questions and he affirmed them. We revised the minutes to add the record of questioning and the proper form for licensure.

Exception: Jun 29, 2020 (*BCO* 19-3; 19-4) – No record of questions for licensure asked and affirmed. Licensure not recorded in proper form.

Response: We regret not properly recording the licensure questions being asked and affirmed and not recording the licensure in the proper form. The candidate was asked the questions and he affirmed them. We revised the minutes to add the record of questioning and the proper form for licensure

Exception: Oct 5, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Response: We regret not recording the fact that the teaching elder was an assistant pastor at an out-of-bounds ministry. We did not require the church session to produce a minutes for our review since the church is not under our jurisdiction; we only acted upon the reasonable report of the teaching elder. We revised the minutes to note this fact

34. That the Minutes of **Korean Central** Presbytery: *Adopted*

[Editorial Note: see pp. 21-22 for Assembly action on 34.c and 34.f.]

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Apr 13-14, 2021; Jul 13, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: General (*Standing Rules* 2-4.2) – Presbytery did not convene two stated meetings OR minutes not submitted if Fall stated meeting convened. (Oct 13-14, 2020 meeting minutes were submitted for review but these minutes were reviewed by the CRPR of the 48th GA)

Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: Standing Rules – No provision in Standing Rules to allow for virtual Presbytery meetings.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam. (Bible, Greek and Hebrew not included).

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specifics requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4 – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s/candidate’s own words.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specifics requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-5) – No record that the Presbytery or a commission of the Presbytery would be convened for candidate’s ordination.

Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.f.1) – Motions and recommendations approved not completely recorded.

Exception: Jul 13, 2021 (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

Exception: Jul 13, 2021 (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in Presbytery’s minutes.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020 – Stated meeting place online.

Response: Korean Central Presbytery (KCP) could not meet in person due to the States’ Covid restrictions. KCP casted a vote before we begin the meeting. The members agreed to have the meeting online via Zoom by unanimous consent.

Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work (Mr. [name omitted])

Response: The stated clerk of KCP explains the definite work of a candidate on the floor. But it was not included on the minute traditionally. KCP will record the definite work of a candidate from now on.

Exception: General (*RAO* 16.4.c.3) – No response to the Assembly dispositions of exceptions of substance.

Response: KCP will make sure to submit responses on time from now on

Exception: Apr 10-11, 2018 (*BCO* 20-1) – Ordination of TE; no record of call to a definite work.

Response: The stated clerk of KCP explains the definite work of a candidate on the floor. But it was not included on the minute traditionally. KCP will record the definite work of a candidate from now on

Exception: Apr 10-11, 2018 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational vote to dissolve pastoral call.

Response: The re-entry of the senior pastor of the church to the United States was rejected. The church was not even able to have a congregational meeting. KCP tries to all the time to follow the appropriate guidelines of PCA’s *BCO*.

Exception: Oct 16-17, 2018 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-4.3.e.4) – Record of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Response: KCP does not recall any commission formed in that Presbytery meeting except commission for ordination. Korean Central Presbytery (KCP) is divided into four chapters according to regions, and each chapter is composed of TEs and REs of the presbytery. The duty of install/ordain pastor delegates to the chapter, where the

ceremony would take place (Presbytery Bylaw 13-4). From now on, KCP will include the name of a TE or a RE of the chair of a chapter
Exception: Apr 18-19, 2017; Oct 10-11, 2017 (BCO 15-2) – No record of commission formed to install/ordain pastor.

Response: Korean Central Presbytery (KCP) is divided into four chapters according to regions, and each chapter is composed of TEs and REs of the presbytery. The duty of install/ordain pastor delegates to the chapter, where the ceremony would take place (Presbytery Bylaw 13-4). From now on, KCP will include the name of a TE or a RE of the chair of a chapter

Exception: Apr 18-19, 2017 (BCO 13-8) – No commission report for RE examinations for church transferring.

Response: The record of RE examinations for church transferring to KCP is left out. They all took the exam and passed. KCP acknowledges its mistake. We will make sure to keep and report the record of commissions from now on.

Exception: Oct 10-11, 2017 (BCO 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members of dissolved church.

Response: The church did not accept the intervention of the presbytery. We will make sure to keep the record of all the details from now on.

Exception: Apr 18-19, 2017 (BCO 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exams.

Response: KCP did not record in detail for the transfer candidates because they failed exam. We will make sure to keep the record in detail even for the candidates who fail exam from now on.

e. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:

Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020 (BCO 21-4) – Stated difference not recorded in candidate’s own words.; not judged according to prescribed categories (Mr. [name omitted]; Mr. [name omitted]).

Response: All the candidates of KCP are required to submit the difference in written form. KCP will attach candidate’s written form from now on. KCP believes that we judged according to prescribed categories.

Rationale: Presbytery must submit the stated differences for review.

Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020 (BCO 21-14) – Stated difference not recorded in candidate’s own words.; not judged according to prescribed categories (Mr. [name omitted]).

Response: All the candidates of KCP are required to submit the difference in written form. KCP will attach candidate's written form from now on. KCP believes that we judged according to prescribed categories.

Rationale: Presbytery must submit the stated differences for review.

Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020 (BCO 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (Mr. [name omitted]).

Response: KCP acknowledges the mistake, and we will be careful next time.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to submit amended minutes reflecting all specific requirements of ordination exam were administered.

Exception: Apr 18-19, 2017; Oct 10-11, 2017 (BCO 20-1; 20-6; RAO 16-3.e.6) – No record that calls to TEs were examined and approved by Presbytery.

Response: KCP believes that there is no TEs who were not examined and approved by Presbytery. We will keep making sure that all TEs who wants to transfer to KCP will be examined properly.

Rationale: The exception addresses the TE's call to a definite work and not their examination. Presbytery must examine and review the call to a definite work.

Exception: Oct 10-11, 2017 (BCO 21-4) – Use of ¾ extraordinary clause not explained for ordination exam.

Response: KCP acknowledges its mistake, and we will be careful next time. There were three (3) transfer candidates at the October 2017 meeting. They came from another denomination (Presbyterian Church in Korea – *Hapdong*). Ordinarily, a transfer candidate takes written exams on all subjects, but for these three (3) candidates, we conduct a part of the exam in *viva voce*. Also, KCP allowed a recorded sermon substituting the floor sermon.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to provide an explanation as to why it chose to omit these parts by use of the extraordinary clause.

f. BCO 40-5 Citation:

The CRPR recommends that the 49th General Assembly:

- a. Find that the Korean Central Presbytery's proceedings on October 13-14, 2020, April 13-14, 2021, and July 3, 2021 in the minutes of the Presbytery constitute a "credible report" of "an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings" (BCO 40-5) regarding the handling of the accusations against TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], and TE [name omitted];

- b. Cite the Korean Central Presbytery to appear, per *BCO* 40-5, before the PCA’s Standing Judicial Commission which the 49th GA constitutes its commission to adjudicate this matter, by representative or in writing, at the SJC’s fall stated meeting, to “show what the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question,” following the Operating Manual for the SJC, particularly chapter 15; and
 - c. Direct the RPR Officers to appoint one or more representatives of the GA and Report (*OMSJC* 15.2) to present this case to the SJC.
35. That the Minutes of **Korean Eastern Presbytery:** *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Directory; Mar 10, 2020; Sep 15, 2020; Mar 16, 2021; Sep 14, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
 - Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record that teaching elder transferring into the presbytery has a call to a definite work.
 - Exception: Mar 10, 2020; Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 15.1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in subsequent Presbytery minutes.
 - Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 13-8) – No record of examination of elders for a church that has petitioned to join the PCA.
 - Exception: Sep 15, 2020; Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 8-7; 20-1) – Teaching Elders approved to minister out of bounds but with no record of a call to a definite work where they will be “engaged in preaching and teaching the Word ... [and] will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our church.”
 - Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6) – Details of transfer exam not recorded.
 - Exception: Sep 15, 2020; Mar 16, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.
 - Exception: Sep 15, 2020; Mar 16, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
 - Exception: Mar 18, 2018** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of stated differences.
 - Response:** KEP apologizes the oversight of not recording the stated differences for ordination exam. The candidate had no differences to the standards. We will be more cautious in the future.
 - Exception: Mar 18, 2018** (*BCO* 20-9) – No record of terms of call.

Response: The transfer candidate was properly called to a particular work. The terms of call was in the docket page 82, but not in the meeting minutes. We will be more careful to organize meeting minutes with the clarity in the future

Exception: Mar 18, 2018 (BCO 20-9) – Transferred out of presbytery with no record of destination.

Response: TE was approved to transfer to Eastern PA Presbytery. We will be more careful in the future to include the detail in meeting minutes.

Exception: Sep 11, 2018 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Response: The presbytery apologizes for not recording the term of call for the candidate. The TE approved for the Out of Boundary went to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to pursue his study

Rationale: A course of study is not a definite work to which a call can be issued.

New Response: KEP apologizes for not being clear about the TE's call. We were able to clarify that the TE was serving at RCC as the out of boundary while studying at TED school. We will be more cautious in the future not to miss the detail in meeting minutes

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Mar 18, 2018 (BCO 13-6) – Received as a member but no record of mechanism how it happened.

Response: The TE's membership status was discussed on the floor and the KEP approved to grant him a continual membership with the promise of attending stated meeting and pay membership fee as required by the presbytery.

Rationale: A teaching elder must have a call to a definite work or be received as Without Call (BCO 13-5; 20-1).

36. That the Minutes of **Korean Northeastern** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 9, 2021; Sep 14, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

37. That the Minutes of **Korean Northwest** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Oct 11, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: General (*BCO* 13-12) – Presbytery did not meet at least twice OR minutes not submitted.
Exception: Standing Rules – No provision in Standing Rules to allow for virtual Presbytery meetings.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 19-3) – No record of questions for licensure.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 20-1, 20-9; 21-1) – No record of a call to a definite work for ministers transferring from another denomination.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
Exception: Oct 11, 2021 (*BCO* 5-3) – No record of temporary government for organizing a mission church.
- d. **That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no approved responses were received in 2022.**
Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9b) – No record of review of records of church sessions
Exception: Apr 24, 2017 (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.
Exception: Apr 24, 2017; Oct 9, 2017 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.
Exception: Apr 24, 2017 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.
Exception: Apr 24, 2017 (*BCO* 19-13) – Approval of internship for ordination not recorded.
Exception: Apr 24, 2017; Oct 9, 2017 (*BCO* 12-5) – Power to examine, ordain, and install ruling elders belongs to the Session.
Exception: Oct 9, 2017 (*BCO* 19-2) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
Exception: Oct 9, 2017 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam – no indication of transferee’s previous denomination.

Exception: Apr 9, 2018 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Exception: Apr 9, 2018 (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: General (*BCO* 40-1) – No record of review of session minutes.

Response [2018]: We have a committee that reviews them each presbytery meeting. Many times, churches forget to bring them. We will be more diligent in this matter to ensure that sessional records are reviewed under *BCO* 40-1.

Rationale [2018]: Please supply a record of presbytery action reviewing 2014 Session minutes.

Exception: General (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No response to the Assembly concerning disposition of any exceptions of substance.

Response [2018]: We apologize for not responding on time. It is not the attitude of the presbytery and its members to rebel or disrespect. It was the fault of the clerk and he apologizes and asks for forgiveness.

Rationale [2018]: Please provide responses to presbytery exceptions of substance for 2014, 2013, and 2011.

Exception: Apr 13, 2015 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of candidate meeting all qualifications for ordination.

Response [2018]: Our examination committee keeps record of all the parts and details of the exam and just gives final report to the presbytery. We will have requirements in our minutes in the future. We have revised our minutes to show required parts are approved and that the exam as a whole was approved.

Rationale [2018]: Please provide a record of the revised minutes and the record of presbytery's revision including statement of stated differences in candidate's own words and presbytery's categorization of the differences.

Exception: Apr 13, 2015 (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of exam not recorded.

Response [2018]: Our examination committee keeps record of all the parts and details of the exam and just gives final report to the presbytery. We will do better job of recording requirements in our minutes in the future. We have revised our minutes to show required parts are approved and that the exam as a whole was approved.

Rationale [2018]: Please provide a record of the revised minutes and the record of presbytery's revision including statement of differences in candidate's own words and presbytery's categorization of the differences.

Exception: Apr 13, 2015 (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No record of candidate's stated differences, if any.

Response [2018]: We will keep clear record of statement of differences with standards in the future.

Rationale [2018]: Please provide a record of the revised minutes and the record of presbytery's revision including statement of differences in candidate's own words and presbytery's categorization of the differences.

Exception: General 2019 & 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of church Session records.

Exception: General 2019 (*BCO* 13-5) – TEs on roll without explanation. Apr 8, 2019 meeting listed 32 total TEs and Sep 30, 2019 meeting listed 36 total TEs.

Exception: Apr 8, 2019 (*BCO* 13-11) – Inaccurate record of attendance. No list of excused/unexcused absences, no list of churches represented.

Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019; Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 20-1; 13-7) - No record of call to definite work for ministers transferring from another denomination.

Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019 (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 24-1) – Improper exercise of Presbytery authority. Presbytery may not require churches to request Presbytery permission to elect Ruling Elders.

Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019 (*BCO* 12-3) – No record that interim moderators were approved by Sessions.

Exception: Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 13-8) – No record of commission of Presbytery meeting with church ruling elders before receiving the church into its membership.

Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019; Oct 13, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4; 13-6) - Incomplete record of transfer exams for ministers transferring from another denomination.

38. That the Minutes of **Korean Southeastern** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Apr 5, 2021; Oct 4, 2021**.
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (BCO 13-9; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.
Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (BCO 38-3.a, b) – No record of whether departing TEs were categorized according to BCO 38-3.a or b.
 - d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**
39. That the Minutes of **Korean Southern** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Oct 19, 2020; Apr 19, 2021**.
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 13-6, 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our standards.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 21-5) – No record that Presbytery installed pastor following approved exam.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO Part II) – Unclear record of a judicial matter.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 21-6) – No congregation present at ordination/installation service of its pastor. No questions asked of the congregation.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exams not recorded.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020; Apr 19, 2021 (BCO 13-8) – Presbytery received a new church into its membership without examining its ruling elders.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.
Exception: Oct 19, 2020; Apr 19, 2021 (BCO 13-9.b, 40-3) – Results of review of records of church Sessions not stated.
Exception: Apr 19, 2021 (BCO 34-10) – Presbytery adopted a rule that ministers without call for three years are “automatically removed by the decision of the Presbytery,” contravening the process required

by *BCO* 34-10, including the requirements for a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote, an inquiry into the cause of his dereliction, notification following the initial vote, and a second vote at the subsequent stated meeting.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Oct 15, 2018 (*BCO* 13-6) – No indication of how TE was/were examined, per *BCO* 13-6; not clear if TE’s were transfers.

Response: Actually, the examination was not for a TE but for a licentiate candidate. And the tested subjects were recorded in the “Report of Examination Committee” on page 12 at the item # 18 in the minute. We will record more clearly in the future how candidates are examined.

Exception: Oct 15, 2018 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call for TEs.

Response: At this Presbytery Meeting, there was no call for any TEs. On the contrary, there were two resigning cases for TEs without further calls at that time.

Exception: Oct 15, 2018 (*BCO* 40-1; *RAO* 16-4) – Several of the pages from these minutes were not included in the binder we received. We acknowledge this was likely a copying mistake. However, since these pages were not reviewable, they should be submitted next year for review.

Response: We are so sorry for that. We resubmit the very minute together with this response to exceptions for review

Exception: Apr 22, 2019 (*BCO* 19-2. f; 21-4) – The licensure exam did not list some of the required areas of testing (e.g. sermon and church government). There is also no record of how stated differences with our standards (if any) were disposed.

Response: The exam areas were recorded in the “Report of Examination Committee” on page 15 at the item # 25 in the minute.

Exception: Apr 22, 2019 (*RAO* 16-4.c.2) – Did not record $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote required per presbytery *Standing Rules* for amending bylaws (Article 15 – Appendix. Section 1).

Response: The amending was made unanimously and the result was not recorded. We are sorry for that. In the future, we surely will record amending cases even though they are done unanimously as well as the voting cases.

Exception: Apr 22, 2019 (*BCO* 13-8) – No record of adherence to *BCO* 13-8, including commission to examine and ordain elders.

Response: These cases were just allowances only for the local churches to be able to elect REs by the Presbytery’s checking the local church’s situations. Tests would be done after these allowances through the due processes

Exception: Oct 21, 2019 (*BCO* 15-2) – TEs without call seem to be limited in their participation in allowable committees and commissions, i.e. membership and examination committees.

Response: TEs without call usually have tendencies not to attend Presbytery Meetings. To operate the two most important committees in the Presbytery properly without the quorum problems, the Presbytery inevitably decided to apply this decision. However, there are no other intentions or discrimination at all. If situations improve, we will reconsider this matter

Exception: Jul 6, 2020 (*RAO* 16-3.c.8) – No record of approval of previous minutes.

Response: This Presbytery Meeting was a specially called Meeting. In the docket, there is neither the item like “Reading the Previous Minutes” nor the approval of previous minutes as in the docket of regular Stated Meetings. The approval of minute is usually done at the next Stated Meeting.

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Oct 21, 2019 (*BCO* 13-9, 24-1) – Examination of RE is not under the purview of the presbytery’s jurisdiction, rather the local session.

Response: Although the minute records the results of the RE tests in the “Report of Examination Committee” on page 10 at the item# 20, the test areas were not recorded. We are very sorry for not recording in detail. But in the future, we will pay more attention for this matter. The RE installation was not administered by the local session.

Rationale: It is unclear how this is a response to the exception. Why was this RE reviewed by Presbytery and the installation not administered by the local Session?

40. That the Minutes of **Korean Southwest** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: General (By Laws, Article 9, *BCO* 8-9) – Presbytery shall not restrict eligibility for office to teaching elders only. Ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility.

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* 5-3) – No establishment of a temporary system of government for Mission Church.

Exception: Bylaws (*BCO* 24-1) – Ruling elders are called by local churches and examined by their session. Presbytery is not the court of original jurisdiction.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 13-4) – No quorum present; moderator does not have the authority to change *BCO* requirements for a quorum. Quorum declared with only two RE's present.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister's/candidate's own words.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Unclear record of ordination exam.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (*BCO* 20) – No record of congregational votes of election of pastor(s).

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; 24-1, 3) – Church shall have authority to elect elders. Presbytery may not set limit of how many elders the church can have.

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* 15-1) – No record of quorum for commission meeting.

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* 21-5-8) – Referred to as a committee and not a commission.

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* 21-5-8) – No record of commission being appointed by presbytery at previous meeting.

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* 21-5-8) – No record of required portions of ordination service.

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* 21-9; 21-10) – No record of *BCO* 21-9 and 21-10 questions being asked and answered in the affirmative.

Exception: May 25, 2021 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Exception: Sep 14, 2021 (*BCO* 46-6) – Teaching elder did not remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery until received by the other.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory: Exception: Sep 11, 2018; Oct 18, 2018; Mar 12, 2019; Sep 10, 2019** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Response: We have erred. It has been our practice to include the Commission’s report in the presbytery minutes, but not the minutes of the commission. Going forward, we will included them in our presbytery minutes.

Exception: Oct 18, 2018; Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that the congregation voted on dissolution.

Response: We have erred in failing to include this in our minutes. Both churches of concern did hold congregational meetings and our presbytery stated clerk received the results of the vote, but it was not included in the minutes. We will correct this error and amend our minutes accordingly

Exception: Oct 18, 2018; Oct 15, 2019 (*RAO* 16-3.c.1) – The purpose of the meeting is not recorded in the Minutes.

Response: For the called presbytery meeting, the agenda does show the purpose of the meeting, but we will make sure that “the purpose of the meeting” is more clearly stated in future minutes.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 18-3) – No record that the candidate was examined by the Presbytery before being received as a candidate.

Response: The candidate was examined by the Examination Committee and was sustained and approved by the presbytery. We will do better to record this more accurately – that the candidate stood before the presbytery to be examined and the Examination Committee’s recommendation was approved.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination (see also *BCO* 21-4).

Response: The transfer examination included: Bible, Systematic Theology, Westminster Standards, *BCO*, Church/PCA History, Sermon, Theological Position Papers (Soteriology, Trinity, Scripture, Sacraments, Women’s Ordination). The details were in the Examination Committee report. We failed to include it in the presbytery meetings that the transferring minister stood before the presbytery to be examined on these topics and the examination committee’s recommendation was sustained and approved.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019; Sep 10, 2019; Oct 15, 2019 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Response: We failed to include the call to a definite work in our minutes. We will do our best to correct this and amend the minutes to include the calls of concern for 2019.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (see also *RAO* 16-3.e.5).

Response: The details were in the Examination Committee report. We failed to include it in the presbytery meetings that the ordination candidate stood before the presbytery to be examined on these topics and the examination committee's recommendation was sustained and approved. (Topics: Bible, Systematics, *BCO*, Church/PCA History, Theological Paper, Exegetical Paper)

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 21-7, 8, 9, 10) – No record that the steps of installation were carried out, simply who was in charge.

Response: This concerns a licensure exam not an ordination or installation.

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 20-1; 21-5, 6, 7, 8) - No record that the ordinand was installed.

Response: This was not an ordination but a transfer. The installation service was carried several weeks after presbytery meeting. We will make sure to better record this.

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 24-1; 11-4) – The right to determine the number of officers to be elected resides with the congregation, not the presbytery.

Response: At our 76th stated meeting, we changed our presbytery standing rules so that it does not conflict with the *BCO*. We agree that the right to determine the number of officers to be elected resides with the congregation.

Exception: General 2019 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – There is usually no indication in the record of transfer exams from where the TE is transferring. Without this information it is not possible to tell whether the examination included the required elements.

Response: We have erred in this oversight. We will record the denomination from where the TE is transferring.

Exception: General 2019 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

Response: At our 76th presbytery meeting, this issue was discussed, and we are taking steps to fix this problem. The moderator appointed reviewers

Exception: General 2019 (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No record in Minutes of exceptions taken by GA. There is mention of communication regarding exceptions, but no record of approving responses.

Response: We have erred. We will do this from now on and include the record of the exceptions and approving of responses.

Exception: Standing Rules (BCO 34-10) – These provisions of the Standing Rules appear to have the effect of *BCO* 34-10, but without process.

Response: We will consider changing our Standing Rules to be more consistent with *BCO* 34-10.

Exception: Standing Rules (BCO 24) – The provisions of Article 23 appear to usurp the role of the Session and congregation. Particularly #2 requiring RE candidates first be ordained as Deacons is not a biblical requirement.

Response: At our 76th stated meeting, we changed our presbytery standing rules so that it does not conflict with the *BCO*. Article 23-1, 2 have been deleted from our standing rules

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b) – No record of review of minutes of church Sessions.

Response: We have asked church Sessions to submit their minutes for review but we acknowledge that there is a culturally rooted issue in Korean churches where church Sessions have apprehension about the details of their Session meetings becoming known by other churches. As a Presbytery we are unsure of how to rectify this in order to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Although we understand the cultural apprehension with regard to examining Session Minutes, nevertheless it is a requirement of our polity to which the Elders have agreed to submit in their Ordination and Installation vows.

New Response: At our 76th presbytery meeting, this issue was discussed, and we are taking steps to fix this problem. The moderator appointed reviewers.

Exception: By-laws (BCO 24-1) – By-laws for electing ruling elders are out of accord with the *BCO* [Article 23].

Response: During the 74th stated presbytery meeting on March 10, 2020, the floor called the *By-laws* committee to formulate and propose a response to the exception for the following stated presbytery meeting to be held on September 15, 2020. To give some context, in Korean churches/culture this practice is common in efforts to cultivate a heart of service and humility among ruling elders.

Rationale: Although the intent behind Article 23 may be a good one, it remains that the requirements of Article 23 are out of accord with the *BCO* and the article should be stricken, which requires Elders to

be elected and ordained as Deacons first, and for all Elder nominees to be approved by Presbytery.

New Response: At our 76th stated meeting, we changed our presbytery standing rules so that it does not conflict with the *BCO*. Article 23-1, 2 have been deleted from our standing rules

Exception: Mar 11, 2014 (*BCO* 20-1) – Ordination of TE: no record of call to a definite work.

Response: This was a clerical error on our part. The credentials committee received the call from the church before recommending the candidate for ordination and indicated so in their report. However, as with the above exceptions, the report of the committee indicating the record of call to a definite work was not transcribed into the Presbytery minutes. We acknowledge that this kind of recording error has been occurring multiple times. We will make sure to record the full report of the committee.

Rationale: Simply recording the Committee report is insufficient. The call must be acted upon by the Presbytery.

New Response: We failed to include the call to a definite work in our minutes. We will do our best to correct this and make sure the call to a definite work is included and acted upon by our presbytery.

Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of session records.

Response: We have asked church Sessions to submit their minutes for review but we acknowledge that there is a culturally rooted issue in Korean churches where church Sessions have apprehension about the details of their Session meetings becoming known by other churches. As a Presbytery we are unsure of how to rectify this in order to comply with *BCO* requirements.

Rationale: Although we understand the cultural apprehension with regard to examining Session Minutes, nevertheless it is a requirement of our polity to which the Elders have agreed to submit in their Ordination and Installation vows.

New Response: We are working on fixing this. We agree this is an important part of our polity and needs to be corrected

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 22-2) – No record of congregational meeting and call, no record of terms of call being approved, no record of installation.

Response: The church of concern is not a PCA church, therefore it was not under our jurisdiction. The minister was serving out of bounds.

Rationale: Although the church is out of bounds, the terms of the call still need to be approved by the Presbytery (*BCO* 8-7).

41. That the Minutes of **Korean Southwest Orange County Presbytery:**

Adopted

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Directory; Sep 14, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
 - Exception: Mar 16, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TEs transferring into Presbytery.
 - Exception: Mar 16, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – TE was transferred into Presbytery as an “Associate Member.” No such designation exists in the PCA.
 - Exception: Mar 16, 2021; Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements for ordination exam not recorded.
 - Exception: Mar 16, 2021; Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 11-4; 24-1) – Presbytery appointed ruling elders to a church; which it has no authority to do.
 - Exception: Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
 - Exception: Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
 - Exception: Sep 12, 2017; Mar 13, 2018** (*BCO* 15-1) – Minutes of Commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.
 - Response:** We apologize for this error. We understand that the actions of a commission are the actions of the Presbytery which require minutes for review. Unfortunately, we do not have the minutes of the commission to submit for review. We will be more diligent to include commission minutes into the Presbytery record.
 - Exception: Sep 12, 2017** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.
 - Response:** We apologize for neglecting to record the full examination for a minister that transferred from another denomination as required according to the *BCO*. We understand that ministers transferring from another denomination are subject to a full ordination exam and it has been our practice to do so, however we failed to record the full

examination in our minutes. We will make sure to be more diligent to record it in detail.

Exception: Sep 12, 2017; Mar 13, 2018 (BCO 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our standards.

Response: We apologize for failing to record whether these candidates had any differences with our standards. We understand that any differences must be included in the minutes in the candidate's own words along with Presbytery's judgment of those stated differences according to the prescribed categories in *RAO* 16-3.e.5. While these particular candidates did not have any stated differences with our standards, we failed to record as such.

Exception: Sep 12, 2017; Mar 13, 2018 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to definite work.

Response: We apologize for this recording error. The ministers who were examined for ordination did have proper calls but we failed to record that the calls were received, read aloud, and accepted by the respective candidates. We will make sure to record this properly.

Exception: Sep 12, 2017; Mar 13, 2018 (BCO 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Response: We apologize for this clerical error. We examined the ordination candidates according to the requirements outlined in *BCO* 21-4 however we failed to record it in detail. We will make sure to record the specific requirements of ordination exams.

Exception: Sep 12, 2017; Mar 13, 2018 (BCO 19-13; 21-4.a) – Approval of internship for ordination not recorded.

Response: We apologize for this clerical error. Internships are approved by our credentials committee. While the committee reported that these candidates' internships were approved, we failed to record it in our minutes. We will make sure to record it properly.

Exception: Sep 12, 2017; Mar 13, 2018 (BCO 13-9.b) – No review of church session records found.

Response: We agree with RPR's exception here. Since our inception as a Presbytery, we struggled to have sessions submit their records for review. As of our 15th stated meeting (2019) sessions have been submitting their records and we have been reviewing them.

Exception: Sep 12, 2017 (BCO 12-5) – Power to examine, ordain, and install REs belongs to the Session.

Response: We agree that the power to examine, ordain, and install REs belongs to the session. In this particular case, the church was particularizing and had requested the Presbytery to conduct the examination, ordination, and installation of REs.

Exception: Sep 12, 2017 (BCO 23-1) – No record that congregation was cited to appear to give a statement about pastor’s resignation.

Response: We agree with RPR on this exception. The pastor tendered his resignation and relocated to Korea before the Presbytery was able to inquire and hear from the congregation

Exception: Sep 12, 2017 (BCO 34-10) – Process for divesting TE from office not in accordance with *BCO*.

Response: We apologize for this recording error. We followed the process as outlined in *BCO* 34- 10, however we failed to record the specific process in our minutes. We will make sure to keep a full and accurate record

Exception: Sep 12, 2017 (BCO 5-2.c; 13-10) – Process of dissolving mission church not in accord with *BCO*.

Response: We apologize for an incomplete record regarding the dissolution of a mission church. The Presbytery sent a letter to the church to encourage the congregation to transfer to other churches which they did. We failed to properly record this action of the Presbytery.

Exception: Mar 13, 2018 (BCO 13-1) - Certificate of Presbytery membership issues to REs. REs are not members of the presbytery.

Response: We apologize for the confusion here. It seems this is due to a mistranslation in our minutes. We do not issue certificates of membership to REs. In this case, we issued a certificate of ordination to the RE as his church had requested the Presbytery to examine, ordain, and install

Exception: Standing Rules (BCO 24) – Election of RE out of accord with *BCO*.

Response: We agree with RPR’s exception regarding the election of REs. We have amended our Standing Rules to comply with the *BCO*.

Exception: Sep 14-15, 2015; Mar 14, 2016 (BCO 13.9.b) – No record of the review of session records.

Response: We agree with RPR’s exception here. Since our inception as a Presbytery, we struggled to have sessions submit their records for review. As of our 15th stated meeting (2019) sessions have been submitting their records and we have been reviewing them

Exception: Sep 14-15, 2015; Mar 14, 2016 (BCO 19-2) – All specific requirements for licensure exams not recorded.

Response: We apologize for this clerical error. We examined the licensure candidates according to the requirements outlined in *BCO* 19-2 however we failed to record it in detail. We will make sure to record the specific requirements of ordination exams.

Exception: Mar 15, 2016 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Response: We apologize for this recording error. The ministers who were examined for ordination did have proper calls but we failed to record that the calls were received, read aloud, and accepted by the respective candidates. We will make sure to record this properly

Exception: Mar 15, 2016 (BCO 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Response: We apologize for this clerical error. We examined the ordination candidates according to the requirements outlined in *BCO* 21-4 however we failed to record it in detail. We will make sure to record the specific requirements of ordination exams.

Exception: Mar 15, 2016 (BCO 21-4) – No record of candidate meeting requirements for ordination (education, languages, etc.).

Response: We apologize for this clerical error. All requirements for ordination are reviewed by the credentials committee and candidates are only recommended to the floor for oral examinations only when those requirements are met satisfactorily. These candidates met those requirements however we failed to record it. We will make sure to record it properly.

Exception: Mar 15, 2016 (BCO 38-2) – Request to be divested of office was acted upon at the same meeting.

Response: We apologize for this error. We agree with this exception as we did not act on the request to be divested of office at the next stated meeting. We had never had a minister request to be divested of office and did not know the *BCO* procedure.

Exception: Sep 13, 2016 (BCO 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery from another denomination.

Response: We apologize for neglecting to record the full examination for a minister that transferred from another denomination as required according to the *BCO*. We understand that ministers transferring from another denomination are subject to a full ordination exam and we will make sure to record as such

Exception: Sep 13, 2016 (BCO 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

Response: We apologize for failing to record whether these candidates had any differences with our standards. We understand that any differences must be included in the minutes in the candidate's own words along with Presbytery's judgment of those stated differences according to the prescribed categories in *RAO* 16-3.e.5.

While these particular candidates did not have any stated differences with our standards, we failed to record as such.

Exception: Sep 13, 2016 (*BCO* 5-2.b; 5-3) – Unclear if churches received into presbytery are missions churches or particularized; if particularized, no record of designation of commission to meet with church elders.

Response: The churches that were received were mission churches. We apologize for not specifying the status of the churches received.

Exception: Sep 13, 2016 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church sessions.

Response: We agree with RPR's exception here. Since our inception as a Presbytery, we struggled to have sessions submit their records for review. As of our 15th stated meeting (2019) sessions have been submitting their records and we have been reviewing them

e. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2022:

Exception: General 2019 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church sessions.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.c; 21-4.f) – Incomplete record of transfer exams, specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. No record of asking for differences with Standards.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of calls to definite works.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 19-2, 19-9) – Specific requirements of licensure exam not listed, included differences with Standards.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 19-9; *BCO* 18) – Incomplete record of internship. No record of session endorsement, six-months membership, details of exam for candidate.

Exception: Mar 12, 2019 (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of member transfer or dismissal upon dissolution of the church.

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 15-01; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commissions not entered in minutes. Incomplete record of Session internship, endorsement, six-months membership.

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4; 13-6) – No record of requirement to state differences with standards. No record of *BCO* Exam. No record of details of transfer exam.

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 19-2) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Sep 10, 2019 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of calls to definite works.

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6) – Interim pastors appointed without call/vote of congregations.

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes. (“full and accurate record” *RAO* 16.3.e.6).

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* 20-01; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – Specific arrangements of call not shown to be approved.

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4) – No report of requiring statement of differences with Standards.

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* 19-2) – All specific licensure exam requirements not recorded.

Exception: Mar 10, 2020 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to definite work.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – No Presbytery action taken on resignation/dissolution of pastoral relationship.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 5-12) – No record of call to or Presbytery establishment of pastoral relationship.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 38-1) – No record that deposed minister appeared before the court.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11; *BCO* 38-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.8) – The minutes approved by the presbytery and submitted to RPR do not include a full and accurate record of investigation, confession and deposition of a TE, including a written statement of confession recorded in the TE’s own words, or a statement of facts as required by *BCO* 38-1.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 46-8) Presbytery did not assign a deposed TE membership in a local church with concurrence of the receiving Session.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

42. That the Minutes of **Lowcountry** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 23, 2021; Jul 24, 2021; Nov 4, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Apr 27, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Feb 16, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated/recorded.
Exception: Apr 27, 2021 (BCO 15-1) – No record of quorum for commission meeting.
Exception: Apr 27, 2021 (RAO 16-3.c.8) – No record of approval of minutes of Feb. 16, 2021 called meeting
 - d. **No response to a previous assembly is required.**
43. That the Minutes of **Metro Atlanta** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 26, 2021; May 4, 2021; Sep 21, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Sep 17, 2019 (RAO 16-10a) – No record in minutes concerning Presbytery response to exceptions of substance cited by General Assembly within calendar year.
Response: MAP erred. MAP recorded the responses at the January 2020. Extract from January 28th, 2020, minutes follows:
Response to 47th GA RPR Exceptions [p.1]
 - *MAP response to exception noted for Jan 23, 2018, minutes regarding commission report – see APPENDIX F [pg. 31-32]*
 - *MAP response to exception noted for Jan 23, 2018, minutes regarding Mr. [name omitted]’s differences – see APPENDIX G [p. 33]***Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (BCO 40-1)** – *BCO* requires annual review of Session records. (In the previous year 7 were reviewed; 17 were not reviewed; 9 have no record of review; per Table on page 15.)
Response: MAP requests grace from RPR for 2020. Due to COVID MAP did not want to pass paper and MAP met by hybrid. For 2021 MAP is establishing a Review of Session Records Committee and will have much higher compliance in 2022.
Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (BCO 38-2) – No record of two stated meetings for demission of TE.
Response: This meeting was the first meeting to “MSP – to approve the request of TE [name omitted] to demit from the ministry.

BCO 38-2 says, “A minister of the Gospel against whom there are no charges, if fully satisfied in his own conscience that God has not called him to the ministry, or if he has satisfactory evidence of his inability to serve the Church with acceptance, may report these facts at a stated meeting of Presbytery. At the next stated meeting, if after full deliberation the Presbytery shall concur with him in judgment, it may divest him of his office without censure.”

TE [name omitted] reported the facts in September 2020. The demitting should be recorded in January 2021. However, it was not. MAP erred. Map will concur with him (TE [name omitted]) at the September 2021 meeting to correct the record.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (BCO 46-8) – TE that demitted did not have membership assigned to a local church.

Response: TE [name omitted] reported the facts in September 2020. The demitting should be recorded in January 2021. However, it was not. MAP erred. MAP will concur with him ([name omitted]) at the September 2021 meeting to correct the record and will record which church his membership was assigned to.

Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (BCO 13-6) – TE from another denomination was received without requisite examination in Christian experience and views.

Response: MAP would ask RPR for clarification. Pages 4 and 5 of the September 15, 2020, minutes are extracted below. There was not a TE from another denomination received.

EXTRACT:

1. Ordination

- [name omitted] – Assistant Pastor, [church name omitted]

Mr. [name omitted]

Mr. [name omitted] having sustained his examination for licensure at the January 2018 stated meeting of the Metro Atlanta Presbytery. The credentials committee confirmed the following regarding Mr. [name omitted]:

- confirmation of his candidacy as a candidate under care of MAP,
- received testimonials pertaining to his internship within MAP,
- approval of his completion of his MAP internship,
- acknowledgement of his college and seminary training,
- approval of theological thesis and exegetical study,

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The court examined Mr. [name omitted] on the following:

- his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- his inner sense of God's calling on his life to ministry,
- Bible content,
- theology,
- the Sacraments,
- church history and the history of the Presbyterian Church in America,
- the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church
- Mr. [name omitted]'s expressed differences with the WCF (documented in Appendix D) were judged by the Court as more than semantic but not out of accord. MSP
- the court approved the sermon preached in Mr. [name omitted]'s licensure exam in lieu of an ordination sermon
- MSP to sustain His examination in each of these areas.
- MSP to receive the Credentials committee certification of Mr. [name omitted]'s successful completion of Metro Atlanta Presbytery's Plan of Internship.
- MSP to accept Mr. [name omitted]'s Master of Divinity degree from Metro Atlanta Seminary in lieu of an examination in the original languages.
- MSP to approve Mr. [name omitted]'s theological paper on a topic assigned by and found acceptable by the Credentials Committee.
- MSP to approve Mr. [name omitted]'s exegesis using the original languages on a text assigned by the Credentials Committee which found it acceptable.
- MSP to approve Mr. [name omitted]'s examination as a whole.
- MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]'s call to be in order. The call was placed in Mr. [name omitted]'s hands and was accepted and received by him. (Appendix E)

- MSP to approve a commission to ordain and install Mr. [name omitted] on October 4, 2020, at [church name omitted]. The commission is to consist of:

Teaching Elders:	Ruling Elders:
[name omitted] (Moderator)	[name omitted]
[name omitted]	[name omitted]

[name omitted] signed the MAP ministerial obligation.

2. Transfer into MAP

- [name omitted] – Without Call from Chicago Metro Presbytery
- [name omitted] – Assistant Pastor [church name omitted]
- [name omitted] – Senior Pastor [church name omitted]
- [name omitted] – Assistant Pastor [church name omitted]
- [name omitted] – Senior Pastor, [church name omitted]

TE [name omitted]: from The Chicago Metro Presbytery to Without Call in MAP

- MSP to accept Mr. [name omitted] as a transfer from The Metro Chicago Presbytery upon confirmation of his release from said Presbytery.
- Mr. [name omitted] expressed differences with the WCF (documented in Appendix D) were judged by the Court as more than semantic but not out of accord. MSP
- MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s transfer to be in order.
- MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s transfer and request to be in order.
- Mr. [name omitted] signed the Metro Atlanta Presbytery *Book of ministerial obligation*.
- MSP to approve Mr. [name omitted]’s transfer to MAP.

TE [name omitted]: from Northern Illinois Presbytery to Assistant Pastor, [church name omitted]

- MSP to accept Mr. [name omitted] as a transfer from Northern Illinois Presbytery upon confirmation of his release from said Presbytery.
- TE [name omitted] was examined by the Committee on his Christian experience and his views on theology, the Sacraments and church government and was recommended by them to the court. Presbytery had the opportunity to examine him in all the areas according to *BCO* 13-6.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- TE [name omitted] expressed differences with the WCF (documented in Appendix D) were judged by the Court as more than semantic but not out of accord. MSP
- MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s call to be in order. The call was placed in Mr. [name omitted]’s hands and was accepted and received by him. (Copy of call in Appendix E)
- MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s transfer and request to be in order.
- Mr. [name omitted] signed the Metro Atlanta Presbytery *Book of ministerial obligation*.
- MSP to approve a commission to install Mr. [name omitted] on September 20, 2020 at [church name omitted]. The commission is to consist of:

Teaching Elders:	Ruling Elders:
[name omitted] (moderator)	[name omitted]
[name omitted]	[name omitted]

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**
Exception: Jan 28, 2020 (BCO 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination (see also BCO 21-4).
Response: It is unclear what RPR is taking an exception to here. “Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.”

We are attaching the full transcript below from the January 28th meeting:

Transfer into MAP - [name omitted] – [church name omitted]

TE [name omitted]: from The Presbytery of the East of the EPC to [church name omitted]

MSP to accept Mr. [name omitted] as a transfer from The Presbytery of the East of the EPC upon confirmation of his release from said Presbytery.

TE [name omitted] was examined by the Committee on his Christian experience and his views on theology, the Sacraments and church government and was recommended by them to the court. Presbytery had the opportunity to examine him in all the areas according to BCO 13-6.

TE [name omitted] expressed differences with the WCF (documented in Appendix D) were judged by the Court as more than semantic but not out of accord. MSP

MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s call to be in order. The call was placed in Mr. [name omitted]’s hands and was accepted and received by him. (Copy of call in Appendix E)

MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s transfer and request to be in order. Mr. [name omitted] signed the Metro Atlanta Presbytery Book of ministerial obligation.

MSP to approve a commission to install Mr. [name omitted] on April 19, 2020, at [church name omitted]. The commission is to consist of:

Teaching Elders:	Ruling Elders:
[name omitted] (Moderator)	[name omitted]
[name omitted]	[name omitted]
[name omitted]	

Perhaps RPR is alluding to BCO 21-4 “*If applicants come from other denominations, the Presbytery shall examine them thoroughly in knowledge and views as required by BCO 21-4 and require them to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination. Ordained ministers from other denominations being considered by Presbyteries for reception may come under the extraordinary provisions set forth in BCO 21-4. Presbyteries shall also require ordained ministers coming from other denominations to state the specific instances in which they may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions, which differences the court shall judge in accordance with BCO 21-4 (see BCO 21- 4.)*”

MAP believes that requirement was met with the Credentials Committee, his time on the floor and his installation. Please clarify.

Rationale: Minutes do not indicate the transfer candidate was examined in both knowledge and views, as well as the areas of Greek and Hebrew languages, church history, and the history of the PCA, as required by BCO 21-4.

44. That the Minutes of **Metropolitan New York** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Mar 9, 2021; Nov 9, 2021; Dec 27, 2020 Commission Minutes and May 23, 2021 Commission Minutes.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b, 40-3) – No record of review of church Sessions.

Exception: Mar 9, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s own words.

Exception: Mar 9, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded; no record of examination on Christian experience.

Exception: Dec 27, 2020 (*BCO* 21-6) – Presiding minister did not propose questions to the Session as required by *BCO* 21-6.

Exception: May 11, 2021 (*BCO* 23-1) – Presbytery must dissolve the call before a minister leaves the field or take some other action if he leaves the field prior to Presbytery dissolving the call other than retroactively dissolving the call.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 38-2) – Presbytery did not consider a minister’s request to be divested of office at the subsequent stated meeting as required by *BCO* 38-2.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded. Minutes do not record that the candidate preached before presbytery, and minutes do not record a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote to approve preaching before a committee.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 23-1) – Presbytery must dissolve the call before a minister leaves the field or take some other action if he leaves the field prior to Presbytery dissolving the call.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregation having approved the dissolution of call of the former pastor.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 22-5) – Temporary pastoral relation established without Presbytery’s approval. [name omitted], on Presbytery’s role as honorably retired, began serving as interim pastor of [church name omitted] in September 2021 without the establishment of a stated supply relationship approved by Presbytery.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 8-7, 20-1) – Presbytery recorded a TE’s call to an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America without approving the call, without receiving assurance that he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church, and without making “a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry.”

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; 5-9; 13-9.f) – Presbytery established a new particular church without first establishing a temporary government, without receiving either a petition or from members of the proposed church or a request for division from an existing church, without interviewing nominated ruling elders, without forming an organizing commission, and without holding a service of organization.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 5-9, 13-9.f) – Presbytery transferred members to a different church without their consent or request.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 5-9, 24-1) – Presbytery assigned ruling elders to a church without the consent of the congregation.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 5-9, 20-2) – Presbytery assigned teaching elders to a church without the consent of the congregation and without receiving a call.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 5-9) – Presbytery did not approve the particularization of [church name omitted] prior to organization of the church and following petition by congregation.

Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (*BCO* 15-1) – Presbytery’s commission exceeded the powers delegated to it.

Exception: Nov 9, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s own words.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Jun 18, 2019 (*BCO* 13-11) – Minutes of executive session not included (see also *BCO* 14-6c; 40-1; and *RAO* 16-3e.6).

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. Presbytery went into executive session, but apparently no minutes were recorded because no action was taken as noted in the called stated meeting minutes. In the future, executive session minutes will be kept more accurately and included in the end of the year omnibus.

Exception: Jan 9, 2018 (*BCO* 5-3, 13-9) – Presbytery received as information a report that a church “has become a mission church.” No record of presbytery designating its status, nor to assume jurisdiction per *BCO* 13-9, in order to establish a temporary system of government per *BCO* 5-3.

Response: GA is correct that there was no record of a provisional session being approved by the congregation. We apologize and will correct our practice next time. The church has since dissolved and no longer exists, thus no further action can be taken.

Rationale: Presbytery reports the church no longer exists. If the church no longer exists, then the presbytery has on-going responsibility to see the members of the former church are cared for (*BCO* 5-2.c, 13-10).

New Response: GA is correct in that presbytery had a responsibility to see that the members of the former church were cared for. The members of the church were invited to join with [church name omitted] or other churches. Their pastor TE [name omitted] worked

with the members to help them find places of worship. Regretfully, the commission did not record this information in its minutes. In the future, presbytery endeavors for commissions to do a better job in recording their actions in minutes.

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: General 2019 (BCO 13-9b) – No record of review of church Sessions found in presbytery minutes.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. The committee that has this responsibility has struggled in the past few years to complete these tasks. We are working on rectifying this situation.

Rationale: As of 2021 minutes, there is still no record of review of church Session found in Presbytery minutes.

Exception: Jan 8, 2019 (BCO 18-3) – No record that the candidate was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. Presbytery is working with our LDT committee to remind them of the *BCO* requirement of candidate ordination and floor examination.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Jan 8, 2019 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregation having approved the dissolution of call of the former pastor.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct its record and promises to be more careful in the future.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: May 14, 2019 (BCO 18-3) – No record that the candidate was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. Presbytery is working with our LDT committee to remind them of the *BCO* requirement of candidate ordination.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if **possible**, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Sep 17, 2019 (*BCO* 18-3) – No record that the candidate was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. Presbytery is working with our LDT committee to remind them of the *BCO* requirement of candidate ordination.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Jan 7, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes ('full and accurate record').

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and in the future will properly record a complaint in the minutes. The ROC has the complaint listed with the judicial commission that was formed.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Jan 7, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of a congregation meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and in the future will properly record the action by noting the session or congregation approval of the dissolution in the minutes.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with

the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Nov 20, 2020 (BCO 20-1) – No record of approval of new call to TE laboring out of bounds.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Nov 20, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct its record. Presbytery promises to be more careful in the future.

Rationale: when GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Nov 20, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – No record of a session meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct its record. Presbytery promises to be more careful in the future

Rationale: when GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Nov 5, 2016 (BCO 21-4.b) Candidate not “asked to indicate whether he has changed his previous views concerning any points in the *Confession of Faith*, *Catechisms*, and *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

45. That the Minutes of the **Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley: *Adopted***

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Aug 3, 2021; Nov 2, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **May 4, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Feb 2, 2021; May 4, 2021 (RONR 9:34) – A commission conducted business by email, which does not constitute a deliberative assembly.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Aug 6, 2019 (BCO 21-10) – Constitutional questions for assistant pastor installation propounded to the congregation rather than to the Session.

Response: We acknowledge that presbytery did not pick up on the error that RPR correctly cites. We regret the error and promise to remind presbyters of the appropriate *BCO* rules governing ordination and installation procedures

Exception: Aug 6, 2019 (BCO 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

Response: PMV would report that the error regarding the incomplete transfer exam from another (NAPARC) denomination was a clerical recording error which omitted the fact that he was examined in both “knowledge and views.” Both the Credentials Chairman who did the exam as well as the man examined remember the full examination required by *BCO* 13-6, 21-4 being completed. The Stated Clerk regrets the error and the confusion caused. He will correct the minutes with this report

Exception: Nov 5, 2019 (BCO 21-4.f) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

Response: RPR correctly cites the omission of the required statement concerning the candidates “statement of difference” (*BCO* 21-4f.). PMV regrets that the minutes do not reflect that we did in fact ask and received the affirmation that TE [name omitted] did not hold any difference with the Standards. Again, the Stated Clerk regrets the error and will correct the minutes with this report.

46. That the Minutes of **Missouri** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 19, 2021; Apr 20, 2021; Jul 20, 2021; Oct 19, 2021; Dec 11, 2021; Dec 11, 2021 ES.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**

Exception: Jan 21, 2020 (BCO 18-3) – Incomplete record of exam – candidates coming under care w/o record of examination in experiential religion and sense of call.

Response: We are very sorry for this oversight in record keeping. It is our practice to examine each candidate coming under care in experiential religion and sense of call. However, that fact of the examination was not recorded in minutes. We have amended these minutes to explicitly state this examination as well as changed our practice in record keeping to ensure that the examination of experiential religion and sense of call is explicitly recorded in future minutes.

Exception: Jan 21, 2020 (BCO 19-2.a) – Incomplete record of exam – no record of examination in experiential religion and sense of call for licentiate.

Response: We are very sorry for this oversight in record keeping. It is our practice to examine each candidate coming for licensure in experiential religion and sense of call. However, that fact of the examination was not recorded in minutes. We have amended these minutes to explicitly state this examination as well as changed our practice in record keeping to ensure that the examination of experiential religion and sense of call is explicitly recorded in future minutes.

Exception: Jul 21, 2020 (BCO 18-3) – Incomplete record of exam – candidates coming under care w/o record of examination in experiential religion and sense of call.

Response: We are very sorry for this oversight in record keeping. It is our practice to examine each candidate coming under care in experiential religion and sense of call. However, that fact of the examination was not recorded in minutes. We have amended these minutes to explicitly state this examination as well as changed our practice in record keeping to ensure that the examination of experiential religion and sense of call is explicitly recorded in future minutes

Exception: Oct 20, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Candidates exceptions not recorded (states that they had exceptions, yet no record of such differences is included).

Response: We are very sorry for this oversight in record keeping. Each man’s stated differences were presented to the body in their own words and voted on, however the text never made it into the minutes. We have amended these minutes to include their stated differences.

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Jan 21, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.f; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Explanations not recorded in candidate’s own words – two candidates describe their exceptions in precisely the same words (need clarification).

Response: We apologize for this error, which was simply an error in copying/pasting the wrong exceptions for the wrong man, which resulted in the duplication. We have the correct exceptions for each man, which were presented to the body and prosecuted. This was an error in the creation of the minutes. We have amended our minutes to reflect each man’s correct exceptions.

Rationale: The corrected minutes including the candidate’s stated differences should be submitted for review.

- 47. That the Minutes of Nashville Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 26, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Apr 13, 2021; Jun 25, 2021; Aug 31, 2021; Nov 9, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
 - Exception: Feb 8, 2021; Aug 10, 2021** (*BCO* 18-7) – No reasons given for removing candidates from rolls.
 - Exception: Feb 8, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – Dissolution of pastoral relations with no reference to congregational meeting or appearance of representatives.
 - Exception: Apr 13, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of Session meeting to dissolve pastoral relation.
 - Exception: Apr 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.
 - Exception: Jun 25, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – No record of notice for a called meeting; purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
 - Exception: Aug 31, 2021; Sep 21, 2021; Dec 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for Called Meeting not in order; no record of 10-day notice.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory.

Exception: Apr 9, 2019; Jun 11, 2019; Aug 13, 2019 (BCO 13-6) – Missing examinations on sacraments and church government for transfer.

Response: Nashville Presbytery agrees with the exception. Transferring TEs are in fact examined by our presbytery with regards to the sacraments and church government as part of their transfer exam, but the minutes cited above do not record the prescribed examination. This is an oversight. We adjusted our recording in 2020 to bring our minutes into compliance.

Exception: Apr 9, 2019 (BCO 21-4) – Missing PCA History exams.

Response: Nashville Presbytery agrees with the exception. Candidates for ordination to the gospel ministry are in fact examined by our presbytery with regards to PCA history as a part of their church history exam, but the minutes cited above do not record the prescribed examination. We adjusted our recording in 2020 to bring our minutes into compliance

Exception: Feb 11, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – Congregational vote not recorded and [church name omitted] not cited to appear before presbytery.

Response: Nashville Presbytery agrees with the exception. The dissolution of the call of the assistant pastor was approved by the Session and the church documents showing the needed approval for the dissolution were reviewed by our committee before recommending dissolution of the pastoral relationship. We will be more careful in the future to make sure the churches are cited to appear, and that the citation is entered in the body of our minutes.

Exception: Nov 10, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – Congregational votes not recorded for TE [name omitted] or TE [name omitted].

Response: We agree with the exception. For each of the churches noted in the exception, the dissolution was approved by the Session (for assistant pastors) or congregation (for associate pastors or pastors), and the church documents showing the needed approvals for the dissolution were reviewed by our committee before recommending dissolution of the pastoral relationship to presbytery. The body of our minutes does not record congregational votes or session action for any of the pastoral relationships that were dissolved. We have adjusted our recording to bring our minutes into compliance.

Exception: Nov 10, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – Churches not cited to appear before presbytery ([church names omitted] churches).

Response: Presbytery agrees with this exception and will make sure we ask churches to appear in the context of 23-1 and record that action in our minutes. For each of the churches noted in the exception, the dissolution was approved by the Session (for assistant pastors) or congregation (for associate pastors or pastors), and the church documents showing the needed approvals for the dissolution were recorded in the minutes. We will be more careful in the future to make sure the churches are cited to appear, and that the citation is entered in the body of our minutes.

Exception: Nov 10, 2020 (*BCO* 13-10) – None of *BCO* 13-10 is recorded as having been followed.

Response: Nashville Presbytery agrees with this exception and will make sure we handle *BCO* 13-10 procedures in accord with the constitution in the future. This was a challenging situation where the church was dissolved after the planting pastor's catastrophic and disabling accident. As a church plant, things were handled more informally than was required. There were follow-up meetings for the congregation, and all the members were contacted by the provisional Session. The Session provided members with information concerning churches to which the members could transfer. There were a relatively small number of members, and this process was handled informally by the provisional Session with oversight by the Presbytery's Church Planting Committee. We will be more careful in the future to make sure the provisions of *BCO* 13-10 are followed when a member church is dissolved.

48. That the Minutes of **New Jersey** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 20, 2021; May 15, 2021; Sep 18, 2021; Nov 20, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
 - d. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Mar 16, 2019 (*BCO* 38-2) – No record of prior meeting report of desire to demit before vote by the Presbytery.
Response: New Jersey Presbytery acknowledges that it did not strictly follow the procedure outlined in *BCO* 38-2 regarding a minister indicating his desire to demit the ministry. However, the

unusual nature of this case necessitated our action after a long and ongoing discussion with the minister who had been living out of the area for several years.

He became a minister without call on September 21, 2013 and moved to another state with his family. NJ Presbytery attempted to transfer the minister to the Presbytery into whose geographical bounds he had moved, but they refused because he did not have a call in that area. He was working in secular employment in order to support his family. Despite our appeals to that Presbytery, they continued to refuse to receive him without a call. Therefore, he remained under our care and jurisdiction.

Throughout the following years, the ministerial Committee remained in contact with the minister reminding him of the requirements of *BCO* 13-2 and 34-10. In November 2017, the minister informed the Presbytery of the possibility of being received into the ARP as he was currently assisting the pastor of a small church near his home. The Presbytery agreed to allow him to remain on our rolls so that he could pursue that call and have his credentials transferred to the ARP. The Presbytery again agreed to extend that time in May 2018.

In December 2018, the minister informed the Chairman of the ministerial Committee via email that “the time has come for me to resign my ministerial credentials.” A call in the ARP was no longer an option. In March 2019, the Presbytery agreed that it was long overdue to act on these matters and moved to accede to his request to demit the ministry according to *BCO* 38-2.

49. That the Minutes of **New River** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Mar 6, 2021; Nov 6, 2021**.
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
Exception: Aug 7, 2021; Nov 6, 2021 (*BCO* 46-6) – Teaching Elder did not remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery until received by the other.
Exception: Aug 7, 2021 (*BCO* 23-1) – There is no record that presbytery received report that the congregation concurred with the dissolution of the pastoral relation.
Exception: Aug 7, 2021 (*RAO* 16-3.e.5 *BCO* 19-2.d) – Incomplete record for a licensure exam.

Exception: Nov 6, 2021 (*BCO* 13-2) – No record of TE laboring out of bounds with concurrence of Presbytery within whose bounds he labors.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Aug 3, 2019 (*BCO* 21-5, 6, 7) – No record that ordination and installation steps were completed (missing sub-attachment).

Response: The Ordination Commission’s Minutes reference that there was, “MSC to approve [name omitted] to deliver the sermon, along with the entire ordination and installation service of [name omitted] (See attachment).” The attachment was not sent to RPR, though we recognize that it should have been. The attachment was a copy and pasted print out of *BCO* 21-5, 6, & 7, showing that the ordination and installation steps were followed, including the questions to the candidate, the congregation, and the pronouncement. We will include these steps in the body of future Installation Commission Reports.

Exception: Nov 2, 2019 (*BCO* 21-7) – Record does not show that the commission conducted the laying on of hands, extended the right hand of fellowship, or made the pronouncement.

Response: Attachment B of November’s Minutes show that “TE [name omitted] to lead the service and give the charge to the Rev. [name omitted] per *BCO* 21-7 from 2 Timothy 4:1-6.” In recording that TE [name omitted] gave the charge per *BCO* 21-7 we intended to show that all of 21-7 was followed, including the laying on of hands, extending the right hand of fellowship, and making the pronouncement. All of these things were done in accordance with *BCO* 21-7, but in the future we will list each component separately in the minutes.

50. That the Minutes of **New York State** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 27, 2021; May 22, 2021; Sep 17-18, 2021; Sep 18-19, 2021.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Directory.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Jun 15, 2019 (*BCO* 19-3) – No record of candidate answering questions for licensure.

Response: New York State Presbytery acknowledges the exception and offers the following response. While there was no record of the candidate answering questions for licensure, the candidate, [name omitted] did answer the questions affirmatively. *BCO* 19-3 was

followed, though it was not recorded in the minutes. The moderator also prayed for Mr. [name omitted] and addressed him with the words from *BCO* 19-4. This is recorded on the checklist for the floor examination that was used by the former chairman of the committee during his floor exam. We apologize for the oversight and will seek to accurately reflect all parts of our licensure exams in our minutes.

Exception: Oct 4-5, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4.b) – Presbytery accepted the licensure exam by another presbytery as fulfilling the requirements for ordination, nor a record of sermon, exegesis paper.

Response: The New York State Presbytery acknowledges the exception and offers the following response. The Leadership Committee was provided the licensure examinations from the Pittsburgh Presbytery for TE [name omitted]. The committee was satisfied with his answers to the questions on the exams. While we discussed Doctrine, Church Government, and the Scriptures in our Committee meeting, we failed to have a portion of time allotted for each of these areas on the floor during his examination.

However, there was a time when the floor was opened for questions from any area after the Church History and Sacraments portions of the examination were arrested.

It is generally our practice to do licensure and ordination exams at separate meetings. *BCO* 21-4.b states “If the Presbytery previously approved all parts of the licensure examination, it need not re-examine the intern in those area at this time.” Since we did not examine the candidate for licensure, we acknowledge our error.

Regarding the sermon, the candidate preached a sermon as well as submitted a manuscript of the sermon. The text was Philippians 1:3-11 and its title was “Four Words of Encouragement from Paul, a Loving Pastor.” We apologize for not recording that in our record.

Regarding the exegesis paper, TE [name omitted] submitted an exegesis paper which was accepted by the Leadership Committee which is still on record with us, along with a theology paper which was also accepted. This is recorded on the checklist for the floor examination that was used by the former chairman of the committee during his floor exam. It was reported on the floor of presbytery that the candidate submitted his exegetical paper and that it was approved. This was accidentally omitted from the minutes

Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9.h) – Commission appointed to install pastor and ordain and install ruling elder of a mission that has petitioned to be organized as a particular church, but not empowered to organize it.

Response: New York State Presbytery acknowledges the exception. We did err in not explicitly referring to the commission appointed to install pastor and ordain and install ruling elder as an organizing commission appointed to install pastor and ordain and install elder, per *BCO* 5-9.h. We apologize for the oversight.

51. That the Minutes of **North Florida** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Feb 11, 2021; May 13, 2021; Aug 12, 2021; Nov 4, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: May 13, 2021 (*BCO* 19-2.d) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: May 9, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.E.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (*PCA* history).

Response: Presbytery agrees with this exception. The candidate was examined in both church history and the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, but the record did not specifically state the inclusion of *PCA* history in the history exam. The minutes will be corrected to explicitly state the inclusion of *PCA* history in the candidate’s ordination exam. We will be more careful in the future.

Exception: Aug 13, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregation vote to dissolve relationship with pastor.

Response: Presbytery respectfully disagrees with this exception. The minutes record that the dissolution of two pastoral relationships were approved by the presbytery at the Aug. 13, 2020 meeting. The first was a solo pastor concerning whom the record states “that the congregation, at a duly constituted meeting, voted to receive his resignation.” The second was an assistant pastor who resigned to accept a call at another *PCA* congregation. Concerning this assistant pastor, the record states “that the session of [church name] voted to receive [assistant pastor’s name] resignation.”

Since an assistant pastor is called by the session (*BCO* 22-3), and “the relationship of the assistant pastor to the church is determined by the Session” (*BCO* 22-4), the requirement of *BCO* 23-1, which states that “whether the minister or the church initiates proceedings for a dissolution of the relation, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation called and conducted in the same manner as the call of the pastor,” does not apply to an assistant pastor since he is called by the session, not the congregation.

52. That the Minutes of **North Texas** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Nov 5-6, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: May 7-8, 2021; Aug 13-14, 2021 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.
Exception: Aug 13-14, 2021 (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

d. That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:
Exception: May 3-4, 2019 (BCO 15-1) – No record of establishment of a commission for installation of a minister, nor are minutes of said commission entered in Presbytery minutes.

Response: See 1 and 2 below

1. This exception involves a matter occurring prior to the term of the current Stated Clerk, but my correspondence with the Assistant to the Stated Clerk of the PCA leads us (North Texas Presbytery) to the conclusion that no installation by North Texas Presbytery is required for an RUF Area Coordinator. Please see the email from Rev. Bob Hornick below.

Steve,

Sorry for the mix-up on the meeting of North Texas Presbytery.

In response to your question regarding the installation of TEs. I checked with Dr. Taylor concerning your question. He is of the opinion as am I, that the BCO only requires Pastors, Assistant & Associate Pastors to be installed by their presbyteries. I would acknowledge that many of our presbyteries would add Organizing Pastors (Church Planters) and RUF Campus ministers as well. I think a good argument can be made that any TE serving in a capacity that is under the ecclesiastical authority of presbytery should be installed in that position (RUF Campus ministers, etc.). Out of Bounds calls approved by presbytery organizations that do not operate under the ecclesiastical oversight of presbytery are not, ordinarily installed by their presbytery. This would include seminary and college professors, Military Chaplains, TEs called by a PCA committee or agency, etc. (When I spoke to Dr. Taylor about this, he noted that he was not installed as Stated Clerk of the GA or as a RTS professor.)

It is not unusual for PCA presbyteries to conduct a type of commissioning service for Military Chaplains and missionaries but, in my opinion, it is not required by the BCO.

In regards to the termination of an out of bounds call, presbytery simply notes the change in its minutes. (In my opinion, since PCA committees are not under the ecclesiastical authority of a presbytery they are considered to be an out of bounds call.)

I hope this helps. Please do not hesitate to contact if you would like further clarification.

Blessings,

Rev. Bob Hornick,

Assistant to the Stated Clerk

Presbyterian Church in America

1700 North Brown Road, Suite 105

Lawrenceville, GA 30043-8143

Phone: 678-825-1000

Fax: 678-825-1001

2. We have been in conversation with RUF Area Coordinator [name omitted] and also Stated Clerk [name omitted] and we have expressed that the *BCO* does not provide clear direction on the calling, hiring, installation, oversight, and employment relationships involving PCA Committee TE personnel and individual presbyteries. We have been informed that this matter is being discussed and worked out by the PCA Stated Clerk and the various PCA Committee Coordinators. We look forward to the results of these discussions and the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the Presbyteries and Committees in concert with *BCO* direction in these matters.

53. That the Minutes of **Northern California** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 7, 2021; Oct 1, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Standing Rules; Feb 5, 2021; Nov 12, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: May 3, 2019 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Only one stated difference out of two appears to be judged by Presbytery.
Response: Both stated differences were judged by the Presbytery, but the Presbytery’s judgment was conflated into a single response. We will list each stated difference and judgment individually in the future
Exception: Jun 18, 2020 (BCO 13-12) – Call of meeting not in order (no record of 10-day notice given or explicit purpose listed).
Response: The sole purpose of the meeting was to approve [church name omitted]’s call of [name omitted] as pastor and to empower the

Moderator to appoint a commission regarding his installation. We attach a copy of the June 8, 2020 email to the presbytery by which the 10 day notice requirement was met. In the future, for any called meetings we will be more diligent to make the purpose of the meeting evident and to provide documentation of compliance with the notice requirement.

Exception: Oct 2, 2020 (BCO 21-7) – In assistant pastor ordination commission minutes, chairman propounded questions to the congregation instead of the Session.

Response: This was an error by the commission’s chair. We will work to ensure such error is not repeated. However, as the members of the Session answered the questions along with the rest of the congregation, we do not believe further action is necessary at this time.

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-9b) – No record of Presbytery reviewing Session minutes.

Response: The Presbytery had a system for the inspection of minutes outside of the Stated Meeting times in place, but neglected to include record of the oversight of this system in the minutes. We will be more diligent in the future in recording such work.

Rationale: While the presbytery committed to be more diligent in the future, the minutes of 2021 include an incomplete record of inspection of Session minutes (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1).

54. That the Minutes of **Northern Illinois** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 9, 2021; Jan 9, 2021 ES; Sep 11, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: May 11, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.
Exception: Dec 15, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated or recorded.
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: May 26, 2020 (BCO 13-12) – 10 Day notice for called meeting not given.

Response: “We thank the Review of Presbytery Records Committee for its diligence in helping us keep our presbytery records in line with

the *Book of Church Order*. We have discovered the exception (10 day notice for called meeting not given). Though the minutes do not reflect the day the called meeting notice was sent to the presbytery, that meeting was actually called 13 days before the meeting, on May 13th. We have corrected the records to reflect the date the meeting was called. We will be more careful in the future to make sure the date of calling a called meeting is properly recorded

Exception: May 26, 2020 (*BCO* 19-2. C; 20-12) – No record of “floor exams.

Response: We are thankful for the assistance the Review of Presbytery Records committee gives us in recording our meeting minutes properly. Licentiate [name omitted] appeared before the presbytery in person on May 26, 2020 to undergo examination for ordination in order to accept the call of presbytery to plant a PCA congregation in Springfield, Illinois. All of the appropriate examinations reflected in the meeting minutes took place on the floor of presbytery and were conducted after the Presbytery Credentials Committee examined him previous to this called meeting. We will be more careful to specify such a situation in future minutes of meetings.

55. That the Minutes of **Northern New England** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 6, 2021; May 15, 2021; Oct 16, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
 - d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**
56. That the Minutes of **Northwest Georgia** Presbytery: *Adopted*
 [Editorial note: see 56.e below – *not adopted by Assembly.*]
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 16, 2021; Apr 13, 2021; Aug 21, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Apr 13, 2021 (*BCO* 43-8) – If a complaint is properly filed, it shall be heard by the Presbytery. A complaint may not be denied without a hearing except on narrow administrative grounds.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Jan 19, 2019 (*BCO* 15-3) – Written report of judicial commission not included in the record.
Response: Presbytery acknowledges the error and has amended the minutes to include the report and the minutes of the judicial commission

Exception: Jan 19, 2019 (*BCO* 15-1) – Minutes of the judicial commission were not included in the record.

Response: Presbytery erred in not recording the reason some parts of the examination were not recorded. The said licentiate had been previously ordained as a PCA minister and received in the former “North Georgia Presbytery.” The licentiate took no exceptions to the Westminster Standards. He was received under the extraordinary clause and not examined further in basic knowledge of biblical doctrine, or knowledge of Bible content (*BCO* 19-2).

Exception: Apr 2, 2019 (*BCO* 19-2) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. Some parts omitted without explanation.

Response: Presbytery erred in not recording the reason some parts of the examination were not recorded. The said licentiate had been previously ordained as a PCA minister and received in the former “North Georgia Presbytery.” The licentiate took no exceptions to the Westminster Standards. He was received under the extraordinary clause and not examined further in basic knowledge of biblical doctrine, or knowledge of Bible content (*BCO* 19-2).

Exception: Aug 17, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Response: The reason for omission is recorded in the minutes. The said ordination candidate was received under the extraordinary clause by a unanimous vote, as the man had been previously a minister in both the OPC and PCA (*BCO* 21-4.c.(4)).

Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (*BCO* 15-1) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes (Appendix J).

Response: Presbytery erred in failing to record these minutes. The Jan 19, 2020 minutes were amended to include the commission minutes

Exception: Jan 27, 2018; Apr 3, 2018; Aug 18, 2018 (*RAO* 16.3.e.7) – No executive minutes provided.

Response: No actions were taken in executive session. It was a private discussion, and all actions were voted on in open session.

Rationale: Though no official actions were taken in executive session, minutes still need to be taken and submitted to General Assembly.

New Response: No actions were taken in executive session. Thereby, due to the inexperience of the clerk, no minutes were recorded. Presbytery apologizes for the failure in record keeping and will exercise greater diligence in the future.

Exception: Jan 27, 2018 (*BCO* 13-11, 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting to dissolve relationship with pastor.

Response: This record was inadvertently left out. The congregation voted on 1/21/18 to receive the resignation of said teaching elder and thereby dissolve the pastoral relationship.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to take action by amending minutes to record the congregational meeting in question.

New Response: Presbytery acknowledges the error of failing to record the congregational meeting. Presbytery has amended the minutes to make a record of the dissolution of the relationship

Exception: General (BCO 8-6) – TE listed as evangelist but no record of his commission being renewed.

Response: This is an error of Presbytery, which we will rectify by renewing his status.

Rationale: Presbytery must take and record action to renew status

New Response: Presbytery acknowledges the failure to renew the status of said TE designated Evangelist. However, the TE in question has now been enrolled in the church triumphant.

- e. **BCO 40-5 report referred to CRPR on decision of the SJC, Case No. 2021-02:** [Editorial note: See Journal, p. 25 and p. 21 for Assembly's action on VI. 56.e.]

The CRPR recommends that the 49th General Assembly:

- a. Find that the February 14, 2021, letter from RE [name omitted] et al. is a “credible report” of “an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (*BCO 40-5*): specifically, there is evidence that (1) the calls to the three candidates were constitutionally deficient, so implementing them was unconstitutional, and (2) the Presbytery acted improperly in approving the calls and installing the three candidates;
- b. Cite the Northwest Georgia Presbytery to appear, per *BCO 40-5*, before the PCA’s Standing Judicial Commission which the 49th GA constitutes its commission to adjudicate this matter, by representative or in writing, at the SJC’s fall stated meeting, to “show what the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question,” following the Operating Manual for the SJC, particularly chapter 15; and
- c. Direct the RPR Officers to appoint one or more representatives of the GA and Report (*OMSJC 15.2*) to present this case to the SJC.

57. That the Minutes of **Ohio** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 1, 2021; Oct 1-2, 2021; Dec 13, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Feb 6, 2021.**

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
 - Exception: May 4, 2019 (BCO 13-6)** – A PCA TE was given a BCO 13-6 transfer exam, but Minutes indicate he was only examined on his views in theology, Sacraments and church government *in committee*. Minutes record *the Presbytery* only examined him in Christian experience.
Response: The Ohio Presbytery agrees with this exception and has corrected the Minutes of May 4, 2019, to indicate that the TE transferring into the Presbytery “was examined in Christian Experience and his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government pursuant to BCO 13-6.” The Ohio Presbytery promises to be more careful with its records in the future.
 - Exception: Oct 3, 2020 (BCO 12-7; 13-9.b)** – Record does not indicate that all 2019 Session records were reviewed by Presbytery in 2020.
Response: The Ohio Presbytery agrees with this exception and has now reviewed the Session Minutes from 2019. The Ohio Presbytery promises to be more careful in reviewing records in the future.

- 58. That the Minutes of **Ohio Valley** Presbytery: *54-0-0*
 - a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 30, 2021; May 18, 2021; Jul 31, 2021; Oct 19, 2021 ES; Oct 19, 2021; Nov 5, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
 - d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

- 59. That the Minutes of **Pacific** Presbytery: *Adopted*
 - a. Be approved without exceptions: **Aug 7, 2021; Dec 1, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Mar 2, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: May 4, 2021 (BCO 19-2.d) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
Exception: Oct 5, 2021 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
 - Exception: May 1, 2018 [p. 32] (BCO 46-8)** – Divested TE not assigned to membership in a particular church.
Response: “We acknowledge and apologize for this error and will attempt follow up with both former TE [name omitted] and the [name omitted] Session to see where he and his wife are worshipping

currently. If we discover that they are not at a PCA church or another evangelical church, we will make every effort to direct them to one. Further, we commit ourselves, by God’s grace, to avoiding this error in the future.”

Rationale: The Presbytery needs to accomplish the assignment of the divested TE and report to the Assembly.

New Response: “We again acknowledge and apologize for our error, and we have passed a motion at our October 5, 2021 Stated Meeting, assigning former TE [name omitted] to the membership of a particular church, [church name omitted], in San Marino, CA, per *BCO* 46-8.”

Exception: Oct 6, 2018 [p.7] (BCO 13-10) – Disposition of remaining members of dissolved church left unresolved.

Response: “We acknowledge and apologize for this error, and the stated clerk has already secured an accurate roll of the remaining members of [name omitted] Presbyterian Church, Torrance, CA, at the time of its dissolution on July 1, 2018. We will seek to determine if they have joined other churches, and how many, if any, have not done so. Further, if necessary, the stated clerk shall issue letters of dismissal to those individuals. We commit ourselves, by God’s grace, to avoiding this error in the future.

Rationale: The Presbytery needs to accomplish the assignment of the remaining members and report to the Assembly.

New Response: “Stated Clerk TE Jerrard Heard has granted letters of dismissal to all individuals remaining at [church name omitted] at the time of its dissolution on July 1, 2018, per *BCO* 13-10-2, and TE Heard has confirmed that all remaining members have been received, as of October 5, 2021, into the membership of other churches. Hence, we view the matter as closed. We again commit ourselves to the avoidance of our previous error in the future.”

60. That the Minutes of **Pacific Northwest Presbytery:** *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Feb 5, 2021; May 20-21, 2021; Oct 14-15, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Feb 5, 2021 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

Exception: Feb 5, 2021 (BCO 20, 21) – No record that TE, whose call changed from Assistant to Associate, was installed as Associate Pastor.

Exception: Feb 5, 2021 (*BCO* 18-3) – Incomplete record of candidate's examination.

Exception: May 20-21, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam.

Exception: May 20-21, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Exception: May 20-21, 2021; Oct 14-15, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination not recorded.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: May 16-17, 2019 (*BCO* 19-3) – No record of licensure questions being asked or answered.

Response: The Minutes of our Stated Meeting on October 9, 2020 record the following response was adopted for this citation: “In January 2019, RE [name omitted] and RE [name omitted] were asked and answered the licensure questions as the first part of their ordination exams (see PNW Presbytery Minutes Jan 24, 2019, p. 14, p. 18).”

Exception: No record of annual examination of Sessional records of churches of Presbytery in the May minutes. (*PNW Standing Rules* 4.51; *BCO* 13-9.b)

Response: The Minutes of our Stated Meeting on October 9, 2020, record the following response was adopted for this citation: “Presbytery agrees with this citation. Presbytery’s Admin Committee reviewed 2018 Session records, but this was not noted in their report. Record of such will be appended to our minutes from this [Oct. 2020] meeting. Presbytery commits to being more careful in recording in the future.”

Exception: Oct. 8-9, 2020 (*BCO* 19-3) – No record of licensure questions being asked or answered.

Response: We failed to record it, but this was completed. We will be more diligent in the future to record something like the following: “The Moderator asked the candidate the four licensure questions from *BCO* 19-3, and he affirmed each.” We assume RPR and GA are not requiring presbyteries to reprint those four questions in the Minutes.

Exception: Oct 8-9, 2020 (*BCO* 19-2.d) – No record of licensure sermons.

Response: We failed to record it, but this was completed. Our Credentials Committee is empowered in our Standing Rules (Rule 4.52.h) to act as a *BCO* 15-1 Commission to hear and approve sermons, which it did in this case. This provision in our Standing Rules was approved by a three-fourths (¾) vote of the Presbytery.

(*BCO* 19-2.d allows licensure sermons to be preached before a committee, and *BCO* 21-4.c.(4) allows the same for ordination exam sermons with approval of three-fourths of the Presbytery.)

Exception: Oct 8-9, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6) – No record that a views examination was conducted for transferring TEs.

Response: We failed to record it, but the transferring PCA minister was “examined on Christian experience, and also touching his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government.” Each of those parts were sustained.

Exception: Oct 8-9, 2020 (*BCO* 18-3) – No record that requisite questions were proposed to applicants for candidacy.

Response: We failed to record it, but both questions were asked and affirmed. We will be more diligent in the future to record something like the following: “The Moderator asked the man the two candidacy questions from *BCO* 18-3, and he affirmed each.”

Exception: Oct 8-9, 2020 (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of all specific requirements for ordination examination.

Response: We failed to record that all specific requirements were completed, but they were. The ordination exam consisted of a careful examination of:

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages (his seminary degree which included study in the original languages, was accepted in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages),
- (c) Bible content,
- (d) theology,
- (e) the Sacraments,
- (f) Church history,
- (g) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
- (h) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

The examinee prepared a thesis on a theological topic and prepared an exegesis on a portion of Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages. He also preached a sermon before the Presbytery's Credentials Committee. (This preaching provision in our Standing Rules was approved by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the Presbytery, in compliance with *BCO* 21-4.c.4.)

Exception: Nov 28, 2020 (*BCO* 38-2) – No record of two stated meetings for demission of TE.

Response: No minister demitted or was divested at this called meeting. A motion to divest two ministers was “postponed indefinitely.” Thus, no action was taken regarding [church name omitted], or its pastors TEs [name omitted] and [name omitted], leaving our denomination for the ACNA, other than the ministers being administratively removed from the rolls via *BCO* 38.3.a.

Exception: Nov 28, 2020 (*BCO* 46-8) – TE that demitted did not have membership assigned to a local church.

Response: See response to Item 8.

Exception: General 2020 (*Standing Rules* 4.51; *BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of annual examination of Sessional records of churches of Presbytery.

Response: Respectfully, we think this citation is mistaken because the Minutes of our October 2020 Stated Meeting, pages 8-12, record the completion of the annual review of 2019 Session records. A report on annual reviews for each of 33 Sessions is shown. Two Sessions ([church name omitted] and [church name omitted]) did not submit 2019 records and they have been exhorted to submit them for review as soon as practical.

61. That the Minutes of **Palmetto** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Feb 21, 2021; May 13, 2021; Nov 11, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Feb 21, 2021; May 13, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6) – No record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.

Exception: Feb 21, 2021 (*BCO* 15-3; 31-10; 34; 36) – Censure inflicted by a judicial commission without process being instituted or a judgment approved by the Presbytery.

Exception: May 13, 2021; Aug 12, 2021; Nov 11, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: May 13, 2021 (*BCO* 19-1) – No record of licensure exam.

Exception: May 13, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record (or unclear record) of ordination exam.

Exception: May 13, 2021 (*BCO* 15-2) – A commission to ordain and install must have a minimum of two TEs and two REs for a quorum.

Exception: Aug 12, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of a church being cited to appear by its commissioners to dissolve pastoral relation.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Feb 14, 2019 (BCO 23-1) – Pastoral relationship dissolved without citing local church to appear.

Response: In every case in which a pastoral relationship was dissolved, there was both a request from the pastor and minutes of the congregational meeting in which the congregation voted to approve the pastor’s resignation. The Presbytery will require that a ruling elder representative be present in future cases where a pastoral relationship is dissolved, and both the presence of the elder and the minutes of the congregation will be specified in the minutes of Presbytery

Exception: Feb 14, 2019 (BCO 15-2) – Commission comprised of insufficient numbers of both TE and RE. Second TE was from another Presbytery.

Response: The commission to ordain and install [name omitted] did have two teaching elders, but one was from another presbytery. It was not clear to this Presbytery from *The Book of Church Order* that a teaching elder from another Presbytery could not properly be counted in the quorum of a commission. Presbytery will make sure in the future that all commission members counted in the quorum are in this Presbytery.

Exception: May 9, 2019 (BCO 15-1) – No minutes for commission. Actions were reported to Presbytery, but minutes not recorded.

Response: The Presbytery admits its error in not including the minutes from the Church and ministerial Health Committee which acted as a commission (allowed by the Presbytery Bylaws) in the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. The Presbytery will be careful to include all commission reports in the future.

Exception: Feb 13, 2020 (BCO Preliminary Principle 1, 7; BCO 19-2) – Presbytery prohibited two licentiates from preaching or teaching their views to differences that were ruled as not striking at the vitals of religion.

Response: These prohibitions concerning recreation on the Sabbath and visual images of deity were mistakenly put in the Presbytery minutes, and Presbytery will move to have these minutes corrected.

N.B. This exception places Palmetto Presbytery in a “Catch 22” situation in that if a candidate’s exam is not approved because of issues that do not strike at the vitals of religion, there is a very good possibility that this Presbytery will be instructed by a higher court to

re-examine the candidate and redo the action. If the candidate holds strongly to an issue such as paedo-communion, then the higher court may well side with him in holding that his views on this subject do not strike at the vitals of religion, but approving the exam in such a matter has led to confusion and disunity in our churches and could result in the loss of members, elders, and even churches.

Exception: General 2019 (BCO 13-9.b) – Incomplete results for review of session minutes.

Response: Palmetto Presbytery was cited for incomplete results of session minutes. The Presbytery admits it has not listed specific problems in those session minutes which have been approved with exceptions, but it commits itself to including these problems in future minutes.

Exception: Nov 12, 2020 (BCO 13-9.b) – No record of all the church Session records being reviewed.

Response: Palmetto Presbytery has requested all the churches to submit their session records for Presbytery examination, but some churches have not responded in a timely way, and others not at all. Presbytery admits the failure and will give greater effort in motivating churches to submit their records annually.

62. That the Minutes of **Pee Dee** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 28, 2021; Apr 22, 2021; Jul 29, 2021; Oct 28, 2021.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Oct 27, 2019 (BCO 18-2) – Presbytery states, “Note that ‘Sessional Certification of Applicant to Come Under Care of Presbytery’ is not required upon approval of the Extraordinary Circumstances.” An “extraordinary” circumstance changes the requirements for the time of membership in the “congregation whose session provides an endorsement,” not with whether the Session submits an endorsement.

Response: The session at [church name] PCA presented the information for endorsement which we have now added to our minutes from Oct 27, 2019, and we apologize for the oversight.

Exception: Apr 29, 2020 (RAO 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting was not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

Response: After reviewing the minutes, it was noted that though we had included the information and docket for the Called Meeting in

Appendix D of the minutes, there was no clear statement of purpose for the meeting included verbatim in the minutes. We apologize for the oversight and will include the “purpose of” statement in future called meetings

Exception: Oct 24, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – Resignation request received and pastoral relationship dissolved without citing the local church to appear.

Response: Although we received approval of release from both the Pastor and the congregation and a RE from the church was present at the Presbytery Meeting to present personal thanks for the service of the pastoral relationship, we are aware that we failed to “cite the church to appear by its commissioners, to show cause why the Presbytery should or should not accept the resignation”. We apologize for the oversight and will do so in the future.

63. That the Minutes of **Philadelphia** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 15, 2021 ES.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Directory; Jan 16, 2021; Sep 18, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 16, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – No record that minister transferring into the presbytery was examined on his views in theology, the sacraments, and church government.

Exception: Mar 20, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Licensure candidate stated that he disagrees with the “strictness” of the Westminster Standards’ view of the Sabbath but is not clear on what his stated difference is.

Exception: Sep 18, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: May 9, 2018 (BCO 43-2) – Consideration of complaint was deferred until after the next Stated Meeting.

Response: Presbytery did not meet on May 9, 2018, but on May 19, 2018 for its stated meeting. In reading the *BCO* – “The court shall consider the complaint at its next stated meeting” – it was our understanding that we considered the matter and then can have several options including erecting a committee or commission to answer. We also thought that, in like manner, this particular matter could be heard (“considered”) and then directed to a called meeting two weeks later. If this is not a correct reading of the *BCO*, then we will not conduct business in such a manner in the future.

Exception: May 9, 2018; Sep 15, 2018 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Candidate examination areas are not indicated – generic “all areas” not sufficient.

Response: The Philadelphia Presbytery, in future minutes, will use *BCO* terminology for examinations.

Exception: Jan 20, 2018; May 9, 2018; Sep 15, 2018 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational or sessional vote concerning dissolution of pastoral relationships.

Response: This was an oversight, for which we apologize. All dissolutions had the necessary vote by their respective congregations.

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Sep 21, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3e.5) – Candidate [name omitted]’s exceptions noted, but not recorded in his own words.

Response: We apologize for the oversight. *Mr.* [name omitted] has since transferred to Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery (and thus his exceptions should be in their minutes when he was received). He was contacted to provide his exceptions in his own words as a result of this exception which we now have on file. We will put the candidate’s exceptions in his own words, as submitted to the Credentialing Team, in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to submit the candidate’s stated differences in his own words for review.

64. That the Minutes of **Philadelphia Metro West** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 27, 2021; Mar 23, 2021; May 8, 2021; Sep 18, 2021; Nov 16, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

65. That the Minutes of **Piedmont Triad** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 30, 2021; Apr 24, 2021; Jul 24, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Oct 24, 2020.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Oct 24, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

Exception: Oct 23, 2021 (*BCO* 34-10, 38-2) – No record of why a minister was divested.

Exception: Oct 23, 2021 (*BCO* 46-8) – No record that divested minister was assigned to membership in a particular church.

- d. That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Jul 25, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6) – TE [name omitted] was transferred from another presbytery without examination for Christian experience, theology, sacraments, and church government. The minutes only record examination with regard to differences from the Westminster Standards.

Response: We apologize for this oversight. The TE in question was given a full transfer exam according to *BCO* 13-6. We will strive to include that in the minutes in the future and will happily oblige the RPR’s recommendation for how to repair this oversight.

66. That the Minutes of **Pittsburgh** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Apr 10, 2021; Jul 24, 2021; Aug 17, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 30, 2021; Oct 16, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Oct. 16, 2021 (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.
- d. That a response shall be submitted to the following GA as no response was received in 2022:**
Exception: Jul 25, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4 c.1.a) – Incomplete record of exam – no record of ordination candidate being examined in experiential religion.

67. That the Minutes of **Platte Valley** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Feb 6, 2021; Apr 24, 2021; Aug 14, 2021; Oct 23, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Nov 2, 2019 (*BCO* 19-16) – ³/₄ vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded.
Response: Presbytery acknowledges this exception as an error in our minutes. There was indeed a ³/₄ vote for waiving the internship requirement, but this fact was not properly recorded. We will work to record this if the situation arises again in the future.

Exception: Standing Rules (*BCO* 10-3) – The Moderator may only be elected for a period of time up to one year. Standing Rules allow election for a period of up to 2 years.

Response: Presbytery acknowledges this issue as a conflict from our Standing Rules to the *BCO*. We have never had a Moderator serve longer than one year, but we have now amended our Standing Rules to bring them into conformity with the *BCO*.

68. That the Minutes of **Potomac** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 26, 2021; Mar 20, 2021; Jun 1, 2021; Jul 24, 2021; Sep 21, 2021; Nov 20, 2021.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

d. That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory: Exception: Jun 25, 2019 (*BCO* 13-12) – Call for meeting not in order (no record of 10-day notice of meeting).

Response: Potomac Presbytery (PP) regrets setting the wrong date (date of the meeting) in the call letter that was sent out. PP should have placed the date of the call (June 15, 2019) into the letter. PP will strive to avoid such an error in future calls.

69. That the Minutes of **Providence** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 5, 2021.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Feb 2, 2021; Aug 3, 2021; Nov 2, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Feb 2, 2021; Aug 3, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Aug 3, 2021 [p. 25] (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory: Exception: General 2019 (*BCO* 13-4; *RAO* 16-3.c.6) – Unable to determine if quorum is present, as the names of TEs and the names of REs are not specified.

Response: Sign-in sheets are utilized to capture a record of attendance, including Ruling and Teaching Elders and which Church they represent, as well as visitors. A quorum was indeed present at all of these meetings. In the future, we will endeavor to include all of this information as a part of the Minutes.

Exception: Aug 6, 2019; Nov 5, 2019 (*BCO* 15-1) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes (see also *RAO* 16-3.e.4).

Response: Previously, we have had Commission Minutes as part of the Docket & Attachments, but have not always made sure those are inputted into the Minutes. We have made an effort to not make this mistake in our Minutes since it was brought to our attention

Exception: Aug 4, 2020 (*BCO* 19-2.d) – No record of a written or oral sermon.

Response: We disagree with this exception, as the minutes clearly note: “TE [name omitted] Introduced **Candidate [name omitted]** to be examined for the licensure examination. Specifically, theology, Bible content, *BCO*, and **sermon**, as required in *BCO* 19- 2”. {emphasis ours} We will seek to be more specific as to whether it was written or oral, but the Minutes note the fulfillment of this *BCO* requirement, as did the docket that was before the Presbytery

Exception: Aug 4, 2020; Nov 10, 2020 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of a congregational meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

Response: The Pastor in both cases served as an Assistant Pastor of their respective congregations and therefore no congregational meeting was required. The Minutes, however, do not properly identify them as such. We will strive for greater accuracy in our Minutes.

Exception: Feb 5, 2019 (*BCO* 22-2) – No record of congregational meeting to approve call for pastor.

Response: This was a recording oversight on our part, though a congregational meeting to approve the call for the pastor took place on December 8th, 2018. We will endeavor to be more diligent in the future.

Exception: May 7, 2019 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of a congregational meeting in the dissolution of two relationships between ministers and churches.

Response: This was a recording oversight on our part, in both cases, as the congregations held meetings to dissolve the relationship with these ministers and the Presbytery was aware of it the time of our meeting. We will endeavor to be more diligent in the future.

Exception: Feb 4, 2020; Nov 10, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our standards.

Response: Because these men had stated their differences with our standards during their Licensure exams, which in one case was the immediately preceding meeting, we neglected to ask the Ordinands if

those views had changed upon their coming to complete the Ordination process. We agree with this exception and have corrected our procedures.

Exception: Aug 4, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9) – Documentation of the Particularization of [church name omitted] Church is incomplete and unable to determine if there are REs or Deacons, etc.

Response: This was recording error on the part of the Stated Clerk. A completed and signed form 043-1 was submitted to the Presbytery and available for all members in the Docket, but that form and proper notes were not inserted into the Minutes. Two Ruling Elders and one Deacon were “regularly elected, ordained, and installed” as Officers of the Church. We will endeavor to not make such mistakes in the future

70. That the Minutes of **Rio Grande** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 27-28, 2020; May 18-19, 2020; Jan 26, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Apr 26-27, 2021; May 5, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 27-28, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not properly recorded.
Exception: Sep 21, 2020 (*Standing Rules*) – No provision in the standing rules for conducting a meeting in this manner. The meeting may be invalid.
Exception: Apr 26-27, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Exception not properly recorded.
Exception: May 21, 2021 (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Notice and purpose and those calling the called meeting not recorded.
Exception: May 21, 2021 (*BCO* 18-19) – No record of candidate coming under care, licensure or ordination exams, or internship.
 - d. **That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no approved responses were received in 2022:**
Exception: General (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
Exception: Apr 29-30, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam of TE transferring into presbytery.
Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer for minister. Type of transfer from a Korean language presbytery or another denomination not specified.

Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019 (BCO 21-4) – No record of requiring a statement of differences with our Standards.

Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019 (BCO 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer for minister from another presbytery.

Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019 (BCO 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

71. That the Minutes of **Rocky Mountain** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 24, 2019; Apr 25, 2019; Sep 23, 2021; Jan 28, 2021; Apr 22, 2021; Sep 23, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b, 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: Jan 24, 2019 (BCO 21-4.c. (1)(g)) – All specific requirements of ordination examination not recorded.

Exception: Apr 25, 2019 (BCO 21-4.c.(1)(g)) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

Exception: Oct 3, 2019 (BCO 21-4.d) – Apparent use of $\frac{3}{4}$ clause during transfer exam of minister from the OPC not explicitly demonstrated in the minutes.

Exception: Apr 22, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – No record of Transfer being examined on views touching sacraments or church government.

d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**

Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

Response: Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

Exception: Aug 6, 2020 (RAO 16-3.c.1) – No record of call for called meeting.

Response: Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future

Exception: Oct 1, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational vote to dissolve relationship with pastor.

Response: Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Oct 1, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.c) – Incomplete exam for transfer from another denomination.

Response: Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: Oct 1, 2020 (*BCO* 13-5) – Minister transferring from another denomination with no call to a definite work without deeming the transfer necessary.

Response: Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: Oct 1, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.c; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s own words (the minister said, “it is possible that I have a scruple or exception in connection with the language about ‘recreations’” but never said what that scruple is).

Response: Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

Exception: Jan 23, 2020; Oct 1, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.a, c) – Incomplete ordination exam (no Hebrew/Greek requirement completed; no internship completed).

Response: Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

- f. **That a response shall be submitted to the following GA as no response was received in 2022:**

Exception: Feb 1, 2018; Apr 26, 2018; Oct 4, 2018 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational concurrence in dissolution of pastoral relations.

72. That the Minutes of **Savannah River** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jul 17, 2021; Oct 19, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 23, 2021; Apr 20 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.
 - d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Apr 17, 2018 (*BCO* 15-1) – Records of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes (cf. *RAO* 16-3.e.4).
Response: We agree that we did not include the Commission Report but we attach it here to.
Exception: Apr 17, 2018 (*BCO* 13-11, *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Overture not recorded.
Response: The subject overture was attached as ATT-007.A and ATT-007.B copies of which are hereby attached.
 See attachment
Exception: Jul 20-21, 2018 (*BCO* 13-11) – Minutes of executive session not included.
Response: The full and complete Ex Session minutes were included on Page 8 of 8 and a copy is here to attached.
 See attachment
Exception: Oct 15, 2019 [(*BCO* 42-4) – No record of the court’s action regarding a timely filed appeal.
Response: The Bills and Overtures Committee made a motion, that was approved by the court, to postpone this item to the January 2020 Stated Meeting.
Exception: Jan 24-25, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6) – No record of two men transferring from another Presbytery being examined in views of the sacraments and church government.
Response: The minutes of the examination of two men state “no part of the examination being omitted”. We will make sure to be more expansive in our future minutes.
Exception: May 18, 2020 (*Bylaws*, Section X) – No record of vote on motions to amend *Bylaws* (requires $\frac{2}{3}$).
Response: The Moderator asked if there were any exceptions or objections to a one time change in the By Laws and, hearing none, he believed that this fulfilled the requirement to vote
Exception: May 18, 2020; Jul 18, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.c. (1) (g)) – Although it is asserted that two candidates for ordination have been

examined in history of the PCA, there is no record of them being examined in this area in either their licensure or ordination.

Response: The two candidates were examined in history of the PCA but this fact was not recorded properly. We will be more diligent in the future.

Exception: Jan 25-26, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4.a, c) – No record of candidate’s academic credentials, experiential religion, or sustaining exams in sacraments, church history, and languages.

Response: We believe that a careful reading of this section of our minutes show that the full examination of the candidate was made and recorded

Exception: Jan 24-25, 2020; May 18, 2020; Oct 10, 2020 (*BCO* 19-1, 2) – A candidate for licensure should be examined in accordance with *BCO* 13-6 if he is a member of another Presbytery, or under 19-2 if he is not, but he should not be examined under both as minutes record to be the case with the six candidates for licensure examined at those meetings.

Response: We agree that the men involved should not have been examined under two different chapters of the *BCO* and we will be more diligent in the future.

Exception: May 18, 2020 [pp. 3-5] (*BCO* 19-2.b) – Candidates for licensure examined in the area of practical knowledge of Bible content but no record of that particular examination being approved; conversely record shows approval of an examination in the area of sacraments for both of these men that there is no record of being administered.

Response: We hereby agree that we did not properly and clearly record approval of “Bible content” examinations and also did not record examinations in “sacraments”. We hereby state that these examinations were properly made and the men were approved. We will attempt to be more accurate in the future.

Exception: July 19, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4.a) – No record of academic credentials or experiential clause given for candidate for ordination.

Response: The subject candidate is a seminary graduate and we accepted his course work as fulfilling the requirement. We will be more diligent to record such items in the future.

- e. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Oct 15, 2019 (*BCO* 41) – No constitutional basis for declaring a non-judicial reference out of order.

Response: The Moderator did not believe a “constitutional basis” was needed since the full court, by vote, agreed with him.

Rationale: Declaring a constitutionally allowed practice out of order without giving a constitutional basis is out of order.

73. That the Minutes of **Siouxlands** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 22, 2021; Apr 22, 2021; Sep 23, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 22, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16.3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Sep 23, 2021 [p. 4, 122.14] (BCO 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam from another Presbytery.

- d. **That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Sep 24, 2020 (BCO 21-1; RAO 16-3.e.6) – TE [name omitted]’s call was not included or signed.

Response: In response to the exceptions cited by the 48th General Assembly to the Presbytery of the Siouxlands, amend the minutes of the September 24th Stated Meeting to include the call of TE [name omitted]. The presbytery acknowledges its error in omitting the call in our minutes. It was presented, reviewed and approved by the Presbytery at that stated meeting, but was inadvertently not included in our minutes. We have amended our minutes to include it. We will be diligent to include the calls in the future.

74. That the Minutes of **South Coast** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jul 8, 2021; Aug 26, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 23, 2021; Apr 24, 2021; Sep 25, 2021 .**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: General (RAO 16-3.e.4) – Commission minutes not provided.

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b, 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

Exception: Apr 24, 2021 (BCO 34-4) – A minister was found contumacious, but Presbytery did not make “record... of the fact and of the charges under which he was arraigned.”

Exception: Apr 24, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of the congregation having approved the dissolution of the call of the former pastor.

Exception: Aug 14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Exception: Aug 14, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (*BCO* 5-9.f) – No record of call/installation of Rev. [name omitted] as pastor of particularized church as listed in directory.

Response: The call/installation was in order and received and we retroactively had to approve at the 9.25.2021 meeting

Exception: General 2020 (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church sessions.

Response: General 2019, General 2020 Our administrative commission underwent significant personnel change in 2019-2020, and then with the events of 2020 was further delayed in making progress on reviewing session minutes. We have implemented a new administrative team and they will be making progress on this task this year.

Exception: Nov 17, 2020 (*RAO* 16-3.a.1) – Purpose of called meeting not stated.

Response: This meeting was originally called at the 9.26.2020 stated meeting. Its purpose was listed in the minutes. The call to the meeting was sent out on 11.6.2020 with the reason for the meeting. The clerk neglected to put the purpose in the minutes of 11.17.2020. We will do this in the future.

e. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:

Exception: Jan 26, 2019; May 4, 2019; Sep 24, 2019 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.2.4) – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.

Response: These minutes were received by our administrative commission and reported to the presbytery, but we failed to enter them into the minutes. We will revise our processes to include them in the future.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (*BCO* 19-2.a) – No exam/statement of Christian experience and inward call.

Response: Our ordination team has historically received a statement of Christian experience and inward call when candidates come under care in the presbytery. In the future, we will make sure this is added to licensure candidates as well.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete transfer exam (no theology, Bible content or Sacraments).

Response: Our ordination team recognizes and agrees with this error and will remedy it in future transfer exams.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: July 23, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam (no record of questions on views of sacraments or church government).

Response: Our ordination team recognizes and agrees with this oversight and will work to conduct a complete transfer exam in the future.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (*BCO* 19-7) – No indication of Mr. [name omitted] having completed his presbytery internship prior to ordination.

Response: Our ordination team agrees with this oversight and will work to insure it is completed in the future.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with

the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (BCO 21-4) – No record that theological thesis or exegetical papers submitted.

Response: Our ordination team agrees with this oversight and will work to insure it is completed in the future.

Rationale: When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

75. That the Minutes of **South Florida** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b, 40-1) – No record of review of Session minutes.

Exception: Directory (BCO 15-1, 21; RAO 16-3.e.4) – No record of ordination for a man who is listed in the 5/18/21 and 8/17/21 minutes as licensed, but in 11/9/21 minutes as ordained.

Exception: Feb 11, 2020; Aug 11, 2020 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

Exception: Nov 10, 2020 (BCO 15-1) – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.

Exception: Nov 10, 2020 (BCO 13-6, 21-4) – Unclear record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

Exception: Feb 9, 2021; Nov 9, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in minister's own words.

Exception: Feb 9, 2021 (BCO 19-5) – No record that the examination for transfer of licensure was completed.

Exception: Feb 9, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – No record of transfer exam from another Presbytery.

Exception: Feb 9, 2021; May 18, 2021; Aug 17, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded

Exception: May 18, 2021 (BCO 18-5, 22-5) – Student supply approved without licensure.

Exception: May 18, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam from another Presbytery.

Exception: May 18, 2021 (*BCO* 13-6, 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

Exception: Aug 17, 2021 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes from commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: Nov 13, 2018 (*BCO* 13-4) – Minutes say no quorum present, and no record of attendance attached.

Response: Agreed, but corrected; and copy sent to one of RPR Team several months ago during review.

Exception: Feb 13, 2018 (*BCO* 15-1) – Ordination commission reported but no records of proceedings attached.

Response: Agreed, Stated Clerk now attending all ordinations for proper paperwork and inclusion in minutes.

Exception: Nov 13, 2018 (*BCO* 8-7, 13-2) – TEs laboring out of bounds or without call reports missing.

Response: Agreed, Stated Clerk now requesting reports to be submitted.

Exception: Feb 13, 2018 (*BCO* 13-2) – A South Florida TE laboring out of bounds without concurrence of Presbytery within whose bounds he labors.

Response: Agreed; TE dropped from rolls in December 2018.

Exception: May 8, 2018 (*BCO* 19-16) – $\frac{3}{4}$ vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded.

Response: Disagree; a unanimous vote is 100%, which is more than 75%; *BCO* 19-16 does not require an actual head count, just more than 75% approval vote.

e. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2022:

Exception: Feb 13, 2018; May 8, 2018 (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Differences of three candidates not judged to prescribed categories.

Response: Agreed. Categories now being used for all determinations of exceptions to the standards.

Rationale: Presbytery's judgment of stated differences using the prescribed categories need to be submitted for review.

Exception: May 9, 2017; Aug 8, 2017 (*BCO* 18-2; *BCO* 21-4) – Stated difference not recorded in the minister's/candidate's own words (*RAO* 16-3.e5).

Response: Actually, it was. If the candidate says he is taking the “Continental Exception to the Sabbath per 21-8” then that is what he said in his own words.

Rationale: Candidate must state “specific instances in which he” (*BCO* 19-2.e) differs from *WCF*, *LC*, *SC*; not simply name a view.

New Response: Agreed; candidate’s actual words now being recorded.

Exception: Feb 13, 2018; May 8, 2018 (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Differences not stated in candidates’ own words.

Response: Agreed. Candidate’s words now being recorded in the minutes.

Rationale: The candidate’s own words must be recorded and entered in the minutes and submitted for review.

76. That the Minutes of **South Texas** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Oct 29-30, 2021.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Apr 23-24, 2021; Aug 13-14, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021; Aug 13-14, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**

Exception: Jan 25-26, 2019 (*BCO* 13-10) – Unclear if provision of 60-day notice followed consent of members to transfer.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception and regrets the ambiguity. The congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship with the pastor and dissolve the church occurred on June 10, 2018. The approval of the dissolution occurred more than 6 months later and notice of dissolution pursuant to *BCO* 13-10 was properly given to the members of the church at that time. That action reviewed by the appropriate committee of the presbytery while proceeding through the dissolution process and was faithfully reported to the presbytery. The members were communicated with and advised of their responsibility to transfer their membership to another particular church, and the minutes accurately record their transfer to another particular church within the presbytery.

Exception: Aug 9-10, 2019 (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of a proper call for a man changing from Assistant to Associate Pastor.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception and regrets the oversight. The call was reviewed by the appropriate committee within the presbytery and found to be properly in order. The clerk failed to include that statement in the minutes and seeks forgiveness for the lack of attention to detail.

Exception: Jan 24-25, 2020 (BCO 20-6; 22-2) – No record of a call being extended by a congregation to an assistant pastor being called as associate pastor of the same congregation.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception and regrets the oversight. The call was reviewed by the appropriate committee within the presbytery and found to be properly in order. The clerk failed to include that statement in the minutes and seeks forgiveness for the lack of attention to detail.

Exception: Aug 7, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational vote to release TE [name omitted] from call.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception and regrets the failure to include the minutes of the congregational meeting in the presbytery minutes. The presbytery timely received the minutes of the congregational meeting held by the church on June 28, 2020, in accordance with all *BCO* requirements where a motion was made and passed to release the teaching elder from his call. The presbytery will correct this oversight by including the minutes of the congregational meeting in the minutes of the next presbytery meeting with a note referencing the minutes in error.

Exception: Aug 7, 2020 (BCO 13-5) – No record of the reasons to receive a man without a call as member of the Presbytery.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception and regrets the oversight. TE [name omitted] is a military chaplain. He moved into the bounds of South Texas Presbytery. He engages in unpaid ministry as a counselor. He is likely to transition back into service at some point with the military in San Antonio. He had no call because of his expectancy to returned to active duty, but wanted the accountability to the geographical presbytery where he resided. These issues were thoroughly discussed in committee and on the floor of presbytery before the vote to receive him without call. In the future, the presbytery will try to ensure such explanations are included in the minutes.

Exception: Oct 30-31, 2020 (BCO 20-1, 20-10) – No record of Presbytery extending the call to TE as pastor of mission church.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this exception and regrets the oversight. The call was reviewed by the appropriate committee within

the presbytery and found to be properly in order. The clerk failed to include that statement in the minutes and seeks forgiveness for the lack of attention to detail.

77. That the Minutes of **Southeast Alabama** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 27, 2021; Apr 27, 2021; Aug 24, 2021; Oct 26, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b, 40-3) – Incomplete record or review of records of church sessions.

Exception: Oct 26, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16.3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Jan 27, 2020; Oct 27, 2020 (BCO 21-4) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories (RAO 16-3.e.5).

Response: Both of the minutes in question state the following in relation to the person’s stated differences: “Moved and approved that Presbytery deem the candidate's difference to our doctrinal standards as enumerated above as not hostile to our system of doctrine and does not strike at the vitals of religion and therefore grant an exception to this difference.”

While this language does come from BCO 21-4, it does not fit one of the prescribed categories in 16-3.e.5. Therefore, we agree with this exception and will correct our actions in the future

Exception: Jan 27, 2020; Jun 2, 2020 (BCO 13-11; 14-6.c; 40-1; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Presbytery entered Executive Session but did not provide minutes.

Response: We respectfully disagree with the exception.

For January 27, 2020 (which should be January 28, 2020), minutes of actions taken in Executive Session are recorded between 20-1-07.F.4 and 20-1-07.F.5, from the bottom of page 3 to the top of page 4.

For June 2, 2020, minutes of actions taken in Executive Session are recorded between 20-6-06.B.2 and 20-6-06.B.3, from the bottom of page 10 to the top of page 11.

Exception: Aug 25, 2018 (BCO 13-12) – Call for meeting not in order or recorded.

Response: We agree with this exception and will correct our actions in the future.

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Apr 23, 2018 (BCO 21-4) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories, and not recorded in candidates’ own words.

Response: We agree with this exception and will correct our actions in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to correct their minutes to include the judgment of stated differences with prescribed categories.

Exception: Jun 2, 2020 (BCO 13-10) – Dissolution of church occurred without designation of members to Presbytery’s care or another Session.

Response: We agree with this exception and will correct our actions in the future.

Rationale: Presbytery needs to submit minutes indicating that the members of the dissolved church have been designated to Presbytery’s care or another Session.

78. That the Minutes of **Southern Louisiana** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 23, 2021; Apr 24, 2021; Oct 23, 2021.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 23, 2021 (BCO 25-11) – No record of 30-days notice to dismiss congregation from the PCA.

Exception: Jan 23, 2021 (BCO 25-11) – No record of congregational vote to leave the PCA.

Exception: Jun 23, 2021 (BCO 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-days notice of meeting not indicated or recorded.

Exception: Jun 23, 2021 (BCO 5-9.g) – No record of petition to particularize.

- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-9, b) – No record of review of Session Minutes.

Response: Southern Louisiana Presbytery apologizes for failing to put in our records that the records of our individual sessions were reviews by the shepherding committee of presbytery and reported to the presbytery during the October 24th, 2020 meeting. Typically we return these minutes at the April meeting, but we did not meet in April

2020 due to Covid restrictions and it was an oversight on my part as the clerk of Presbytery.

Exception: Oct 24, 2020 (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Complaint not recorded in the minutes.

Response: Southern Louisiana Presbytery apologizes for failing to record the complaint in our record according to *BCO* 13-11 and *RAO* 16-3.e.7. Please find the attached letter which contains the complaint.

79. That the Minutes of **Southern New England** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 14, 2021; Mar 13, 2021; Jul 24, 2021; Oct 23, 2021.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 16, 2021; Apr 23-24, 2021; Sep 18, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Sep 18, 2021 (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6) – No record that members of interim/provisional Session were called by the congregation of a particularized church.

Exception: Sep 18, 2021 [p. 54] (*BCO* 15-2) – No record of quorum for commission meeting.

d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**

Exception: Dec 14, 2019 (*RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not stated.

Response: Presbytery agrees with the exceptions and promises to be more careful in the future.

Exception: Sep 19, 2020 (*BCO* 13-9b; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Response: The ordination exam in question was for [name omitted]. [name omitted] was examined for Licensure at our January 2020 stated meeting and a part of the omnibus motion passed at that time was as follows:

“Move to permit the candidate’s exception to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms regarding Sabbath recreation as “more than semantic, but not out of accord with any fundamental in our system of doctrine.””

In this light, Presbytery respectfully disagrees with this exception taken to its minutes and refers this matter back to the Assembly.

80. That the Minutes of **Southwest Florida** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 13, 2021; May 11, 2021; Jun 7, 2021; Jun 22, 2021; Aug 17, 2021; Sep 11, 2021; Nov 9, 2021; Dec 6, 2021.**

- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

81. That the Minutes of **Suncoast Florida** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 9, 2021; Sep 14, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; May 11, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Feb 11, 2020 (BCO 8-7) – TE permitted to minister out of bounds but no record of Presbytery being shown that TE will have the freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of the PCA.
Response: Presbytery has noted that it failed to include in the record that the TE does have the freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of the PCA.
Exception: Apr 28, 2020 (BCO 13-12) – No indication of 10-day notice of called meeting.
Response: Presbytery failed to note in the record that there was a 10-day notice given for the called meeting.
Exception: Dec 15, 2020 (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting to dissolve pastoral relations.
Response: Presbytery failed to note that the congregational meeting minutes were received prior to the dissolution of the pastoral relations.

82. That the Minutes of **Susquehanna Valley** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 20, 2021; May 15, 2021.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Sep 21, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jun 15, 2021 (BCO 13-6; 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam from another PCA presbytery not recorded; no mention of examination on Sacraments and Govt and Discipline of PCA.
Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam from another PCA presbytery not recorded; no mention of examination on Theology, Sacraments and Govt and Discipline of PCA.
Exception: Nov 20, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam from another PCA presbytery not recorded; no mention of examination on Theology, Sacraments and Principles Govt and Discipline of PCA.

- d. That the following response to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**
Exception: Sep 20, 2020 (RAO 16-3.e.6; BCO 14-6.c; 40-1) – No executive session minutes. No mention pp. 1759-60 (11/21/20).
Response: At our stated meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 (incorrectly listed as September 20 in the header of the minutes), we went into executive session at the end of the meeting (p. 1727-28) but failed to approve the executive session minutes and come out of executive session. Our minutes acknowledge this oversight and pledge to correct the error at our next stated meeting on November 21, 2020. At the November 21 meeting, we did approve the executive session meeting minutes from the September 22, 2020 meeting as recorded on page 1753 (not pages 1759-60). We apologize for our oversight and for making the matter difficult for the reviewer. We pledge to handle executive session with better care in the future.

83. That the Minutes of **Tennessee Valley** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Apr 17, 2021; Jul 13, 2021; Oct 19, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
Exception: Jan 9, 2021 (BCO 22-5; 20-1) – Improper status granted to TE who has no pastoral call but is stated supply, pending approval from other presbytery.
Exception: Jul 13, 2021 (BCO 15-1, 2) – An individual may not take an action on behalf of a court; a commission is required.
Exception: Oct 19, 2021 (BCO 19-1) – Candidate under care preaching regularly in PCA pulpits without a license.
 - d. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no approved responses were received in 2022:**
Exception: Jan 12, 2019 (BCO 23-1; 22-4) – Presbytery approved the dissolution of pastoral relations with no record of congregational meeting or any record of the church commissioners appearing before Presbytery.
Exception: Jul 9, 2019 (BCO 21-6) – TEs installed as assistant pastors, but constitutional questions were addressed to the congregation instead of the session.
Exception: Jul 9, 2019 (BCO 13-6) – The commission record indicates that presbytery re-ordained a minister transferring from another denomination.
Exception: Jan 11, 2020 (BCO 19-2) – Stated differences with standards not recorded in licensure examination.

Exception: Jun 13, 2020 (BCO 13-12) – Committee report given that was not included in the purpose of called meeting.

Exception: Jul 14, 2020 (BCO 13-11) – Complaint appealed to Presbytery not recorded in the minutes.

84. That the Minutes of **Tidewater** Presbytery: *Adopted*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 13, 2021.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Feb 6, 2021.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Feb 6, 2021 (Bylaws 7.2.1) – Taking action at virtual meeting expressly prohibited by Presbytery bylaws.

Exception: Feb 6, 2021; Oct 7, 2021 (BCO 15-1, 2) – An individual may not take an action on behalf of a court; a commission is required.

Exception: Feb 6, 2021 (BCO 15-3) – Presbytery took action on a recommendation from a judicial commission without receiving a full statement of the case.

Exception: Oct 7, 2021 (BCO 13-11) – Complaint and Appeal sent to Presbytery not recorded in Presbytery’s minutes.

d. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:**

Exception: Feb 2, 2019 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Response: The presbytery agrees with this caveat: During Mr. [name omitted]’s Licensure exam (recorded in minutes 10/4/2018) we recorded “Moved that Mr. [name omitted]’s Exceptions to the Westminster Standards be found as not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine because the difference is neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.” This was properly recorded at that time and the view statements are included in the 10/4/18 minutes. Mr. [name omitted] was asked if his views had changed since his licensure four months before his ordination and they had not. Failure to record that question is solely the fault of the Clerk.

Exception: Feb 2, 2019 (BCO 13-5) – TE on roll of presbytery without examination or explanation.

Response: The Presbytery agrees and provides this reasoning: TE [name omitted] was already member in good standing in TWP, honorably retired. As an existing member in good standing, we did not reexamine the views of our brother.

Exception: Jul 28, 2020 (BCO 13-12) – Criteria for calling a called meeting not recorded (three TEs, three REs from three different churches).

Response: The Presbytery agrees with this omission. This was purely an oversight on the part of the Clerk. Quorum the purpose of the call were noted but I failed to record that Criteria for the Call was met in the minutes. It was noted in the announcement, but not recorded in the minutes

- e. **That the following responses to the 49th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

Exception: Feb 1, 2020 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission (to ordain and install) TEs [names omitted] not entered into presbytery minutes.

Response: The Presbytery agrees with this omission. This was purely an oversight of the Clerk. The Sessional Oversight Commission was appointed to ordain and install and I failed to note that in the minutes

Rationale: Presbytery needs to submit the commission minutes for review.

Exception: Aug 1, 2019 (*BCO* 19-5) – Incomplete record of a licensure transfer exam.

Response: The Presbytery disagrees with this exception. We suggest that the language of 19-5 is confusing at best.

In the first sentence we read, “the latter Presbytery may, at its discretion, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, repeat any portion of the previous Presbytery’s examination it desires.” The following sentence then reads, “The Presbytery into whose bounds the licentiate is moving, however, must at least examine the man concerning: a. his Christian experience, b. his call to preach the Gospel, c. his views in theology, d. Bible content, e. church government.” We erred in the favor of the “at its discretion” finding the examination of the previous presbytery and the documentation provided to as sufficient and decided to only repeat his testimony and views.

Rationale: *BCO* 19-5 mandates a minimum exam that must be given to licentiate transfers. The whole *BCO* 19-2 exam need not be repeated, but the 19-5 elements must be.

85. That the Minutes of **Warrior** Presbytery: *Adopted*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Oct 19, 2021; Nov 16, 2021.**
 - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General; Jan 26, 2021; Apr 20, 2021.**
 - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

Exception: Jan 26, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4.e; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s own words.

Exception: Jan 26, 2021 (*BCO* 21-4.e; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

Exception: Jan 26, 2021 (*BCO* 22-5) – Mr. [name omitted] is regularly preaching in a local church but is specifically noted as not being licensed.

d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory:

Exception: General (*RAO* 16-10.a, b) – No response to the Assembly concerning disposition of any exceptions of substance.

Response: We apologize for failing to send in responses for 2019.

Exception: Apr 16, 2019 (*BCO* 23-1; 22-4) – Presbytery approved the dissolution of pastoral relations with no record of congregational meeting or any record of the church commissioners appearing before Presbytery.

Response: Warrior Presbytery acknowledges our failure to accurately preserve the court record. The congregation held a meeting on March 3, 2019 and voted unanimously to dissolve the pastoral relationship. This notice was sent to our membership committee who interviewed the pastor and approved the dissolution. Representatives from the church were present at Presbytery. We will endeavor to keep a more accurate record of court proceedings.

Exception: Apr 16, 2019 (*BCO* 13-6) – Record of transfer exam does not appear to be complete; no record of examining candidate’s Christian experience nor specifics concerning his views.

Response: Warrior Presbytery apologizes for the incomplete nature of this record. We did examine the Elder’s Christian experience but did not record that in the minutes. While we did note that his views were examined, we understand it is helpful to provide the specifics of his views. We have already improved on that in recent exams and will continue to do so going forward.

Exception: Oct 15, 2019 (*BCO* 21-4.c) – No record of $\frac{3}{4}$ approval of Presbytery’s use of extraordinary clause.

Response: Warrior Presbytery acknowledges our failure to provide adequate notation regarding this vote for use of the extraordinary clause. The recommendation to approve the Elder’s ordination using the extraordinary clause passed unanimously. We are thankful for the committee’s diligence and will continue to work on improving our minutes.

Exception: Oct 15, 2019 (*BCO* 15-1) – Report of commission not included.

Response: Warrior Presbytery apologizes for not including the commission's report. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate the original or copy of the commission's report. We will endeavor to be more responsible with court documents in the future and thank the committee for notifying us of this oversight.

Exception: Jan 28, 2020 (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commissions to install TEs [names omitted] not entered into Presbytery minutes.

Response: Warrior Presbytery apologizes for not including the minutes of commissions to install TEs [name omitted]. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate the original or copy of the commission's report. We will endeavor to be more responsible with court documents in the future and thank the committee for notifying us of this oversight.

Exception: Oct 20, 2020 (*BCO* 21-4.c.(a), (b)) – Ordinand was not examined in his seminary degree or his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages.

Response: Warrior Presbytery apologizes for this oversight. The ordinand was examined in his seminary degree and his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages. We will do a better job of marking out all the parts of exams, so they are more accurately reflected in the future.

Exception: Oct 16, 2018 (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting to dissolve the call of a pastor.

Response: Warrior Presbytery appreciates RPR's diligence in guarding the integrity of the pastor/church relationship and the importance of care being given in the dissolution of a call. However, in this instance, the Teaching Elder who resigned was not serving as the church's pastor, but as Stated Supply. The court did not think that the dissolution of that temporary relationship required a congregational meeting or the approval of Presbytery.

86. That the Minutes of **West Hudson** Presbytery:

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. As the review of the presbytery was not completed, CRPR will report on this Presbytery to the 50th General Assembly.**

87. That the Minutes of **Westminster** Presbytery:

Adopted

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 13, 2021; Jun 14, 2021; Aug 14, 2021; Nov 13, 2021.**

- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

88. That the Minutes of **Wisconsin** Presbytery: *Adopted*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 23, 2021.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
 - Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Presbytery policy as described does not require ministers/candidates to state differences in their own words.
 - Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (BCO 19-2.a) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
 - Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (BCO 19-7) – All specific requirements of internship not recorded.
 - Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (BCO 19-2.f; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.
 - Exception: Jan 23, 2021; Apr 24, 2021; Sep 25, 2020** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.
 - Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (BCO 5-2.c.; 5-3; 13-11) – Unclear why members were added to a provisional Session when the mission church was dissolved.
 - Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (BCO 21-5) – Constitutional vows for ordination not propounded to two ordinands.
 - Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (BCO 13-2) – All specific requirements of admitting ministers without call not recorded.
 - Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (BCO 5-9) – All specific requirements for the organization of a particular church not recorded.
 - Exception: Aug 7, 2021** (BCO 13-1) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated.
 - Exception: Aug 7, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.
 - Exception: Sep 25, 2021** (BCO 5-4) – The nature of provision for pastoral ministry for a mission church not clearly defined.
 - Exception: Sep 25, 2021** (BCO 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidates.
 - Exception: Sep 25, 2021** (BCO 21-5) – Constitutional vows for ordination not propounded to an ordinand.

- d. That the following responses to the 49th GA be found satisfactory: Exception: Jan 26, 2019; Apr 27, 2019; Jul 20, 2019; Sep 28, 2019 (BCO 21-4.f; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Candidates for Ordination not asked about differences with WCF.**

Response: The Presbytery apologizes for not properly notating its asking [name omitted] at the January 26, 2019, meeting and [name omitted] at the April 27, 2019, meeting if their differences with WCF had changed since their licensure exams. [Name omitted] was examined for licensure in April 2018, and at that time stated that he took no exceptions to the Standards, so the Presbytery apologizes for failing to note that there was no change in his position since then in the January 26, 2019, minutes. [Name omitted] was examined for licensure in January 2019, and at that time stated that he had stated differences with WCF 21.8 and WLC 109, so the Presbytery apologizes for failing to note that there was no change in his position since then in the April 27, 2019, minutes. There was no one ordained at the July 20, 2019 and September 28, 2019, meetings, and all candidates licensed were asked about differences with WCF.

Exception: Jan 26, 2019; Apr 27, 2019; Jul 20, 2019; Sep 28, 2019 (BCO 21-4.c.1, 2) – No record of approval of theological papers or examination in languages.

Response: Only two candidates were ordained in these four meetings; there was no one ordained at the July 20, 2019 and September 28, 2019, meetings. The Presbytery's receipt of theological papers and transcripts (in place of a language exam), were noted for [name omitted] during the January 26, 2019, meeting on page 3 of 15 of the minutes and for [name omitted] during the April 27, 2019, meeting on page 9 of 16. The Presbytery will do a better job of noting its approval of these portions of the exam.

Exception: Jan 26, 2019; Apr 27, 2019; Jul 20, 2019; and Sep 28, 2019 (BCO 21-4.c) – Unclear if ordinands are being given a careful examination in Bible, Theology, and Polity as BCO 21-4 requires.

Response: Only two candidates were ordained in these four meetings; there was no one ordained at the July 20, 2019 and September 28, 2019, meetings.

During the January 26, 2019, meeting, the Presbytery did not re-examine Mr. [name omitted] in the areas of his acquaintance with experiential religion, Bible content, theology, and the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church since Mr. [name omitted] had been previously examined for licensure in those areas during the meeting on April 28, 2018. During the April 28, 2018,

meeting, the Presbytery asked Mr. [name omitted] the following questions in the corresponding areas, along with other questions from the floor that were not notated:

English Bible: TE [name omitted] asked Mr. [name omitted] questions about the Pentateuch, he gave an outline of Genesis, answered questions about Messianic psalms – some more particular like Psalm 22. He discussed Isaiah 6 – God in all his glory, also seen in John 12. He gave a summary of Joel, talked about David and Goliath the Gospel of Luke, gave an outline of Philippians, spoke about the Bible’s teaching on prayer, Matt. 6, 1 Timothy, outlined Ephesians, spoke about what is the Gospel. What the Bible says about the Bible. Is Jesus God?

Theology: What is God? How does God relate to man? What is a covenant? Difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Offices of Christ. How does he execute these offices? View of Creation. Order of Salvation. Purpose of the church? Justification. Similarities and differences between Justification and Sanctification. Relationship between the Kingdom and the Gospel.

Book of Church Order: Preface, difference between a committee and commission. Presbyterian government in the Old Testament and New Testament. Why is most of the directory of worship not binding?

During the April 27, 2019, meeting, the Presbytery did not re-examine Mr. [name omitted] in the areas of his acquaintance with experiential religion, Bible content, theology, and the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church since Mr. [name omitted] had been previously examined for licensure in those areas during the meeting on January 26, 2019. During the January 26, 2019, meeting, the Presbytery asked Mr. [name omitted] the following questions in the corresponding areas:

Bible content: He was asked to give the theme of the book of Micah and what the book is about. He asked where we find the Jerusalem Council in Scripture and how that helped to spread the Gospel. He was asked who was king of Jerusalem when the nation divided. He was asked who was a good king of Israel, the northern kingdom. He was asked for a good king of Judah. He was asked where Jesus talks about marriage and divorce. He was asked where fasting is commanded in the Bible. He could not answer. He was asked where it was found and he could not answer that as well. He was asked where in Scripture you would find the means of grace not being a work. He was asked if there was anywhere in the OT he would look. He stated he would go to the prologue of the ten commandments. He

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

was asked where in Scripture you would find discussion about the holiness of God and where God's people are called to be holy.

Theology: He was asked what justification is. He was asked how it is different from sanctification. He was asked if a believer can do good works. He was asked what exactly is a good work. He was asked what covenant theology is. He was asked what ecclesiology is and why it matters. He was asked if the Bible's use of the word Gospel is synonymous with justification. He was asked to summarize the Gospel. He was asked to give a Trinitarian analogy and tell us what is wrong with it. He was asked what his view of Creation was. He was asked if he believed in an historical Adam, Eve, and fall. He was asked his view of the end times and how that is practical for him now. He was asked why the days of Creation are analogical. He pointed to the lack of mention on morning and evening in the seventh day and that it seems to continue on. He also pointed to Genesis 2 and the natural processes being mentioned there, but not present in Genesis 1. He was asked what the incarnation is and why it's important. He was asked what his view of the atonement is, what happened when Christ died on the cross. He was asked what other views of the atonement are. He was asked how long he has been in Appleton and to point out one or two bad theologies in that city. He was asked how he would follow up and counsel the individuals who are promulgating these bad theologies. He was asked if his view that at the moment of justification all his sins past, present, and the future are covered and settled. He was then asked to give Scripture verses to support that. He could not provide scripture texts and was exhorted by the questioner to know the Scriptural support. He was asked if all his sins were forgiven when Jesus died or when an individual is justified.

BCO: He was asked who the members of the visible church are. He was asked how many officers of the church there are and who they are. He was asked how many courts there are and what they are. He was asked who is a member of Session. He was asked who the members of Presbytery are. He was asked the three parts of the BCO. He was asked what the censures of the Church are. He was asked what a case without process is. He was asked if all the Directory of Worship was binding. He was asked why the rules of discipline are good. He was asked how the rules of discipline help us. He was asked what discipline is for. He was asked if the BCO talks about marriage. He was asked it was binding. He was asked if a believer can marry a Roman Catholic. He shared that he thinks there are some in the Roman Catholic church who do not fully understand their doctrine

Exception: Jan 26, 2019 (BCO 19-2.f; RAO 16-3.e.5) – No record of candidate’s stated difference on creation and no record of Presbytery’s adjudication of that difference.

Response: It is the Presbytery’s understanding that holding to the analogical view of creation does not require stating a difference with the Westminster Standards so it did not require the candidate to state this view as a difference.

Exception: Apr 27, 2019 (BCO 19-16) – No record of $\frac{3}{4}$ vote or explanation for extraordinary clause.

Response: The Presbytery apologizes for failing to note a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote in the minutes. Mr. [name omitted]’s prior experience of at least one (1) year in comparable ministry in St. Louis, MO and Appleton, WI was adopted as equivalent to an internship and to the best of our recollection there was no dissent to the approval of Mr. [name omitted]’s internship equivalency.

Exception: Sep 26, 2020 (BCO 13-9.b) – No record of all church records being reviewed. Several churches were not recorded as having been reviewed.

Response: The Presbytery apologizes for failing to review all church records. A number of churches were added to its number in 2018 and 2019, but the Administrative Committee failed to include them in the annual review. This mistake has now been corrected and all church records will now be reviewed.

Exception: Jan 26, 2019 (SR 16-1) – No record of $\frac{2}{3}$ vote to suspend the rules.

Response: The Presbytery apologizes for failing to note the $\frac{2}{3}$ vote, but this motion was adopted with the appropriate vote count and the Presbytery simply failed to note the count.

Exception: Sep 28, 2019 (BCO 19-2.f; RAO 16-3.e.5) – The recorded differences are too vague to be in candidates’ own words and sufficient for adjudication.

Response: It is unclear to the Presbytery why the recorded difference is vague and insufficient for adjudication. The candidate provided the following and the Court ruled on this:

I take exception to WCF 21.8 regarding observance of the Sabbath. I believe the prohibition of recreation on the Sabbath goes beyond what Scripture says about keeping the Sabbath. I take exception to WCF 4.1 regarding the six days of creation. I do not believe it is necessary to affirm that God’s act of creation happened in six ordinary calendar days.

Regarding WCF 21.8, it is not clear in Scripture that recreation is included with the prohibition of work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15) so I do not believe men's consciences should be bound in that area. Scripture does, however, encourage rest on the Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3). I believe that certain forms of recreation can be legitimate means of rest and can be received as a blessing from the Lord on the Sabbath. This should not be abused as an excuse to do whatever we desire on the Sabbath. Recreation on the Sabbath should only be pursued as a form of rest and received as a gift from the Lord. Regarding WCF 4.1, I hold to the framework view of Genesis 1-2. I believe the creation account in Genesis 1 to be historical yet structured topically and not chronologically. I believe this to be shown in the text by the paralleled structuring of days 1-3 to days 4-6 signaled by the separating of day and night in both days 1 and 4. I affirm that Genesis 1-2 is history and not myth or poetry. I affirm that God created all things out of nothing by the word of his power. I affirm a historical (specially created) Adam and a historical fall. Though there are many essential and clear elements of Genesis 1-2, I am not convinced of the relationship between the days of creation and ordinary calendar time. It is my desire to continue to learn in this area and to humbly submit to the teaching of Scripture.

It is unclear what more would be required.

VII. Officers Elected for 2022-2023

Chairman: TE Hoochan Paul Lee
 Vice-Chairman: TE Chris Wright
 Secretary: TE Eddie Lim
 Assistant Secretary: TE Freddy Fritz

VIII. Roster of Members Present

Presbytery	Representative
Arizona	TE Tom Troxell
Ascension	TE Steve Tipton
Blue Ridge	TE Taylor Rollo
Calvary	TE Jon Butler
Catawba Valley	TE Steve Stout
Central Carolina	RE Flynt Jones

APPENDIX R

Central Florida	TE Kevin Gardner
Central Georgia	TE Elliot Everitt
Central Indiana	TE Mike McBride
Chesapeake	TE Donald Dove
Chicago Metro	TE Dan Adamson
Covenant	TE James Codling
Eastern Carolina	RE Dan Prins
Eastern Pennsylvania	RE Terry Carnes
Evangel	TE Greg Poole
Fellowship	TE Chip McArthur
Grace	TE Grover Gunn
Great Lakes	TE Elliot Pinegar
Gulf Coast	TE Joshua Sparkman
Heartland	TE Dale Thiele
Houston Metro	TE Dennis Hermerding
Illiana	RE Keith Phillips
Iowa	TE Brian Janssen
James River	TE Robert Rumbaugh
Korean Capital	TE David Bae
Korean Central	TE Brian Park
Korea Eastern	TE Daniel Park
Korean Northeastern	TE Paul Lee
Korean Southeastern	TE Eddie Lim
Korean Southwest Orange County	TE James Park
Mississippi Valley	TE Chris Wright
Nashville	RE Bryce Sullivan
New Jersey	TE Stephen O'Neill
North Texas	RE Randall Gradle
Northern California	TE Brad Mills
Northern New England	TE Ian Hard
Northwest Georgia	TE Marc Harrington
Ohio	TE Jason Piland
Ohio Valley	TE Larry Hoop
Pacific Northwest	TE Jerid Krulish
Pee Dee	RE Paul Goodrich
Piedmont Triad	TE Ethan Smith
Pittsburgh	TE David Schweissing
Potomac	RE Mark Doehnert
Providence	TE Adam Tisdale
Savannah River	TE Ken McHeard
Siouxlands	TE Jeffrey Neikirk

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Southern Louisiana
Southern New England
Southwest Florida
Suncoast Florida
Tidewater
Warrior
Westminster

RE Ken Kostrzewa
RE Patrick Sewell
TE Freddy Fritz
TE David Stewart
TE Ken Christian
TE Paul Kooistra
TE Thomas Rickard

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ TE Hoochan Paul Lee, Chairman

/s/ TE Edward Lim, Secretary

APPENDIX S

ATTENDANCE REPORT FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Arizona			
Chandler, AZ	Desert Palms	Kelley Hand	
Flagstaff, AZ	Church/Resurrection	Joshua Walker	
Goodyear, AZ	King of Kings	Joshua Harp	
Peoria, AZ	Fellowship of Grace	Jonathan Foster	Dave Price Keith Shull
Queen Creek, AZ	Hope Community	JC Baysinger	
Sierra Vista, AZ	Grace	Nathan Morgan	
Sun City West, AZ	Covenant	Paul Muresan	Alan Pitts
Tucson, AZ	Desert Springs		Matthew Fitzsimmons
	Rincon Mountain	Philip Kruis	
Ascension			
Aliquippa, PA	New Life	Jared Nelson	
Beaver, PA	Chapel	Tom Stein Jr.	Scott Shidemantle
Beaver Falls, PA	Christ	Scott Moreland	
Erie, PA	Faith Reformed	David Hills	
	West Erie	Marc Miller	Jonathan Moser
Harrisville, PA	Rocky Springs	Scott Fleming	
Industry, PA	Fairview Reformed	Jeff Zehnder	
Seneca, PA	Christ Covenant PCA	Jeremy Coyer	
Valencia, PA	Gospel Fellowship	Matthew Everhard	Curt Starr
		David O'Leary	
Volant, PA	Hillcrest	Stephen Richman	Mark Miller Jay Neikirk
		Jerry Knight	
Blue Ridge			
Charlottesville, VA	All Nations	Mick Leary	
	Grace Community	Jon Anderson	
	Trinity	Jesse Robinson	John Collmus Michael Martin Bill Porter Michael Richards Craig Wood
Crozet, VA	Hope	Todd Johnson	
Draper, VA	Draper's Valley	Roland Mathews	Michael Cooper Stuart Pratt

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Blue Ridge, continued			
Floyd, VA	Harvestwood Cov Covenant	Duncan Rankin	Lawrence Chico
Harrisonburg, VA		Tim Frost	
Lexington, VA	Grace Mercy	Todd Pruitt	JD Patton
		Aaron Roberts	Gerald Weniger
Lynchburg, VA	Christ the King	Justin Clement	Mark Coddington
			Stephen Hobson
Roanoke, VA	Christ the King	Tobias Riggs	Rick Ulmer
Winchester, VA	Westminster	Kyle Ferguson	Charlie Nave
	Eagle Heights	Nat Davidson	Frank Smith
		Tom Breeden	
		John Carroll	
		Bob Davis	
		Dave Gilleran	
		Doug Hart	
		Jake Hooker	
		Eric Noll	
		John Pearson	
		Drew Trotter Jr.	
Calvary			
Abbeville, SC	Lebanon	John Butler	Roy Phillips
Clemson, SC	New Hope	James Norris	
	Clemson		
Clinton, SC	Westminster	Chad Reynolds	Scott Hultstrand
Easley, SC	Covenant	David Preston	
Fountain Inn, SC	Fairview	Jonathan Williams	
Greenville, SC	Downtown	Brian Habig	
		Jeff Heiser	
	Eastside	Sam Taaffe	
	Grace & Peace	Mark Auffarth	
		Joe Dentici	
	Horizon	Timothy Udouj	
	Mitchell Road	Joseph Franks IV	
		Andy Lewis	
		Mark Reed	
		Neel Skelton	
	Second	Jonathan Master	Geoff McDowell
		Rick Phillips	George Koontz
			David Palma
			Jon Barkman
			Don Boroughs
			Jason Cochran
			Bill Kelly
			Philip Temple
			Melton Duncan
			Kevin Mobley
			Dennis Zimmerman

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Calvary, continued			
Greenwood, SC	Greenwood	Paul Patrick	
Greer, SC	Antioch Fellowship	Zachary Groff Marty Martin Andrew Newman Robert Cathcart Jr.	Terry Richards Timothy Taylor Mike Mahon Larry Bradley Bill Pierce Robert Ross
Laurens, SC	Friendship		
Reidville, SC	Reidville		
Roebuck, SC	Mount Calvary	Jim Stephenson Richard Thomas Richard Winston	Bill Pierce Robert Ross
Simpsonville, SC	Roebuck Christ Community	Paul Sanders	Bruce Apgar Randy Gordon
	Palmetto Hills Woodruff Road	Josh Martin Scotty Anderson Dan Dodds Taylor King Michael Morales Carl Robbins Justin Kendrick	Jon Chilton Fredric Marcinak Derek Scott
Spartanburg, SC	Grace	Andrew Hane Tom Hart Brian Howard Reid Jones Rod Mays George Mixon Joey Pipa Jr. Roy Taylor Jr. Jeffrey Windt	
Canada West			
Calgary, AB	Woodgreen	Don Hulsey	Paul Mandry
Edmonton, AB	Crestwood	Jeff Kerr Chris Pignatiello	
Langley, BC	Christ Covenant	Garry Vanderveen	
Catawba Valley			
Charlotte, NC	Prosperity	Bruce Brown	Brian Dove
China Grove, NC	New Hope	James Byers	
Harrisburg, NC	Grace	Steve McCullough Eugene Oldham Mike Gordon	Jay Krestar Daniel Nicholas
Hickory, NC	Grace Covenant		
Huntersville, NC	Southlake	Dan King	
Mooresville, NC	Harbor	Michael Colvard	Jim Aldridge Gabe Atchison
Mount Ulla, NC	Shearer	Steve Stout	
	Back Creek	Bill Thraillkill	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Catawba Valley, continued			
		Hudson Belk Will Faires Jr. Andrew Goyzueta	
Central Carolina			
Albemarle, NC	Second Street	John Black	Robert Rawls
Charlotte, NC	Christ Central South Charlotte	Josh Kim Josh Creason Dean Faulkner	George Kurz Joe Spencer
	Sovereign Grace	Arthur Rankin III Ben Thomas	Ryan Henderson Charles Smoak
	Uptown	John Downs Jordan Olshefski	Tim Shorey
	Vive Charlotte	José Portillo	
Ellerbe, NC	First	Stan Layton	Timm Dazey
Fayetteville, NC	Cross Creek	Michael Mock	Steve Bennett Johnny Surles
Indian Trail, NC	Church of the Redeemer	Adam Mumpower	
Locust, NC	Carolina	Salatiel Chuc Cory Colravv	Dave Eddy Shane Everts
Matthews, NC	Christ Covenant	Dave Baxter Bruce Creswell Kevin DeYoung Nathan George Tom Groelsema Mike Miller Derek Wells	Brent Andersen Flynt Jones Steve Onxley Mark Palardy Jim Sutton
Mount Gilead, NC	Lake Tillery	Chip McAulay	
Sanford, NC	Christ	Ralph Johnston	
Southern Pines, NC	Redeemer	John Kinyon Jr.	
Waxhaw, NC	Grace	Daniel Vinson John Baber Charles McKnight III Bob Owen III Blair Smith Marcus Smith	
Central Florida			
Casselberry, FL	Chinese Evangelical	Moses Han Jinan Zhang	
Eustis, FL	New Hope	Richard Burguet	
Lecanto, FL	Seven Rivers	Michael Hart	
Maitland, FL	Orangewood	Joe Creech Tyler Groff Mark Nicks	James Miller David Moore

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Central Florida, continued			
Ocala, FL	Good Shepherd	Michael Rauls	Tommy Craggs Mike Whitaker
Orlando, FL	Grace Redeemer Comm	Theo van Blerk Chuck DeBardleben	Gregory Hersey
	Christ United Fell	Michael Aitcheson	
	Kissimmee Fell	Heath Zuniga	
	Lake Baldwin	Mike Tilley	
	Lake Nona	BJ Milgate	
Ormond Beach, FL Palm Bay, FL Port Orange, FL	Pine Ridge St. Paul's	Eric Burket Justin Borger Dan Thompson	Wesley Humphreys Gordon Cloke John Maynard
	Coquina Covenant	Neal Ganzel Jr. Jerry Klemm	Vic Headley Gabe Williams
	Spruce Creek	Josh Owen	
Vero Beach, FL Winter Springs, FL	Christ the King Willow Creek	Seth Wallace Greg Doty	
		Stephen Adams Michael Allen Don Bailey Jr. Biao Chen Dennis Eide Stephen Fisher Kevin Gardner Aaron Garriott Jonathan Iverson Steve Kang Patrick Lennox Don Mountan Burk Parsons Hardy Reynolds Robert Rothwell Benjamin Shaw Scott Swain John Tweeddale	
Central Georgia			
Albany, GA	Northgate	John Albano	Nathan Boldt
Americus, GA	St. Andrews	Randy Saye	
Columbus, GA	Westminster	Mitch McGinnis	
Eatonton, GA	Lake Oconee	Jeff Birch	Russ Murray George Rountree
Forsyth, GA	Dayspring	David Martin	Erik Leonhard Lloyd Strickland

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Central Georgia, continued			
Kathleen, GA	Houston Lake	Paul Bankson	Michael Collins Kevin Epperson
Macon, GA	First	John Kinser Justin Leslein Chip Miller	Chuck Duggan Andy Gray Christopher Marks Jay Strickland
	North Macon	Duncan Cantrell Joshua Garrett Hunter Stevenson	Thomas James Paul McCommon Rob Morton
	Strong Tower Fell	Brett Barbee	
Midland, GA	St. Andrews	Grant Gilliam	Chris Schuster
Milledgeville, GA	Covenant	Kreg Bryan	Doug Pohl Gerald Stuckey
Perry, GA	Perry	Parker Agnew Glenn Jakes	Daniel Peterson
Warner Robins, GA	Covenant	Robert Jarrett Gary Sagnibene	Kenneth Craig David O'Leary
		Bill Douglas John Gordy III	
Central Indiana			
Brownsburg, IN	Trinity	Steve Marusich	
Indianapolis, IN	Fountain Square Grace	Nicholas Davelaar John Peoples Jr.	Dan Barber III
	New City Redeemer	Taylor Bradbury Sam Haist Ben Hein Nicholas McDonald Ben Reed	Nathan Partain
Muncie, IN	Westminster	Kristofer Holroyd	
Noblesville, IN	Living Branch	Cody Brobst	
Richmond, IN	Christ	Rich Hawkins	
Yorktown, IN	New Life	Bob O'Bannon	
Chesapeake			
Annapolis, MD	Evangelical	Harrison Spitler Drew Wilkins	William Lee
Arnold, MD	Broadneck Evan	Brian March Jon Pickens	
Baltimore, MD	Faith Christian Fell	JB Watkins	Jeff Beans
Columbia, MD	City of Hope	Doug Serven	
	Columbia	PD Mayfield	
Davidsonville, MD	Grace Evangelical	Jerry Straight	
Dundalk, MD	Inverness	Michael Weltin	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Chesapeake, continued			
Forest Hill, MD	Aisquith	John Ceselsky	
	Forest Hill	Jason Van Bommel	
Hampstead, MD	Cornerstone	Todd Hare	
Havre de Grace, MD	Living Hope	Donald Dove	
Lutherville, MD	Valley	Mark Tippin	Jonathan
Thompson			
Marriottsville, MD	Chapelgate	Patrick Allen	Ronnie Tallent
		Mike Khandjian	
		Dan Passerelli	
Millersville, MD	Han-Sarang Evan	Benjamin Kim	
	Severn Run Evan	Jesse Crutchley	Brad Chwastyk
			Jeremiah Horner
Owings Mills, MD	Liberty	Arch Van Devender	Steven Madden
Parkville, MD	Loch Raven	David Milligan	
Pasadena, MD	Severna Park Evan	Michael Stephan	
Reisterstown, MD	Covenant of Grace	Mark Samuel	
Relay, MD	Grace Reformed	Stan Long	
Severn, MD	Grace Point	Josh Sillaman	
		Trip Beans III	
		Craig Garriott	
		Daniel Iverson III	
		Jacob Jasin	
		Wy Plummer	
Chicago Metro			
Chicago, IL	Bethel Christian	Joe Cristman	
	Covenant	Dan Adamson	
	Living Hope	Taylor Franchuk	
Crete, IL	Crete	Brett Revlett	Mark DeVries
			Jonathan Womack
Crown Point, IN	Grace	Brad McMurray	
		John Rogers	
Elgin, IL	Westminster	Robin Cho	
Frankfort, IL	Peace Community	Kurt Kruger	Angel Contreras
Lansing, IL	First	Daniel Miller	Daniel Lyzenga
West Chicago, IL	Faith Community	Rhett Austin	
Winnetka, IL	Grace	Marshall Brown	
		Nick Swan	
		Chris Colquitt	
		Kyle Edwards	
		Ian Hammond	
		Douglas O'Donnell	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Columbus Metro Dublin, OH	Northwest	Nate Conrad Chris Mabee Dave Schutter	
Gahanna, OH Hilliard, OH	Walnut Creek New City	James Kessler	Jason Kong
Covenant Charleston, MS Clarksdale, MS Cleveland, MS	First First Covenant	Paul Long Jr. Ryan Dean Ben Ratliff Tim Starnes	Ted Leininger David Robinson Clint Wood
Collierville, TN Columbus, MS	Trinity Main Street	Hunter Brewer	Justin Harris John Russell Jarod Williams
Conway, AR Dyersburg, TN Eads, TN Fort Smith, AR Germantown, TN	Christ First Hickory Withe Covenant Riveroaks Reformed	Gage Jordan Doug Barcroft John Clayton Kyle Dillon Tommy Lee Jr. David Frierson Richard Owens Jim Plunk	Jon Hendrickson
Greenville, MS Greenwood, MS Hernando, MS	Covenant Westminster Christ Covenant	David Frierson Richard Owens Jim Plunk	Bob Barber Chas Emerson Billy Eddy
Hot Springs, AR Houston, MS Indianola, MS Jackson, TN	Hope Houston First Covenant Grace	Scott Davis Craig Barnard Duncan Hoopes Steven Wright Scott Floyd	Erik Lessmann Charles Hawkins
Little Rock, AR	Central Hope Covenant	Daniel Anderson Derek Coyle Tim Reed	
Memphis, TN	Independent Redeemer	Robert Browning Ed Norton Parker Tenent Matt Howell Ben Winkler Logan Almy Curt Presley III Justin McGuire	David Caldwell Peter Winterburn
Olive Branch, MS Oxford, MS	Christ Christ College Hill	Craig Jones Michael Kidd Brad DeVries Tyler Kenyon John Sartelle	Dick Butler Glynn Ingram Micah Everett
Pontotoc, MS Saltillo, MS Sherwood, AR Somerville, TN	Maple Drive Redeemer Trinity Fellowship Christ	Craig Jones Michael Kidd Brad DeVries Tyler Kenyon John Sartelle	Bill Rhea

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Covenant, continued			
Starkville, MS	Grace	Seth Starkey	Jonathan Barlow Jason Krutz
Tupelo, MS	Lawndale	Bill Bradford	Jamey Finley
Water Valley, MS	First	Harold Spraberry Austin Braasch Don Locke Jim Shull Ro Taylor Clint Wilcke Randy Williams	
Eastern Canada			
Bedford, NS	Bedford	Bill Radford	
Halifax, NS	Christ	Michael Chhangur	
Ottawa, ON	Resurrection	Franky Garcia	Bryan Feenstra
Toronto, ON	Christ	Kyle Hackmann Lyndon Jost	Wilson Wong
	Grace Toronto	Jeff Hynds Luke Bert	
Eastern Carolina			
Cary, NC	Peace	Doug Domin Chris Florence Ken Langley	Dan Prins
Chapel Hill, NC	Christ Community	Byron Peters	
Clayton, NC	Christ	John Musgrave	
Dunn, NC	Christ	Tim Inman	
Durham, NC	Good Shepherd	Mark Whipple	
Jacksonville, NC	Harvest	Grant Beachy	
New Bern, NC	Village Chapel		Craig Simon
Princeton, NC	Progressive	Shawn Willis	
Raleigh, NC	Calvary	Nate Wilks	
	Midtown Community	Lindsey Williams	Wally Tinsley
	Redeemer	Daniel Seale	Bruce Narveson Michael Newkirk
Wake Forest, NC	Christ Our Hope	Timothy Sharpe	
Wilmington, NC	Christ the King	Wes Strebeck	Jakim Friant Tim Pattison
Wilson, NC	Wilson	Andy Raynor	Danny Handley
		Andy Jones Sam Kennedy Simon Stokes	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Eastern Pennsylvania			
Allentown, PA	Lehigh Valley	Matt Franchetti David Green	Ken George
Center Valley, PA	Cornerstone	Matt Bostrom Doug Tharp	
Dresher, PA Hatfield, PA	New Life Lansdale	Clint Estes Brian Hand Chris Kennedy	
Moosic, PA	Hope	Taylor Bradley	Bill Barnes
North Wales, PA	Gracepoint North	Daavid Yoon	
Quakertown, PA	Providence	Jonathan Kuciemba	
Warminster, PA Willow Grove, PA	Christ Covenant Calvary	Mark Herzer Angel Gomez Josiah Bancroft IV Robert Carr Jonathan Eide Patric Knaak Alister Torrens	Terry Carnes
Evangel			
Alabaster, AL	Evangel	Alex Goodsell David Maginnis	Glenn Hoyle Stephen Sanders
Anniston, AL	Faith	Grant Carroll	
Birmingham, AL	Altadena Valley	Brad Allison Blake Harris Michael MacCaughelty Steve Whitner	Grahame Bobo Nicholas Ireland Karl Poythress
	Briarwood	Joel Acevedo Jim Alexander Max Bunn Mark Cushman Rob Genin Kotaro Hamamatsu Stephen King Dave Matthews Benny Parks Bobby Parks Eric Reebals Harry Reeder III Seth Richardson Jay Shaw Olan Stubbs Chris Thompson Ray Tucker Michael Wichlan Benny Youngblood Jr. Murray Lee Jamie Peterson Sr.	Billy Ball Jim Carlson Jason Crowe Jim Entrekin Lee McCarty Matt Moore Loring Muir Drew Ricketts Bryan Wintersteen Charles Woodall
	Cahaba Park		

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Evangel, continued			
	Covenant	Marty Crawford David Driskill John Fountain Robby Holt Josh Johnson	Will Brooke David ODell John Pickering Bob Schaffeld
	Faith	Cameron Patterson Carl Smith Jason Sterling	Johnny Johnson
	Household of Faith Oak Mountain	Larry Cockrell Bob Flayhart Ken Jones Mark Long Timothy McCracken Tom Patton III Greg Poole Juan Vasquez Chad Walker	Jim Doggett Jimmy Edwards Scott Gosnell Mark Guzzo Nathan Kirkpatrick John Pounders
	Red Mountain	Matt Clegg Charles Johnson	Brian Barrett Collin Newberry
	Third	Michael Brock Anton Ivanov Hunter Twitty Burt Boykin Jr. Chad Granger Alton Hardy	Walter Monroe Jack Neill
Chelsea, AL	Grace		
Fairfield, AL	Urban Hope		
Helena, AL	Christ Community	Phil Chambers David Cunningham	Eric Brown Jim Griffith
Homewood, AL	Homewood Comm	Tom Franklin	
Hoover, AL	Cross Creek	Chris Peters	Paul Johnson Brandon Robbins
Jacksonville, AL	Hope Community	Steve Mayes	Ted Fenn Harry Knight
Jasper, AL	First	Scott Pierce	
Moody, AL	Community	Robby Grames III	Matthew Duke Joe Ellis
Pell City, AL	Lakewood	Daniel Leavengood	Larry Acton David Nelson
Pinson, AL	Mount Calvary	Philip Rich	Tommy Crawford Steve Norris
Pleasant Grove, AL	Pleasant Grove	Jay Haley Jim Maples	
Rainbow City, AL	Rainbow	Dick Cain	Michael McMillan
Springville, AL	Christ Community	Rick Hutchinson	Don Dickenson David Johnson
Sylacauga, AL	Knollwood	Mark Jessup	David Farnsworth David Hellwig

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Evangel, continued			
Trussville, AL	Christ	Michael Davis James Dickson	Taylor Denard Matt Monroe Levoy Bankson
Weogufka, AL	Unity	David Chester Walt Davis Lynn Downing Howard Eyrich Daniel Hightower Heath Kahlbau Gary Purdy Wally Sherbon Jr. Ken Stuart III Mike Williams	
Fellowship			
Chester, SC	Trinity Zion	Richard Wheeler Al Ward Jr.	Don Wood Jr. Steven Palecek Chris Griesman Joe LeMoyne Chad Cureton Tom Neagle
Clover, SC	Bethel		
Fort Mill, SC	Christ Ridge	Michael Dixon Branden Williams	
Gaffney, SC	Salem	Matthew Duraski	
Lake Wylie, SC	Redeeming Grace	Devin Kahan	Gordon Kerr Caleb Standafer Chris Arnold
McConnells, SC	Olivet	Chip McArthur	
Rock Hill, SC	Hopewell Westminster	Jason Anderson Caleb Blow Jonathan Garrett Mike Honeycutt Chris Sewell	
Van Wyck, SC	Trinity	Jeff Bryant	
York, SC	Filbert	Dave Hall	Dan Hall
	Temple	Greg Marshall	Jeff Gott Jeff Sigmon
		Bill Fox Jr. Wallace Tinsley Jr.	
Georgia Foothills			
Athens, GA	Good Shepherd Redeemer	Morgan Angert Wes Andrews Todd Lowery Matt Siple	Chip Milner
Chestnut Mtn, GA	Resurrection Chestnut Mountain	Jared Bryant Travis Brown Ben Phillips	Jason Cunningham
Clarksville, GA	Christ	Hobie Wood	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Georgia Foothills, continued			
Dacula, GA	Restoration		Richard Dolan
Duluth, GA	Old Peachtree	Joe Deighton Alan Johnson	Jon Richards Jack Wilson
Monroe, GA	Haynes Creek		Josh Fuller
Watkinsville, GA	Faith	Steven Brooks Nathan Parker	Jerry Norris
Winder, GA	Oconee Fellowship	Clay Werner	
	Northside	Tim Weldon Ben Coppedge Ed Dunnington Stephen Estock Alan Foster Bruce Owens Jeff Wreyford	
Grace			
Biloxi, MS	First	Tim Horn	
Centreville, MS	Thomson Memorial	Eric Greene	
Collins, MS	Collins McDonald		Ronnie Eaves
Crystal Springs, MS	First	Grover Gunn III Christopher Willett	Bob Lee
Gulfport, MS	First	Toby Holt	Jordan Carl Bryan Kelly
Hattiesburg, MS	Bay Street	Brian Davis	Sam Duncan Mike Smith
	First	Josh Adair Zeek Dean Jim McCarthy	Hugh Bolton Bill Stanway Bill Turpin Troy Gibson
Hazlehurst, MS	Woodland	David Irving	
Natchez, MS	First	James Logan	
Picayune, MS	New Covenant	John Franklin	Tommy Ellett
Summit, MS	First		Dick Ulerich
	New Covenant	Brian McCollough Danny Ruth	Harry Young
		Chip Huey Jr. Randy Kimbrough	
Great Lakes			
Ann Arbor, MI	Christ	Jeremy Byrd	Jim Lopez
Detroit, MI	Redeemer	Jon Saunders	Jerome Gorgon
East Lansing, MI	University Reformed	Jason Helopoulos Kevin Phipps	David Hinkley Allan Knapp Zane Meibeyer
Elkhart, IN	Heart City	Joel Irvin	Victor Yoder
Fenton, MI	Tyrone Covenant	Lawrence Bowlin David Groendyk	Steve Thomas

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Great Lakes, continued			
Ferndale, MI	New City	Matt Luchenbill	
Ft. Wayne, IN	Providence	Tony Garbarino	Mike Coplin Ross Harris
Grand Rapids, MI	Christ		Jerry Stutzman Jim Visser
Granger, IN	Gracehill Michiana Covenant	Ben Seneker Peter Wallace	David Shank Jacob Stoltzfus
Harrison Twnship, MI	Knox	Doug Graham Jon Herr	Roger Dean Dave Licavoli Donald Stickney
Holland, MI	Covenant Redeemer	Ken Klett Chip Byrd	
Hudsonville, MI	Trinity	Jeremy Visser	
Kalamazoo, MI	Good Shepherd	Ryan Potter Neil Quinn	Greg VandenHeuvel
Traverse City, MI	Redeemer	Austin Reed	
Valparaiso, IN	Good Shepherd	Andrew Gretzinger	Bruce Hrivnak Yon Lindborg
		Robert Knuth Confex Makhallira Elliott Pinegar	
Gulf Coast			
Cantonment, FL	Pinewoods	David Balzer Joel Treick	
Fairhope, AL	Eastern Shore	Andrew Colbert Pat Davey Kyle Parker	John Hailey Mike McCrary Doug Vermeulen
Foley, AL	Grace Fellowship	Rick Fennig	TJ Neely Rick Sullivan
Ft. Walton Beach, FL	Westminster	Chad Watkins Knox White	Jason Belcher Kelly Jones
Gulf Breeze, FL	Concord	Jonathan Becker	Joshua Hellyer Joel Holston
Lillian, AL	Lillian Fellowship	Dean Conkel	
Loxley, AL	Loxley	Jonas Brock	
Madison, FL	Grace	Stacey Cox	
Mobile, AL	Christ Christ Redeemer Grace Community	Ryan Alford Dustin Belue Jim Bryars	Scott Owens Brad Steffler
Niceville, FL	First	Joe Grider	David Margulis Shawn Mitchell
Panama City, FL	Covenant	Stephen Tipton	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Gulf Coast, continued			
Pensacola, FL	Fairfield	Ralph LaGuardia	
Tallahassee, FL	CenterPoint	Brian Douglas	George Close
	Westminster	Sean McGowan	Brett Doster
	Wildwood	David McNeely	
		Gary Cox	
		Dennis Shackelford	
Gulfstream			
Boca Raton, FL	Spanish River	David Cassidy	
Jupiter, FL	Sand Harbor	Mark Murnan	Bob Brunjes
Palm Beach, FL	Truth Point	Matt Eusey	
Palm Beach Gard, FL	Cornerstone	Weston Lauver	
Port St. Lucie, FL	Christ the King	Jason Paugh	
Stuart, FL	Grace	Bernie van Eyk	
	Treasure Coast	Rob Edenfield	
Wellington, FL	Christ Community	Peter Bartuska	
Heartland			
Andover, KS	Kirk of the Plains	Rick Franks	
Lees Summit, MO	Christ the Redeemer	Aaron Suber	Stephen Campbell
			Jim Slocomb
Olathe, KS	New Hope	Jim Baxter	Larry Hauck
		Tim Elliott	
Overland Park, KS	Redeemer	Nathan Currey	Patrick Berch
		Tony Felich	Lance Kinzer
Shawnee, KS	Oak Hills	John Lee	Bill Burns
		Dale Thiele	Bret Willoughby
Wichita, KS	Evangel	Tim Rackley	Marlon Johnston
	Heartland Comm	Gary Goodrich	
		Jonathan Whitley	
		George Boomer	
		Tom Johnson	
		Steve Prost	
		David Upchurch	
Heritage			
Dover, DE	Grace	Kenny Foster	Tyler Hogan
		Joshua Suh	
Easton, MD	Shore Harvest	Scott Shaw	Matthew Bair
Elkton, MD	Fair Hill	Steve Coward	
Kemblesville, PA	Cornerstone	Billy Haines	George Pauley
			Seth Watts
Middletown, DE	The Town (PCA)	Scott Winchester	
Salisbury, MD	Providence	Jason Shelton	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Heritage, continued			
Wilimington, DE	Hope	William Stern	
Wilmington, DE	City	Israel Ruiz Ore	
		Rick Gray	
Highlands			
Arden, NC	Arden		James Aldrich David Livernois
Asheville, NC	Covenant Reformed	James Curtis Sean McCann	
	Grace & Peace Trinity	Jonathan Inman	Conley Brown Stephen Todd
Boone, NC	CrossPoint Comm Grace Highlands	Scott Stewart Graham Svendsen	
Elizabethton, TN	Memorial	Tim Mindemann	
Franklin, NC	Emmanuel	Tim McQuitty	
Hazelwood, NC	Hazelwood	Steve Muzio Cooper Starnes	
Mills River, NC	Grace Mills River	Patrick Lafferty	
Morganton, NC	Faith	Danny Beck	
Murphy, NC	Providence	David Hina	
Sylva, NC	Redeemer	Steven Hansen	
Weaverville, NC	First	Skip Gillikin Flavien Pardigon	Alan Sonner
		Cameron Anderson Lonnie Barnes Rob Herron Scott Hill Andrew Shank	
Hills and Plains			
Bartlesville, OK	Hope	Peter Johnson	Shane Pennington
Bentonville, AR	Christ	Chris Taylor	Aaron Raines Hans Saunders
Edmond, OK	Heritage	Wes Martin Michael Philliber	Neal Roberts Allan Wehe
Fayetteville, AR	King's Cross Christ Community Covenant	Casey Shutt Hunter Bailey Jay Bruce Paul Sagan	Andrew Brill Jeff Chewning Matthew Lee
Norman, OK	Christ the King	Mike Biggs Anthony Pyles	
Oklahoma City, OK	City		Jacob Spencer
Owasso, OK	Trinity	Blake Altman	Chuck Simmons
Rogers, AR	Trinity Grace	Chris Miller Brandon Van Marel	Noel Henley Stephen Rowe

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Hills and Plains, continued			
Siloam Springs, AR	Redeemer	Ted Wenger	
Stillwater, OK	Grace	Jason Averill	
Tulsa, OK	Christ	Jason Bobo	Heath Kirkeby
	Grace & Peace	Jeremy Fair	Christopher Stokes
		Shane Hatfield	
		Scott Morris	
Houston Metro			
Beaumont, TX	Reformed		Ryan Bowling Chuck Heare Eric Manthei Winston Dollahon
	Riverside		
Bellaire, TX	Southwest	David Wakeland	
Houston, TX	Advent	Taylor Leachman	
	Christ Evangelical	Richard Colquitt	Keith Pendergrass
		Richard Harris	Jason Walker
		Juan Carlos Martinez	Ken Wynne
	Christ the King	John Trapp	Rob Hays
		Andres Zelaya	
	Cornerstone	Blake Arnoult	Neal Wade Philip Whitley Andy Edwards Jeremy Thomas
	Covenant	Lou Veiga Julian Zugg	
Huntsville, TX	Christ	Nolan Williamson	
Katy, TX	Christ	Fred Greco	Mark Becker
		David King	Daryl Brister
		Curt Mire	Dave Cias
		Jason Wegener	
Lufkin, TX	Covenant	Mark O'Neill	Bill Craig Cecil Mott Justin Chandler Eric Haaland
Spring, TX	Spring Cypress	Ben Duncan	
The Woodlands, TX	Grace	Kyle Bobos	
		Bradley Wright	
Webster, TX	Bay Area	Chris Yates	
		Ken Thurman Jr.	
Illiana			
Carbondale, IL	Grace		Keith Phillips
Cutler, IL	Reformed	Curt Rabe	Keith Boyce
Edwardsville, IL	Center Grove	Ryan Diehl	Andre Kok
		Wes James	
Evansville, IN	Providence	Bill Hill Jr.	
Marissa, IL	Marissa	James Ryan	
Owensboro, KY	Christ	John Birkett	
Sparta, IL	Bethel Reformed	Alex Eppstein	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Illiana, continued			
Terre Haute, IN Waterloo, IL	Living Hope Concord	Chris Rufener Brian Sandifer	
Iowa			
Holland, IA Iowa City, IA Ledyard, IA North Liberty, IA	Colfax Center One Ancient Hope Bethany Evan&Ref Hope Evangelical	Luke Wolfe Colin Andrade Lincoln Larsen	Chris Sutton
James River			
Chester, VA Fredericksburg, VA	Centralia Evident Grace Fell New City Fellowship	Dan Lipford David Fischer Bob Becker	Matt Murray Doc Murdoc Gene Rivers Doug Bergen Robert Rumbaugh
Hopewell, VA	New Life in Christ	Sam Capitano	
Midlothian, VA	New Life Korean West End West Hopewell Spring Run	Soungkook Shin Eric Dugan Ethan Mullis Andrew Conrad Brian Fletcher Sean Sawyers	Jeff Miller Daniel Jordan
Richmond, VA	Sycamore All Saints Reformed	Levi Bakerink Dennis Bullock Steve Moulson Harrison Ford	Matt Fender Al Yancey George Constantino
Stafford, VA	Church Hill City West End Hope of Christ	Joe Brown Leonard Bailey	Rich Leino
		Harry Long Jim Pulizzi Fred Sloan	
Korean Capital			
Baltimore, MD Centreville, VA	Harris Creek Comm Christ Central	Hansoo Jin Sam Kim Owen Lee Bobby Suh Albert Young	Peter Kim
	Korean Central	Eung Yul Ryoo	Sang Choi Guang Yon Weon Han Song Yang
Chantilly, VA Clarksville, MD	Korean Harvest	Yong Ho Cha Walter Lee Brian Shim	
Glen Burnie, MD	Gloria Korean	Sang Rok Lee	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Korean Capital, continued			
Laurel, MD	Covenant	Dong Woo Kim	
Rockville, MD	Rosebrook	Moses Lee	
		Daniel Baeq	
		Steve Yoon	
Korean Central			
Ann Arbor, MI	Korean	Jae Joong Hwang	
Elmhurst, IL	Vineyard	James Yoo	
Glenview, IL	First Korean	Stephen Jon	
Indianapolis, IN	Eunhye Korean	Paul Cho	
Louisville, KY	Korea SaeHan	Chung Man Lee	
Nixa, MO	First Korean	Ju-Heon Lyu	
Palatine, IL	Bethel	Eun Kwan Kim	
		Anson Lee	
St. Ann, MO	First Korean	Shinkwon Lee	
St. Louis, MO	Korean	Luke Kim	
Vernon Hills, IL	Highland Korean	Abraham Hong	
		Jason Hyunsoo Park	
		Paul Chi	
		Samuel Kang	
		Peter Kim	
		Sungwoo Nam	
		Brian Park	
Korean Eastern			
Ambler, PA	Sarang Nanum Comm	Seog Woo Sun	
Dillsburg, PA	First Korean	David Kim	
Lansdale, PA	Cornerstone	Andrew Kim	
State College, PA	State College Korean	Jonathan Kim	
		James Kim	
		Danny Kwon	
		Hukmin Kwon	
Korean Northeastern			
Hicksville, NY	New Heart	Paul Chung	
Pleasantville, NY	Sekwang Korean	Min Young Lee	
Tenafly, NJ	Glory Community	Sam Sung	
		Paul Lee	
Korean Northwest			
Anchorage, AK	Anchorage New Life	Yong Dok Pak	
Carmichael, CA	Ark	Wonsik Ha	
Honolulu, HI	Hawaii Central	Daniel Jung	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Korean Northwest, continued			
Pleasant Hill, CA	Hamonah	Sung Chol Lim	
Sacramento, CA	CrossPoint	Ezra Kim	
Walnut Creek, CA	Heavenly	Chun Ho Oh	
		Jeremiah Kim	
		Changwon Choi	
Korean Southeastern			
Charlotte, NC	Charlotte	Sungkyun Na	
Columbia, SC	Sandol	Thomas Oh	
Fayetteville, NC	New Life Community	Jong-Su Hong	
Ft. Walton Beach, FL	Internat'l Community	Joshua Jea	
Jacksonville, FL	Korean Cornerstone	Youngsu Jeong	
Macon, GA	Macon Korean	Sung Bok Oh	
Marietta, GA	Korean Covenant	Ilha Hwang	
Ocala, FL	Ocala Korean	Sam Kim	
Orlando, FL	Orlando Korean	Jae Lee	
		Daniel Yu	
Panama City, FL	Panama City Korean	Zadok Hong	
Peachtree Crnrs, GA	New Church	Youngchun Cho	Seungyeol Choi
		Sungyak Kim	Yoonho Kang
			Seung Hyun Kim
Pike Road, AL	Mont Open Kingdom	Kyung Jae Seo	
Sharpsburg, GA	Saebit Korean	Anthony Lee	
Suwanee, GA	Grace Community	Eddie Lim	
		Billy Park	
Tallahassee, FL	Korean Cornerstone	Joon Yung Jang	
Tampa, FL	Chodae Community	Injib Kim	
Winter Garden, FL	Him	Juseong Paek	
		David Lee	
		Terence Ng	
		Bill Sim	
Korean Southern			
Carrollton, TX	Dallas Dream	Young Ki	
	Hope	Sung Eun Yoon	
		Gu Kwang Lee	
		Min Ku Lee	
Friends Wood, TX	Houston	Soo Dong Kim	
Houston, TX	Korean Faith	In Seung Lee	
Korean Southwest			
Diamond Bar, CA	Global	Daniel Chin	
		Daniel Kim	
Los Angeles, CA	The Way	Jinhyuk Ju	
Pomona, CA	Inland	Hwan Ahn	James Han

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Korean Southwest, continued			
San Fernando, CA	Gateway	Sang Kim	
Torrance, CA	Redeemer	James Han	
Valencia, CA	Jesus Family	Seongryong Kwon	
		Johan Baik	
		Steve Ham	
		Paul Lee	
Korean Southwest Orange County			
Buena Park, CA	Il Shin	Joseph An	
Corona, CA	New Song	Jong Lee Lee	
Fullerton, CA	New Life	Will Chang	Alex Jun
Gardena, CA	Gardena	Taesup Shin	
Orange, CA	Orange Hill		Frank Cho
		Joel Kim	
		Sun Kwak	
Lowcountry			
Beaufort, SC	First Scots	Alex Mark	Mark Senn
		Steven Walton	Ron Woernle
Charleston, SC	Church Creek	Nick Batzig	Donald Cummings
			David Walters Jr.
Hilton Head Is, SC	Hilton Head	William McCutchen	Earl Crown
Mount Pleasant, SC	Christ Church	Michael Bauer	Tobe Hester
		Jon Payne	Mike Royal
North Charleston, SC	Two Rivers	Jeremy Mullen	
Orangeburg, SC	New City Fellowship	JP Sibley	
	Trinity	John Mark Patrick	
Summerville, SC	Hope Community	Nathan Francis	
		Sam Joyner Jr.	
		Jacob Lee	
Metro Atlanta			
Atlanta, GA	Atlanta Westside	Steven Gilchrist	John Gunter
		Walter Henegar	Nagib Hermes
		Woonny Kim	
		Jason Kriaski	
	Brookhaven	Zach Bradley	
	ChristChurch	Jeffery Hamm	Chris LeCraw
			Randy Stair
	Church/Redeemer	Bob Brunson	Chuck Francis
	Intown Community	Luke Brodine	Patrick Freeman
			Joseph Thompson
			Jim Wert Jr.
	Ponce	Hace Cargo	Jay Duff
		Tolivar Wills	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Metro Atlanta, continued			
Atlanta, GA	Tucker Westminster	Erik Veerman Rush Hill Carlton Wynne	Russell Berry Chet Lilly John White Jr. Kevin Lanclous
Covington, GA	Trinity	Matt Abel Rob Rienstra	David Vogelpohl
Cumming, GA Fayetteville, GA	GracePointe Covenant	James Nichols Jamie Lambert John Sutton	Frank Brown
Franklin, GA Johns Creek, GA	Redemption Fell Salem Perimeter	Bill Heard Howard Brown Ryan Brown Bob Cargo Ryan Carson Bob Carter Caleb Click Herschel Hatcher Matthew Means Jeff Norris Randy Pope Eric Ryan Randy Schlichting Jerry Schriver Chip Sweney Jr. Tony Thomas	Clint Demetriou Ryan Grant Alex Gue Tino Imbesi John Morris John Purcell III Randy Renbarger Mark Rockett Jamey Short Chad Turner Ryan Wood
Lawrenceville, GA	New City	Brandon Dean Ryan Johnson	Joe Brand
Lilburn, GA	Kainos Parkview	John Thompson James Martin	
Marietta, GA	East Cobb	Tim Locke Paul Owens	Bob Edwards Francois Longeiret
Norcross, GA Peachtree City, GA	Christos Community Carriage Lane	Alex Villasana Doug Griffith Sam Hogan Adam Peeler	Vic Gaylor Greg Rosser
Sharpsburg, GA Stockbridge, GA	Christ The Rock	Drew Archer John Stovall John Burch McKay Caston Stephen Maginas Michael Phillips Guy Richard James Saxon	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Metropolitan New York			
Manhasset, NY	Living Faith Comm	Philip Sangjin Chung	
New York, NY	Emmanuel	Scott Strickman	
	Redeemer	David Bisgrove	
		Michael Keller	
		Rich McCaskill III	Bruce Terrell
		Bruce O'Neil	
		Hector Sanchez Jr.	
		Jeffrey White	
	Redeem East Harlem	Justin Adour	
Oyster Bay, NY	North Shore Comm	John Yenchko	
Palisades Park, NJ	Exilic	Aaron Chung	
		Jay Harvey III	
		Gene Joo	
Stamford, CT	Grace		Michael Taliercio
Water Mill, NY	Grace	Mark Middlekauff	
		Abraham Cho	
		Jim Fredere	
		Wei Ho	
		Jon Storck	
		Andrew Terrell	
Mississippi Valley			
Bailey, MS	Bailey	Eric Mabbott	
Brandon, MS	Brandon	John Dawson	Scotty Dickey
Byram, MS	Grace	Roger Collins	
Carthage, MS	Forest Grove		Brad Gomillion
Clinton, MS	Pinehaven	Allen Stanton	Kevin Burns
			Larkin Chapman
	Providence	Ian Kayser	
Delhi, LA	Delhi	Chris Wright	
Flowood, MS	Lakeland	John Duke	William Davis
		Steve Jussely	William Sutton
		John Revell	
Jackson, MS	First	David Felker	Ned Currie
		Wiley Lowry III	George Fair
		Jamie Peipon	Craig Flowers
		David Strain	Claude Harbarger
			Bill Stone Jr.
			Alan Walters
	Redeemer	Brian Gault	
		Elbert McGowan Jr.	
		Zack Owens	
Louisville, MS	First	Matt Miller	Steven Holman
		Scott Phillips	Mike Triplett
Macon, MS	Macon	Michael Butterfield	
Madden, MS	Carolina	Perry McCall	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Mississippi Valley, continued			
Madison, MS	Madison Heights	Wally Bumpas Jr.	
Meridian, MS	Northpointe	Mason Kiple Kevin Vollema	
Monroe, LA	Ouachita	Harris Bond	
Pearl, MS	Pearl	Joey McLeod Jr.	David Powe
Philadelphia, MS	First	David Storment	
Raymond, MS	Raymond	Zachery Byrd	
Ridgeland, MS	Highlands	Bradford Mercer Joseph Wheat III	Hap Farber Mac McGehee Kevin Russell
	Pear Orchard	Christian Brewer Caleb Cangelosi Dean Williams	James Clark Ken Haynes John Moran
Ruston, LA	Covenant Reformed	Chris Stevens	Chuck Murphy Rob Pierce Samuel Hutton
Tchula, MS	Tchula		
Union, MS	First	Christopher Shelton	
Vaiden, MS	Blackmonton	Philip McRae	
Winona, MS	First	Andy Coburn	
Yazoo City, MS	First Second	Charles Wingard	Rob Coker Jamie Peaster
		Ligon Duncan III Robert Hays Wayne Herring Jeff Jordan Ralph Kelley Mark Lowrey Jr. Fred Marsh Joshua Rieger Jim Stewart Guy Waters	
Missouri			
Ballwin, MO	Twin Oaks	David Barnes Russell St. John	Brian Roby Robert Wilkinson
Byrnes Mill, MO	Spring Hills	Dave Stain	
Chesterfield, MO	Chesterfield	Hugh Barlett Tony Howard Justin Huensch Owen Tarantino	George Middendorf John Ranheim
Columbia, MO	Midtown Redeemer	Ross Dixon Ryan Speck	Darrell Allgaier Ken Leslie
Eureka, MO	Heritage	Jesse York	
Farmington, MO	Grace	Allan Harmingening Tyler Hendley	Paul Earhart

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Missouri, continued			
Kirkwood, MO	Trinity	Chris Polski Pablo Rosales	Thomas Schmidt
Maplewood, MO	Crossroads		Kyle Keating
Owensville, MO	Redeem Grace Fell	Charles Stover	Greg Brown
St. Louis, MO	Covenant	Greg Meyer Christopher Smith	John Bauer
	Grace & Peace Fell	Mike Brandenstein	
	Kirk of the Hills	Chad Townsley	Lowell Pitzer John Tubbesing Phil VanValkenburg Christian Madsen Joe Thompson
	Memorial	Samuel Dolby Greg Johnson Keith Robinson	
	Midtown		Marcus Whitman
	New City Fell		Steve Schaper
	New City South	Nicholas Dahlquist	
	New City West End	Anthony Johnson Thurman Williams	
	Restoration Comm	Jon Eagin Daniel Song	
Union, MO	Trinity	Curtis Crumpecker Jr.	
Washington, MO	New Port	Darrell Jung	
Wentzville, MO	New Creation	Loren Bell	
		Cartee Bales John Chung Kenneth Conklin Phil Douglass Phil Fiol Ben Hoemann Benjamin Kieffer Robert Kim Tim LeCroy Brad Matthews Jay Sklar	
Nashville			
Brentwood, TN	All Saints	Matthew Bradley Nathan McCall	Jay Hollis JD Stuart
Columbia, TN	Zion	Paul Joiner Jeff Wilkins	
Cookeville, TN	Grace	Step Morgan	
Franklin, TN	Christ Community	Ken Leggett Randy Lovelace Mike Smith	Stephen Bingham Steve Kuhn Elliott Wood

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder	
Nashville, continued	Cornerstone	Tony Giles Benjamin Griffith Nathan Shurden	Randy Allen	
	Mercy Parish	Ryan Doyle Jamie Crampton	Brandon Herrenbruck Michael Mastroberti Jason Parolini John Pink Al Williams	
	Goodlettsville, TN	Faith		
	Mt. Juliet, TN	Hickory Grove	Kenny Silva Mitchell Carter	
	Murfreesboro, TN	Trinity	Stacey Croft Mika Edmondson David Filson Russ Ramsey Scott Sauls Todd Teller	
	Nashville, TN	Christ	Jeff Creasy Tom Drury LeeEric Fesko Buz Graham Doug Korn Bill Mooney Mac Purdy Rob Wheeler	
		City Covenant	David Richter Ryan Anderson Patrick Curles	Jeremy Kath Bryce Sullivan Jack Watkins Joshua Davis Ryan Hudson
		Flatrock Community	J Hager	
		Midtown Fellowship	Matt Avery Brant Bonetti Elliott Cherry Darrell Jones Jeremy Kemp Eric Ashley	
		Parks West End Comm	John Bourgeois IV Carter Crenshaw Greg Davis Chan Kilgore Monte Starkes	Chuck Merritt
Nolensville, TN	Southpointe Comm	Paul Boyd Bill Clark	Greg Brinkmann Frank Wonder	
Rockvale, TN	Redeemer			
Tullahoma, TN	Covenant	Mike Fennema Charles McGowan Steve Robertson Kevin Teasley Kevin Twit Bill Tyson Britton Wood		

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
New Jersey			
Allenwood, NJ	Calvary	Tom Harr Jr.	
Cherry Hill, NJ	Covenant	Bob Orner	
Lawrenceville, NJ	Hope	Stephen O'Neill	Jason Method
		David Rowe	
Mount Laurel, NJ	Grace	Ted Trefsgar Jr.	
Northfield, NJ	Hope Community	Don Waltermeyer Jr.	
New River			
Barboursville, WV	Providence Reformed	Mark Kozak	Rob Finley
Buckhannon, WV	Grace	Alan Hager	
Hurricane, WV	Redeemer	Kurt Gray	
		Barrett Jordan	
Nitro, WV	Covenant	Josh Bailey	
		Michael VanDerLinden	
New York State			
Ballston Spa, NY	Hope		John VanVoorhis
Buffalo, NY	Christ Central	Christopher Jhu	
Cortland, NY	Church/Redeemer	Daniel Wells	
Ithaca, NY	New Life	Steve Froehlich	
Rochester, NY	Grace	Marc Swan	
	New City Fell	Chris Holdridge	
Rock Tavern, NY	Westminster	Kevin Chiarot	
Syracuse, NY	Christ	Jonathan Hood	
North Florida			
Fernandina Beach, FL	Grace Community	David Bradsher	
Gainesville, FL	Faith	Kevin Nelson	
Jacksonville, FL	Christ	Dave Abney	
		Willie Addison Jr.	
		Matt Morrison	
	Christ Church	John Lawler	
	Ortega	Joshua Hinson	Kevin Morris
	Westminster	Stephen Spinnenweber	Bill Cheek
			Tim Vertz
Live Oak, FL	Community	Tommy Peterson	Klaas Reyneveld
Middleburg, FL	Pinewood	J.D. Funyak	Jay Funyak
		Ren Zepp	Jason Henning
			Rick Roberts
St. Augustine, FL	Good News	David Aucremann	
St. Johns, FL	Cross Creek	Keith Snow	
		Dave Burke	
		Larry Roff	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
North Texas			
Amarillo, TX	Redeemer		David Gatz
Anna, TX	Grace and Peace	Matt Wood	Brian Heise James Poteet
Arlington, TX	Redeemer		Stephen Wolters
Carrollton, TX	Metrocrest	Bill Lovell	Paul Hartgrove Larry Perry
Celina, TX	New City	Jake Patton	
Colleyville, TX	Colleyville	Josh Anderson	
Dallas, TX	Christ the King	Mark Husband	Greg Gorman
	Lakewood		Randall Gradle
	New City Fell	Robbie Mills	
	New St. Peter's	Alex Dean	Jim Pocta
		Noah Wiersema	
	Park Cities	Mark Davis	Brad Bradley
		Pete Deison	Kyle Manley
		Paul Goebel	Rick Owens
		Bill Lamberth Jr.	Bill Thomas
			Steven Vanderhill
			Blake Woodall
Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth	Brandon Eggar	
	Grace Community	Andrew Sarnicki	
Frisco, TX	Christ Community	Patrick Poteet	
Lubbock, TX	Providence	Ronnie Rowe	Peter Griffith
McKinney, TX	Redeemer	Seth Miller	Michael Lovelace
		Jordan Stone	Gary Matlack
		Mark Trigsted	Daniel Wann
Midland, TX	Providence	Dagan Mayfield	
Paris, TX	Faith	Justin Hilliard	
Plano, TX	Trinity	Jeff Morrow	Chip Gorman
		Jake Yohannan	Scott McNeill
Prosper, TX	Zion	Mark Belonga	
Richardson, TX	Town North	David Rogers	Joel Aguilar
			David Schlimme
Rockwall, TX	Rockwall	Zach Pummill	Rob Scheele
		Marq Toombs	
Shreveport, LA	Grace	Howard Davis III	
		Quinn Hill	
Southlake, TX	Lakeside	Donny Friederichsen	Steven Stallard
			Ben Thompson
Temple, TX	Redeemer	David Rapp	Ken Smith
Tyler, TX	Fifth Street	Drew Pressoir	Clint Covington
			Matthew Marshall
Weatherford, TX	Weatherford		Wes Hammond
			Robert Looper

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
North Texas, continued			
		Keith Berger Lou Best Ben Dunson Richey Goodrich Chris Morrison Graham Purcell Justin Smith Davis Sweatt JB Wilbanks	
Northern California			
Brigham City, UT	Brigham City Bible	Alex Ford	
Elk Grove, CA	New City Fellowship	Lance Lewis	
Fremont, CA	New Life	Kevin Timmons	
Fresno, CA	Grace Fresno	Brad Mills	Ray Sanchez
Honolulu, HI	The City	John Kim	
Palo Alto, CA	Grace	David Jones Iron Kim Ben Melchers Daniel Katches	Jason Greene
Paso Robles, CA	Covenant		
Roseville, CA	Valley Springs		Chad Edison Sean Gann
Salt Lake City, UT	New City Salt Lake	Mark Peach Rob Wootton	
San Anselmo, CA	Grace	Jeremiah Hill	
San Jose, CA	Grace South Bay	Bob Crossland	Matt Cabot
Santa Rosa, CA	Redeemer	Michael Awtry	
St. George, UT	All Saints Reformed	Ben Kappers	
West Jordan, UT	Jordan Valley	Jon Stoddard	
		Chase Daws John Kong Jon Medlock	
Northern Illinois			
Aledo, IL	Trinity		Larry McAuley Troy Young
Freeport, IL	Grace Fellowship	Justin Coverstone	
Hanna City, IL	Hanna City	David Keithley	Ben Harding Fred Winterroth
Normal, IL	Christ	Brad Lucht	
Paxton, IL	Westminster	Steve Jones	
Peoria, IL	Grace	John Cherne III Greg Grindinger	Michael Flinn Keith Reynolds
	Redeemer	Mark Henninger	
Springfield, IL	Exodus	Stephen Lawrence	
Urbana, IL	All Souls	Luke Herche	
		Ethan Brown Bryan Chapell	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Northern New England			
Exeter, NH	Exeter		Ernie Shipman
Lewiston, ME	Free Grace	Per Almquist	
Pembroke, NH	Christ	Ian Hard	
St. Albans, VT	Trinity	Seth Anderson	
Northwest Georgia			
Canton, GA	Cherokee	Clif Daniell	Daryl Lipham Chuck Lokey Stephen Murphy Kirk Swanson
	Grace	Robie Hembree	
Carrollton, GA	King's Chapel	Andrew Hendley	
Cedartown, GA	Grace	Matthew Rabe	
Dallas, GA	Grace Covenant		Daniel Stout
Douglasville, GA	Grace	Greg Bylsma David Gilbert	Justen Ellis Timothy Verner
Kennesaw, GA	Christ Community	Cameron Barham	Jonathan Stuckert
Marietta, GA	Hope	Martin Hawley	
Powder Springs, GA	Midway	David Hall Marc Harrington	Rodney Pritchett Wes Richardson Bob Whitaker
Rome, GA	Seven Hills Fell	Bryan Pierce Jeff Summers	
Smyrna, GA	Smyrna	Danny Myers Joel Smit	Jared Kee Jordan Lee
Villa Rica, GA	First	Thomas Myers	
Woodstock, GA	Christ Covenant	Job Dalomba Brian Stock Buster Williams	
Ohio			
Boardman, OH	Cornerstone	Mark Bell	
Hudson, OH	Grace	Rhett Dodson	Mark Bailey Gregg Gorzelle
	Redeemer	Jacob Piland Jason Piland Scott Wright	Ray Gilliland Ernie Miller
Mayfield Heights, OH	Story	Jeremy King	
Medina, OH	Harvest	David Wallover Seth Young	
North Canton, OH	Trinity	Lee Hutchings	Scott Wulff
Vincent, OH	Veto		John Fennell Bill Howell
		Nate Bower	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Ohio Valley			
Centerville, OH	South Dayton	Casey Cramer Michael Littell	Bruce Page Shahram Parvani
Cincinnati, OH	New City	Brian Ferry Zach Meyer Michael Previterra Josh Reitano Ryan Zhang	
Danville, KY	Grace PCA	Shane Terrell	Kevin Dilbeck
Elizabethtown, KY	Grace	Monty Hershberger	
Hamilton, OH	Living Hope PCA	Chad Grindstaff	
Lexington, KY	Hope Tates Creek	Marshall Wilmhoff Robert Cunningham Mark Randle	Paul Adams Chuck Sox Ronald Whitley Matt Dielman Herb Melton Jake Williams
Louisville, KY	Community		
	Redeemer	Fritz Games Murray Nickel	
Ludlow, KY	Trinity	Billy Otten	Shay Fout Tom Hill Don Bond
Middlesboro, KY	Grace Fellowship		
Richmond, KY	Covenant Community	Josh Crawford Travis Stephens Larry Hoop	
Pacific			
Glendale, CA	Calvary	Philip George	
Los Angeles, CA	Pacific Crossroads	Paul Hahn Jr.	
North Hills, CA	Valley	Ron Svendsen	
South Pasadena, CA	The Way	Michael Gregory Timothy Lien	
Pacific Northwest			
Anchorage, AK	Faith	Jerid Krulish	Bill March
Beaverton, OR	Evergreen	Adam Parker	Mike Barnes Charlie Meeker Jim Sherwin Howie Donahoe
Bellevue, WA	Hope	Martin Hedman	
Boise, ID	Boise	Brian Frey	
Hillsboro, OR	Ascension	Eric Costa	
Issaquah, WA	Covenant	Andrew Perkins	
Mill Creek, WA	Trinitas	Brant Bosserman	Scott Hedgcock
Portland, OR	Hope	Charlie Shaw	
Poulsbo, WA	Liberty Bay	Patrick Severson	Everett Henry
Puyallup, WA	Resurrection	David Scott	John Galle
Seattle, WA	Trinity	Gavin Brand Michael Kelly Luke Morton	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Pacific Northwest, continued			
Spokane, WA	Coram Deo	Matt Allhands	
Tacoma, WA	Faith	Steven Nicoletti	
Vancouver, WA	Westminster	Chris Wiley	Tom Berkompas Camden Spiller
Yakima, WA	St. Andrews	Craig Harris	
		Jonathan Kiel	
Palmetto			
Aiken, SC	Grace New Covenant	Trent Still Brad Rogers	Andrew Rutherford
Blair, SC	Salem	Richard Hodges	
Chapin, SC	Chapin	Scott Dinkins	
Columbia, SC	Christ Covenant Columbia	Trevor Allen David Gentino	Robert Allen
	Eau Claire Northeast St. Andrews	Adam Shields Eric Walter Marc Rattray	David Layman Larry Mack
Irmo, SC	Grace Point	Todd Boone Keith Kneeshaw	
Lexington, SC	Lexington		James Inman Richard Laughridge Joe Wright
North Augusta, SC Winnsboro, SC	North Augusta Fell Lebanon	Jason Cornwell Matthew Coplin	Jason Pope
		Craig Wilkes	
Pee Dee			
Alcolu, SC	New Harmony	David Sanders	Christopher DuRant
Andrews, SC	Andrews	Mark Horne	
Cheraw, SC	Faith	Joe Arnold	Bob Eskridge
Conway, SC	Grace	Kyle Brent	Sidney MacIntyre Stephen Wayne Michael Brown
Dillon, SC	First	Matt Adams Don Stager	
Florence, SC	Faith Good Shepherd	Jordan Gallo Stacey Severance	Jack North Tim Bell Andy McInville John Ropp
Hartsville, SC	Hartsville	Mike Moreau	
Kingstree, SC	Central Kingstree	Robert Jolly Joe Womack	Will Carsten
	Mouzon	Michael Brown	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Pee Dee, continued			
Myrtle Beach, SC	Faith Surfside	John Irwin Brian Peterson	Carroll Armstrong Paul Goodrich Ron Riesz
Sumter, SC	Westminster	Stuart Mizelle James Carter	
Philadelphia			
Chestnut Hill, PA	Cresheim Valley		Lindsay Brooks Jeffrey Hart
Glenside, PA	New Life Rock of Israel	Mark Moser Fred Klett III	
Philadelphia, PA	Northeast Community Renewal Tenth	Maranatha Chung Dwight Yoo Liam Goligher Ryan Egli SJ Lim	
Philadelphia Metro West			
Bryn Mawr, PA	Proclamation	Jeremy Johnson	Bob Carlson Mike Harnish Patrick Tolbert
Coatesville, PA Harleysville, PA Upper Darby, PA	Olive Street Covenant Crossroads Comm	Timothy Brindle John Rohrman David Van Meerbeke Phil DeHart Dave Garner Peter Lillback	
Piedmont Triad			
Burlington, NC Clemmons, NC Greensboro, NC Lexington, NC	Northside New Hope Covenant Grace Meadowview Ref	Jim Mitchell Benjamin Tietje Tom Brown George Sayour	Greg Greene Ozzie Marin
Winston-Salem, NC	Hope Redeemer Salem Trinity	Ethan Smith Giorgio Hiatt Chris Horne Ben Milner Joel Branscomb Derek Radney Palmer Robertson Douglas Stelzig Darin Stone	Trevor Laurence

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Pittsburgh			
Bovard, PA	Laurel Highlands	Adrian Armel	
East Liverpool, OH	First Evangelical	Gregory Mead	
Harrison City, PA	New Life	Matthew Fisher	
Indiana, PA	Resurrection Indiana	David Schweissing	
LaVale, MD	Faith	Lee Capper	
Leechburg, PA	Kiski Valley	Matt Stevens	Michael Myers
Ligonier, PA	Pioneer	David Kenyon	
Murrysville, PA	Murrysville Comm	Seth Gurley	
		Jason Leist	
Pittsburgh, PA	City Reformed	John McCombs	Jim Partridge
	First Reformed	Brent Horan	
		James Weidenaar	
	Grace and Peace	Travis Scott	
Robinson Tship, PA	Providence	Rick Appleton	Denny Baker
		Jeff Garrett	Jim Stuart
		Ray Heiple Jr.	
Washington, PA	Washington	Mike Bowen	
		John Kenyon	
		Frank Moser	
		Adam Thomas	
Platte Valley			
Fremont, NE	Grace	Kyle McClellan	
Lincoln, NE	Zion	Stu Kerns	
		Tag Tuck	
Omaha, NE	Harvest Community	Jacob Gerber	Brandon Scholting
		Andrew Lightner	
		Michael Gordon	
		Thomas Kuhn	
		Jason Schafer	
Potomac			
Alexandria, VA	Alexandria	Josh Diack	
		Tom Holliday	
Annandale, VA	One Voice Fell	Chris Sicks	
Arlington, VA	Christ	Billy Boyce	Mark Doehnert
			Bob Mattes
	Emmanuel	Nathan Boyette	
		Scott Seaton	
Ashburn, VA	King's Cross	Paul May	
Bowie, MD	Reformed	Stephen Fix	Steve Hollidge
Burke, VA	Christ	Porter Harlow	Scott Hatch
California, MD	Cornerstone	Dae Gyu Kim	Stu Asp
			Doug Leepa
College Park, MD	Wallace	Ryan Moore	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Potomac, continued			
Derwood, MD	Shady Grove	Charlie Baile	
Fairfax, VA	New Hope	David Coffin Jr. Paul Wolfe	
Falls Church, VA	Chinese Christian	John Chua	
Frederick, MD	Faith Reformed	John Armstrong Jr.	Martin Hudzinski Rich Rochford Jr.
Fulton, MD	Good Hope	Jack Waller	
Germantown, MD	Christ		Matt Pickens
Herndon, VA	First Asian Indian	Jegar Chinnavan	
	Grace Christian	Zhongming Chen	
Lusby, MD	Harvest Fellowship	Barry Noll	Cal Metz
Manassas, VA	Spriggs Road	Matt Bowles	Bo Deane
		Michael Mang	
Martinsburg, WV	Pilgrim	Kirk Blankenship	
McLean, VA	McLean	Ryan Laughlin	Tom Pilsch
		Matt Lietzen	Steve Welke
		Terence Little	
		JT Tarter II	
Silver Spring, MD	Mosaic Community	Joel St. Clair	
Waldorf, MD	Christ New Comm	Abraham Nuquay	
Warrenton, VA	Heritage	Todd Gwennap	Edward Faudree Erick Reese
Washington, DC	Grace	Glenn Hoburg	Ryan Bratt
		Duke Kwon	
		Andrew Russell	
		Russell Whitfield	
		Remargo Yancie	
Woodbridge, VA	Crossroads		Josiah Huggins Aaron Root
		Cyril Chavis	
		Chris Garriott	
		Ken Godwin	
		Irwyn Ince Jr.	
		Joseph Ko	
		Michael Langer	
		Don Sampson	
Providence			
Albertville, AL	Grace Fellowship	Caleb Ehmke	
		Jackie Gaston Jr.	
Athens, AL	Grace Covenant	Jeff Hooker III	
Cullman, AL	Christ Covenant	Jason Ellerbee	Jonathan Haynes
Decatur, AL	Decatur	Rick Stark	Brian Rodgers
		Nathan White	Blake Temple
Florence, AL	Redeemer	Scott Barber	James Thigpen
Fort Payne, AL	Grace	Dave Latham	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Providence, continued			
Huntsville, AL	Cornerstone	Brian Russ Wilson Shirley Adam Venable	John Bise Frank Cohee
	Southside Southwood The Village Westminster	Alex Shipman James Ensley David Hammond Stephen Hooks Nick Robison Joe Steele III William Plott	Skeets Simonis Jr. Dennis Bradford Tom Adams Robert Johnson Ken Shipman
Madison, AL	Valley	William Plott	
Meridianville, AL	North Hills	Jacob Hale Adam Tisdale	
Owens Cross Rds, AL	Christ	Mike Calvert	Crawford Dillon
Scottsboro, AL	Redeemer	Dieter Paulson	
Tuscumbia, AL	First	Scott Edburg Randy Thompson	John Waggoner Al Willis
		Ron Clegg Lenden Fleeman Glenn Gresham Joel Linton	
Rio Grande			
Albuquerque, NM	City High Desert	Justin Edgar Dan Rose	
El Paso, TX	Christ the King	Dawson Hunt	
Las Cruces, NM	University	Jordan Huff Patrick Tebbano	Robin Rose
White Rock, NM	Bryce Avenue	Zachary Garris	Charles Bell
		Daniel Herron	
Rocky Mountain			
Aurora, CO	New Life	Tim Sin	
Castle Rock, CO	Cornerstone	Shawn Young	Dennis Helsel Bruce Olson
Centennial, CO	Elevate Hope Skyview	Brett Weston Rick Vasquez	
Cheyenne, WY	Northwoods	Blake Denlinger	Timothy Anderson
Colorado Springs, CO	Cheyenne Mountain Forestgate Grace and Peace Village Seven	Matthew Capone Matt Giesman Vincent Hoppe Chris Hodge	Jim Franks
	Westside	Davis Morgan	Jim Johnson David Kliewer EJ Nusbaum Michael Van Arsdale

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Rocky Mountain, continued			
Denver, CO	Denver	Ronnie Garcia	
Falcon, CO	High Plains Fell	Matt Holst	John Leaf
Gillette, WY	Harvest Reformed	Caleb Nelson	
Kalispell, MT	Faith Covenant	Lloyd Pierson	
Lafayette, CO	The Table	Brad Edwards	
		Bryce Hales	
Lander, WY	Covenant	Scott MacNaughton	Kelly Dehnert Doug Duncan
Littleton, CO	Deer Creek Comm	Duane Cory Daniel Nealon JonPaul Watson	Tim Ringquist
Longmont, CO	Redeemer Longmont	Justin Chappell Paul Ranheim	
Montrose, CO	Trinity Reformed		Ronald Kruis
New Castle, CO	Trinity Reformed	Zach Kruis	
Westminster, CO	Rocky Mountain	Shane Waldron Christopher Weniger	
		Dominic Aquila Mark Bates III Wes Calton Bill Nikides Sam Rico Kurt Schimke	
Savannah River			
Augusta, GA	Cliffwood	Geoff Gleason	Jackson Cox Jon Thompson
	First	Mike Hearon D.T. House II Ken McHeard Luke Niday	
	Lakemont	Dave Vosseller	
Brunswick, GA	Redeemer	Jim Shaw II	
Dublin, GA	Covenant	Jonathan Rowe	
Evans, GA	Christ Church Redeemer	Robbie Hendrick Anthony Brogan Charlie Stakely IV	Glynn Dyer
Lyons, GA	Grace Community	Jason Davis	
Martinez, GA	Westminster	Mark Scholten	Dan Nielsen
Richmond Hill, GA	New Covenant	Dave Senters	Travis Peacock Rob Shepherd
Savannah, GA	Grace	JC Cunningham	Mark Board Tom Taylor Jr. Ty Donaldson
	The Kirk	Peter Whitney	
St. Simons Is, GA	Golden Isles	Alex Brown	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Savannah River, continued			
Statesboro, GA	Trinity	Roland Barnes Henry Beaulieu	
		Evan Gear Terry Johnson Nathanael Miller Timothy Shaw	
Siouxlands			
Duluth, MN	Grace	Nathan Lee	
Hinckley, MN	First	Dan Brendsel	
Minnetonka, MN	Good Shepherd	Judson Marvel	Paul Helseth Blake Pool
Rapid City, SD	Black Hills Comm	Art Sartorius	
Spearfish, SD	New Covenant	Luke Bluhm	
Sturgis, SD	Foothills Community	Jeffrey Neikirck	
		Bill Carr Matt Ryman	
South Coast			
Aliso Viejo, CA	Aliso Creek	Nick Locke	
Escondido, CA	New Life	Julius Kim Won Kwak Robin Lee	
Irvine, CA	New Life	Jeffrey Suhr	
La Mesa, CA	New Life	Connor Underseth Joel Wood	
Murrieta, CA	Christ	Robert Recio Dan Warne	
Newport Beach, CA	Redeemer	Danny Morgan	
San Diego, CA	Harbor City Resurrection	Omar Ortiz Robert Novak	
Yorba Linda, CA	Grace	Ben Muresan Clayton Willis	
		Chad Brewer Ray Call III Steven Cooper Lloyd Kim	
South Florida			
Coral Springs, FL	First	David Barry	Greg Misesyko James Poole
Cutler Bay, FL	Pinelands	Aldo Leon	Christopher Barrett Richard Closius

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
South Florida, continued			
Dorado, PR	Trinity	Zachary Lutz	
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Coral Ridge	Robert Pacienza Andrew Siegenthaler	
Hollywood, FL	St Andrews Park Rd	TJ Campo	
Homestead, FL	Redlands Community	Lee Mashburn	
Miami, FL	New City Fellowship	Steven Lantz	
San Juan, PR	Iglesia La Travesía	Yamil Alejandro Jose' Carlo Mirabal Juan Jose Cotto	
Southwest Ranch, FL	Christ Covenant	Brian Kelso	
Wilton Manors, FL	New	Justin Beam	
		Al Barth Woody Woodham	
South Texas			
Austin, TX	All Saints	Brent Baker Tim Frickenschmidt	
	Christ the King	Timothy Fox	
	CrossPointe	Steve Johnson	
	Emmanuel	Adam Lopez Greg Ward	
	Redeemer	Eric Landry	Landy Ligon Barry McBee Joshua Torrey Mike McDonald
Bryan, TX	Westminster	Wade Coleman Tree Triolo	
Harlingen, TX	Covenant	Italo Furieri	Jim Frost
Kerrville, TX	Christ	Billy Crain	Tuan La
New Braunfels, TX	Christ	John Bennett Berdj Tchilinguirian	
San Antonio, TX	Christ	Luke Evans	
	Redeemer	Matt Beham	Jeremy Whitley
	Trinity Grace	Victor Martinez Michael Novak	
		Tom Gibbs Ross Lockwood Lee Wright	
Southeast Alabama			
Auburn , AL	Christ	Eric Zellner	
Auburn, AL	Covenant	Jere Scott Bradshaw	Steve Dowling
Brewton, AL	First	Parker Johnson	Earl Cooper
Clanton, AL	Grace Fellowship	Kevin Corley	
Dothan, AL	First	Caleb Galloway	Nick Shimoda Banks Smith
	Westwood	Lynn Miley	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Southeast Alabama, continued			
Enterprise, AL	First	Chris Thomas	Gerry Whitaker
Eufaula, AL	Covenant	Brewer Ames III	
Greenville, AL	First	Rob Fossett	
Hayneville, AL	Hayneville	Lincoln Speece	Robert Haigler
Millbrook, AL	Millbrook	Brannon Bowman	
Monroeville, AL	Monroeville	Roger McCay Jr.	
Montgomery, AL	Eastwood	Lee Bloodworth Jr.	Tommy James
		Ross Hodges	Lee Sumner
		Billy Joseph III	
	First	Barton Lester	
	Trinity	Reed DePace	Rodger Morrison
		Michael Howell	Mark Anderson
		Claude McRoberts III	Thomas Danielson
			Fred Johnson
			John Steiner
	Young Meadows	Adam Coppock	
Okinawa, JAP	Okinawa Covenant	Miguel D'Azevedo	
Opelika, AL	Trinity		Roger Lien
			Dozier Smith T
Prattville, AL	First	Allan Bledsoe	Doug Gordon
		Bryant Hansen	
Stuttgart, GER	Covenant Fellowship	Nicholas Bullock	
Troy, AL	First	Rick Holbert	
Wiesbaden, GER	Christ	Phil Gelston	
		Michael Alsup	
		Braden Benson	
		Samuel Bratt	
		Tanner Crum	
		Terry Fox	
		Joe Harrell	
		Henry Morris	
		Gary Spooner	
		James Williams	
Southern Louisiana			
Baton Rouge, LA	South Baton Rouge	Nathan Tircuit	
	Westminster	Brandon Bernard	
Lafayette, LA	Parish	Josh Kines	Alec Moyer
Metairie, LA	Grace	Richard Davies	
New Orleans, LA	Redeemer	Ray Cannata	Jason Cabell
			Ken Kostrzewa
	St. Roch Community		Aaron Collier
Zachary, LA	Plains	Ricky Glenn	
		Campbell Silman	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Southern New England			
Boston, MA	Citylife	Daniel Paik	
Charlestown, RI	Christ Our Hope	Daniel Jarstfer	Chris Shoemaker
Concord, MA	Redeemer	Matthew Kerr	Cris Campelli Rob Steele
Coventry, CT	Presbyterian	Will Snyder	
Dorchester, MA	Christ the King		David Daniel Patrick Sewell
Manchester, CT	Presbyterian	Michael Robison	
New Haven, CT	Christ	Jefferson Bennett Curran Bishop Mike Brunjes Preston Graham Jr. Benjamin Sheldon	
Newton/LF, MA	Christ the King New	Nathan Barczi Bradley Barnes Troy Albee	
North Pembroke, MA	Grace		Nick Angert
Providence, RI	Trinity		Andy Norquist
Quincy, MA	Christ the King	Helio Carneiro	
	Christ the Redeemer	Matthew Owens	
Springfield, MA	Grace	Stephen LaValley	
W. Springfield, MA	Covenant Comm	Rodney Collins Robert Hill Pedro Lino	
Woburn, MA	Christ the King Unit.	Timothy Chang Lucas Dourado Thomas Hudson Solomon Kim	
Southwest Florida			
Brandon, FL	Westminster	Jeremy Fuller Wes Holland Jr. Jimbo Mullen	Jim Eggert Sylvester Pittman
Clearwater, FL	Christ Community	Bob Brubaker	
Indian Shores, FL	Christ the King	Peter LaPointe	
Lakeland, FL	Covenant	Jeff McDonald Adam McNeal David McWilliams	Allen Montgomery Jared Morrison Scott Robinson
	Redeemer	Dave Martin	
	Strong Tower	Brian MacDonald	
Lutz, FL	Cornerstone	Sam Lago	
Mulberry, FL	Greater Hope	Stan McMahan Jr.	Ryan Choate
Palm Harbor, FL	Grace Community	Brent Bergman	
Riverview, FL	Redeemer	Josh Gilman	
St. Petersburg, FL	City	Justin Woodall	Will Scott
	St. Petersburg	David Harding Alex Woods	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Southwest Florida, continued			
Tampa, FL	Christ Central	John Keen	Todd Bayley Ed Jordan
	Tampa Bay	Freddy Fritz	
Winter Haven, FL	Westtown	Morgan Lusk	Barry Bennett
	Cypress Ridge	Rodney Barton	
	Redeemer	Drew Bennett Tony Elswick Jonathan Winfree	
		Esaie Etienne Aldo Mondin	
Suncoast Florida			
Bonita Springs, FL	Bay	Patrick Womack	Michael Levenhagen Andy Mitchell
Bradenton, FL	Cornerstone	Phil Woods	
Cape Coral, FL	Providence Christian	Brent Lauder	
Lake Suzy, FL	Grace	David Stewart	
Marco Island, FL	Marco	Scott Kerens	
Naples, FL	Covenant	Aaron Dean Chris Voorhees Brent Whitefield	
North Ft. Myers, FL	North Ft. Myers	Dann Cecil	Aleksy Fomichenko
North Port, FL	Covenant of Grace		
	Word of Life	Arnie Brevick	
Sarasota, FL	Covenant Life	Ken Aldrich Bob Dillard Jr.	Jim Robinson
	Faith	Keith Ledford	
Venice, FL	Auburn Road	Dwight Dolby	
		Ted Hamm	
Susquehanna Valley			
Alexandria, PA	Christ Reformed	Angelo Valle	Pat Daly
Carlisle, PA	Carlisle Reformed	Matt Purdy Decherd Stevens	
Chambersburg, PA	Redeemer	Jeff Cottone	Edward Lankford
Harrisburg, PA	Second City	Peter Rowan	
	Trinity	Michael Wolcott	
Hummelstown, PA	Hershey	David Kertland	Lee Brooks John Mwaura James Ressler Patrick Rohal
Lancaster, PA	Harvest	Jim Furey	
	Westminster	Barry Cureton Dave Kieffer	
	Wheatland	Luke Le Duc Keith Winder	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Susquehanna Valley, continued			
Mount Joy, PA	Proclamation	Troy DeBruin	
Quarryville, PA	Faith Reformed	Michael Brown	
State College, PA	Oakwood	Owen Hughes	Brian Roberg
		Dan Kiehl	Douglas Sharp Jr.
York, PA	New Life	Erik Swanson	Joe Heidler
	Providence	Vince Wood	Darryl MacPherson
			Al Taglieri
		Bob Eickelberg	
		Paul Hyunkook Kim	
		Shibu Oommen	
Tennessee Valley			
Chattanooga, TN	Covenant	Jake Bennett	Adam Sanders
	First	John Jones IV	
		Gabe Fluhrer	Loren Hartley
		Mike Haberkorn	Mike Kramer
			Bart Rolan
	Grace+Peace	Benjie Slaton	
	New City Fell	Kevin Smith	Oliver Trimiew
	New City Fell E Lake	Josiah Katumu	
	North Shore Fell	Chris Powell	
		John Tomberlin	
	Restoration Southside	Jared Huffman	
Cleveland, TN	Trinity	Sam Brown	Ben Christmann
Crossville, TN	First	Andy Aikens	Robert Berman
			Jim Sparks
Dalton, GA	Grace	Adam Brokaw	
		Wes Parsons	
Dayton, TN	Westminster	Carter Johnson	
		Dennis Johnson	
Flintstone, GA	Chattanooga Valley	Dennis Louis	Rob Chaplin
Ft. Oglethorpe, GA	First	Ryan Biese	Nathan Bowers
			Wil Davis
Hixson, TN	Hixson	Thad Davis	
		Steven Edging	
		Robert Johnson	
Jasper, TN	Grace	Erik McDaniel	
Knoxville, TN	Christ Covenant	Seth Hammond	Andy Halbert Sr.
		Joel McCall	Mitchell Moore
			John Wood
	Redeemer	Shawn Slate	
	West Hills	John McKenzie	
Knoxville, TN	Resurrection	Brent Harriman	Bill Browne
LaFayette, GA	Highlands	Tom May	Dan Hudson

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Tennessee Valley, continued			
Lookout Mtn, TN	Lookout Mountain	Frank Hitchings III Chad Middlebrooks Wil Nettleton IV Brian Salter	Bill Davis Gill Jeong Don Kent Keith Michaels John Wingard
Louisville, TN	Christ the King	Nate Xanders	
Maryville, TN	Trinity	Jonathan Brooks	Barry Heaton
Morristown, TN	Lakeway	Chris Talley	
Oak Ridge, TN	Covenant	John Blevins III Sean Morris Nick Willborn	Brad Isbell William Prater
Rising Fawn, GA	Rock Creek Fellowship	Eric Youngblood	Scott Jones
Signal Mountain, TN	Mountain Fellowship Wayside	Jimmy Davis Brian Cosby	Aaron Gould David Moss
Sweetwater, TN	Christ	Wes Alford	
		Doyle Allen Carl Ellis Jr. Corey Pelton Jim Richter Chandler Rowlen John Mark Scruggs Curt Stapleton David Stoddard	
Tidewater			
Chesapeake, VA	Crosswater	Dan Kerley	
Hampton, VA	Calvary Reformed	TJ Schley	
Norfolk, VA	Trinity	Jack Howell Ben Lyon	
Suffolk, VA	Westminster Ref	Brett Carl	Bill Cover Micah Mattix
Virginia Beach, VA	Eastminster	David Zavadil	
	New Covenant	Jeff Elliott	Kurt Nelson
	New Life	Ken Christian Jr	Ken Christian Sr.
	Resurrection Comm	James Brock	
Williamsburg, VA	Grace Covenant	Dennis Griffith	Timothy Nargi Jr.
Warrior			
Aliceville, AL	First	Derrick Brite	Mark Gilliam Donny Sanders
Brent, AL	Brent	Mitchell Haubert	
Demopolis, AL	First		Scott Kirkpatrick Jimmy Mackin
Eutaw, AL	Pleasant Ridge	Tom Kay Jr.	
Selma, AL	New Covenant	Michael Perry	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
Warrior, continued			
Tuscaloosa, AL	Riverwood	Jeff Pate	Allen Powers
	Trinity	Pace Holdbrooks Richard Vise Jr.	
		Paul Kooistra John Robertson Ron Smith Stewart Swain	
West Hudson			
Glen Rock, NJ	Grace Redeemer	Steve Sage Peter Wang Brad Bissell	David Talcott
Montclair, NJ	Redeemer		
Short Hills, NJ	Covenant	Daniel Liu Rob Maeder	
Somerville, NJ	Crossroads Comm	John Hanna	
Westminster			
Bristol, TN	Walnut Hill	Andy Moehn	Jerry Neas AJ Babel Paul Gorman Theo Hagg Larry Steuck Daniel Witcher
Glade Spring, VA	Seven Springs	Thomas Rickard	
Greeneville, TN	Meadow Creek	Richard Steele	
Johnson City, TN	Christ Community	Bill Leuzinger Jim Powell	
	Westminster	Bobby Roberts Andy Wyatt	
Kingsport, TN	Westminster	Rob Dykes Steve Warhurst	
		Will Barbour III	
Wisconsin			
Cedar Grove, WI	Faith Reformed	Zachary Tarter	Steve Iler Ted Kemen
Delafield, WI	Cornerstone	Clay Smith	
Green Bay, WI	Jacob's Well	David Gallagher Dan Jackson Spencer Thomas	
La Crosse, WI	Christ Covenant	Michael Bowman	
Milwaukee, WI	Christ	Jon Talley	
Oconomowoc, WI	Grace & Peace	Ben Sinnard	
Pardeeville, WI	Grace	Charles Walton	
Wausau, WI	New Hope Comm	Tony Lombardo	
		Nick Bratcher	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ATTENDANCE SUMMARY:

TEACHING ELDERS	1634
RULING ELDERS	751
TOTAL	2385
PRESBYTERIES	88
CHURCHES	1036

ADDENDUM 1
(See Journal, p. 25)

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
INTERCHURCH RELATIONS
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. IRC Permanent Committee Report
- B. IRC Permanent Committee Minutes from:
September 8, 2021
April 12, 2022
- C. IRC Permanent Committee Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. IRC Permanent Committee Report
- B. IRC Permanent Committee Minutes from:
September 8, 2021
April 12, 2022
- C. IRC Permanent Committee Recommendations

III. Recommendations

- 1. That Fraternal Delegates, Corresponding Delegates, and Ecclesiastical Observers be welcomed and that the Assembly hear their greetings. *Adopted*
- 2. That visiting ministers be introduced to the General Assembly (BCO 13-3). *Adopted*
- 3. That the minutes of September 8, 2021, be approved without exception. *Adopted*
- 4. That the minutes of April 12, 2022, be approved without exception. *Adopted*
- 5. That Overture 2022-3 from Pee Dee Presbytery, "Withdraw from the National Association of Evangelicals" be answered in the affirmative. ~~negative based on the following:~~ *Adopted*

Grounds:

- ~~1. Overture 2022-3 repeats several arguments of Overtures 2011-12 and 2019-23 from Central Carolina Presbytery that the General Assembly has answered in the negative twice.~~

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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- ~~2. The PCA's being a member of the NAE is consistent with our Lord Jesus' prayer of John 17.~~
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-
- ~~3. The PCA's being a member of the NAE is consistent with our theology of the Church as expressed in the Westminster Confession, Chapters 25 and 26.~~
- ~~4. The First General Assembly gave Mission to the World permission to join the NAE to benefit from the NAE's services and expertise of the World Relief Commission, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, and the Chaplains Commission (M1GA, 1973, p. 39). In 1973, military chaplains were under MTW, but were later transferred to MNA.~~
- ~~5. In 1986, after several years of study, the IRC recommended that the PCA as a denomination join the NAE, citing six reasons.[†] Those reasons are still valid. The General Assembly approved the PCA's joining the NAE as a denomination (M14GA, 1986, pp. 323-324).~~
- ~~6. The PCA General Assembly has spoken to issues that have moral and ethical implications including:~~
- ~~a. Abortion~~
 - ~~b. Homosexuality~~
 - ~~c. Biblical Marriage between one man and one woman~~
 - ~~d. Religious Liberty~~
 - ~~e. Racial Reconciliation~~
 - ~~f. Nuclear War~~
-
-
- ~~7. The NAE is not a synod or council (WCF 31-5, BCO 3-3); it is an association of denominations, institutions, congregations, and individuals. The NAE does not speak to all political issues, (see <https://www.nac.org/for-the-health-of-the-nation/>) but only to issues that have moral or ethical implications such as~~
- ~~a. Abortion~~
 - ~~b. Homosexuality~~
 - ~~c. Biblical Marriage between one man and one woman~~
 - ~~d. Religious Liberty~~

~~e. Racial Reconciliation~~

- ~~8. The actions of the General Assembly do not reflect the unanimous opinions of all members of the PCA[#] any more than the actions of the Board of Directors of the NAE reflect the opinions of every individual member of the NAE member denominations. There are different opinions on political issues that have moral and ethical implications by individual members of both the PCA and the NAE. The NAE, like the PCA, reflects a constituency not a monolith.~~
- ~~9. Overture 2022-3, like Overture 2019-23 alleges that the NAE “has changed its stance on the death penalty.” Actually, the action taken October 19, 2015 was simply to recognize that there are differences among Evangelicals regarding the death penalty because of racial and economic inequities in the use of the death penalty, the costs to the state of decades of appeals (it is cheaper to give life sentences without parole), and that innocent people have been executed. There are those in the PCA of the same opinion. Overture 2019-23’s asserting, as a new argument, that the NAE “has changed its original stance on the death penalty” could be understood as the NAE’s going on record as opposing the death penalty in every instance. *That interpretation is factually incorrect.* The Washington Post article referenced in Overture 2019-23 acknowledges that the NAE’s 2015 position is more nuanced than its 1973 position. However, the 2015 resolution *did not* say that there are no circumstances in which the death penalty is appropriate. The article simply pointed out that with the advances in DNA technology to prevent innocent persons from being executed, the facts that African American, Hispanic, and low-income prisoners are more likely to be executed, and the generational differences in perspectives make the death penalty a more complex issue today than in 1973. Our confessional position is that the state has the power of the sword to punish evildoers, which may include capital punishment (*WCF 23-1*). Neither the NAE 1973, nor 2015 resolutions are contrary to our confessional position that the state has the power of the sword.~~
- ~~10. Overture 2022-3 repeats the allegation of Overture 2019-23 that the NAE passed a motion entitled, “Fairness for All.” The~~

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

~~NAE Board of Directors did not approve a motion for "Fairness for All." The Executive Committee, prior to the Board meeting, discussed the issue as a legal protection for Christian colleges October 11, 2018. However, when discussed by the Board, the Board did not approve a motion for "Fairness for All." As of October 11, 2018, no congressional representative or senator had introduced a "Fairness for All" legislation in the Congress.~~

~~11. Like Overtures 2011-12 and 2019-23, Overture 2022-3 repeats the same allegation that the RPCNA withdrew from the NAE in 2009 for theological reasons. The minutes of the General Synod did not cite the grounds for the action. The alleged theological compromise with Muslims was not communicated to the President of the NAE until a year after the RPCNA withdrew from the NAE. The RPCNA's IRC did not recommend that the RPCNA withdraw from the NAE; that motion came from the floor by one of the commissioners. See the endnote v for further details.ⁱⁱⁱ~~

~~ⁱThe six reasons were: 1. Joining the NAE will give us the opportunity to express our oneness with brothers and sisters without the implications of a Church Council or doing ecclesiastical functions. It will strengthen our identity as a biblical voice on the American scene where the name "Presbyterian" frequently is associated with theological liberalism. Our confession of one holy catholic church needs to be more than a mere confession (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapters 25 and 26); — our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be o n e ..." (John 17:20); and, the Apostle Paul wrote, "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body ..." (Ephesians 4:2-4). 2. Joining the NAE will magnify our voice in speaking to the moral issues of the day as we unite with 15 million other believers and 47 other NAE denominations; — by uniting with Christians from other communions, we will be in a better position to put "feet" to our prayers for national righteousness (Proverbs 14:35) and to our help for the world's poor and hungry, doing together what none can do alone. 3. Joining the NAE will enrich our fellowship and help to break down caricatures of the Reformed position and have our own caricatures of other communions corrected; — we cannot afford the luxury of remaining apart in the face of the materialistic paganism in America. Our brothers and sisters who love Christ and honor His Word need to know that we are interested in having fellowship beyond our narrow Reformed family. 4. Joining the NAE will enable us to express our voice and theology in helping to formulate and articulate a Christian world and life view within the NAE; — by uniting with Christians from other communions, we will have the opportunity to dialogue on central theological issues (e.g., the Sovereignty~~

~~of God, the extent of the atonement, the kingdom of God). 5. Joining the NAE will enable us to take up our responsibilities for the ministries of the NAE commissions/affiliates from which the PCA presently benefits; — membership in the NAE will make the PCA a part owner of the World Relief Corporation, a wholly owned corporation of the NAE. 6. Joining the NAE will give us the opportunity to be linked with a worldwide group of evangelicals; — each national evangelical association around the world is a member of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). Both the NAE and the WEF will provide a much needed sense of support to the PCA as she seeks to fulfill her Lord's command to go into all the world and make disciples.~~

~~ii. We have Chapter 45 in the BCO, "Dissents, Protests, and Objections," which is often employed at the General Assembly as the Minutes of the General Assembly record.~~

~~iii. The RPCNA's withdrawal from the NAE needs to be understood in its context:~~

- ~~• The RPCNA was a member of the NAE since 1949. Dr. Jack White of the RPCNA was Secretary of the Board and Dr. D. Howard Elliott of the RPCNA was President for a time.~~
- ~~• RPCNA concerns were expressed to the NAE Board Chairman that a statement on Creation Care could be misunderstood as radical environmentalism. The Creation Care portion of the Health of the Nation document was carefully crafted (with PCA representative input) so that it would be a biblical and responsible statement and did not endorse a radical position, either right or left. Moreover, the NAE staff was instructed by the board not to go beyond the NAE's adopted position.~~
- ~~• The President (Leith Anderson) and Board Chairman (Roy Taylor) met with representatives of the RPCNA at an NAE Board meeting in Orlando in March 2008 and discussed RPCNA concerns.~~
- ~~• The RPCNA delegation asked the advice of NAPARC regarding participation in the NAE at the November, 2008 meeting. The PCA delegation (Craig Higgins and Roy Taylor) discussed the matter with the RPCNA brothers.~~
- ~~• The RPCNA's Interchurch Relations Committee did not recommend to the General Synod that the RPCNA withdraw from the NAE; rather they recommended that the Synod discuss the matter. After fifteen minutes of discussion, a motion from the floor was made that the RPCNA withdraw. The motion secured a majority vote (*Minutes of the RPCNA General Synod*, June 24, 2009, pp. 120-121). No grounds for the action were specified in the Minutes.~~
- ~~• The RPCNA reported to NAPARC at the November 2009 meeting, "We wish to thank the Council for the discussion held one year ago on membership in the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). We found it helpful but our committee was still not persuaded one way or another, therefore, we asked our Synod for a discussion of the matter to see whether the delegates would give us a clear indication on whether to continue our membership. Instead a motion was offered from the floor calling for an end to this membership and the motion passed" (RPCNA Report to NAPARC, fall, 2009).~~
- ~~• In August 26, 2010, over one year after the RPCNA General Synod's action, a member of the RPCNA Interchurch Relations Committee informed the NAE President and Board Chairman of the Synod's 2009 action and mentioned NAE President Dr. Leith Anderson's participation in a conference of Christians, Jews, and Muslims held at Yale~~

~~University, (July 2008) and the document entitled "Loving God and Neighbor Together" (November, 2007) that was the basis of the conference. The letter mentioned other unspecified concerns. The letter concluded by saying, "We are not closing the door to future cooperation and/or membership with the NAE, but we pray that our action may be a means that God will use to help to encourage the NAE to be faithful to its commitment to 'cooperate without compromise.'"~~

● ~~On September 13, 2009, the President of the NAE responded to the RPCNA Interchurch Committee. He stated that the Yale Conference of 2007 was not mentioned by the RPCNA delegation in the meeting with them and the NAE President and Chairman in 2008. Dr. Anderson also mentioned that at the Yale Conference he had clearly given a straightforward explanation of biblical evangelical doctrine on God and salvation only through the Lord Jesus Christ. So clear was the NAE president's explanation, that salvation was only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that a Jewish rabbi, strongly objected.~~

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery Commissioner (*Convener)

Arizona	TE Joshua Harp
Ascension	TE David O'Leary
Calvary	TE Carl Robbins
Canada West	TE Chris Pignatiello
Catawba Valley	TE Dan King
Central Carolina	RE Flynt Jones
Central Florida	TE Greg Doty
Central Georgia	TE Mitchell A. McGinnis
Chesapeake	TE Doug Serven
Chicago Metro	TE Michael Kyle Edwards
Eastern Canada	TE Luke Barnabas Bert
Eastern Carolina	TE John A. Musgrave
Evangel	TE Jim Alexander
Fellowship	RE Chris Griesman
Georgia Foothills	TE Travis Joshua Brown
Grace	TE Brian McCollough
Great Lakes	TE Peter J. Wallace
Gulf Coast	TE Joseph C. Grider
Heartland	TE Gary Goodrich
Highlands	TE James Curtis
Hills & Plains	TE Chris Taylor
Houston Metro	TE Ben S. Duncan
James River	RE Al Yancey
Korean Capital	TE Dong Woo Kim
Lowcountry	RE Ron Woernle
Metro Atlanta	RE Francois Longeiret

ADDENDUM 1 - JOURNAL

Mississippi Valley	TE Harris Bond
Missouri	TE Ryan Speck
Nashville	TE Randy M. Lovelace
North Texas	RE Benjamin Thompson
Northwest Georgia	RE Bob Whitaker
Pee Dee	RE Michael Brown
Philadelphia Metro West	TE David Garner
Piedmont Triad	TE George Sayour
Pittsburgh	TE Seth Dakota Gurley
Potomac	TE Russ Douglas Whitfield
Providence	TE Joe Henry Steele III
Savannah River	TE Kenneth Anthony McHeard*
Siouxlands	TE Nathan Lee
Southern New England	TE Thomas D. Hudson
Southeast Alabama	TE James E. Williams
Southwest Florida	TE Stan Keith McMahan Jr.
Susquehanna Valley	TE Peter James Rowan
Tennessee Valley	RE Robert Berman

Respectfully submitted,
/s/TE Ken McHeard, Chairman

/s/TE Peter Wallace, Secretary

ADDENDUM 2
(See Journal, p. 32)

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS ON
PCA RETIREMENT & BENEFITS, INC.
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

I. Business Referred to the Committee

- A. RBI Board of Directors Minutes:
 - September 17, 2021
 - November 19, 2021
 - March 11, 2022
- B. Review of Audited Financials/Report for 2021
- C. Review of the Proposed 2023 Budget
- D. Review of Board of Directors Recommendations

II. Statement of Major Issues Discussed

- A. The Chairman gave a devotional and then introduced TE Ed Dunnington, RBI's President. TE Dunnington introduced the RBI staff, then he gave began a presentation on the work of RBI. Specific topics in the presentation included:
 - 1) Announcing the Name Change for the Agency
 - 2) Retirement Plan & Investments
 - a. Long-Term Investment Performance
 - b. Risk Management
 - c. Average Assets Under Management
 - d. Moral Screen
 - e. Affordable Investments
 - f. Expense Ratio
 - g. Consulting & Advocacy
 - 3) Insurance Plans
 - a. Notable Items from 2021
 - 4) Pastoral Wellbeing
 - a. Minister Relief: The Reality
 - b. Financial Assistance
 - c. Counseling Services
 - d. 2021 Impact
 - e. Gifts at Work

- f. Growing Needs in the PCA
 - g. The Stats
 - h. The Research
 - i. Present Need
- 5) CoC Business
- a. Agency Recommendations

III. Recommendations

1. That the General Assembly approve the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings dated ~~September 17, 2021~~, November 19, 2021, and March 11, 2022 without exception, and the minutes of September 17, 2021 with an exception of substance that no record of any action taken on the recommendations of the Programs Committee and recommend that the Board take action on those recommendations; *Adopted*
2. That the General Assembly receive the 2021 Audited Financials as reviewed by Capin Crouse LLP; *Adopted*
3. That the General Assembly approve the 2023 Operating Budget with the understanding that it is a spending plan and will be adjusted as necessary by the Board of Directors to accommodate changing conditions during that fiscal year; *Deferred to CoC on AC*
4. That the General Assembly approve the 2023 Trustee Fee Agreements for the 403(b) Retirement Plan Trust, the Health and Welfare Benefit Trust, and the Ministerial Relief Trust; *Deferred to AC*
5. That the General Assembly exhort PCA Presbyteries, churches, and related ministries to review and utilize the 2022 PCA Call Package Guidelines in creating compensation packages for Teaching Elders; *Adopted*
6. That the General Assembly urge member churches to participate in an annual offering to Ministerial Relief or to budget regular benevolence giving to support relief activities through the Ministerial Relief Fund; *Adopted*
7. That the General Assembly be informed that during early 2022 the PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc. agency under the direction of the Board of Directors, as permitted in RAO 4-3, changed its civil corporate name from “PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.” to “Geneva Benefits Group, Inc.” (also known as Geneva Benefits Group or Geneva); and that the General Assembly expressly authorize and ratify such incorporation. *Adopted*
8. That the General Assembly commend President Ed Dunnington and the staff of Geneva Benefits Group for their faithful service to the Church. *Adopted*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

IV. Commissioners Present:

Presbytery

Blue Ridge
Calvary
Central Georgia
Chesapeake
Columbus Metro
Eastern Carolina
Evangel
Fellowship
Grace
Great Lakes
Gulf Coast
Heartland
Houston Metro
James River
Korean Capital
Mississippi Valley
Missouri
Nashville
New York State
Northern California
Northern New England
Pacific Northwest
Potomac
Southeast Alabama
Southern Florida
Susquehanna Valley
Tennessee Valley

Commissioner

TE W. Duncan Rankin
RE Jon Barkman
RE Paul McCommon
TE PD Mayfield
TE Nate Conrad
TE Doug C. Domin
RE David ODell
TE Branden Cole Williams
RE Bill Turpin
TE Ryan Potter
RE Jason Belcher
RE Bret Willoughby
RE Philip Whitley
TE J. Andrew Conrad
TE Brian Sang Hoon Shim
RE Claude W. Harbarger
RE Lowell S. Pitzer
RE John C. Pink
TE Christopher Jhu
TE Daniel P. Katches
TE Per Almquist
RE Charlie Meeker
TE Kirk Blankenship
RE Rodger Morrison
TE John K. Keen
TE Troy DeBruin
TE William Rowlen

Respectfully submitted:

/s/ TE J. Andrew Conrad, Chairman

/s/ TE Per Almquist, Secretary

MINUTES
of the
FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
VOLUME 2 of 2

PLEASE NOTE:

1. The pages of Volume 1 and Volume 2 are numbered consecutively.
2. The INDEX to both volumes is found at the back of Volume 2.

VOLUME 1, pp. 1-684

PART I: Directory of General Assembly Committees and Agencies

PART II: Daily Journal

PART III: Appendices A-S

VOLUME 2, pp. 685-1414

PART III: Appendices T-X

PART IV: Corrections to Previous Minutes

Part V: References and Index

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PART III

APPENDICES (Continued: Appendices T-X)

NOTE: Appendices A-S are included in Volume 1 of these *Minutes*.
Appendices T-X are found in Volume 2.
See a Table of Contents for these Appendices on the back of this page.

These Appendices include the Reports of the General Assembly Committees, Agencies, and Standing Judicial Commission as originally submitted to the General Assembly. The recommendations in this section are those originally submitted and may have been amended or not adopted by the Assembly. See Part II, Journal, to find the recommendations as they were adopted by the Assembly.

Appendix W presents the Overtures as originally submitted by the presbyteries. See the Overtures Committee report and other Committee of Commissioner reports for Assembly action on these overtures, including any amendments.

The PCA Committee and Agency budgets, as approved by the Assembly, are found in Appendix C, Attachment 3, beginning on p. 215, Vol. 1.

**APPENDICES
CONTENTS**

PERMANENT COMMITTEE AND AGENCY REPORTS

APPENDIX A	Stated Clerk	139
APPENDIX B	Board of Directors	185
APPENDIX C	Administrative Committee.....	191
APPENDIX D	Committee on Discipleship Ministries	283
APPENDIX E	Covenant College.....	293
APPENDIX F	Covenant Theological Seminary.....	299
APPENDIX G	Mission to North America	320
APPENDIX H	Mission to the World	343
APPENDIX I	PCA Foundation	365
APPENDIX J	PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.	375
APPENDIX K	Reformed University Fellowship.....	384
APPENDIX L	Ridge Haven	408

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

APPENDIX M	Cooperative Ministries Committee.....	411
APPENDIX N	Interchurch Relations Committee	412
APPENDIX O	Committee on Constitutional Business.....	419
APPENDIX P	Nominating Committee	437
	Supplemental Report.....	469
APPENDIX Q	Theological Examining Committee.....	479
APPENDIX R	Committee on Review of Presbytery Records	482

OTHER REPORTS

APPENDIX S	Attendance Report	639
APPENDIX T	Standing Judicial Commission.....	685
	Supplemental Report.....	875
APPENDIX U	Committee on Thanks	947
APPENDIX V	Ad Interim on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault.....	949

OVERTURES

APPENDIX W	Overtures to 49th General Assembly.....	1267
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COMMUNICATIONS – None

N/A

WORSHIP SERVICE

APPENDIX X	Tuesday Evening Worship.....	1385
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APPENDIX T

REPORT OF THE STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

I. INTRODUCTION

Since its report to the 48th General Assembly, the Standing Judicial Commission has held four meetings: a video conference called meeting on July 13, 2021; an in-person Stated Meeting on October 21, 2021; a video conference called meeting on February 1, 2022; and an in-person Stated Meeting on March 3, 2022.

Members of the Standing Judicial Commission:

Class of 2022

TE Ray Cannata, <i>S. Louisiana</i>	RE John Bise, <i>Providence</i>
TE Fred Greco, <i>Houston Metro</i>	RE EJ Nusbaum, <i>Rocky Mtn</i>
TE Guy Waters, <i>MS Valley</i>	RE John Pickering, <i>Evangel</i>

Class of 2023

Vacant*	RE Daniel Carrell, <i>James River</i>
TE Carl Ellis, Jr., <i>TN Valley</i>	RE Bruce Terrell, <i>Metro N.Y.</i>
TE Charles McGowan, <i>Nashville</i>	RE John B. White, Jr., <i>M. Atlanta</i>

Class of 2024

TE Hoochan Paul Lee, <i>Korean NE</i>	RE Howie Donahoe, <i>Pacific NW</i>
TE Sean Lucas, <i>Covenant</i>	RE Melton Duncan, <i>Calvary</i>
TE Mike Ross, <i>Columbus Metro</i>	RE Samuel Duncan, <i>Grace</i>

Class of 2025

TE Paul Bankson, <i>C. Georgia</i>	RE Steve Dowling, <i>SE Alabama</i>
TE David Coffin, Jr., <i>Potomac</i>	RE Frederick Neikirk, <i>Ascension</i>
TE Paul Kooistra, <i>Warrior</i>	RE R. Jackson Wilson, <i>GA Foothills</i>

*TE Bryan Chapell resigned as a member of the Commission after completing service on the cases initiated prior to his election as Stated Clerk.

II. JUDICIAL CASES

At this time, Cases 2021-06, 2021-09, 2021-10, 2021-11, 2021-13, 2021-14, 2021-15, 2022-01, 2022-02, and 2022-04 are being considered by panels. The SJC has completed its work on the cases listed below, and the report on those cases follows in the order in which they were decided.

2020-07	Wilbourne v. Pacific Presbytery
2020-08	Gendall et al v. Pacific Presbytery
2020-09	Oxbalt et al v. Pacific Presbytery
2020-06	Gordon v. Southern New England Presbytery
2020-14	Myers v. Illiana Presbytery
2021-01	Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery
2021-02	Tippins v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery
2020-10	Eagle v. Savannah River Presbytery
2021-05	Eudaly, et al. v. Southwest Florida Presbytery
2021-08	In the matter of Korean Southwest Orange County
2020-12	Speck v. Missouri Presbytery
2021-12	Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery
2020-02	In the matter of PCA v. Missouri Presbytery
2020-05	Speck v. Missouri Presbytery
2021-03	DeJong v. Session of Village Seven Presbyterian Church
2021-07	Acree v. Tennessee Valley Presbytery
2021-08	Citation of Korean Southwest Orange Presbytery

III. REPORT OF THE CASES

CASE NO. 2020-07
TE RANKIN WILBOURNE
V.
PACIFIC PRESBYTERY

CASE NO. 2020-08
TE SHAWN GENDALL, TE RUSSELL HIGHTOWER
AND TE TIMOTHY LIEN
V.
PACIFIC PRESBYTERY

CASE NO. 2020-09
RE SEAN OZBALT AND RE ERIN BARR
V.
PACIFIC PRESBYTERY

DECISION ON COMPLAINTS

July 13, 2021

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

A letter with accusations against TE Rankin Wilbourne was sent to Pacific Presbytery's Shepherdling Committee. Most, if not all, of the 36 signers were reported to be past staff or past members of Pacific Crossroads Church. The following day, Presbytery formed an investigative commission (called the Judicial Commission) "to investigate the allegations submitted to the Shepherdling Committee, and to determine whether a strong presumption of guilt can be corroborated, per *BCO* 31-2, and to bring charges if necessary." Soon thereafter, the Commission informed TE Wilbourne that accusations were made concerning his "dealings with the officers, staff and employees of PCC," but neither the specific allegations nor the names of the accusers were provided to the minister. The accused was not invited to meet with the investigative Commission until its 28th meeting. After three months of investigating, and 34 meetings, the Commission was intending to "bring charges," when the accused minister requested the matter be handled as a *BCO* 38-1 case without process. Two weeks later, the Commission and the minister reached an agreement on a "full statement of the facts" and it was to be presented at a called Presbytery meeting. At the meeting, the Commission distributed and read aloud a six-page report prior to the minister reading his

Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt. The minister was dismissed for the next part of the meeting, lengthy discussion ensued, Presbytery adopted a motion that *BCO* 34-7 applied, and the minister was deposed from the ministry. All three Complaints alleged several errors, especially that the reading of the negative Commission report, which was not part of the agreed-upon Statement, violated *BCO* 38-1. The SJC eventually sustained the Complaints, annulled the censure of deposition, recommended Presbytery treat his censure (in effect for seventeen (17) months as of the date of this decision) as definite suspension from office (*BCO* 36-4) and as being a sufficient censure for the offenses confessed in the minister's Statement, and recommended Presbytery consider the matter closed.

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 10/02/19 The day before Presbytery's Fall Stated Meeting, Pacific's Shepherding Committee received a communication with allegations against TE Rankin Wilbourne. The Committee indicated it was signed by 36 people, but the letter is not in the Record.
- 10/03/19 Presbytery's Fall Stated Meeting. The Shepherding Committee recommended that Presbytery "establish a judicial commission to investigate the allegations submitted to the Shepherding Committee, and to determine whether a strong presumption of guilt can be corroborated, per *BCO* 31-2, and to bring charges if necessary." A motion¹ to amend failed, which sought to make it a committee. The Shepherding Committee recommendation was adopted. Presbytery then adopted a motion to appoint the following to the Judicial Commission ("JC"): TEs Ron Svendsen, TE Jason Park, TE Jeff Tell, RE Bob Nisbet, RE Rod DenOuden, and RE Randy Berg.

¹ It is not clear from the record as to whether this commission was to be a *BCO* 15-1 commission that would conclude the business referred to it, keeping a record of its proceedings to be submitted to the appointing court, or a *BCO* 15-3 judicial commission, which would require the appointing court to, without debate, to approve or disapprove its judgment. Although not fatal, the appointment of a committee, rather than a commission of any sort, at this point would have been a wiser and more prudent procedural vehicle to conduct the *BCO* 31-2 investigation. Ordinarily, a *BCO* 15-3 judicial commission should not be appointed until after a strong presumption of guilt is found and a trial is in order.

APPENDIX T

- 10/07/19 First JC meeting. Record indicates there were 39 other JC meetings in the four months between October 17, 2019 and February 6, 2021.
- 10/08/19 The JC informed TE Wilbourne and the Session of Pacific Crossroads Church (“PCC”) of its investigation. The JC informed TE Wilbourne that allegations were made against him concerning his “dealings with the officers, staff and employees of PCC” but that it was “not ready to go into details about specific allegations nor ... to disclose names of those involved.” The JC requested the Session to provide it with every email and written document from its Session and staff for the past seven years, with no scope limitations or details regarding the allegations.
- 01/11/20 Three months after it informed TE Wilbourne of the investigation, the JC met with him for the first time. That was the JC’s 28th meeting. Prior to the meeting, he had requested permission to bring someone with him to the meeting, and the JC denied that request, as it continued to do with the same request for other meetings. TE Wilbourne was not informed of the specific accusations against him, nor were his accusers identified. He contends he was never informed of the names of the accusers. However, he was aware of tensions that had arisen in prior years between himself and former PCC staff. The Session was aware of these sins and failures, and TE Wilbourne committed to intensive Christian counseling, which led to a “plan of repentance.” He presented the JC with the plan of repentance he had been following, as well as a list of 40 witnesses whom he believed could provide the JC additional firsthand testimony about incidents he believed the JC might be investigating. However, the JC indicated it would not consult those witnesses.
- 01/23/20 Two days before Presbytery’s Stated Meeting, TE Wilbourne informed the JC by email that he wished to confess to matters related to the investigation and proceed as a *BCO* 38-1 case without process. The next day, the JC provided him a document titled “Working Draft of Potential Charges” and informed him that the JC had been intending to “bring charges” the following day at the Presbytery meeting. The JC informed Wilbourne it would give him two weeks to draft the *BCO* 38-1 “full statement of the facts” and that it would ask for a called meeting to be held two weeks after the Stated Meeting.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

01/25/20 Presbytery Stated Meeting. JC reported it had concluded there was a strong presumption of guilt, and was prepared to recommend indictment, but recommended Presbytery postpone action until a called meeting on Feb. 8. The JC reported:

The Commission decided that if TE Wilbourne does, in fact, come as his own accuser that we would refrain from filing our charges. If he fails to come as his own accuser, we will proceed to file charges.

Over the next two weeks, Wilbourne and the JC met three times and agreed on a seven-page “Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt.” He also prepared an additional statement (called the “Voluntary Statement,” which included a four-page “Statement of Repentance” and a four-page “Commitment to Repentance”), and the JC agreed it could also be presented to Presbytery at the February 8 meeting.

02/08/20 Presbytery Called Meeting. The Moderator announced the order of business would be: “to hear the Judicial Commission’s report, to hear from TE Rankin Wilbourne, and then to move to consideration of the appropriate censure.” This was the first time Wilbourne was made aware the JC intended to read a detailed report. The JC’s six-page report was distributed and read aloud. On motion, Presbytery voted to “receive the report.” The JC then reported the following to Presbytery.

According to *BCO* 38-1 it is necessary to prepare a "statement of facts" which is to be approved by both accused and the court. The Commission gave TE Wilbourne two weeks to write his confession, and it worked with him to produce a statement of facts which we could mutually approve, and which TE Wilbourne would present at a called meeting of Pacific Presbytery on February 8, 2020. [ROC 19]

Wilbourne then read an eight-page “Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt,” as well as the first four pages of an eight-page “Voluntary Statement” regarding repentance. Presbytery voted to receive each. Below is a summary.

APPENDIX T

1. “Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt” -
Confessed to sins in two areas:
 - a) 6th Commandment - “I have lorded my authority over our staff in a domineering manner and have engaged in unrighteous anger,” listing nine examples;
 - b) 9th Commandment - “I have engaged in lying, deceitful speech, and manipulative behavior,” listing eight examples.
 - c) “Voluntary Confession of Guilt” - One-page, with six bullet points, each beginning with, “I confess that I ...”

2. “Voluntary Statement in Addition to My Confession”
 - a) “Statement of Repentance” - Four pages.
 - b) “Commitment to Repentance” - Four pages, which included 13 paragraphs, like “Weekly Counseling” and “Training in Conflict Management.” (Not read aloud, but “received” and included in Minutes.)

The Minutes record the following excerpts:

“Moderator Bjerkaas then prayed for TE Wilbourne, after which TE Wilbourne was dismissed from the meeting.”

“Lengthy debate then ensued as to whether TE Wilbourne's sins confessed in the Statement of Fact rise to the level of "base and flagitious." [BCO 34-7]

“[JC member] TE Jason Park then brought the following motion: That the presbytery rule that the sins TE Wilbourne has confessed do rise to the level of base and flagitious. The motion was seconded by TE Jerrard Heard.”

“As ballots were being distributed, Moderator Bjerkaas reminded the court of the motion before them is to rule that the sins confessed by TE Wilbourne be found to rise to the level of base and flagitious. Upon

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

voting, the motion passed, with 21 for, 11 against, and 1 abstention.”

“At 11:00 am, TE Jason Park brought the following motion: That TE Rankin Wilbourne be deposed from the ministry. The motion was seconded by [JC member] TE Jeff Tell. Following lengthy, passionate, and often times emotional debate, various points of clarification and points of order, and some statements not directly pertaining to the Statement of Facts being ruled out of order by the Moderator, TE Jason Park called the question. Upon voting, the calling of the question was sustained. TE Kyle Wells requested prayer, which Moderator Bjerkaas led. Moderator Bjerkaas reminded the court of the motion before them: That TE Rankin Wilbourne be deposed from the ministry. Upon voting, the motion passed, with 21 votes for, 10 against, and no abstentions.”

04/05/20 Wilbourne filed Complaint with Presbytery, alleging four “primary constitutional violations” (1-4) and three “secondary violations,” (5-7) followed by fuller explanations of each. Emphasis below was original.

1. At the called meeting of Presbytery on February 8, 2020, the Judicial Commission was allowed to read a detailed report, prior to my 38-1 confession, that was not agreed upon. The reading of this report was improper and inconsistent with BCO 38-1, allowing for injustice in the judgment and censure of the complainant.
2. The Presbytery ruled that my confessed sins were "base and flagitious," (BCO 34-7) when they are not rightly categorized as such.
3. The court neglected to consider the question of my repentance as they were obligated to do.
4. The Commission and Presbytery ignored BCO 32-20, namely that the court should limit its focus to offenses in the space of the last year, unless they have 'recently become flagrant'. They had not recently become flagrant, nor did my confession

APPENDIX T

show that they had, nor did the Commission make the case that they had. Constitutionally, offenses from several years ago should only be admissible if the court can prove the pattern persists and had recently become flagrant.

5. During the Judicial Commission's investigation, I was repeatedly denied reasonable opportunities to defend myself.
6. The Judicial Commission prejudiced the Presbytery by claiming they had spoken to people on "both sides" as well as claiming they had spoken to everyone "in the room" at particular incidents. This is not true.
7. Throughout this process, Matthew 18 has not been followed, "as required by Christ" (BCO 31-5).

04/05/20 Session of PCC filed a six-page Complaint with Presbytery alleging five "Failures in Interpretation of the Constitution of the Church," shown below.

1. Submission of a Judicial Commission Report that inappropriately charged the Confessor and influenced the judgment of Presbytery.
2. In both its written report and during deliberations, the Judicial Commission made inaccurate statements that influenced Presbytery's judgment.
3. The Presbytery incorrectly ruled that TE Wilbourne's confessed sins were "Base and Flagitious."
4. The Sins were not recent.
5. Other Concerns.

04/07/20 TEs Gendall, Hightower and Lien filed a 10-page Complaint with Presbytery alleging six "Constitutional Concerns and Violations," shown below. Emphasis was original, and indicated the sections alleged to be violated.

1. BCO 40-4: Courts may sometimes entirely neglect to perform their duty ... In any of these cases their records will by no means exhibit to the higher court a full view of their proceedings. If therefore, the

next higher court be well advised that any such neglect or irregularity has occurred on the part of the lower court, it is incumbent on it to take cognizance of the same, and to examine, deliberate and judge in the whole matter as completely as if it had been recorded, and thus brought up by review of its records.

2. *BCO 38-1*. When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment. The accused has the right of complaint against the judgment.
3. *BCO 34-7*: the court erred procedurally and factually in its declaration of "base & flagitious."
4. *BCO 32-20*: The court failed to properly consider *BCO 32-20*, especially that process ... shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant.
5. *BCO 27-5 & 31-5*: According to *BCO 27-5*, steps A-D of the proper disciplinary principles set forth in Scripture must be followed - whether the sins be general or specific, public or private. That did not happen.
6. *BCO 31-8*: Great caution should be exercised in receiving accusations from any person who is known to indulge a malignant spirit toward the accused ... [or] who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused.

APPENDIX T

- 07/18/20 Presbytery Called Meeting. Presbytery debated and denied the three Complaints by the following votes: Wilbourne (15-19-1), PCC Session (14-21), and Gendall, Hightower & Lien (13-21).
- 08/04/20 TEs Gendall, Hightower, and Lien carried their Complaint to the SJC.
- 08/05/20 Wilbourne carried his seven-page Complaint to the SJC, with 70 pages of attachments.
- 08/13/20 PCC Session carried its Complaint to the SJC.
- 09/16/20 SJC Officers rule Case administratively in order and randomly drew the Panel, which included TE Greco, TE Cannata and RE S. Duncan, with alternates TE Ellis and RE Donahoe.
- 09/17/20 Panel members were notified of their appointment and received the ROC for three related Complaints against the decision of Pacific Presbytery: Cases 2020-07 *Wilbourne* (ROC 300 pages), 2020-08 *TEs Gendall, Hightower & Lien* (ROC 252 pages), and 2020-09 *Session of Pacific Crossroads* (ROC 228 pages).
- 10/06/20 Panel Constituting Meeting. TE Greco was elected as chairman and RE S. Duncan as secretary. Panel decided to send the Parties copies of the SJC’s July 2020 Decision in Case 2019-10 *Evans v. Arizona*, and its August 2020 Decision in Case 2020-04 *Williams v. Chesapeake*, since they were just recently decided, and both involved *BCO* 38-1.
- 10/29/20 Presbytery Representatives filed a motion asking the Panel to rule all the Cases out-of-order. They alleged Cases 2020-08 and 2020-09 were out of order because those Complainants lacked standing because the final sentence of *BCO* 38-1 purportedly restricts such a complaint to the accused: “*The accused* has the right of complaint against the judgment.” They also contended Case 2020-07 was out of order, for the following reason: “[T]he relief being sought in the complaint goes beyond the specific issue that can be raised under *BCO* 38-1. The only issue the accused can complain against is the judgment: “The accused has the right of complaint *against the judgment.*” ” (Emphasis original.)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 11/03/20 Chairman notifies the Presbytery Representative that the motions will be considered after the Record of the Case has been finalized.
- 01/15/21 Panel notified the Parties of its decision on the ROC objections, sent a Revised ROC dated January 15, and notified the Parties the Hearing would be via GoToMeeting on February 22. Panel notified the Parties it denied Respondent's October 29 motions to dismiss the three Complaints, providing rationale.
- 01/28/21 Panel received the Complainant's 10-page Preliminary Brief.
- 02/10/21 Panel received the Presbytery Representative's 10-page Preliminary Brief.
- 02/22/21 Complaint Hearing via GoToMeeting. Present were Panel members TE Greco, TE Cannata, and RE S. Duncan, along with alternates TE Ellis and RE Donahoe. Complainants present included Mr. Wilbourne, RE Ozbolt, TE Gendall, TE Lien and TE Hightower. The Complainants' Representative was TE Larry Hoop. Presbytery's Representatives were TE Tell and TE Park.
- 04/01/21 Panel filed Decision with SJC.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Did Presbytery clearly err on February 8, 2020, in how it handled a *BCO* 38-1 Case Without Process, and previously in how a *BCO* 31-2 investigation was conducted?

III. JUDGMENT

Yes. Therefore, the Complaint is sustained, and the censure of deposition is annulled.

IV. REASONING

Our Book of Church Order calls on higher courts ordinarily to show great deference lower courts in factual matters (*BCO* 39-3(2)) and in matters of discretion and judgment, including the administration of censures (*BCO* 39-3(3)), unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court. In this case, the lower court clearly erred in its actions arising from a *BCO* 38-1 confession. Those errors were prejudicial to the accused and require that the Complaint in Case No. 2020-07 be sustained.

APPENDIX T

The six-page Judicial Commission report was more than just a “record of its proceedings ... submitted to the court appointing it.” (*BCO* 15-1) It contained significant assertions against and opinions regarding TE Wilbourne. Because the JC presented this new and prejudicial material in addition to the agreed-upon *Statement of the Facts and Confession*, the process violated the provisions of *BCO* 38-1. If the JC and Presbytery had followed the provisions of *BCO* 38-1, the presbyters would have seen and heard only the seven-page *Statement of Facts and Confession* that was agreed to by the minister and the JC. Presbytery could then have properly proceeded to decide which of the censures of *BCO* 30 was warranted.

Instead of trying to re-do that procedure, and because TE Wilbourne’s confession still exists, the SJC recommends the censure be regarded as definite suspension from office (*BCO* 30-3). In other words, this Decision restores him to the status of a minister in good standing in Pacific Presbytery, without call, having made a *BCO* 38-1 confession and having practically served a 17-month suspension from office. Alternatively, Presbytery is not prohibited from considering TE Wilbourne’s *BCO* 38-1 confession, as the sole basis for imposing a *BCO* 30 censure. Additionally, TE Wilbourne is not prohibited from withdrawing his *BCO* 38-1 confession, at which point Presbytery would need to decide whether to take no further action or determine whether a strong presumption of guilt exists warranting the appointment of a prosecutor, an indictment, and trial.

Rather than have TE Wilbourne consider another *BCO* 38-1 confession and statement of facts and have the Presbytery consider again the censure it would impose, we believe the cause of justice will be served by a *de facto* 17-month definite suspension from office. Therefore, if Presbytery believes a new or greater censure is warranted than the past 17-month suspension, it should find a strong presumption of guilt, bring an indictment against TE Wilbourne, and proceed to a trial. The SJC is not recommending any further censure or an indictment and trial. The SJC recommends Presbytery consider the matter closed.

The SJC is not annulling Presbytery’s dissolution of the minister’s call.

Finally, there were also several other irregularities alleged in the three Complaints, and they are briefly addressed below.

1. There seemed to be a misunderstanding about what a commission delivers to a presbytery. *BCO* 15-1 stipulates: “A commission shall

keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing ...” Thus, a *BCO* 15-1 commission does not typically present a report to presbytery, *because it acts as the presbytery* on the matter assigned to it. It simply submits (files) a record of its proceedings for the records of presbytery. Ordinarily, a presbytery doesn’t “consider” a report from a commission, unless it’s a *BCO* 15-3 commission that tried a judicial case and is presenting a non-debatable recommendation on the judgment. In other words, the *BCO* did not require Pacific Presbytery to hear the JC’s six-page “report.” No motion is needed for the “record of the proceedings” of a commission to be entered into Presbytery records. The JC’s record of its proceedings should simply have been filed with the Presbytery Clerk after the meeting, or at least after the decision on censure. In addition, the motion adopted by Presbytery to “receive the Judicial Commission’s report as presented” was out of order. Even if the JC’s presentation could legitimately be regarded as a “report,” reports are automatically *received* when *presented*, and the motion was thereby unnecessary and probably confusing. (RONR (12th ed.) 51:9, 51:15)

2. Early in the process, the SJC Panel ensured Presbytery’s Representative received a copy of the SJC’s July 2020 Decision in Case 2019-10: *TE Evans v. Arizona*, another Case involving *BCO* 38-1 decided three months earlier. The Presbytery Representatives should have regarded the SJC Decision in *Evans* as “establishing a principle” that “may be appealed to in subsequent similar cases.” (*BCO* 14-7) A major procedural issue in both Cases was clearly similar, but the Presbytery’s Representatives disagreed. They claimed the facts of the Cases were substantially different and contended Arizona’s commission reporting was faulty because it came after the confession was read, but Pacific’s came *before*. We do not agree with Respondent’s attempt to distinguish this case from *Evans*. *BCO* 38-1 does not address the time at which additional adverse information might be presented; it prohibits the introduction of any information adverse to the accused to the court beyond the agreed upon statement of facts at any point prior to the decision on censure. Hearing a negative report before hearing a man’s confession is *more* prejudicial

than after, given the importance of first impressions.² In addition, Presbytery's Representative contended the minister was free to change his mind after hearing the negative JC report, and ask for a trial instead. While that would have been constitutionally permissible for him to do, we find Presbytery's contention implausible and at odds with the procedure outlined in *BCO* 38-1.

3. In its deliberations on censure, Presbytery spent much time on *BCO* 34-7 discussing whether the confessed offenses rose to the level of being "base and flagitious."

BCO 34-7. When a minister, pending a trial, shall make confession, if the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness, or crimes of a greater nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the court shall without delay impose definite suspension or depose him from the ministry.

It should be noted that this was not time well spent. It is clear that consideration of *BCO* 34-7 was not applicable to any censure consideration because there was no trial pending.

Nevertheless, Presbytery's Representative reported that a *BCO* 38-1 document in the online Presbytery Clerk's Handbook defines *base* as "vile, contemptible" and defines *flagitious* as "heinous, extraordinarily wicked, flagrantly wicked." However, the disclaimer in that document is relevant:

"Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order* ... by the Stated Clerk ... or staff members of the Office of the Stated Clerk are for information only, however, and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by courts of the Church. ... Parties to potential cases or cases in process

² In his paper titled, *Avoiding Procedural Errors in Judicial Cases*, Stated Clerk Emeritus Dr. Roy Taylor includes this statement: "It is unwise for a Shepherding Committee to report prior to a *BCO* 38-1 procedure, because that would violate the *BCO* 38-1 rights of the self-accused person that only the statement of facts that he has approved and the sins to which he confesses may be used by the court to decide on a censure." However, it is more than just unwise. It will often constitute reversible error, as it did in this Case.

are responsible for their own constitutional and procedural knowledge and understanding.”

When interpreting a word in a constitution or a law, it is important to try to understand the meaning the word had at the time the document was written.³ Because the words *base* and *flagitious* date back to the 1879 PCUS Book of Order, it would be more accurate to use a resource like the Oxford English Dictionary, which shows usage at various times in history, rather than something like the Merriam-Webster 2021 dictionary.⁴

More importantly, context is critical. Regardless of how the two words are defined, it is unusual for the *BCO* to say repentance is immaterial when deciding censure. For example, we would not ordinarily say repentance is immaterial in cases of drunkenness or uncleanness. However, if those sins resulted in public scandal, we might say that. Thus, it seems the main purpose of *BCO* 34-7 is the removal of public scandal achieved by definite suspension or deposition. If the offenses of drunkenness or uncleanness do not create a public scandal, then the *BCO* would allow the court to consider repentance and all degrees of censures. This might also explain why indefinite suspension is not mentioned as an option in *BCO* 34-7, even though one might argue it’s often a harsher censure than definite suspension, because the duration is unknown. Further, *BCO* 34-7 explicitly applies only to ministers, presumably because their sins will be more likely to create a public scandal than those of elders and other church members. This does not mean the censure of deposition was unwarranted for the offense confessed. It just means Presbytery’s

³ “The theory of originalism treats a constitution like a statute, giving the constitution the meaning that its words were understood to bear at the time they were promulgated. ... If you don’t take the words of the Constitution and what they were originally understood to mean, what is the standard? The answer is, there isn’t any standard.... [T]he only sensible way to construe a constitution is the way you construe statutes. What did its words mean when they were adopted?” Justice Antonin Scalia, “*Judicial Adherence to the Text of our Basic Law: A Theory of Constitutional Interpretation.*” Speech at the Catholic University of America, October 18, 1996.

⁴ <https://www.oed.com/> In the *Institutes*, Calvin uses the word *flagitious* to refer to the “incestuous Corinthian,” David’s sin with Bathsheba, murder, the public “worship of images,” and “the sin against the Holy Ghost.”

misreading of *BCO* 34-7 resulted in an error in ignoring any consideration of repentance when deciding censure.

4. *BCO* 38-1 envisions a single document. It does not envision what we had in this Case, which included a seven-page Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt and an eight-page Voluntary Statement (four-page Statement of Repentance and four-page Commitment to Repentance). Whatever single document is agreed to by the confessor and the court should include all the material necessary for the court to render a decision on censure. That way, the presbyters simply need to read the single document to be ready to vote.⁵
5. Accused persons are permitted counsel or assistance at any point in the investigative process, not just at trial. The accused minister repeatedly requested to bring someone with him to the interviews with the investigative Commission, but the Commission incorrectly ruled that *BCO* 32-19 only allows counsel during a trial. Absent some compelling reason, it is unreasonable to prohibit an accused person from bringing his counsel with him to an investigative interview. Besides, experienced counsel can often help a commission or court avoid procedural mistakes.⁶
6. A fundamental goal of any *BCO* 31-2 investigation is to determine whether the accused has “satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character.” But in this Case, Presbytery’s investigative Commission did not interview the accused until its 28th

⁵ The 2021 Presbytery Clerk’s Handbook prepared by the PCA Clerk’s office recommends the use of an additional, separate document, which it calls the *Voluntary Statement in Addition to the Required Statement of Facts and Confession of Guilt*. (See pages 226 and 228 at <https://www.pcaac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2021-Presbytery-Clerks-Handbook.pdf>). However, it would seem prudent for such a repentance statement to be included in the mutually agreed-upon *single* document.

⁶ Robert’s Rules stipulates: "An investigative committee appointed as described above has no power to require the accused, or any other person, to appear before it, but it should quietly conduct a complete investigation, making an effort to learn all relevant facts. Information obtained in strict confidence may help the committee to form an opinion, but it may not be reported to the society or used in a trial—except as may be possible without bringing out the confidential particulars." (RONR (12th ed.) 63:12)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

meeting - three months after they informed him there were accusations. That was neither wise nor just. Had the Commission interviewed the accused sooner, given him specifics about the allegations, and allowed his Session and PCC staff leadership to also speak as they requested, the following proceedings might have been avoided.

The Complaint in Case No. 2020-07 is sustained, and the censure outlined in that case is annulled. The Complaints in Case Nos. 2020-08 and 2020-09 are sustained and answered by reference to this decision.

This Panel Decision was drafted by RE Howie Donahoe, amended and unanimously approved by the Panel, with amendments by the full SJC. The SJC approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Absent</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Absent</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Chapell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Absent</i>	Terrell <i>Disqual.</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Absent</i>	White <i>Concur</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>

(19-0-0)

RE Terrell disqualified himself because of his personal relationship to the Appellant and Appellant's father-in-law. *OMSJC* 2.10(d).

CASE NO. 2020-06
BRIAN PAUL GORDON
V.
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON APPEAL
OCTOBER 21, 2021

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The Appellant was charged by the Session of his church with failing to keep his membership vows by not attending church for more than one year and failing to submit to the Session in its recommendations regarding his conduct,

his marriage and his family. At trial, the Appellant admitted that the charges were “true”. The Appellant was found guilty at trial. On appeal, the Presbytery affirmed the decision of the lower court. The Appellant appealed the Presbytery’s decision to the General Assembly.

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 03/11/15 The Session of First Presbyterian Church North Shore (FPCNS; an OPC congregation at that time) sent Mr. Gordon a letter of admonishment regarding his treatment of his wife. Mr. Gordon disagreed with the admonishment and informed the Session that he intends to leave the church.

- 11/20/15 Session of FPCNS sent a communication to Mr. Gordon to encourage him to take steps to heal his marriage and return to worship.

- 01/14/16 Mr. Gordon wrote to the Session that his plan was to withdraw his membership and inform them when he joined another church. Note: The Session did not remove his name. FPCNS was a member of the OPC at this time. According to the Session, the OPC Rules of Discipline do not allow such a withdrawal, unless “the member informs the session that he does not desire to remain in the fellowship of the OPC, in other words the denomination as a whole, rather than just this particular church.”

- 12/11/16 The Congregation of FPCNS voted to join the PCA

- 12/29/16 Commission of SNEP concluded their interviews with the Ruling Elders of FPCNS. Interviews were conducted in accordance with *BCO* 13-8. The Commission concluded that the Ruling Elders understand and can sincerely adopt the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church in America as contained in its Constitution.

- 01/27/17 FPCNS Teaching Elders were examined and received into SNEP

- 04/28/17 SNEP received FPCNS into the PCA. Mr. Gordon was a member of FPCNS when the church was received into the PCA.

- 05/06/17 The FPCNS Session sent a letter to Mr. Gordon asking him to re-establish contact with the Session, heed their admonishments and

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

return to Lord's Day worship at FPCNS. The letter warned Mr. Gordon that failure to comply could result in additional disciplinary actions.

- 01/15/19 The Session of FCPNS conducted the trial of Mr. Gordon. He was found guilty of "failure to heed the admonition of the session," and failure to follow the membership vow 5 of the OPC and membership vows 4 & 5 of the PCA." . Mr. Gordon was indefinitely suspended from the table.
- 05/14/19 The Session of FPCNS voted to impose the censure of excommunication, because the Session found that Mr. Gordon's conduct warranted the greater censure. (*BCO* 30-3).
- 08/12/19 FPCNS sent a letter to Mr. Gordon notifying him that the censure had been changed to excommunication. Mr. Gordon received the notice from FPCNS regarding his excommunication on 8/16/2019.
- 09/10/19 Mr. Gordon submitted notice to the Stated Clerk of Southern New England Presbytery (SNEP) that he was appealing the decision. The grounds of his appeal were that "they have disregarded all of the very considerable evidence which would have not only exonerated me of the chargers [sic] they leveled against me, but would actually constitute sufficient grounds for me to bring charges against them."
- 03/06/20 SNEP's Commission heard the appeal.
- 06/27/20 SNEP heard the report of the Commission at a Called meeting. SNEP voted in favor of the Commission's recommendation and denied the appeal.
- 07/24/20 The Stated Clerk of the PCA received the appeal from Mr. Gordon.
- 04/15/20 The panel conducted the hearing. Panel members were RE E. J. Nusbaum (chairman), RE Jack Wilson (secretary) and TE Charles McGowan. TE Paul Lee (alternate) was also present.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

Did SNEP err on June 27, 2020, in approving the recommendation of its Judicial Commission’s decision to deny Mr. Brian Gordon’s appeal?

III. JUDGMENT

No.

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

The Appellant has not presented any evidence that sustain the specifications of error that he has alleged. The Appellant did not “specify” an error in the conduct of the trial, the admission of evidence, or the Presbytery’s review on appeal. The Appellant failed to identify any error with particularity. Instead, he recited the general grounds for appeal outlined in *BCO* 42-3. We believe this vague and non-specific recitation of general grounds for appeal could be said to be inadequate to identify any particular error with specificity. While the SJC has summarily adjudicated at least one recent case for such lack of specificity (See 2019-05, *Goggan v. Missouri Presbytery*), we review each of the Appellant’s “specifications” below in an abundance of fairness.

A. Failing to Grant a Reasonable Indulgence

The Presbytery granted the Appellant a reasonable indulgence by resetting the date of the hearing. This specification is not supported by the Record and is not sustained.

B. Hurrying to a decision

The Appellant did not identify any specific act or omission by the lower court or the Session in support of this specification. The Session waited approximately twenty (20) months between offering its admonition and proceeding to trial. After the trial and censure, the Session waited an additional five (5) months before proceeding to excommunication because the Appellant never returned to church attendance. This timeline does not indicate any improper rush to a decision. This specification is not supported by the Record and is not sustained.

C. Exhibiting Prejudice

The Appellant has not identified any specific act or omission by the lower court or the Session in support of this specification. While the Appellant contends that the Session took his wife's side in his divorce, he did not identify any error in the conduct of the trial amounting to prejudice. He also failed to identify any prejudicial act by the Presbytery in considering his appeal. This specification is not supported by the Record and is not sustained.

D Exhibiting Injustice

Again, the Appellant has failed to identify any specific erroneous act or omission from the trial or the appeal in support of this vague allegation. At trial, in his brief and oral argument to Presbytery, and in oral argument to the Panel in this case, the Appellant admitted that the trial court's charges against him were true. The Appellant indicated that he did not call witnesses at trial because their testimony would have provided further proof of his guilt. The Appellant made clear that he wished to present evidence not directly related to the charges against him but bearing on the actions of his wife or the circumstances of his marriage. Since Appellant chose not to tender such evidence at trial to support his defense, it is impossible to evaluate whether it would have been admissible, and if so, whether it would have been exculpatory. On appeal, the higher court cannot consider or evaluate evidence not presented at trial. This specification is not supported by the Record and is not sustained.

While a number of defenses at trial and arguments on appeal may have been available to the Appellant, we limit our review to those issues actually presented by the parties in the lower courts and decline to speculate regarding matters not raised by the parties in the lower courts. *BCO* 39-3(1).

The decision of SNEP is affirmed, and the appeal is denied.

The Panel decision was written by RE EJ Nusbaum and RE Jack Wilson and edited and approved by the panel 3-0-0. The SJC amended and approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

APPENDIX T

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Dissent</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Dissent</i>
Chapell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Dissent</i>	Lucas <i>Absent</i>	White <i>Absent</i>
Dowling <i>Dissent</i> (18-4-0)	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>

**Dissenting Opinion
Of RE Howie Donahoe**

I dissented from the Decision because the SJC (1) should have ruled the Appeal administratively out of order for lack of standing and (2) should have ruled that the Session did not retain jurisdiction over Mr. Gordon when First Presbyterian Church North Shore left the OPC and joined the PCA and thus had no jurisdiction to conduct the trial. The Record does not demonstrate Mr. Gordon ever became a PCA member or was ever under the jurisdiction of a PCA Session.

The matter is complicated by Mr. Gordon having participated in a PCA trial even though he had repeatedly maintained he was not leaving the OPC. And he did not raise the jurisdictional question in his appeal. However, his September 2021 Supplemental Brief indicates that at the time of the church's departure from OPC, he was unfamiliar with the OPC rule for how members could remain in the OPC.

Regardless, the higher court must always verify jurisdiction and standing before adjudicating a case, even if neither party raises the issue. This is a critical part of what's considered when a higher court determines if a case is administratively in order. When *BCO* 39-3.1 stipulates, "A higher court, reviewing a lower court, should limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original [lower] court," it's not referring to jurisdiction or standing.⁷

⁷ SJC Manual 9.1 stipulates: "When a judicial case is submitted to the Commission, the Officers shall make an initial determination as to whether the case is administratively in order. (a) A case is administratively in order if the relevant provisions of *BCO* 41, 42, and 43 have been followed." The "relevant provisions" would include jurisdiction and standing. There is precedent for the SJC ruling complaints out of order for lack of standing. See, for example, these seven cases: 92-9b *Overman v. E. Carolina*, 2015-03 *Gearhart v. Chicago Metro*, 2012-06 *Bethel*

Here is a summary chronology. In March 2015, about two years before FPCNS joined the PCA and four years before the PCA trial, the OPC Session of FPCNS “admonished” Mr. Gordon in a letter regarding matters related to his marriage. It’s important to note that in one procedural way, admonition is different in the OPC than in the PCA. An OPC Session can impose the censure of admonition *without* a confession of guilt or a guilty verdict at trial. (OPC Book of Discipline 3.6) However, the censure of admonition is not an on-going *status*. It’s administered at one point in time. The OPC *BCO* does not mention the “removal” of an admonition as it does other censures. Nor does a PCA Session vote to remove the censure of admonition at some point in the future, as it would with other censures. (*BCO* 37)

Below are the OPC Session’s *recommendations* in its March 2015 letter sent four years before the PCA trial, in which it admonished him to “repent of harshness to his wife.” [ROC 12]

... It is also our responsibility as your shepherds in the Lord to help guide you in a path of repentance, healing, and reconciliation. In order to help you do so we give you the following recommendations.

1. Begin marriage counseling with [the wife] as soon as possible with a counselor of our recommendation.
2. Meet with Elder ___ for discipleship and accountability.
3. Seek individual professional counseling.
4. Limit your conversations about your circumstances with only 2 or 3 people including ___ but not including the pastor, elders or [the wife].

Eleven days later, on March 22, 2015, Mr. Gordon wrote the OPC Session, saying,

I have determined before the Lord that my family needs to leave FPC. We will be looking for another Presbyterian Church to join, preferably within the OPC. ...We will begin our search for a different OPC church immediately and will be seeking membership there.” [ROC 16]

v. SE Alabama, 2012-08 Jackson v. NW Georgia, 2019-13 Benyola v. Central Florida, 2019-14 McWilliams v. SW Florida, and 2020-01 Benyola v. Central Florida.

He began attending worship elsewhere, and in January 2016, ten months after the admonition, he asked to be removed from the rolls of FPCNS OPC. The OPC Session declined the request on two grounds: (1) their contention that Mr. Gordon was still “under discipline” and (2) their understanding that the OPC Book allowed them to retain someone under discipline *unless* that person was leaving the OPC.

A year later, FPCNS left the OPC and was received into the PCA by the S. New England Presbytery in January 2017.⁸ Four months after joining the PCA, the Session wrote Mr. Gordon and exhorted him to worship at FPCNS PCA - even though he had clearly said in March 2015 and again in January 2016, that he was planning to worship elsewhere in the OPC.

In January 2019 — two years after leaving the OPC — the PCA Session put Mr. Gordon on trial and convicted him on two charges — “failure to heed the admonition of the session” and “failure to follow the membership vow 5 of the OPC and membership vows 4 and 5 of the PCA.” He was judged guilty on both and suspended from the sacraments. Four months later, the Session excommunicated him.

When Your Church Changes Denominations and You Don’t Want to Follow

Again, we note Mr. Gordon complicated jurisdictional questions by appearing at the trial before the PCA Session. But his error does not thereby impart jurisdiction. For example, it would be illegitimate for my PCA Session to put my Methodist neighbor on trial, regardless of whether he chooses to participate.

The OPC Session clearly understood Mr. Gordon desired to stay, and intended to stay, in the OPC. This was clear in the OPC Session Moderator’s email to him in April 2015 - three years before the PCA trial.

With regard to the substance of your request [to be removed from the rolls of FPCNS], however, the [OPC] Book of Discipline does not permit your erasure under these circumstances. Your request, as we understand it, was specific to withdrawing from membership at First Presbyterian Church

⁸ PCA Stated Clerk’s Report, *M46GA*, p. 89

North Shore [OPC]. Under Chapter V(2)(a)(2) of the [OPC] Book of Discipline, however, such an erasure can only be performed where the member informs the session that he *does not desire to remain* in the fellowship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in other words the denomination as a whole, rather than just this particular church.

I am, of course, not in a position to suggest what the Session would decide, but am able to communicate that *should you make the request based on your desire to no longer remain in the fellowship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a whole* we would docket the matter for consideration at a regular Session meeting. (Emphasis added.) [ROC 45]

Thus, it was clear to the OPC Session that Mr. Gordon *did not* intend to leave the OPC, which is why the Session believed they could retain them on the rolls of FPCNS OPC. The Record does not indicate Mr. Gordon ever attended FPCNS after it became a PCA church.

Furthermore, as far as Mr. Gordon's OPC membership was concerned, the OPC Session apparently failed to comply with the OPC rules for withdrawing. Below is an excerpt from the OPC Form of Government, Chapter 16 regarding congregational meetings held to withdraw from the OPC. Note the italicized requirement at the end regarding members who wish to remain in the OPC.

7. A congregation may withdraw from the OPC only according to the following procedure:
 - a. Before calling a congregational meeting for the purpose of taking any action contemplating withdrawal from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the session shall inform the presbytery, ordinarily at a stated meeting, of its intention to call such a meeting, and shall provide grounds for its intention. The presbytery, through representatives appointed for the purpose, shall seek, within a period not to exceed three weeks after the presbytery meeting, in writing and in person, to dissuade the session from its intention. If the session is not dissuaded, it may issue a written call for the first meeting of the congregation. The call shall contain the session's recommendation, with its written grounds, together with the presbytery's written argument.
 - b. If the vote of the congregation favors withdrawal, the session shall call for a second meeting to be held not less

than three weeks, nor more than one year, thereafter. If the congregation, at the second meeting, reaffirms a previous action to withdraw, *it shall be the duty of the presbytery to prepare a roll of members who desire to continue as members of the OPC and to provide oversight of these continuing members.* (Emphasis added.)
https://www.opc.org/BCO/FG.html#Chapter_XVI

There is no evidence in the Record that the OPC Session helped arranged for such a remain-in-the-OPC option roll or that the OPC Presbytery of NY and New England required such. In the Minutes of the FPCNS congregational meeting of December 11, 2016, there is no mention of this remain-in-the-OPC option for those who voted against joining the PCA. [ROC 214] Granted, if Mr. Gordon had been familiar with this section of the OPC BCO, perhaps he could have directly petitioned the OPC Presbytery to retain his OPC membership at large. But the real responsibility lay with the departing Session and the OPC Presbytery. Had the rules been followed, Mr. Gordon would have been placed on the rolls of the OPC at large and would have been removed from the rolls of FPCNS when it joined the PCA.

This should have been clear to the Session. In an August 4, 2021, post-Appeal-hearing email to the SJC Panel Chairman, FPCNS RE Joss stated the following:

There is a provision in the OPC Book of Church Order (XVI.7.b) for individual members who object to the church leaving the denomination to be taken under care of the presbytery. This did not happen with [Mr. Gordon] so he was still a member when we came into the PCA. [226]

But that August email does not indicate *why* this did not happen, nor does it indicate Mr. Gordon was aware of, or was informed of, the OPC provision. In his September 28, 2021 Supplemental Brief, Mr. Gordon included excerpts from emails he sent to the Panel in August and September in which he reiterated the Session knew he wanted to stay in the OPC and not join the PCA.⁹

⁹ The Record of the Case was deemed complete by the Panel on March 1, 2021, and the Panel Hearing was on April 15. The Record was later revised on August 12, and finally on September 1 with the addition of 14 pages. [ROC 214-227] The Panel's final proposed decision is dated September 7. Mr. Gordon's Supp Brief contained

I vigorously resisted their decision to switch their denominational affiliation... [P]rior to RE Walters' note, the session had sent [name omitted] ... on a fact-finding mission concerning how I felt about FPCNS leaving the OPC for the PCA. [That person] knew exactly and with what vehemence I opposed such a transition and communicated this to [RE Walters] and the members of the Session. ... RE Walters knew that I had no intention of leaving the OPC but rather only leaving FPCNS because it had left the OPC ... [T]here is plenty of evidence in proof of exactly what my intention was and why. So, it was never my intention to leave the OPC: it was my intention to leave FPCNS only because of their poor treatment of my family and their decision to leave the OPC ... In short, my desire for erasure was not from the OPC but from FPCNS precisely because they planned to transition to the PCA; ... I was *not* interested in *erasure* [from the OPC]; I wanted *out* of FPCNS and into another OPC fellowship. ... Why wasn't I "taken under the care of Presbytery"? Was it not precisely, though the session, *whose responsibility it was* to notify the [OPC] Presbytery of members who wanted to remain in the OPC, *knew* I wanted them to take just such action, they never communicated this to the [OPC] Presbytery? Had they done so, I would now be an OPC man having nothing whatsoever to do with FPCNS ... So, before ever my [PCA] trial began, the session of FPCNS knew that I wanted to leave their fellowship, not the OPC. They could have worked with me to make that happen but put me on trial instead ..."

OPC and PCA Rules on Receiving a New Congregation

The arguments above should be sufficient to establish that the PCA Session erred by believing they could retain jurisdiction over an OPC member, *against his expressed wishes*, after the Session and congregation left the OPC. But this Case also raises the general issue of how a person's membership is moved from one church to another when that church changes denominations.

excerpts from emails he contends he sent to the Panel on August 24, 28, 31, September 7, and 10.

We presume the FPCNS Session (PCA) was familiar with OPC rules on receiving congregations, because the Session membership remained the same after the church came into the PCA. [ROC 216; 220-21]

OPC Form of Government 29.B - Receiving Congregations

2. In receiving an existing, local church not belonging to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a new and separate congregation (church) the procedure shall be as follows:

...

- b. The presbytery or a committee appointed by the presbytery *shall examine the applicants* as to their Christian faith and life and their knowledge of and *willingness* to submit to the standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. (Emphasis added.)

Granted, the above did not apply when the OP church sought entry to the PCA. But it would be unreasonable to assume an OPC member like Mr. Gordon was aware of the difference between the OPC and PCA rules. The Record does not indicate Mr. Gordon ever submitted himself for such an applicant examination in the PCA or ever expressed a “willingness to submit to the standards” of the PCA, which, given his membership in the OPC, would have been a reasonable expectation on his part.

While the PCA *BCO* might not be as explicit as the OPC’s, the principle still pertains. A person cannot be taken into another denomination against his will, especially when he has repeatedly indicated his intent to remain in his current denomination. Agreement with the following points is not necessary to establish the FPCNS PCA Session’s lack of jurisdiction, but it demonstrates a principle.

It seems reasonable to expect that when a church joins the PCA, either from PCA mission church status or from another denomination, each joining congregant would ordinarily sign the PCA’s *BCO* 5-9.g. organizing petition to transfer his membership into the PCA along with fellow congregation members. Ordinarily, he would also publicly affirm the covenant promise of *BCO* 5-9.i.(3) at the organizing service. Absent that signing and public affirming, it is reasonable to question if a member of the previous church intends to be part of the church in the new denomination. Put another way, the entire membership roll of an OP church does not *automatically* become the membership roll of the PCA church at the organization service. Each member must ordinarily make that choice individually and demonstrably. And this seems to at least be implied in the PCA’s stipulations below from the *BCO* 5

section titled “The Organization of a Particular Church.” (Emphasis added throughout.)

BCO 5.9.g. In order to proceed to organization as a particular church the members of the mission church *shall sign a petition* to Presbytery requesting the same.

BCO 5.9.h. Upon Presbytery’s *approval of the petition*, Presbytery shall appoint an organizing commission and shall set the date and time of the organization service.

BCO 5-9.i.(3). A member of the organizing commission *shall require* communicant members of the mission church present to enter into covenant, by answering the following question affirmatively, with uplifted hand: Do you, in reliance on God for strength, solemnly promise and covenant that you will walk together as a particular church, on the principles of the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church in America, and that you will be zealous and faithful in maintaining the purity and peace of the whole body?

The SJC Decision does not cite *BCO 13-8*, which would govern *how transferring ruling elders become PCA elders* in a newly received PCA church.

BCO 13-8. The Presbytery, before receiving into its membership any church, shall designate a commission to meet with the church’s ruling elders to make certain that the elders understand and can sincerely adopt the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church in America as contained in its Constitution. In the presence of the commission, the ruling elders shall be required to answer affirmatively the questions required of officers at their ordination.

If *BCO 13-8* is the *only* constitutional provision that applies to an OPC church joining the PCA, it would contradict my understanding of the jurisdictional question. But I don’t believe *BCO 13-8* is the only paragraph that applies. *BCO Chapter 5* also applies regarding the congregation members. The provisions in *BCO 5* were adopted *after BCO 13-8*. So, it’s reasonable to

understand *BCO* 5-9 as describing an additional component of how a church joins the PCA.¹⁰

The Minutes of the Southern New England Commission to receive FPCNS record the following from the organization service on April 28, 2017:

The Service of Reception was conducted according to the Order of Service. The members of First Presbyterian Church responded in the affirmative to their vow to enter into covenant to walk together as a church according to the principles of faith and order of the Presbyterian Church in America. The church was received according to the Word of God and faith and order of the Presbyterian Church in America.” [ROC 222]

The Order of Service in the Record clearly followed that in *BCO* 5-9. [ROC 223-225]

To maintain that Mr. Gordon became a PCA member against his will and against his expressed wishes might be akin to the following examples. Let’s say 50 members of the 99-member XYZ PCA Church vote to leave the PCA and each of the 50 sign a petition to join a local RCA church. But the other 49 vote against doing so and decline to sign the joining petition. Are those 49 *automatically* excised from the rolls of the PCA and immediately entered onto the rolls of the RCA against their will, and immediately under the jurisdiction of its mixed-gender Session and female minister?

Or let’s say instead of joining the RCA, the PCA church joined the CREC. And let’s say John Doe was in the 49-person minority voting against leaving. And let’s say that regardless of Mr. Doe’s clear intention not to leave the PCA, the CREC Session believes it has automatic jurisdiction over him and promptly indicts him for the sin of failing to have his children baptized (citing *WCF*

¹⁰ Here’s some quick history. In 1977, Mid-Atlantic Presbytery filed Overture 33 seeking to add *BCO* 13-8, which was enacted a year later by the 6th GA. *Six years later*, *BCO* 5-1 through 5-7 were added and enacted by the 12th GA in 1984. In 1985, *BCO* 5-9 was *extensively revised*. In 2011, *BCO* Chapter 5 was revised again, including the addition of what is now *BCO* 5-5. In 2015, *BCO* 5-2 was revised, and the last revision to *BCO* Chapter 5 came in 2017 with a revision to 5-3. Thus, it is difficult to argue that *BCO* 13-8 supersedes or stands in place of the lengthy procedures of *BCO* 5-9, when *BCO* 5-9 was revised seven years after *BCO* 13-8. The extensive section on “The Organization of a Particular Church” did not exist in 1978 when *BCO* 13-8 was enacted.

28:5). Mr. Doe then reiterates what he clearly stated previously that he never intended to become part of the CREC. But they retain him on the rolls, conduct the trial, and eventually excommunicate him for lack of repentance for that sin. I find the jurisdictional understanding in these two examples untenable.

Finally, referencing those two examples, PCA presbyteries are often not consulted in such church departures, so how would the average member who wants to remain in the PCA know what his options are? PCA ministers and elders might be aware, but it's not reasonable to expect the average member to know his options. And it might be many months before a PCA presbytery has a stated meeting and can act on the member's petition to remain in the PCA at large.¹¹

Proper Charges? - If the Case had been ruled administratively out of order, there would be no need to address the Charges. However, because the SJC took up the Case, some comments are warranted. Before addressing them directly, we commend the Session for its desire to exhibit pastoral care and offer its counsel. Marital difficulties are often quagmires. And this Dissent does not express any opinion on the Session's assessment of the difficulties in the marriage.

The SJC Reasoning states: "At trial, in his brief, oral argument to Presbytery, and in oral argument to the Panel in this case, the Appellant admitted that the trial court's charges against him were true." However, it matters little whether the charges were true if the charges don't allege something that is truly a sin. *BCO 29-1* stipulates, "Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture." These two charges were illegitimate at the outset.

Charge 1 - The first charge in the PCA Session's indictment was "*failing to receive and heed* the discipline of the [OPC] Session as stated in the admonition of March 11, 2015." The PCA Session cited Hebrews 13:17 as the Scripture mandating obedience the admonition/ recommendation of the elders: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account." [ROC 39]

First, it seems odd for a *PCA* Session to charge someone with not heeding recommendations of an *OPC* Session, even if the membership of those

¹¹ Twelve of our PCA presbyteries only meet twice a year, and 28 others only meet three times a year.

Sessions is identical. More importantly, it is an error to claim husbands and wives are required to *obey* Session advice or recommendations regarding marital struggles, and risk excommunication if they decline. It's not automatically a sin to "fail to heed" such counsel. Presumably, the obedience in view in Hebrews 13 pertains to things *Scripture* prohibits or requires. Session recommendations are not that. (WCF 20.2) Thus, it is not a violation of membership vows.¹²

A Session might indict a man for the sin of divorce without biblical grounds, but it cannot indict him for declining to follow Session recommendations, advice, counsel, admonitions, etc. This principle was most recently expressed in the SJC's February 2020 Decision in Case 2019-06: *PCA v. Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley*, which was a BCO 40-5 referral from the 47th GA involving a wife [the Petitioner] who had been pursuing a divorce. Below are the most pertinent excerpts.

The 47th GA's Question 2 to Presbytery - "If a church member declines to follow advice or counsel from a Session, is that automatically evidence of failing to submit to the government and discipline of the church? (i.e., offense for which the Session indicted her)."

MS Valley Response - "No. Not automatically. The action of the session was to "rule" that [the Petitioner] did not have a Biblical basis for divorce (ROC 13 l. 15ff.). That "rule" was communicated to remove any ambiguity as to what the session deemed obedient action for both [the husband and wife]. Knowing her expressed conclusions (ROC 12, l. 11) a clear scriptural decision and communication was approved by the session for [the Petitioner]. That was intended for her benefit."

[SJC Reasoning for finding that Response unsatisfactory] - Presbytery's answer concludes with the assertion below, which indicates that Presbytery, and perhaps the Session, believe the Petitioner only had two options: "obey" and stop the divorce, or file a Complaint."

¹² OPC Directory for Worship 4.b.2.(5) Vow 5: Do you promise to ... to submit in the Lord to its government, and to heed its discipline, even in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life? PCA BCO 57-5. Vow 5: Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

“The proper course of action for [the Petitioner], if her conscience would not allow her to obey, would have been to file a complaint against their ruling. The fifth vow of membership precludes summarily disregarding the session's communication. (*BCO 57-5.5; ROC 12, 1.11*).”

But there's at least one other option: *to consider, but respectfully disagree with, the Session's conclusion*. That would *not* be a violation of membership vow 5 or de facto evidence of "failing to submit to the government and discipline of the church." Granted, in a situation like that, a Session might allege the person is divorcing without biblical grounds, and indict on those grounds, but that was not the Indictment against the Petitioner.” ... (Emphasis added.)

Furthermore, whenever a Session offers such or similar counsel, a member is not required to file a *BCO 43 Complaint* if the member declines to follow it (*contra* Presbytery's response to GA Question 2). *A member's responsibility is to seriously and respectfully consider the counsel*. But there may be many instances where a Session advises it regards something as sinful, without the member sinning by not following the advice. (The person's underlying action may indeed be sinful, but his *response to the advice* is not, in and of itself, sinful). This might include Session advice on how the Lord's Day should be observed, whether parents should use books with depictions of Jesus, whether parents should baptize their infants (WCF 28:5), whether tithing is morally obligated, the permissible use of tobacco or alcohol, appropriate clothing standards, "undue delay of marriage" (WLC 139), "avoiding unnecessary lawsuits" (WLC 141), what constitutes "prejudicing the good name of our neighbor" (WLC 145). And if a Session believed an indictment was warranted in any such situation, the indictment should allege the underlying sin, not the person's decision declining to follow Session counsel.”¹³ (Emphasis added.)

¹³ SJC's 2020 Report to the 48th GA, St. Louis Commissioner's Handbook, pp. 2051-64. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MW-TfB2VWJQa8-mZyq1Shr512zD9VTwo/view?usp=sharing>

Charge 2 - The second charge was “intentionally absenting himself from Lord’s Day worship *at First Presbyterian ...*” (Emphasis added.) The Session cited Hebrews 10:24-25, “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, ...” And in this charge, the Session accused him of violating OPC membership vow 5 and PCA membership vow 4.

As with Charge 1, it’s hard to understand how a PCA court can charge someone with breaking an *OPC* membership vow. And as explained above, Mr. Gordon never affirmed *any* PCA membership vow. Furthermore, the January 2019 trial transcript records:

Mr. Gordon ... indicated that he attended the church pastored by David Booth (Merrimack Valley Orthodox Presbyterian Church). He also reported that he attended a Presbyterian Church when he was [in] Shiloh and he has also attended Genesis, a church in Burlington,” [ROC 47]

It is not automatically a violation of Hebrews 10:25 to decline to heed a Session’s counsel to attend worship at a *specific* church when that person is regularly attending elsewhere, especially when the *specific* church has changed denominations and the accused desired to remain in the original denomination.¹⁴

Conclusion - For the reasons above, the Appeal should have been ruled administratively out of order for lack of standing, and any actions of any PCA court regrading Mr. Gordon should have been ruled null and void for lack of jurisdiction. This dissenting opinion was written by RE Howie Donahoe and joined by RE Steve Dowling and TE Michael Ross.

¹⁴ None of the seven Larger Catechism questions on the 4th Commandment cite Hebrews 10:25. It is cited in Westminster Confession of Faith 21:6 and 26:2, but not in a way that supports how it was applied in Charge 2.

CASE NO. 2020-14
TE AARON MYERS
V.
ILLIANA PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON APPEAL
October 21, 2021

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 03/12/20 At a meeting of the Session of Providence Presbyterian Church (PPC), Edwardsville, Illinois, following a history of difficulties in the marriage of Danielle Myers (Mrs. Myers) and TE Aaron Myers (TE Myers) spanning at least two years, TE Myers was asked to resign from his pastoral charge. He complied.
- 03/13/20 Six of the ruling elders of Providence Presbyterian Church wrote to the Stated Clerk of Illiana Presbytery bringing a recommendation of charges against TE Myers with respect to his treatment of Mrs. Myers.
- 03/15/20 A letter to the congregation from the Session was read by RE Rodgers informing them of TE Myers' resignation.
- 03/19/20 Mrs. Myers wrote to the Session complaining about alleged inaccuracies in the Session's announcement to the congregation and asking that they publicly correct the matter with respect to the congregation.
- TE Myers rescinded his resignation.
- 03/22/20 The Session denied Mrs. Myers request of 3/19.
- 05/23/20 At a stated meeting, Illiana Presbytery appointed a commission to investigate reports concerning TE Myers according to *BCO* 31-2.
- 05/25/20 Mrs. Myers wrote to the Investigative Commission to say that she would not meet or speak with them, and that she intended to exercise her rights under *BCO* 35-2.

APPENDIX T

- 06/03/20 Mrs. Myers wrote to the Investigative Commission saying, “I reverse my decision to follow *BCO* 35-2 to not testify against my husband. I also do not stand by the letters dated March 28, 2020, May 22, 2020 or May 25, 2020 that were signed by me. All three were written under duress and with pressure and coercion from Aaron.”
- 06/26/20 TE Myers informed the Presbytery Investigative Commission that he would not meet with them (*BCO* 35-1) and why.
- 06/29/20 The Commission to Investigate decided that there was sufficient evidence to raise a strong presumption of guilt regarding the allegations brought by the six elders of Providence Presbyterian Church (PPC) and recommended Illiana Presbytery institute process.
- 07/16/20 TE Myers signed a severance agreement delivered by REs Lollar and Cope and then used profanity regarding Mrs. Myers, in the presence of neighbors and children. TE Myers asked the two elders for forgiveness that night via text.
- 07/21/20 A six-member Judicial Commission was appointed by Illiana Presbytery in response to Presbytery's Investigative Commission's report to Presbytery. TE Myers declared that he would not testify.
- 07/30/20 The Commission suspended TE Myers from the duties of his office pending the conclusion of the trial (*BCO* 31-10).
- 09/25/20 Following several weeks of disputes and decisions regarding the language of the indictment, the Commission issued an amended indictment of three charges: 1. maltreatment of his wife; 2. fits of anger; and 3. sexual immorality (use of pornography), and citation to appear for arraignment.
- 10/08/20 The Defense counsel entered a plea of not guilty as received in writing from the Defendant. A new trial date was set for 10/24/20.
- 10/24/20 The Trial was held. In the trial proceedings, charge 3. sexual immorality (use of pornography) and related specifications, were dropped according to a ruling by the Moderator.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 10/31/20 After Commission deliberation, the Defendant was unanimously found guilty of the charge of “maltreatment of his wife” and the charge of “fits of anger”.
- 11/05/20 The Commission considered and decided upon a censure to recommend to Presbytery, to wit, “indefinite suspension from office”.
- 11/21/20 Illiana Presbytery heard the report of the Commission decision that TE Aaron Myers was guilty of the charge of maltreatment of his wife and the charge of having fits of anger and unanimously adopted the Commission’s recommended censure as amended to include suspension from the Sacraments (*BCO* 36-5).
- 12/02/20 TE Myers filed his Appeal with the SJC (received 01/06/21).
- 02/27/21 Appellant submitted alleged new evidence to the Panel that he contended had an important bearing on the case (*BCO* 35-14). In light of the alleged new evidence, Appellant requested the SJC to set aside the judgment and censure in the case and remand the case to Illiana Presbytery for a new trial (*BCO* 42-9).
- 04/29/21 Without objection, the Panel found that the statement of Mrs. Danielle Myers submitted by Appellant as new evidence was not new evidence that had an important bearing on the case, and thus declined to receive it.
- 08/10/21 The Panel (Chairman RE Steve Dowling, TE David Coffin, RE John Pickering, and Alternates TE Charles McGowan and RE John White) conducted the hearing.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

At its meeting on November 21, 2020, did Illiana Presbytery err in approving its Judicial Commission’s decision that TE Aaron Myers was guilty of the charge of maltreatment of his wife and the charge of having fits of anger?

III. JUDGMENT

No. The decision of Illiana Presbytery is upheld in whole. None of the Appellant's Specifications of Error are sustained.

IV. REASONING

With respect to the guilty verdict Appellant raises four specifications of error on the part of Illiana Presbytery (IP). In a first specification of error,¹⁵ Appellant alleges that IP erred in allowing witnesses to the charges who were not eyewitnesses to the offenses alleged. In addition to the testimony of Appellant's wife, the Judicial Commission (JC) allowed certain Ruling Elders of the congregation to testify that Appellant himself had confessed to the truth of the allegations. Appellant argued that such testimony was "hearsay" and, as such, prohibited as evidence.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. *The Book of Church Order (BCO)* sets forth standards for both the competence and the credibility of witnesses. As to competence:

All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments. . . . Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency. . . . (*BCO* 35-1)

The Record shows that the JC acted in accordance with this provision in admitting witnesses and in responding to challenges. The *BCO* does not require that witnesses be eyewitness. Further, the *BCO* does not forbid "hearsay" evidence.

As to credibility:

¹⁵ The indefinite article is used throughout with respect to specifications because the rather diffuse and repetitive character of the Appeal made it difficult to succinctly identify specifications of error. It is the Court's opinion that the following does justice to the Appellant's submission. Future appellants are herein encouraged to consult with *BCO* Appendix G, Suggested Forms for Judicial Business, V. Appeal.

It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence. (*BCO* 35-1)

The Record shows that the JC judged as credible the testimony of Ruling Elders testifying that Appellant himself had confessed to the offenses alleged. Here it is instructive to note that in courts that do have a rule on the inadmissibility of hearsay statements, a well-established exception to the rule is made in the case of testimony with respect to statements made against penal interest, i.e., a statement made by a defendant is admissible as evidence if it is inculpatory.¹⁶ The credibility of such testimony is found in the commonsense belief that people do not rashly or falsely make statements against penal interest. The JC found the testimony credible. Apart from a showing of “clear error,” the SJC must defer to the judgment of the lower court in this matter (*BCO* 39-3.3). No such showing is set forth in the Record.

A second specification alleges that IP erred in allowing only one witness to establish a charge, contrary to *BCO* 35-3, “The testimony of more than one witness shall be necessary in order to establish any charge; yet if, in addition to the testimony of one witness, corroborative evidence be produced, the offense may be considered to be proved.”

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. This specification depends upon the cogency of the first, and as the first has not been sustained, the second fails with it. According to our reading of the Record each charge was established by at least two witnesses.

A third specification of error alleges that IP erred in allowing charge 2, “fits of anger”, which charge violated the provisions of *BCO* 32-20, i.e., “Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant. . . .” Appellant contends that charges were received by the court of original jurisdiction over a year after the alleged offense took place.

This specification of error is not sustained.

¹⁶ Notice, on the other hand, statements that are *exculpatory* are typically excluded, unless corroborating circumstances clearly indicate the trustworthiness of the statement.

A Minute Explanatory. The facts, in this specification, are not in dispute; rather the question has to do with the meaning of *BCO* 32-20. In his concurring opinion to SJC 2019-08, RE J. Howard Donahoe provided an able exposition of the *BCO* provision at issue. He argued that according to the text “the date of an alleged offense is not material unless the offense is a ‘case of scandal.’” RE Donahoe thus asks, “what constitutes a case of scandal?” For an answer he turned to an historic and highly regarded exposition of the *BCO* by F.P Ramsay:

The principle is that, if the Church neglects to commence process against scandal (which is any flagrant public offence or practice bringing disgrace on the Church) within a year, she is debarred from thereafter doing it. This is not to shield the offender, but to incite to the prompt prosecution of such offences. Offences not so serious or scandalous the Church may bear with the longer while seeking to prevent scandal; but for no consideration is the Church to tolerate such offences as are scandalous.¹⁷

RE Donahoe soundly concluded that the first sentence of *BCO* 32-20 does not shelter an offender in any way, but rather, it is simply meant to “spur the court to prosecute a particular offense—something that is actually bringing public disgrace on the Church. . . . For an offense to be a ‘case of scandal’ it would need to be an offense that is known to the broader public and, unless adjudicated promptly, would bring public disgrace on the Church. . . .”

According to the ROC, the alleged offense brought before the JC of IP was not a “public offence or practice bringing disgrace on the Church,” a “scandal” “known to the broader public.” Therefore the one-year requirement of *BCO* 32-20 did not, in this case, prohibit IP from hearing and adjudicating the case.

Finally, a fourth specification of error alleges that IP erred in employing judicial process with respect to the allegations concerning TE Myers, to the neglect of pastoral care and marriage counseling.

This specification of error is not sustained.

¹⁷ F.P. Ramsay, *An Exposition of the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Richmond: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1898), p. 207.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A Minute Explanatory. Apart from a showing of “clear error,” the SJC must defer to the judgment of the lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties (*BCO* 39-3.3). No such showing is contained in the Record.

However, the Record does show that judicial process took place only after reasonable attempts at pastoral care had been made at both the local and presbytery level. Early on members of the Session had urged the Appellant to pursue marital counseling. Pastoral help was sought by Session members from a respected mentor. Counseling was arranged through another minister of the Presbytery, apparently to no avail. The Record shows that IP took up judicial process, not to resolve a pastoral matter, but because, after investigation, IP concluded that there was a strong presumption of guilt that the Appellant had committed grievous offenses against his wife that required disciplinary action.

The Panel Decision was drafted by TE David Coffin and RE John Pickering and amended and unanimously approved by the Panel. The SJC amended and approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

<i>Bankson Concur</i>	<i>M. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Neikirk Concur</i>
<i>Bise Concur</i>	<i>S. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Nusbaum Concur</i>
<i>Cannata Concur</i>	<i>Ellis Concur</i>	<i>Pickering Concur</i>
<i>Carrell Concur</i>	<i>Greco Concur</i>	<i>Ross Concur</i>
<i>Chapell Concur</i>	<i>Kooistra Concur</i>	<i>Terrell Concur</i>
<i>Coffin Concur</i>	<i>Lee Concur</i>	<i>Waters Concur</i>
<i>Donahoe Concur</i>	<i>Lucas Absent</i>	<i>White Absent</i>
<i>Dowling Concur</i>	<i>McGowan Concur</i>	<i>Wilson Concur</i>

(22-0-0)

CASE NO. 2021-01
MR. STUART MICHELSON
V.
NORTHWEST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
October 21, 2021

The SJC finds the case is administratively out of order as prematurely filed. Presbytery had not completed its hearing on the Complaint as of the date the

APPENDIX T

Complaint was filed with the SJC. The Complainant's time to elevate the Complaint is reset so that timing begins on the later to occur of the notification of: (a) this action by the SJC or (b) ruling by Presbytery on the Complaint.

The SJC approved the foregoing decision on the following roll call vote:

<i>Bankson Concur</i>	<i>M. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Neikirk Concur</i>
<i>Bise Concur</i>	<i>S. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Nusbaum Concur</i>
<i>Cannata Concur</i>	<i>Ellis Concur</i>	<i>Pickering Concur</i>
<i>Carrell Concur</i>	<i>Greco Concur</i>	<i>Ross Concur</i>
<i>Chapell Concur</i>	<i>Kooistra Concur</i>	<i>Terrell Concur</i>
<i>Coffin Concur</i>	<i>Lee Concur</i>	<i>Waters Concur</i>
<i>Donahoe Concur</i>	<i>Lucas Absent</i>	<i>White Absent</i>
<i>Dowling Concur</i>	<i>McGowan Concur</i>	<i>Wilson Concur</i>

(22-0-0)

CASE NO. 2021-02
RE LINDSEY TIPPINS
V.
NORTHWEST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON *BCO* 40-5 REQUEST
October 21, 2021

The SJC advises the Stated Clerk that the matter should be referred to the General Assembly's Review of Presbytery Records Committee.

The SJC approved the foregoing decision on the following roll call vote:

<i>Bankson Concur</i>	<i>M. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Neikirk Concur</i>
<i>Bise Concur</i>	<i>S. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Nusbaum Concur</i>
<i>Cannata Concur</i>	<i>Ellis Concur</i>	<i>Pickering Concur</i>
<i>Carrell Concur</i>	<i>Greco Concur</i>	<i>Ross Concur</i>
<i>Chapell Concur</i>	<i>Kooistra Concur</i>	<i>Terrell Concur</i>
<i>Coffin Concur</i>	<i>Lee Dissent</i>	<i>Waters Concur</i>
<i>Donahoe Dissent</i>	<i>Lucas Absent</i>	<i>White Absent</i>
<i>Dowling Concur</i>	<i>McGowan Concur</i>	<i>Wilson Dissent</i>

(19-3-0)

CASE NO. 2020-10
MR. ERIC EAGLE
V.
SAVANNAH RIVER PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
October 21, 2021

The SJC finds the case is administratively out of order as prematurely filed. Presbytery had not completed its hearing on the Complaint as of the date the Complaint was filed with the SJC. The Complainant's time to elevate the Complaint is reset so that timing begins on the later to occur of the notification of: (a) this action by the SJC or (b) ruling by Presbytery on the Complaint.

The SJC approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Chapell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Absent</i>	White <i>Absent</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>

(22-0-0)

CASE NO. 2021-05
TE DUSTYN EUDALY AND TE STEVEN LIGHT
V.
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
October 21, 2021

The SJC finds this matter to be administratively out of order. PCA jurisdiction over Complainants ended on February 9, 2020, when they affiliated with another branch of the visible church (see *BCO* 38-3). Therefore, they lacked standing to file this Complaint.

APPENDIX T

<i>Bankson Concur</i>	<i>M. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Neikirk Concur</i>
<i>Bise Concur</i>	<i>S. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Nusbaum Concur</i>
<i>Cannata Concur</i>	<i>Ellis Concur</i>	<i>Pickering Concur</i>
<i>Carrell Concur</i>	<i>Greco Concur</i>	<i>Ross Concur</i>
<i>Chapell Concur</i>	<i>Kooistra Concur</i>	<i>Terrell Concur</i>
<i>Coffin Concur</i>	<i>Lee Concur</i>	<i>Waters Concur</i>
<i>Donahoe Concur</i>	<i>Lucas Absent</i>	<i>White Absent</i>
<i>Dowling Concur</i>	<i>McGowan Concur</i>	<i>Wilson Concur</i>
<i>(22-0-0)</i>		

CASE NO. 2021-08
IN RE KOREAN SOUTHWEST ORANGE COUNTY
CITATION BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
October 21, 2021

The SJC cites Korean Southwest Orange County Presbytery to appear at the March 3, 2022 Stated Meeting of the SJC in Case No. 2021-08, unless the Presbytery provides satisfactory responses in writing by January 14, 2022 to part (d) of the RPR Report presented to the 2021 General Assembly in the review of Presbytery's records.

The SJC approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

<i>Bankson Concur</i>	<i>M. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Neikirk Concur</i>
<i>Bise Concur</i>	<i>S. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Nusbaum Concur</i>
<i>Cannata Concur</i>	<i>Ellis Concur</i>	<i>Pickering Concur</i>
<i>Carrell Concur</i>	<i>Greco Concur</i>	<i>Ross Concur</i>
<i>Chapell Concur</i>	<i>Kooistra Concur</i>	<i>Terrell Concur</i>
<i>Coffin Concur</i>	<i>Lee Concur</i>	<i>Waters Concur</i>
<i>Donahoe Concur</i>	<i>Lucas Absent</i>	<i>White Absent</i>
<i>Dowling Concur</i>	<i>McGowan Concur</i>	<i>Wilson Concur</i>
<i>(22-0-0)</i>		

CASE NO. 2020-12
COMPLAINT OF TE RYAN SPECK
v.
MISSOURI PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
October 21, 2021

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

In July 2018, Memorial Presbyterian Church (PCA) in St. Louis hosted the first Revoice Conference. Thereafter, several individuals, sessions, and presbyteries communicated concerns to Memorial and to Missouri Presbytery. In light of these concerns, in October 2018, the pastor of Memorial PCA, TE Greg Johnson, and the Session of Memorial PCA each requested investigations (*BCO* 31-2 and 41-1) of the allegations. Presbytery directed different committees to investigate the concerns and allegations, and it heard reports from these committees during several Presbytery meetings over many months. In July 2020, Presbytery heard and considered a 97-page report from its committee conducting a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of allegations against TE Johnson. The committee recommended Presbytery decline to find a strong presumption of guilt on each of four allegations, and Presbytery adopted those committee recommendations. TE Ryan Speck filed a Complaint against those decisions, and it was considered by a Presbytery judicial commission. In his Complaint, TE Speck contended:

[The Presbytery] Committee erred in its *BCO* 31-2 investigation of TE Greg Johnson by failing to act “with due diligence and great discretion [to] demand from [TE Johnson] satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting [his] Christian character” (*BCO* 31-2). Namely, that TE Johnson did not adequately answer some questions posed to him, and what he did answer provides sufficient evidence to raise a strong presumption of guilt that his views are not in conformity with the Scriptures and the Westminster Standards and, therefore, warrant institution of judicial process.

In October 2020, Presbytery adopted the recommended judgment of the commission and denied the Complaint, which TE Speck then carried to the SJC. The Hearing was conducted before the full SJC at its Stated Meeting in Atlanta on March 25, 2021.

APPENDIX T

After the Hearing, a question arose as to whether the Record of the Case was complete. The SJC appointed a committee of six members to return a recommendation on the question. A month later, the SJC adopted four committee recommendations, which included rescinding the previous ruling that the Record was complete and sending a letter to Presbytery's Representative with 25 questions for TE Johnson. TE Johnson responded to each, and both parties then filed five-page Addendum Briefs addressing those responses.

The SJC chairman reconvened an SJC meeting on July 13, 2021, and randomly drew names for a drafting committee. The committee filed its report on September 21, 2021. On October 21, 2021, the SJC voted to deny the Complaint, as shown in the Decision below.

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 1994 Missouri Presbytery (hereafter "Missouri") produced a report titled "*Faithfulness to God's Standards: The Lord's Calling to Homosexually-Inclined Christians*" which was an update to a 1980 RPCES Report titled: "*Pastoral Care for the Repentant Homosexual.*"
- 2017 Missouri produced an extensive revision and expansion of the 1994 report, and titled it, "*Homosexuality and the Gospel of Grace: Faithfulness to the Lord's Calling in an Age of Sexual Autonomy.*" The Report was 240 pages, with an additional 260 pages of appendixes, and was posted on Missouri's website: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iBLGL_2YhsIcI9_kZCBxLZHS_YXWhFeLQ/view
- 05/28/18 TE Johnson published "*Reply to 'Queer Culture in the PCA?'*" on the Aquila Report defending the upcoming Revoice conference (in response to a post by TE Al Baker, "*Queer Culture in the PCA?'*" published three days prior).
- 07/15/18 CrossPolitic Podcast conducted a 1-hour interview of TE Johnson.
- 07/26/18 Memorial Presbyterian Church (hereafter "Memorial") hosted the three-day Revoice 2018 conference. TE Johnson taught one breakout session, the transcript of which was in the Record of this Case.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 09/07/18 Session of Covenant PCA, Harrisonburg, VA sent a seven-page letter to the Memorial Session regarding Memorial's and TE Johnson's involvement in Revoice 2018.
- 09/27/18 TE Andrew Dionne sent a letter to the Memorial Session, which was co-signed by 20 other PCA TEs. Among other things, the letter exhorted Memorial Session "to repent of [their] sin of promoting and hosting the 2018 Revoice Conference."
- 10/10/18 TE Johnson and Session of Memorial sent a letter to Missouri requesting a *BCO* 31-2 investigation regarding allegations against TE Johnson and requesting Presbytery to accept, as a *BCO* 41 Reference, the Session's request for Missouri to also investigate it with regard to the allegations pertaining to hosting Revoice 2018.
- 10/16/18 At a Stated Meeting, Missouri created an ad hoc Committee to Investigate Memorial ("CIM") and tasked it with "investigating TE Greg Johnson ... as well as the Memorial Session, according to the provisions of *BCO* 31.2 and *BCO* 41.1-4, after concerns were expressed against it for allowing Revoice 18, an organization outside of the jurisdiction of Memorial and outside of the PCA, to hold a conference at its church in July 2018." Members included TEs Ron Lutjens (Chair), Bruce Clark, Sean Maney, Ryan Speck, and Mike Williams, & REs Kyle Keating, George Poland, and Frank Theus.
- 10/25/18 Calvary Presbytery sent a 9-page letter to Missouri.
- 11/13/18 Southwest Florida Presbytery sent a 12-page letter to Missouri.
- 01/15/19 At a Stated Meeting, Missouri heard the CIM report on its progress. Missouri referred all letters pertaining to Revoice to the CIM (including the letters already sent from Calvary Presbytery and Southwest Florida Presbytery).
- 01/26/19 Savannah River Presbytery sent a one-page letter to Missouri supporting the October 2018 letter from Calvary Presbytery.
- 05/18/19 At a Called Meeting, Missouri considered the 115-page CIM report, which had been previously distributed by email. Missouri voted to approve the concluding statements and nine judgments.

APPENDIX T

Excerpt from Minutes: “TE Johnson shared his testimony to provide some context for his decision to host Revoice. He noted he wanted to share before the testimony with the Fathers and Brothers before it is published in *Christianity Today* on Monday.”

- 07/08/19 TE Ryan Speck filed a Complaint with Presbytery regarding CIM’s nine judgments approved at the May 18 meeting.
- 07/11/19 TE Johnson and Memorial Session sent a two-page letter to Presbytery responding to the May 2019 CIM Report.
- 07/16/19 At a Missouri Stated Meeting, TE Johnson provided a report from Memorial’s Session to the Presbytery. A committee was appointed to respond to Memorial’s response (“CRM”).
- 08/10/19 Westminster Presbytery sent a 4-page letter to Missouri.
- 08/--/19 SE Alabama (SEAL) Presbytery sent 5-page letter with allegations to Missouri. Later, an “Unofficial” 21-page Addendum from SEAL was sent to Missouri.
- 09/12/19 TE Speck met with Missouri’s Complaint Response Committee (“CRM”) for the hearing on his July 2019 complaint.
- 10/15/19 At its Stated Meeting, Missouri partially sustained TE Speck’s July 2019 (~~Speck-1~~) complaint and voted to reconsider its affirmation of the nine judgments in the CIM report at a future called meeting.

At the same meeting, several requests for investigation of TE Johnson were referred to the already existing CRM (formed three months earlier). CRM was instructed to begin a BCO 31-2 investigation of TE Johnson.

Presbytery also created an ad hoc study committee to create a short statement of affirmations and denials regarding human sexuality (hereafter, “A&D Committee.”)

- 11/25/19 Session of Covenant PCA, Fayetteville, AR sent a 5-page letter to Missouri.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 12/07/19 At a Called Meeting, Missouri reconsidered the nine theological judgments from the May 2019 CIM Report, and adopted amended statements to eight of them, referring one question to an ad hoc committee to reconsider the question of “Queer Treasure.” The newly-amended-and-adopted statements included both affirmation and criticism of parts of Revoice. Missouri authorized its Admin Committee to draft a letter communicating these changes.
- 12/22/19 Session of Grace & Peace PCA, Anna TX sent a 3-page letter to Missouri.
- 01/11/20 Central Georgia Presbytery adopted Overture 2 and “requests the 48th General Assembly assume original jurisdiction of the case of the investigation by Missouri Presbytery of Greg Johnson and the session of Memorial Presbyterian Church with regard to theological error and involvement in the 2018 Revoice Conference.”
- 01/21/20 At a Stated Meeting, Missouri approved modifications to the reporting of actions taken on the CIM report—modifications that reflected Missouri’s actions taken at its October 15, 2019, Stated Meeting and its December 7, 2019, called meeting. The Presbytery also authorized the Administrative Committee to issue an open letter related to these actions, which was eventually titled “*An Open Letter from the Administrative Committee to the Churches of the PCA and the broader Christian Church.*” The letter and the updated CIM report were, and are, posted online at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XyxAwY-ACZsVS-pe_barvg2_wI9BBJsB/view

Below is an excerpt from the Open Letter.

Here is a summary of our actions over the past two years In late 2018 we convened a committee to examine and respond to Revoice and Memorial Presbyterian Church's involvement in the conference. That committee presented its findings at a called meeting of Presbytery in May of 2019. At that meeting we approved nine theological judgments and one judicial judgment regarding Pastor Greg Johnson and Memorial Church. As part of that action, Memorial

APPENDIX T

and Pastor Johnson were required to respond to the report and a new committee was convened to work with them on our findings and judgments. That committee work is ongoing. Additionally, we received requests from two presbyteries and two local church sessions of the PCA to investigate Greg Johnson in particular. Those requests were referred to the existing committee and that work is ongoing. When the work of that committee is completed, they will recommend to the Presbytery whether there is a strong presumption of guilt of Memorial and Pastor Johnson. If there is a strong presumption of guilt for either party, we will proceed to a trial.

Missouri also considered a draft of the Report of the A&D Committee and heard the Report of the CRM. Missouri's Moderator informed Presbytery about Overture 2 from Central Georgia.

- 01/25/20 Savannah River Presbytery adopted Overture 4 concurring with Calvary's Overture 2 and requested the same assumption of original jurisdiction "with regard to theological error and involvement in the 2018 Revoice Conference."
- 02/01/20 Platte Valley Presbytery sent a one-page letter to Missouri regarding Missouri's 2017 report, "*Homosexuality and the Gospel of Grace*" and what might be Missouri's understanding of WCF 6.5 regarding sin.
- 04/20/20 Missouri's Stated Meeting was cancelled due to Covid.
- 05/2020 The GA's Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality published its 60-page report. Members included TEs Bryan Chapell, Kevin DeYoung, Tim Keller and Jim Weidenar & REs Derek Halvorson, Kyle Keating, and Jim Pocta.
<https://pcaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AIC-Report-to-48th-GA-5-28-20-1.pdf>
- 06/02/20 At a Called Meeting, Presbytery adopted the 49 Affirmations and Denials proposed in its A&D Committee Report. A&D Members included TEs Dan Doriani, Mark Dalbey, and Ryan Laughlin &

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

RE Sean Maney. The 8-page Report was posted at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/197ZR63Fg_TCwOswHjjz7Il2JaF1O7mjI/view

The 49 A&Ds were in two Parts:

1. Concise Biblical Theology of Sexuality with Reference to Homosexuality
2. Homosexuality and Identity in Current Debate

07/21/20 At a Stated Meeting, Presbytery heard the 97-page Report of the CRM (investigating allegations against TE Johnson) and adopted its 8 recommendations. It was posted: https://drive.google.com/file/d/18_vvpZg2PwRFwBjwAg4fGp-bhJXh8Mhm/view

The CRM reported the following had been its understanding of its task.

The first part of the work Presbytery assigned to us in the summer of 2019 was to meet with the Memorial Presbyterian Church (MPC) Session to clarify the commendations, recommendations, and requirements which Missouri Presbytery had addressed to Memorial after it (MOP) adopted the same at its called meeting on May 18, 2019. This part of our work was completed in the delivering of our report ... at the stated meeting on January 21, 2020.

The second part of the work assigned to us by Presbytery in the fall of 2019 was to conduct an investigation after receiving requests from several church courts outside our Presbytery to do a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of TE Greg Johnson and his teaching. Eventually four letters requesting this were received by Missouri Presbytery (MOP). They came from Southeast Alabama Presbytery, Westminster Presbytery, and the Sessions of Covenant Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas and Grace & Peace Presbyterian Church in Anna, Texas. Those letters can be found in the Appendix at the end.

The CRM recommended Presbytery adopt the following:

While TE Greg Johnson has, at times, neglected to do all he could to clarify the meaning of his views and teaching, nevertheless, we the Missouri Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America, judge each of these allegations made against him to be untrue ... and find no warrant for a trial since we find no strong presumption of guilt [on any of the four allegations].

Allegation 1: Denies that same-sex-attraction is sinful and thereby fails to properly distinguish misery from the sin which give rise to it. (*Presbytery voted 44-1-4 to find no strong presumption of guilt for this Allegation.*)

Allegation 2: Compromises and dishonors his identity in Christ by self-identifying as a same-sex-attracted man. (43-1-6)

Allegation 3: Denies God's purpose and power to sanctify SSA believers by minimizing the pursuit of orientation change from homosexual to heterosexual. (41-2-8)

Allegation 4: Cannot meet the biblical “above reproach” qualification for the eldership since (a) homosexual inclinations are sin proper and are more heinous for being “against nature,” and since (b) TE Johnson identifies as a homosexually inclined man. (41-6-4)

The other CRM recommendations adopted by Presbytery were as follows:

MSP - We are grateful for TE Greg Johnson’s acknowledgment that has not always been as careful in expressing himself in his teaching as he should have been. We hereby encourage and exhort Greg, our brother in Christ, to take great care, going forward, to qualify what ought to be qualified, and to clarify all his

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

views when he speaks or writes, especially on the matter of sexuality; and when it is called for, to explain what he is not saying as well as what he is, especially with those who have taken offense with things he has said, or are likely to.

MSP - We hereby commend TE Johnson for his commitment to the authority of God's Word in his life and teaching for his faithful ministry to the flock of God at Memorial Presbyterian Church, and for his zeal to see unbelievers savingly encounter Jesus Christ's love through the ministry of the Church, especially people in secular LGBT communities.

MSP - We hereby declare that TE Johnson has been and remains an honorable member in good standing of Missouri Presbytery.

MSP - We receive Parts 1 and 2, which are the summaries of the allegations and the arguments behind the committee's judgments, as useful for Session study and for the perfecting of the Church's understanding of the Scriptural teaching on sexuality and how it can be rightly applied in our 21st century setting.

Presbytery also heard the report of the Committee to Reconsider Queer Treasure (the one theological judgment of the CIM not approved on December 7, 2019), voting to find fault with this lecture given at Revoice 18.

- 09/17/20 Presbytery received a different complaint from TE Speck regarding Presbytery's adoption of the CRM's finding no strong presumption of guilt on any of the four allegations.
- 10/20/20 At a Stated Meeting, Presbytery created a *BCO* 15-3 judicial commission to consider TE Speck's September 17 Complaint, and to propose a judgment.
- 11/10/20 The Complaint Review Commission met and adopted a decision denying TE Speck's September 17 Complaint, with supporting rationale.

APPENDIX T

- 11/16/20 At a Called Meeting, Presbytery approved the Complaint Commission's proposed denial of TE Speck's September 17, 2020 Complaint. The vote was 43-6-1.
- 12/02/20 TE Speck carried his September 17, 2020 Complaint to the General Assembly (Case 2020-12).
- 01/18/21 SJC Officers declared the Complaint administratively in order (OMSJC 9.1.a), ruled the Complaint should be heard by the full SJC instead of a Panel (OMSJC 9.3), and ruled the Record of the Case was complete and the Complaint was judicially in order and ready for Briefs and a Hearing (OMSJC 9.1.b).
- 03/09/21 Complainant filed his 10-page Preliminary Brief.
- 03/12/21 SJC met by teleconference. SJC deleted 430 pages from the Record, as shown below in an excerpt from those Minutes:

2020-12 Speck v. Missouri Presbytery. The SJC discussed the contents of the Record of the Case (ROC). The following motion was made, seconded, properly amended and adopted without objection: That the Commission delete from the ROC in Case No. 2020-12 the paper entitled "Homosexuality and the Gospel of Grace: Faithfulness to the Lord's Calling in an Age of Sexual Autonomy" (ROC 46-445) as a paper not having a "bearing on the complaint" (*BCO* 43-6) and being "extraneous to the matter before the Commission" (OMSJC 7.4.b) and the Standing Rules of Missouri Presbytery (ROC 16-45). The SJC takes judicial notice of the Report and Standing Rules; therefore, the Parties and SJC members may reference them in argument, but SJC members are not required to read those documents to qualify for the Case. In response to inquiries from SJC members, the Chairman ruled that SJC members from presbyteries submitting *BCO* 34-1 Overtures were not disqualified from Case No. 2020-12 or Case No. 2020-05 by virtue of their presbyteries' Overtures.

- 03/15/21 Respondent filed his 10-page Preliminary Brief.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

03/25/21 Hearing was conducted before full SJC in Atlanta with all 24 judges present. (TEs Coffin and Lucas joined by teleconference.) Complainant Speck, his assistant, TE Dominic Aquila, and Presbytery's Representative, TE Tim LeCroy, were present. Presbytery's Clerk observed online.

After the Hearing, the SJC moved into the Committee of the Whole and later rose from the Committee of the Whole. Below is an excerpt from the Minutes:

Chair reported that the committee of the whole approved a motion to recommend that the Commission rescind the declaration that the case is judicially in order, for the limited purpose of perfecting the record with answers to written questions propounded by members of the Commission. *OMSJC* 7.4(f). The Parliamentarian advised that this motion and process were in order. The committee of the whole approved a motion to recommend the statement of the judgment consisting of ROC page 3, lines 8-28, reformatted in the proper form for a statement of the issue. The Commission further agreed without objection to postpone consideration of the final report of the committee of the whole until the Commission next meets at the call of the Chair. The Chairman appointed the following committee to collect and collate questions from members of the Commission and to draft parameters to be communicated to Presbytery to perfect the Record of the Case ...

04/13/21 The six-man SJC Questions Committee filed its 30-page Report. In the course of the Committee preparing its Report, SJC members submitted a total of 103 questions, from which the Committee recommended selecting 25.

04/30/21 Reconvened SJC Meeting. SJC adopted recommendations from the Questions Committee in the following areas.

The SJC rescinded the Officers' previous *OMSJC* 11.1.e ruling that the Record in Case 2020-12 is "complete and sufficiently documented," thereby suspending the Officers' [January 2021] ruling that the Case is "judicially in order."

APPENDIX T

The SJC agreed to send a letter to Presbytery's Respondent, adopting the procedure outlined therein for responses to questions and supplemental [addendum] briefs, per the authority of *OMSJC* 7.4.b and 7.4.e.(3) below.

OMSJC 7.4.b -The hearing body may delete any portions of the Record as submitted that violate justice or due process, a provision of the *BCO* or Roberts Rules of Order, or that are extraneous to the matter before the Commission. The hearing body may also require the addition of material to the Record that is relevant to the Case. Deletions and additions shall always be recorded in the minutes of the hearing body, with the approved rationale for the change. Any deletions or additions shall be reported to the parties and may be addressed in argument from the parties in any hearing requested by a party on the ROC.

OMSJC 7.3.e.(3). After oral argument [on a ROC dispute] the parties shall be dismissed and the Panel or Commission shall make a decision as to whether in fairness and justice the Record of the Case should be corrected.

The SJC adopted the Committee's list of [25] questions for TE Johnson, as amended, to be sent to Presbytery's Representative.

Below is the text of the letter sent to Presbytery's Representative, which was also sent to the Complainant.

In the SJC's deliberations on Case 2020-12, the SJC decided the Record does not yet appear to be "complete and sufficiently documented" (*OMSJC* 11.1.e) and that fairness and justice dictate the accused should have a chance to provide additional documentation for the Record (per the principle of *OMSJC* 7.4.e.(3)) Therefore, the SJC rescinded the SJC Officers' previous ruling that the Record was complete and sufficiently documented, thereby also suspending the ruling that the Case was judicially in

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

order at present. Here is the procedure we will now follow.

We are sending the attached questions to you as Presbytery's Representative with a request that you invite TE Johnson to consider providing written answers, which would be added to the Record per OMSJC 7.4.b: "The hearing body may also require the addition of material to the Record that is relevant to the Case." We have copied the Complainant on this letter.

We understand that you, as Presbytery's Representative, are empowered to represent Presbytery in the perfection of the Record. Note that Question #15 in the "Additional/General" category calls for a response from Presbytery's Representative. It is also included in the list for TE Johnson, in case he needs to assist you with the answer.

If TE Johnson chooses to answer the attached questions, please send his response document to the SJC within 14 days after his confirmed receipt of the Questions. Please use the email addresses below. If TE Johnson is able to respond before the deadline, we would welcome it. If TE Johnson declines, please notify us promptly.

If a Response Document is provided, it would be added to the Record, but there would not be a need to re-brief or have another Hearing. However, if either you or the Complainant wish to file an addendum to your previous Brief, dealing only with any additional information provided by TE Johnson, the Complainant's filing deadline would be seven (7) days after his receipt of the Response Document from the SJC, and the Respondent's would be ten (10) days after his receipt of the Response Document from the SJC. Any such additional Briefs are limited to five-pages.

If there is no Response Document to add to the Record, the SJC Chairman would reconvene a SJC meeting and the SJC would plan to continue with post-hearing adjudication of the Complaint.

APPENDIX T

The SJC does not believe another hearing is required, even if TE Johnson responds to the questions. However, the SJC would schedule another Hearing, on the additional material only, if requested by one of the parties within 7 days after his receipt of the last additional Brief filed.

The introduction to the SJC's 25 Questions read as follows:

The SJC believes it is necessary to attempt to clarify the Record of the Case because its magnitude (over 600 pages covering multiple years of writing, speaking, and judicial processes) makes it difficult to ascertain if specific representations of perspectives of TE Johnson are his actual or present theological convictions. We understand from the Record:

- he has acknowledged some of his perspectives have matured over time;
- he has acknowledged some were poorly stated due to time limits, situational pressures, or extemporaneity;
- some representations of perspectives are made unclear by imprecision or disagreement over what aspect of sin is being referenced in specific statements;
- some representations have been extrapolated by critics but denied by Johnson.

Thus, the SJC offers TE Johnson the opportunity to answer questions with reference to the specific Allegations in the Complaint now before the Commission. Below are 25 questions arranged by the Allegations, with a fifth category titled "Additional/General."

05/11/21 Presbytery answered the SJC Question about the Q&A in the Record between the Missouri investigative committee and TE Johnson from Fall 2019 and early 2020. This was the one question from the SJC directed to Presbytery out of the 25 questions sent down.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 05/20/21 TE Johnson provided a 23-page document responding to the SJC's 25 Questions.
- 05/27/21 Complainant filed a five-page Addendum to his Preliminary Brief.
- 05/31/21 Respondent filed a five-page Addendum to his Preliminary Brief. Neither party requested another Hearing.
- 07/13/21 Reconvened SJC Meeting. Five names were pulled at random to comprise a Drafting Committee tasked to present a proposed decision. Committee included TEs Coffin and Lee, and REs Donahoe, Dowling, and Neikirk.
- 09/21/21 SJC Drafting Committee filed its report to the SJC.
- 10/21/21 SJC's Fall Stated Meeting in Atlanta.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

1. Did Presbytery violate *BCO* 31-2 in the manner of its investigation of the allegations?
2. Did Missouri Presbytery clearly err at its meeting on July 21, 2020, when it declined to commence process on any of the following four allegations?
 - 2.a. Allegation 1: *SSA & sin* - TE Johnson "denies that same-sex-attraction is sinful and thereby fails to properly distinguish misery from the sin which give rise to it."
 - 2.b. Allegation 2: *Identity* - TE Johnson "compromises and dishonors his identity in Christ by self-identifying as a same-sex-attracted man."
 - 2.c. Allegation 3: *Sanctification* - TE Johnson "denies God's purpose and power to sanctify SSA [same-sex-attracted] believers by minimizing the pursuit of orientation change from homosexual to heterosexual."

- 2.d. Allegation 4: *Qualification* - TE Johnson “cannot meet the biblical ‘above reproach’ qualification for the eldership since (a) homosexual inclinations are sin proper and are more heinous for being “against nature,” and since (b) TE Johnson identifies as a homosexually-inclined man.”

III. JUDGMENT

1. No
- 2.a. No
- 2.b. No
- 2.c. No
- 2.d. No

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

This Reasoning and Opinion briefly explains why the SJC did not find that Presbytery was unreasonable in its decisions declining to indict.

Issue 1 - *BCO 31-2 Investigation*

BCO 31-2. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character. This duty is more imperative when those who deem themselves aggrieved by injurious reports shall ask an investigation.

If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the guilt of the party involved, the court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case. This prosecutor shall be a member of the court, except that in a case before the Session, he may be any communing member of the same congregation with the accused.

The Record demonstrates Presbytery sought to exercise the requisite “due diligence and great discretion” in seeking explanations from TE Johnson

regarding the four allegations. There is no evidence that Presbytery committed clear error in its procedures in this area. Whether the explanations provided were satisfactory is a different issue that will be addressed next.

Issue 2 - Four Allegations –

The SJC does not find that the Presbytery clearly erred in its exercise of judgment when it declined to commence formal judicial process (i.e., declined to order an indictment and appoint a prosecutor) on any of the four allegations.

Below are those four allegations, followed by quotes from the Complaint in support of those allegations. The SJC then provides examples of TE Johnson's explanations/responses on each allegation. These examples include 9 statements from TE Johnson to the Missouri Presbytery investigating committee and 19 answers to questions (shown in italics) from the SJC. The excerpts from the statements before MOP make plausible the conclusion that it was not unreasonable for the Presbytery to decline to indict. This judgment is supported by the excerpts from TE Johnson's answers to the questions posed by the SJC, questions posed to clarify the Record of the Case because its magnitude (over 600 pages that included multiple years of writing and speaking by TE Johnson, as well as various allegations, Presbytery reports, and judicial processes) made it difficult to ascertain if specific representations of perspectives of TE Johnson were his actual theological convictions.

Allegation 1

“TE Johnson denies that same-sex-attraction is sinful and thereby fails to properly distinguish misery from the sin which give rise to it.”

Related to this allegation, Complainant contends the following:

- “TE Johnson draws a false analogy between the merely physical and passive condition of cancer and the spiritual and active orientation of homosexuality that goes far beyond mere suffering due to the curse.”
- “TE Johnson does not believe one can really repent of this corruption (i.e., the homosexual orientation), since he was made or born this way genetically (CRM Report, p. 10). Such "movements of internal corruption" we should flee or resist, not mortify or confess (p. 11). You can only "ask

APPENDIX T

forgiveness for a sin, for an action, a word, a thought, a deed, a choice ... " (CRM, p. 17)."

- "... TE Johnson misplaces same-sex attraction into the category of original sin and not into the category of actual transgressions."
- "TE Johnson appears to have created a middle ground between the Roman Catholic view of concupiscence and the Protestant view of actual transgression. He calls the enticement to sin sinful (unlike Roman Catholicism), but he denies that inward enticement is itself a sin."
- "... TE Johnson consistently affirms that apart from the conscious act of the will, a sinful desire is not "a sin" that requires formal, true repentance (e.g., CRM, pp. 9-10, 15-16, 20). Same-sex attraction is "not 'a sin' unless there is volition," according to TE Johnson (CRM, p. 16)."

If the Record demonstrated that the above statements were an accurate summary of TE Johnson's views, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint. Based on the Record, however, the SJC finds that it was not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude that TE Johnson does not hold these positions and that he affirms the sinfulness of fallen desires, including all sexual attractions a person might have to someone not their spouse.

Thus, for example, in response to a question from the Presbytery's investigating committee, TE Johnson stated the following:

GJ: I don't recall saying that same-sex attraction is a morally neutral condition. I have repeatedly stated otherwise. Any time I sense an internal sexual or romantic pull toward anyone God has not given me—including any male by definition—I have to recognize that pull for what it is. It is an effect of the fall, yes, but more precisely it is the pull of what St. Paul terms the flesh. It's a motion of the internal corruption that remains in the believer throughout this life. "This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated" (see WCF 6.4-6). This temptation is "original corruption" and is "properly called

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

sin,” even when it does not lead to “actual sin.” Apart from Christ, I would carry the guilt of original corruption.”

In addition, in responding to the following questions posed by the SJC to complete the Record, TE Johnson stated the following:

SJC 1.b. Do you concur that any illicit desire or inclination in your heart (even if it arises unbidden from the corruption of nature and does not result in an outwardly sinful act), is properly identified as sin, brings guilt upon you, and must be confessed, repented of, and mortified? (ROC 923, Q #2)

Yes, I concur. Sin is not merely transgression of the law of God. Sin is any want of conformity unto it. We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners. I agree with WCF 6 that internal corruption is properly called sin. We are to turn humbly to God in repentance always, both on account of what we do and on account of what we are.

SJC 1.c. Do you believe that you should repent of (i.e., confess as contrary to righteousness, acknowledge as personal guilt, sorrow for, and strive to forsake) any corruption of your heart that is present in you due to original sin, as well as to repent particularly of any particular sins (ROC 928, ln 1ff.)?

Yes, to both questions. I agree with WCF 15.5.

SJC 1.d. Do you attempt, by saying that “the Christian is called to repent of (that is, to confess and forsake) actual sins ... and to proactively ‘mortify’ original corruption (as well as all the actual sins flowing from it)” [see ROC 928, ln 1ff.] to segregate some aspect of original corruption as a category of sin that does not carry personal guilt or does not require repentance characterized by confession, mortification, and forsaking?

No. That is not my intention. All sin, whether original or actual, carries personal guilt and requires all of this.

SJC 2. MOP’s Committee concluded, “We believe it has been and continues to be TE Johnson’s view that homoerotic desire is sinful – not as “a sin,” an ungodly volitional act, but as indwelling sin, a particular manifestation or “motion” (WCF VI.5) of our original corruption.” (ROC 924) How do you define “motion” and how does that definition comport with other uses of the term “motions” in the Standards (i.e., Larger Catechism 147 and 148)?

In *WCF* 6.4, the Assembly distinguished between the “original corruption” conveyed to all humanity and the “actual transgressions” which “proceed” from that corruption. This original corruption includes four elements within the confession, namely that “we are utterly indisposed,” “disabled,” “made opposite to all good” and are “wholly inclined to all evil” (*WCF* 6.4). As part of our original corruption, the confession here distinguishes this “inclination” to evil from the “actual transgressions” that proceed from it.

Of course, if the inclination to sin were itself “actual transgression,” then that would have applied to any potential sexual attraction to someone God has not given us, whether male or female. But the divines chose to categorize the inclination to sin as a facet of original corruption, and not as actual transgression. (We are morally culpable either way.) ...

Here, the point would be that both the corruption and its promptings, proposals, or initiatives (its temptations) are truly and properly sin—and not merely human weakness, contrary to the Roman Church. As A.A. Hodge explains in his commentary on the chapter, “The great burden of pollution and guilt is felt to consist not in what we have done, but in what we are—our permanent moral condition rather than our actual transgressions.”

SJC 4. What does it mean to say that SSA is “of sin” but not “a sin”? Is something that is merely “of sin” morally culpable before God?

That is language I adopted from the 2017 Missouri Presbytery report on sexuality. The distinction is not between degrees of culpability, but between degrees of volition. We are culpable both for what we do (transgression) and also for what we are (any lack of conformity unto). Since sexual temptation (of any kind) arises from our own heart, we are always culpable. “Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed” (James 1:14). I use the phrase “a sin” in its vernacular sense as a synonym for “actual sin.” When speaking of the motions of original corruption, I am

more likely to speak of “indwelling sin.” Temptations are “of sin” in that they are “motions of” original sin/internal corruption.

*SJC 5. Do you have any disagreement with WCF 6.4, 6.5 or 6.6 in its formulation and description of sin, actual or original? If so, identify any differences in detail.*¹⁸

I have no differences with the formulation in WCF 6.4, 6.5 or 6.6. I have leaned heavily on these categories in my teaching on the topic of sexuality in recent years.

Allegation 2:

“TE Johnson compromises and dishonors his identity in Christ by self-identifying as a same-sex-attracted man.”

Related to this allegation, Complainant contends the following:

- “When asked about the question of identity or self-conception (within the context of the 2019 GA affirmation of the Nashville Statement), TE Johnson side-stepped the question entirely (CRM Report, p. 26).” [ROC 5, line 157-158]
- “TE Johnson may not describe himself as a "gay Christian" personally and publicly, but he never declares such a self-designation to be wrong and contrary to God's Word. He refuses to do so, it seems. Why?” [ROC 6, line 189-191]

¹⁸ WCF 6.4 From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

WCF 6.5 This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and subdued; yet both it, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

WCF 6.6 Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

If the Record demonstrated that the above statements were an accurate summary of TE Johnson's views, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint. Based on the Record, however, the SJC finds that it was not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude that TE Johnson does not hold these positions and that TE Johnson's statements, responses, and explanations—taken as a whole—do not undermine or contradict his identity as a new creation in Christ.

Thus, for example, in responding to the Presbytery's investigating committee, TE Johnson stated the following:

- GJ: I have avoided the couplet "gay Christian" because of its historical connection to the Gay Christian Network, an affirming group. Also, it's not my Christianity that's gay. It's my sexual orientation that is. ... For me, my fallen sexual orientation is not my identity. As I wrote in CT, "My sexual orientation doesn't define me. It's not the most important or most interesting thing about me.
- GJ: If by identity, you mean the core identity that defines me, the identity that then becomes what I aspire more fully to be, then no Christian should have a fallen sexual orientation as their core identity. Our core identity as Christians is that we have been adopted as sons of Father into his family. That's the objective identity that names and claims me and to which I owe my life, my love and my treasure.
- GJ: If a believer were celebrating their fallen sexuality, then there's obviously a problem with that.
- GJ: [From an email to someone who posted a critique of Johnson's Christianity Today testimony.] You express well how you cannot understand why anyone would celebrate a sin-identity as part of the Christian experience, and I agree. I have no interest in celebrating the sinful impulse of indwelling sin that so disorders my sexuality. I simply want to acknowledge that reality, not to celebrate it ...

In addition, in responding to the following questions posed by the SJC to complete the Record, TE Johnson stated the following:

SJC 6.a. Because “All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory” (WCF 26.1) and all Christians have an obligation to honor that union with the profession of our identity in Christ as well as our obedience to him, have you compromised that profession by changing your [previously expressed] view that Christians “ought to reckon their identity, their conception of self, in a way that is indexed to the once-for-all judgment Christ has executed against sin, the world and Satan in his death and resurrection” (see ROC 827; 968, ln 9-12)?

No. Jesus is everything to me. ... Every sermon I preach is a proclamation of the saving lordship of Jesus Christ and his calling to live out our new identity in him.

SJC 6.b. Have you changed your agreement with Statement 9 in the Ad Interim Study Committee Report on Human Sexuality? If you have, present differences, please explain them.

I have no disagreement with Statement 9 of the Ad Interim Study Committee Report on Human Sexuality, provided that it is held alongside the other statements in the AIC report. ... In fact, I have no disagreement with the underlying theological or moral structure of the entire report. The concerns I will voice will be pastoral and missiological in nature.

SJC 6.c. Regardless of whether you agree with Complainant that the Bible never describes believers with a sinful modifier, given your understanding of Biblical emphases indicated in [the two questions] above, along with your own testimony that serious misconceptions can occur with Christian’s unqualified identification of themselves as “gay” or “SSA” or “homosexual,” do you understand how you might avoid misunderstanding and bring peace to the church by using wording such as that suggested by concerned brothers below (1 Cor. 8:12-13)?

E.g., #1 “This does not mean that Christians do not continue to struggle with sin all their life long. It means that such a believer ought not consider himself a drunkard Christian or an adulterer Christian or a homosexual Christian but rather a Christian who struggles with the temptation to drunkenness, adultery, or homosexuality....” [emphasis added, ROC 576, ln 256ff.]

E.g., #2 "I'm a Christian fighting against sexual lust, or pride, or worshiping idols, or lying, or gossiping" (ROC 6, ln 181-2).

If you will not use such wording as suggested in these examples, please explain why?

I have never once described myself as a "gay Christian." Even in my GA speech, I said, "I am still same-sex attracted." And when speaking about myself, I have always qualified whatever term I have used. ... I have never spoken of my sexual orientation without also speaking of my agreement with biblical teaching and my commitment to walk with Jesus in celibacy. ...

The AIC notes that the term may be used as "a factual observation about one's experiences," but that believers should be mindful that others may assume something more by the term (AIC 30, lines 4-5-8). But I want to be heard by my fathers and brothers. Some of my detractors have claimed I identify as a "gay Christian," but they have never been able to quote me as such. It is a couplet I have not and do not use. Those who do use it have their reasons, and I do not judge them or quarrel over words. (We owe them the judgment of charity. Most are merely trying to say they are "gay" and they are "Christian." They are not typically intending to modify "Christian" or promote some new form of Christianity that is "gay.") Still, I have always avoided this couplet. ...

My actual daily struggle with sexual temptation is no different from other Christian men. I look away when tempted. I don't take that second glance. I meet with an elder weekly for accountability. I avoid unmonitored internet connections. I invest in Christian friendships in which I am known. I have Covenant Eyes on my phone. That experience is required of any Christian man walking in repentance. Being same-sex attracted does not increase my struggle against sexual temptation, per se.

Again, as the AIC on sexuality states,

“How then should we think of the language of sexual orientation? Insofar as the term orientation is used descriptively to articulate a particular set of experiences, namely the persistent and predominant sexual attractions of an individual, it can remain useful as a way of classifying those experiences in contrast to the experiences of the majority of other people” (AIC p.30 line 41 – p.31 line 1).

Allegation 3

“TE Johnson denies God's purpose and power to sanctify SSA believers by minimizing the pursuit of orientation change from homosexual to heterosexual.”

Related to this allegation, Complainant contends the following. (See also the discussion in Allegation 1.)

- The problem arises when those who claim that same-sex attraction is so strong, that it is such a significant part of their lives, that they find their identity in this disposition. Further, they claim that this one particular sin is the only one that cannot be changed through the process of sanctification.

If the Record demonstrated that the above statement, and those in Allegation 1, were an accurate summary of TE Johnson's views, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint. Based on the Record, however, the SJC finds that it was not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude that TE Johnson does not hold these positions and that TE Johnson affirms the reality and hope of progressive sanctification.

Thus, for example, in response to a question from the Presbytery's investigating committee, TE Johnson stated the following:

GJ: God can do anything. He can do miracles. But the normal pattern in this fallen world is that this is a lifelong struggle. I know I will be delivered from temptation when my Lord Jesus brings me to glory. I know of no promise in the Bible that believers will no longer experience temptation in this life. Read Paul in Romans 7. He was not delivered from temptation in this life. As the confession expresses so

succinctly (WCF 6.5) “This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated.” As Calvin explained in his discussion of Romans 6, “So long as you live, sin must needs be in your members. At least let it be deprived of mastery. Let not what it bids be done.” This also lines up with the experience of most believers who are same-sex-attracted.

Longtime Harvest USA director Tim Geiger has stated that he has also never seen same-sex attraction go away—in himself or anyone else. I suspect there are cases out there. But ordinarily this is a lifetime struggle.

In addition, in responding to the following questions posed by the SJC to complete the Record, TE Johnson stated the following:

SJC 8.a. Because our Confession acknowledges that, though our “sanctification is ... yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war” (WCF 13.2); “in which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail; yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so, the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (WCF 13.3), do you affirm that it is possible for God to reduce or eliminate same-sex attraction from the inclinations and desires of a believer (see ROC, 943 ln 31ff.)?

Yes, it is possible for God to reduce homoerotic temptation from the inclinations and desires of a believer. It is also possible for God to eliminate such temptations, although this has been much, much rarer in practice. ... I have known others like myself who, while still only ever distracted by the same sex, have found the frequency of these distractions has lessened through the decades. While that may be partly a function of aging, I would like to think progressive sanctification has played a role in this.

But struggle against sexual temptation is typically lifelong, whatever one's orientation, especially with men. ...

As the AIC Report on Sexuality explains:

The error of some Christian approaches to same-sex sexual desire has been to tie faithfulness to the elimination of homosexual temptation (or even the development of heterosexual desire) as though if Christians really did enough therapy, had enough faith, or repented sufficiently, God would deliver them in some final and complete way, changing their orientation (AIC p.25, lines 11-14).

SJC 8.b. Do you affirm that it is proper to expect that “through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so, the saints grow in grace,” even if total elimination of sinful inclinations is uncommon?”

Yes, I affirm this. “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is a lifelong process. “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own” (Philippians 3:12).

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified,” scripture states (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

Again, the degree of change has most often been less than we had hoped. I for example wanted a wife and children, but what I got instead was half a century of virginity and lots of spiritual children. I have grown in my love for Jesus, in prayer, in intimacy with God. My anger has turned to gentleness, my impatience to longsuffering, and my endless lust to mere distractions.

I can affirm exactly what this passage states, and it has been my own experience, that the regenerate part is overcoming and I have grown in grace, though the total elimination of sinful inclinations has not occurred. I look forward to this in glory.

SJC 8.c. Do you affirm that the process of sanctification – even when accompanied by many weaknesses and imperfections (WCF 16.5, 6), with the Spirit and the flesh warring against one another until final glorification (WCF

13.2) – *should give Christians biblical cause to “expect to see the regenerate nature increasingly overcome the remaining corruption of the flesh, but this progress will often be slow and uneven” (ROC 850 lines 26-27, from AIC Statement 7).*

Yes, I affirm this. Jesus does change lives, and that change is progressive. ... Nothing I have stated has ever been intended to suggest otherwise. ... Spiritual growth is toward holiness, not necessarily toward heterosexuality. And progressive sanctification, while absolutely real, remains partial in this life. In his 1646 *Mortification of Sin*, John Owen cautions us, “To mortify a sin is not utterly to kill, root it out and destroy it, that it should have no more hold at all nor residence in our hearts.... This is not in this life to be accomplished. An utter killing and destruction of it ... is not in this life to be expected.” Rather, Owen sees ongoing struggle as a means of God's ministry to us. “God, by our infirmity and weakness, keep[s] us in continual dependence on him for teaching and revelations of himself out of his word, never in this world bringing any soul to the utmost.” As *WCF* 6.5 states so succinctly, “This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated.” If, as I have argued, same-sex attraction is part of our “original corruption”—specifically the part about being “inclined to all evil” (*WCF* 6.4), then we should not be surprised to have to battle the motions of such underlying corruption until delivered into glory at death.

The above quote from the AIC report continues with this same precise and necessary qualification.

“Moreover, the process of mortification and vivification involves the whole person, not simply unwanted sexual desires. The aim of sanctification in one's sexual life cannot be reduced to attraction to persons of the opposite sex (though some persons may experience movement in this direction), but rather involves growing in grace and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Yes, sanctification is real and progressive, even while the flesh and Spirit continue their war. In this war, grace has the winning hand.

SJC 8.d. Do you affirm with our Confession that “they, who are once effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally,” since the ... “dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces to the practice of true holiness” WCF 13.1”

And do you by this affirmation, acknowledge that you will preach and teach that Christians who struggle with SSA should believe that the dominion of sin in their lives is broken, and that they can expect for the attraction to be weakened and mortified as they are strengthened by the Word and Spirit in the practice of true holiness?

Yes. I do affirm with our Confession that “they, who are once effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally,” since the ... “dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces to the practice of true holiness.”

All Christians should believe that the dominion of sin in their lives is broken, though it is the lusts that are weakened in WCF 13.1. Christians can expect for the lusts of the heart to be weakened and mortified as the believer is strengthened by the Word and Spirit in the practice of true holiness.

Typically, a believer who is same-sex attracted can expect the same degree of freedom from sexual temptation that a straight believer can ordinarily expect through progressive sanctification. We are new creations in Christ. We are no longer slaves to sin that we must obey its commands. God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able but will provide a way of escape. Jesus said we must pick up our cross daily and die. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord. A

godly character is formed through decades of faithfulness and obedience.

At the same time, again, the confession is nuanced, balancing these words with the qualification that “This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (WCF 13.2). We must hold both of these realities or we leave the flock either enslaved by sin (on one side) or crushed by unrealistic and unbiblical expectations on the other.

I know octogenarians who tell me they are still distracted when a beautiful woman walks in the room. But they have seen genuine increased freedom from the pull of sexual temptation, albeit less than they might have wanted or hoped for. John Murray—also a lifelong celibate until he married during his retirement at the age of sixty-nine—explained: “There is a total difference between surviving sin and reigning sin, the regenerate in conflict with sin and the unregenerate complacent with sin. . . . It is one thing for sin to live in us; it is another for us to live in sin.”

SJC 9. Do you affirm your agreement with the Statement #7 in the Report of the Ad Interim Study Committee on Human Sexuality? If you have present differences, please explain them.

I think Statement 7 is beautifully written and well nuanced. I am in full agreement with it.

SJC 10. On ROC 943, in response to [MOP] Committee Question 5a, you respond that delivery from same sex attraction would take a “miracle” and that “the normal pattern in this fallen world is that this is a lifelong struggle.” You then cite Paul’s statements in Romans 7 as evidence of this ongoing struggle. But Paul also continually calls us not only to cease from sin, but to live in accordance with God’s Law. For example, Ephesians 4:28 requires not just avoiding theft (or temptations to steal) but a positive commitment to “labor, doing honest work.” Similarly, Ephesians 5:4 does not call us only to avoid filthy talk, but to speak “thanksgiving” (its opposite). More generally, the Ten Commandments not only forbid sin, but enjoin righteousness. Do you

believe it is (ordinarily, outside of a miracle) impossible to give up a proclivity to murder? Theft? Lying? If not, how is it that same sex attraction is different from all these other sins?

When I state that “sexual orientation does not typically change,” I am not saying that God doesn't change lives. Look at TE Tim Geiger. Look at TE Allan Edwards. Look at RE Luke Calvin. Look at RE Jim Pocta. None of these brothers claims to have been freed from the presence of same-sex temptation. ... All of these are walking miracles and proof of the gospel's power to radically reorient a life to God. My point has been and remains that none of this is evidence of a gay-to-straight cure. ...

Same-sex sexual attraction is very similar to opposite-sex sexual attraction. Opposite-sex sexual attraction for someone other than your spouse is also a motion of the corrupt nature tempting you to sin. As such, it too is properly called sin. That sexual pull toward your neighbor's wife is not morally neutral. It is sin to mortify.

But it doesn't typically go away, either. It may be weakened, but it is rare that a Christian man does not feel sexual temptation. ...

Just as we don't instruct believers attracted to the opposite sex to expect all sexual feelings to disappear, we cannot expect that of believers with same-sex attraction. The absence of temptation is not a standard that straight men have ever lived up to.

The Bible does present to us a movement from sin to its opposite. But the opposite of homosexual sin is not heterosexual sin. The opposite is holiness. ...

The AIC report suggests this physiological component by trying (sic) homosexual orientation not merely to original/indwelling sin, but also to our state of misery. “The origins and development of sexual desire remain complex and, in many ways, mysterious. It is possible to conceive of the experience of same-sex attraction as simultaneously a part

of the remaining corruption of original sin as well as the misery of living in a fallen world, one of the ways our bodies themselves groan for redemption (Rom. 8:22-23; *WCF* 6.6; *WLC* 17-19)” (AIC p.28 line 5). Fallen biology may account for much of this reality. “However, we must also acknowledge ... the ways in which the Fall has shaped our biological and social development” (AIC p.27, lines 37-39).

Allegation 4

“TE Johnson cannot meet the biblical ‘above reproach’ qualification for the eldership since (a) homosexual inclinations are sin proper and are more heinous for being ‘against nature,’ and since (b) TE Johnson identifies as a homosexually-inclined man.”

If the Complainant had demonstrated, for example, that the minister was involved in homosexual behavior, cultivated unrepentant lustings, taught that either of those were not sinful, or was not continually seeking to mortify those temptations, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint. The Record demonstrates it was not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude that TE Johnson pursues Spirit-empowered victory over his sinful temptations and actions, just as another man must do with heterosexual temptations toward someone not his wife.¹⁹

Thus, for example, in response to the Presbytery’s investigating committee, TE Johnson stated the following:

¹⁹ At the Hearing, the Complainant indicated he questioned whether the ESV accurately translates 1 Cor. 6:9 when it uses the phrase, “men who *practice* homosexuality.” However, the footnote in the ESV indicates: “The two Greek terms translated by this phrase refer to the passive and active partners in consensual homosexual acts.”

In the 48th GA’s AIC Report on Sexuality, footnote 4 for Statement 1 reads as follows: “Paul coined the term *arsenokoitai* (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10) from the use of two related terms in the Septuagint version of Leviticus 18 and 20. The basic meaning is “man-bedders” or men who have sex with other men. ... The combination of *arsenokoitai* and *malakoi*, uniquely used in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 6:9, likely refers most directly—as per the ESV footnote—to the active and passive partners in consensual homosexual activity. For more extended discussion, see Chapter 5 in Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Say About Homosexuality?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).”

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- GJ: The 5th General Assembly of the PCA in 1977 declared that “a practicing homosexual continuing in this sin would not be a fit candidate for ordination or membership in the Presbyterian Church in America.” ... Within the PCA, the categories were “practicing homosexual” and “non-practicing homosexual.” Only the former category was barred from membership and ordained ministry.
- GJ: So how do I view my orientation? Well, it's obviously fallen. No one ever had to convince me of that. ... This means that mortification of sexual sin has been a daily part of my Christian experience these last thirty years. That means fleeing temptation; I've never been able to join a gym or enter a locker room. That means redirecting thoughts. That means accountability. (I've met with an elder every Thursday for the past 18 years for prayer. He gets my Covenant Eyes report to help me stay faithful.)
- GJ: I'm a sinner and so it feels wrong for me to appeal to any righteousness I may have. I'm a virgin who—as I said in my GA floor speech last year—mortifies my indwelling sin daily. But my sin is ever before me. I can mention the more than a decade since I've looked at porn, but I know Proverbs 6:16-19. The point is that we don't judge based on what sinful temptation a minister experiences so much as what he does with that temptation. If a minister of the gospel faithfully mortifies his temptation toward gay sex or slander, developing over decades a character that consistently if imperfectly does what God wants (and not what indwelling sin wants), that is a character that others close to him will see as being above reproach. But the minister himself feels like a “wicked man” with no hope but in God's sovereign grace to “save me from this body of death.” ... [I]f a minister instead engages in more seriously, without particular repentance, they have no basis for an actual gay sex or actual slander, then Paul's logic would seem to indicate that such a minister is unfit for office. And much assurance of salvation.

In addition, in responding to the following questions posed by the SJC to complete the Record, TE Johnson stated the following:

SJC 11. In light of the PCA's statements on homosexuality, Scripture, and the Westminster Standards, how can a same-sex attracted/homosexual elder, who is chaste, be considered above reproach?

I don't see too much difference from how one ordinarily concludes that a minister is above reproach. It is not temptation that disqualifies a man—then we would all be disqualified. As Al Mohler writes, “Every single human being who has experienced puberty has a sexual orientation that, in some way, falls short of the glory of God.” It's a level field at the foot of the cross.

What places a minister above reproach is the Lord's work in developing a Christian character trained through perseverance to trust and obey Jesus Christ in the face of temptation. That includes love for God, the pursuit of holiness, the practice of godliness, personal integrity, humility, self-sacrificial love for people, wise use of spiritual gifts, biblical and confessional orthodoxy and the approbation of God's people.

I do experience same-sex temptation. (I call it same-sex distraction because I'm just trying to serve my Lord when it tries to distract me from that.) I know other pastors in this denomination that experience other temptations like the temptation to slander. Those who have gay sex and those who slander are both listed 1 Corinthians 6 among those who “will not inherit the kingdom.” The Hebrew scriptures similarly call gay sex an abomination to the LORD (Leviticus 18:22). The same scriptures call “spreading strife among brothers” an abomination to the LORD (Proverbs 6:16-19). There are additional sins that also get this same categorization.

The point is that we don't judge by what sinful temptation a minister experiences in his heart so much as by what he does with that temptation. Does he proactively mortify his sin?

If a minister of the gospel faithfully mortifies his temptation toward homoeroticism or slander (or lust, or anger, etc.), developing over decades a character that consistently if imperfectly does what God wants (and not what indwelling

sin wants), that is a character that others close to him will see as being above reproach.

I have been a leader in the same congregation for 27 years. I am known. They view me as above reproach, as does the presbytery in which I have been member these past 19 years—and before that, an intern for about six years. They see all the effort I put into honoring God with my sexuality. They know how I see sin always crouching at my door, requiring me to remain always prepared to battle it. They know I have never been sexually active. I have never held hands, snuggled or looked longingly into someone's eyes. They know I have only kissed once, and that was with a girl in high school before I knew the Lord. They know I have not looked at porn in over 17 years. They know the same ruling elder and I have met for coffee and to pray every Thursday morning for twenty years, and that he gets my Covenant Eyes report. They know I never go near a gym or locker room to avoid any potential temptation or even distraction. They know how I proactively work on having close, long-term Christian friendships in order to proactively mortify the loneliness that might occasion sexual temptation. They know how I respect men and women as image bearers of God and live in joyful submission to my savior Jesus Christ. They have seen all the fruit of the Spirit in me. Those who know me honor God's work in my life and see in it hope that the gospel truly has power to change us. That is the approbation of God's people for a regenerate sinner's life lived in saving union with Jesus Christ in a way that is above reproach. ...

The Presbyterian Church in America itself declared in 1977 only that “practicing homosexuals”—as distinct from non-practicing homosexuals—were not suitable candidates for ordination. Three years later, the 1980 RPCES report on homosexuality specifically rejected any categorical exclusion of “repentant homosexuals” from church office. This year's AIC report states the same position, “Insofar as such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin struggle automatically to disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-11),” (AIC p. 31, lines 29-31).

Our AIC report on sexuality commends those of us who have persevered in the face of homoerotic temptation:

Our brothers and sisters who resist and repent of enduring feelings of same-sex attraction are powerful examples to us all of what this ‘daily mortification’ looks like in ‘the best of believers.’ We should be encouraged and challenged by their example and eager to join in fellowship with them for the mutual strengthening of our faith, hope, and love. (AIC p.23, lines 30-33).

The [AIC] report offers further commendation of those who model for the rest of the church what costly obedience looks like.

Finally, we rejoice with our brothers and sisters who, while experiencing ongoing attraction to the same sex and living in a culture which would encourage them to embrace and act on those attractions, instead pursue lives of faithfulness through chastity and obedience to Christ by daily echoing Jesus’s words of “not my will, but yours, be done” with respect to their sexuality (Luke 22:42). In this, they model for us all what it means to heed Jesus’ teaching: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34). May it be that thanks to the finished work of Christ, and at the end of our sometimes faltering and imperfect obedience, we each hear the divine accolade: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

SJC 12. Is homosexuality a heinous sin? If so, why? If not, why not? (Please support your answer from the Standards and interact with Larger Catechism 150-151)

Sins are not all equally heinous (*WLC* 150). But they are all heinous. Having sex with someone of the same sex is very heinous. Before we ever get to the Standards, the Bible is clear on this point. For a man to lie with another man as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination. Paul picks up the Hebrew of Leviticus—*arsenokoitai*, literally “male bed”—to prohibit it in no uncertain terms as sin that that will keep a man out of the kingdom.

A sin can be aggravated by any number of factors. Sexual immorality is a heinous sin. But the sin can be aggravated, for example, by that immorality being with another man's wife. Or with someone in our church, where we were in a position of spiritual leadership over them. Sexual immorality with someone of the same sex would be yet another aggravation. I do not see the list in *WLC* 151 as exhaustive.

All other things being equal, I would consider homosexual immorality to be more heinous than heterosexual immorality on account of the way it further warps God's creational norm for sex. As in *WLC* 151, it goes against the “light of nature.” Romans 1 notes it is unnatural.

SJC 14. In your Revoice Breakout Session you said “And other people have a calling to glorify God with unwanted same sex attraction or gender dysphoria or intersex condition. And that calling, because it’s a calling from God to suffer, is a holy calling and a holy vocation.” Further, you compare these situations to one who is in an empty marriage and one who has leukemia. (ROC 464). Whatever your answer, what is the Biblical or Confessional basis for designating this as a calling or vocation?

If I thought for a moment that my struggle with same-sex attraction was a random experience, bad luck, something outside of my heavenly Father's care, I would have no hope. It is because it is a calling from my Father that I can follow his wise instruction and trust and obey him through this calling. ...

To be perfectly clear, I was not saying that sin is a holy calling, but that the life-long struggle against a particular indwelling sin on account of a fallen sexual orientation—and enduring the suffering that results from that—is a holy calling. I didn't have

to spell that out because my audience were Christian leaders at a conference that for Christians who are same-sex attracted and committed to the biblical sexual ethic.

SJC 17. (#25 of the Questions the SJC sent down, because some of the questions had multiple parts.) Do you think any of your public statements have upset the peace of the PCA, and if so, do you have any thoughts on how you might restore peace to our denomination?

Certainly, in addition to what I mentioned above, there have been some posts or comments in social media that I regretted. I either deleted them and apologized, or I kept them up with an added apology and clarification. As I said above, I will continue to work with my presbytery in seeking their wisdom as to how and where I should issue further apologies and clarifications. I want nothing more than the purity and peace of the PCA.

Conclusion

Based on the Record, there was no reversible error in the decisions reached by Missouri Presbytery regarding the four allegations. It was not unreasonable for Presbytery to judge that TE Johnson’s “explanations” on the four allegations were “satisfactory.” (BCO 31-2).

The SJC approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Dissent</i>	M. Duncan <i>Dissent</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Dissent</i>	S. Duncan <i>Dissent</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Dissent</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Chapell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Absent</i>	White <i>Dissent</i>
Dowling <i>Dissent</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>
(16-7-0)		

**Concurring Opinion
of RE Howie Donahoe**

I concurred with the SJC Decision but believe comment is warranted in five areas:

1. The Judgment of Charity
2. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
3. Complaints against Non-Indictments
4. 47th GA's AIC Report on Sexuality
5. Reopening the Record

1. The Judgement of Charity - *BCO* 14-7 stipulates, "... Judicial decisions ... may be appealed to in subsequent similar cases as to any *principle* which may have been decided." In 2010, by a vote of 19-1 the SJC decided an important principle when it denied a similar complaint against a non-indictment. Here's an excerpt from the SJC Reasoning.

Complainants hold that certain views expressed by [the minister who was not indicted], capable of a heterodox interpretation, must be so interpreted. But this *violates the judgment of charity*, that if a view can be interpreted in an orthodox fashion, it ought to be so interpreted until one is forced to do otherwise.

Complainants hold that certain of [the minister's] views imply heterodox doctrines, and therefore impute those doctrines to [the minister]. But this is a non sequitur as well. *One cannot properly impute implications that are drawn from a position to a person who expressly denies the implication.* For example, a disciple of Gordon Clark believed that John Gerstner's failure to embrace supralapsarianism implied Arminianism. He was free to so believe, but it was utterly unjust for him to say that Gerstner was an Arminian when Gerstner expressly denied it and spent his ministry upholding the sovereignty of grace in the Gospel.

Against this doubtful reasoning stand [the minister's] express, specific, and unambiguous denials of heterodoxy and affirmations of orthodoxy. The only question, then, is with respect to [the minister's] credibility.²⁰ (Emphasis added.)

²⁰ Case 2010-04: *TE Sartorius et al. v. Siouxlands*. (M39GA, 2011 Virginia Beach, pp. 578-83) Nine current SJC members concurred: TEs Chapell, Coffin, Greco, McGowan, and REs Carrell, S. Duncan, Neikirk, Terrell and White. (TE Dominic Aquila was

In his Complaint and Briefs, the Complainant repeatedly alleges *what he contends* TE Johnson believes, rather than providing reasonable-length quotes from the accused to corroborate those contentions - especially when the accused denies the implications the Complainant imputes. The Complaint never quotes even one complete sentence of TE Johnson's, and the 10-page Preliminary Brief only quotes one complete sentence. This is quite stunning, given that the accusations allege sinful views and statements. The Complainant repeatedly makes assertions like, "Johnson believes ...," and "Johnson affirms ...," without providing evidentiary excerpts.²¹ In the concluding paragraph of his Preliminary Brief, the Complainant asks the SJC to "find a strong presumption of guilt against TE Greg Johnson for his stated views on human sexuality..." But instead of quoting examples of the allegedly unbiblical *stated* views, the Complainant asserts what *he contends* are TE Johnson's views (occasionally providing some snippets from quotes) and then argues why those constructions are problematic.

2. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - The Complainant seems to misinterpret or misapply this passage.

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who *practice* homosexuality,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
¹¹And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (ESV. Emphasis added.)

on the SJC at the time and concurred. In this present Case, he served as the Complainant's assistant in the complaint against the non-indictment of TE Johnson.)
²¹ *from the Complaint:* [Johnson allegedly] "maintains, believes, draws, misplaces, appears, consistently affirms."
Preliminary Brief: [Johnson allegedly] "maintains, defines, seems to say, is seeking to, appears to have, affirms, views, claims, draws, equates, treats, holds, teaches, promotes," etc.
Addendum Brief: [Johnson allegedly] "denies, appeals to, defines, explains, states, emphasizes, denies, contrasts, means, has adopted, expresses, sees, refuses, responds, suggests," etc.

While the original Complaint does not cite 1 Cor. 6:9-11, it is cited a dozen times in the Complainant's Briefs. Yet those verses never appear as citations in the 12,000-word Westminster Confession of Faith.²²

The SJC's Reasoning on Allegation 4 (regarding the alleged failure to be "above reproach") includes the following footnote on 1 Cor. 6, which seems to emphasize a distinction the Complaint does not grant.

At the Hearing, the Complainant indicated he questioned whether the ESV accurately translates 1 Cor. 6:9 when it uses the phrase, "men who *practice* homosexuality." However, the footnote in the ESV indicates: "The two Greek terms translated by this phrase refer to the passive and active partners in consensual homosexual acts."

In the 47th GA's AIC Report on Sexuality, footnote 4 for Statement 1 reads as follows: "Paul coined the term *arsenokoitai* (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10) from the use of two related terms in the Septuagint version of Leviticus 18 and 20. The basic meaning is "man-bedders" or men who have sex with other men. ... The combination of *arsenokoitai* and *malakoi*, uniquely used in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 6:9, likely refers most directly—as per the ESV footnote—to the active and passive partners in consensual homosexual activity. For more extended discussion, see Chapter 5 in Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Say About Homosexuality?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015)." (SJC Decision p. 23)

Contrast that to this excerpt from the Complainant's Preliminary Brief, which cites 1 Cor. 6:

In contrast to those [non-sinful physiological] conditions, *homosexuality* is a violation of the seventh commandment and is always and only portrayed in Scripture as sinful (1 Cor. 6:9 ...) ... [The Bible says] neither "effeminate, nor *homosexuals*...

²² <https://www.pcaac.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WCFScriptureIndex.pdf> Vs. 10 is cited in part of LC 145, and vs. 11 in parts of LC 69, 75, 77, 161 & SC 32, but those parts don't pertain much to assertions in the Complaint.

will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6:9-11, NASB).” (Brief, p. 6, lines 11 and 19. Emphasis added)

The Complainant does not seem to interpret 1 Cor. 6:9-11 as making any significant distinction between unwanted homosexual temptations and intentional homosexual lusts or actions.

Unwanted Temptations vs. Intentional Sinful Actions - Historically, whenever the PCA has adopted statements related to homosexuality, it has always expressed or at least clearly implied a significant distinction between unbidden temptations and intentional sinful actions (lusting and behavior). Some examples are shown below. These excerpts from GA statements or GA-endorsed statements over the last four decades demonstrate it is tenuous for anyone to maintain the PCA has changed its position on the important distinction between unwanted temptations and intentional sinful thoughts and actions. (Emphasis is added throughout.).

1977 - Forty-four years ago, the 5th GA in Smyrna, GA adopted the following:

That the 5th General Assembly of the PCA affirm the Biblical position for our denomination which states that: (1) The *act* of homosexuality is a sin according to God's Word; ... and (3) In light of the Biblical view of its sinfulness, a *practicing homosexual continuing in this sin* would not be a fit candidate for ordination or membership in the PCA. (M5GA, p. 67)

1980 - Three years later, and two years before the RPCES joined the PCA, its study committee produced a report titled “Pastoral Care for the *Repentant Homosexual*,” and their Synod “commended [the paper] to sessions and congregations as an aid for their ministry to those struggling with homosexuality.” (*158th GS Minutes*, pp. 43-50). Below are excerpts.

Romans 1:26 ff. zeroes in on homosexual *practices* as a major manifestation of sinful man’s attempt to distort the creator's intent. But homosexuality is not singled out as the worst of all manifestations of sin as we can see in Jesus’ indictment against the unbelief of Capernaum (Matt. 11:23). ...

If he who once was involved in homosexuality is growing in grace to such an extent that he can “walk with exemplary

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

piety before the flock” *there ought not be any reason for a generalized exclusion from church office.* Judgment must be made in individual cases by the session and/or presbytery, keeping in mind those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others.

1993 - Twenty-eight years ago, the 21st GA in Columbia, SC adopted Overture 16 from Potomac Presbytery and sent a letter to the US President, titled, “Declaration of Conscience.” Below are excerpts. Note the repeated use of the words “practice” or “behavior.”

[W]e stand resolutely opposed to homosexual *practice* as incompatible with the temporal good of our nation and the eternal good of its people. ... Our categorical rejection of homosexual *behavior* as wrong and destructive cannot fairly be taken to mean that we have not extended ourselves or are unable to extend ourselves in compassion and courage to men and women in our society who are homosexual. ... Our American civil government has historically respected the family's primacy in such matters and has sought to nurture it. Any policy which legitimizes homosexual *practice* abandons this time-honored tradition. To conclude, while condemning homosexual *practice*, we affirm our duty to love and do good to all, even those who are pursuing this perversion. ... More profoundly, however, the truth is that those given over to homosexual *practice* will face the judgment of God. ... Our prayer is that you will stand against any and every pressure that would be brought to bear on your Administration by those who would legitimize homosexual *practices*. (M21GA, p. 129)

1996 - Three years later, a personal resolution to "Oppose Legalization of Homosexual Marriages" was answered by the 24th GA in Ft. Lauderdale “by (1) reference to previous actions of the General Assembly (e.g., M5GA, p. 67-8, M21GA, p.129 ff.) and (2) the following statement:

We affirm the Bible's teaching that promotion of homosexual *conduct* and relationships by any society, including action by the governments to sanction and legitimize homosexual relationships by the legalization of homosexual *marriages*, is an abominable sin calling for God's judgment upon any such society (Lev. 18:22 and Rom. 1:18-32). ... (M24GA, p. 315)

2021 - This year, at the 48th GA in St. Louis, the Overtures Committee voted 124-3 to recommend the GA “declare the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality as a *biblically faithful declaration* and refer it to the Committee on Discipleship Ministries for inclusion and *promotion* among denominational teaching materials.” The GA adopted that recommendation by a large majority. Below are three examples of excerpts from the AIC Report pertaining to the difference between unwanted temptations and intentional sinful actions.

Nevertheless, there is an *important degree of moral difference* between temptation to sin and giving in to sin, even when the temptation is itself an expressing of indwelling sin. While our goal is the weakening and lessening of internal temptations to sin, Christians should feel their *greatest responsibility* not for the fact that such temptations occur but for thoroughly and immediately *fleeing and resisting* the temptations when they arise. (Statement 6 on Temptation, p. 9)

We give thanks for penitent believers who, though they continue to struggle with same-sex attraction, are *living lives of chastity and obedience*. These brothers and sisters can serve as *courageous examples* of faith and faithfulness, as they pursue Christ with a long obedience in gospel dependence. (Statement 12 on Repentance and Hope, p. 13)

To feel a sinfully disordered sexual attraction (of any kind) is properly to be called sin—and all sin, “both original and actual” earns God’s wrath (WCF 6.6)—but it is *significantly less heinous* (using the language of the WLC 151) than any level of *acting* upon it in thought or deed. ... Our brothers and sisters who resist and repent of enduring feelings of same-sex attraction are *powerful examples* to us all of what this “daily mortification” looks like in “the best of believers.” We should be encouraged and challenged by their example and eager to join in fellowship with them for the mutual strengthening of our faith, hope, and love. (Essay on Confessional Foundations, p. 23)²³

Righteous v. Unrighteous Standing - In addition to the above, it is difficult to see how 1 Cor. 6:9-11 has much application to the allegations in this Case. The

²³ PCA Statements at <https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/studies/index.html> and bibliography of the AIC Report (p.48).

main point of the passage is that, because of God’s act in regeneration and his imputation of the justifying righteousness of Christ, the Corinthian believers were no longer, in any sense, the unrighteous who will not enter the kingdom of God. (See the comments in the ESV Study Bible on verse 11 summarizing the *objective* realities of regeneration and faith.)

When Paul says in vs. 11, “And such were some of you,” he is not saying the Corinthians no longer experience any of those temptations or might even commit those sins. The passage is not addressing that question, at least not directly. He is simply saying these sanctified and justified Corinthians were once the unrighteous-who-will-not-inherit but are now the righteous-in-Christ-who-will-inherit.

At the same time, it would be reasonable to think Paul expected that some of the Corinthians Christians were still tempted to the sins described in vv. 9-10 and was at least implicitly warning them, and all Christians, to avoid a lifestyle that could fairly be described in the terms of vv. 9-10. But here we’d need to distinguish, say, between a greedy person—whose life is characterized by unrepentant greedy lusts and greedy behavior—and a person who is tempted to greedy thoughts but seeks to flee from them and repents of any greedy thoughts and deeds soon thereafter. There is an important difference between a man whose life is characterized by unrepentant and willful reviling speech and a man who sometimes succumbs to the temptation to revile but repents soon thereafter. Paul is not teaching that people who were once characterized by reviling speech will never again speak in that way. Any fears or warnings in this passage are predicated upon his clear statement about who all of them are presently in Christ.²⁴

3. Complaints Against Non-Indictments - Complaints against non-indictments like this one pose many complications, and this is rarely the most prudent course for an accuser who claims a person should be indicted. This point was made 12 years ago in a Concurring Opinion joined by RE Sam

²⁴ In the AIC Report, the first section of the Bibliography was titled, “For Pastors and Sessions” and the AIC reported these were books that could “help pastors and sessions shepherd congregants who are dealing with same-sex attraction.” Each of the 12 books note a significant difference between a person whose life is *characterized* by sinful homosexual *lusts* and *behavior* and a person who is tempted to homosexual thoughts but seeks to flee from such thoughts and repents of any to which he succumbs. That is a distinction in 1 Cor. 6:9-11 that the Complaint does not seem to sufficiently recognize.

Duncan and TE Fred Greco in the Siouxlands Case mentioned on page 1. Below are excerpts from that Concurrence.

This Case ... demonstrates the difficulty a Higher Court faces when presented with a Complaint, which contends that a Lower Court erred in not finding a strong presumption of guilt pursuant to an investigation (*BCO* 31-2). ...

We suggest that instead of filing a Complaint for the failure of a Court to find a strong presumption of guilt after a *BCO* 31-2 investigation, a clearer and better alternative is to commence the process under *BCO* 32-2, i.e., “[p]rocess against an offender shall not be commenced unless some person or persons undertake to make out the charge.”

[W]e suggest that the better way in this Case, and other Cases where the views, beliefs, and practices of men are called into question, would be for the Party who is concerned about these views, beliefs, and practices to make such inquiries as are necessary and practical (cf. Matthew 18:15) to ascertain exactly what these views, beliefs, and practices are; then, assuming they are contrary to Scripture or our Constitution, formally file a “charge” pursuant to *BCO* 32-2 and 32-3. This procedure not only removes the question of whether a strong presumption of guilt exists (*BCO* 31-2), but also allows a Court to directly try the issue raised in the “charge.” (*BCO* 32-3)

Voluntary Prosecutors - I wasn't on the SJC for the Siouxlands Case referenced above, but I can agree with the excerpt from the Concurrence - to a point. Deciding whether a matter warrants a trial should remain a matter of discretion and judgment for the original court, and it shouldn't be required to indict a person every time someone “formally files a charge.”²⁵ Nevertheless, in situations like the one described in the Duncan/Greco Concurrence, if a trial is deemed the wisest course, the court should seriously consider appointing *the accuser* as the “voluntary prosecutor” and placing the burden and responsibility on him to prepare and prosecute the case, especially if it involves one minister accusing another minister of theological error.

²⁵ See the Reasoning provided ten years ago in Overture 15 from Pacific NW Presbytery: “Amend 31-2 to Clarify What Needs to Be Investigated.” (*M40GA*, Louisville 2012, pp. 698-704)

BCO 31-3. The original and only parties in a case of process are the accuser and the accused. The accuser is always the Presbyterian Church in America, whose honor and purity are to be maintained. The prosecutor, whether voluntary or appointed, is always the representative of the Church, and as such has all its rights in the case.

Very few presbyteries have experienced prosecutors, and if they do, it's unlikely he has hundreds of voluntary man-hours to dedicate to the task. It would seem unfair in many instances for an accuser to expect someone else to spend hundreds of hours preparing and prosecuting the accuser's allegations.

Furthermore, there seems to be no jeopardy for someone who unsuccessfully files a complaint against a non-indictment. Our present Case has consumed thousands of man-hours at various levels in PCA courts (not to mention some division and relational strain amongst brothers). What would dissuade others from doing the same thing again in other situations? But if an accuser is made the prosecutor, and fails to prove the offense at trial, he risks being censured.

BCO 31-9. Every voluntary prosecutor shall be previously warned, that if he fail to show probable cause of the charges, he may himself be censured as a slanderer of the brethren.

So, in situations where someone very publicly accuses another person of sin, and the accusation, if proven, would be sufficient to warrant a censure greater than admonition, perhaps the first thing the court should say to the accuser is, "Call your first witness."^{26 27}

Problem with Amends - An additional problem with a complaint against a non-indictment involves the limited and rather awkward remedies available to the higher court in such cases. Below is the amends section of the *BCO* Chapter on Complaints.

²⁶ A similar thing happened three years ago in Case 2016-11 *Complaint of TE Michael Frazier v. Nashville*, where the SJC unanimously denied a complaint against a non-indictment, but only after the Presbytery and the SJC had spent hundreds of man-hours on the Case. (*M46GA*, 2018 Atlanta, p. 500 ff.).

²⁷ We note that in a *presbytery* trial, *BCO 31-2* presently requires the prosecutor to be a member of that court, but in judicial process before a session, the prosecutor can be any member of that church.

BCO 43-10. The higher court has power, in its discretion, to annul the whole or any part of the action of a lower court against which complaint has been made, or to send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing. If the higher court rules a lower court erred by not indicting someone, and the lower court refers the matter back to the higher court, it shall accept the reference if it is a doctrinal case or case of public scandal (see *BCO* 41-3).

If a higher court rules that a lower court erred by not indicting someone, and remands it “with instructions for a new hearing,” it’s not reasonable to expect the lower court to reverse itself and indict the person when the lower court was nearly unanimous in the original non-indictment decision.²⁸ Likewise, even if the lower court subsequently conducts a trial, it’s not reasonable to expect a conviction, absent some compelling new evidence or testimony.²⁹

Assumption of Original Jurisdiction - A better solution might be a revision of *BCO* 34-1. A revision like the one below might end the interpretive debates on two parts of the current provision - “refuses to act” and “doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal.” It would remove subjectivity.

Possible Revision of 34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, ~~if the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal and two~~ if twenty-five percent (25%) of the other Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction (to first receive and initially hear and determine), the General Assembly shall do so.

Because such a revision would *require* the GA to wrest jurisdiction from the presbytery *regardless* of what the presbytery may have done or decided, the petitioning threshold would need to be appropriately high. For example, if it were only 10% then merely 9 of 88 presbyteries could trigger it, and it might become an annual event. The SJC is not designed to conduct investigations and trials annually, nor would that be healthy for the denomination. If another

²⁸ Missouri’s votes declining to find strong presumption of guilt on the four charges were 44-1, 43-1, 41-2 and 41-6.

²⁹ See the SJC Decisions in Case 2009-06 *Bordwine v. Pacific NW* (a complaint against a non-indictment that the SJC sustained), and Case 2012-05 *Hedman v. Pacific NW* (a complaint against the subsequent trial acquittal - a complaint the SJC denied by a 15-2 vote). (*M38GA*, 2010, pp. 208 ff. and *M41GA*, 2013, pp. 583 ff.)

presbytery's handling of allegations is so egregious and unreasonable, we should expect at least 25% of the presbyteries (22 of 88) to send a simple, one-sentence email to the PCA Stated Clerk saying: "*In accord with BCO 34-1, our Presbytery requests the GA (through its SJC) to assume original jurisdiction over TE ___ on matters related to ___.*" If there aren't 22 presbyteries that believe this rare and extreme step should be taken, then the PCA is evidently not sufficiently concerned to warrant wresting jurisdiction away from a presbytery.

Thus, the 25% threshold seems a reasonable one. It's not too high to be unattainable and not too low to be prone to abuse, and it would likely be acceptable to two-thirds of our presbyteries (though some would prefer it lower, and some would prefer it higher.)³⁰

4. Excerpts from AIC Report on Sexuality - To support some of his assertions, the Complainant cites excerpts from the 2020 AIC Report. TE Johnson also provides AIC excerpts in support of some of his explanations and answers. The Complainant usually cites from the *first* sections of the "Twelve Statements" and TE Johnson often cites from the *second* sections, i.e., the "Nevertheless" sections.³¹

Below are excerpts from the AIC Report that closely pertain to the subject matter of the four allegations, which seem to harmonize with TE Johnson's explanations and answers. While nothing from the AIC Report was proposed for GA adoption, the 2021 GA in St. Louis, by an overwhelming majority, judged it to be a "biblically faithful declaration" and commended it to Presbyteries and Sessions.

Statement 6 (Temptation) ... Nevertheless ... We can avoid "entering into" temptation by refusing to internally ponder and entertain the proposal and desire to actual sin. Without some distinction between (1) the illicit temptations that arise in us

³⁰ The author of this Concurrence has twice drafted Overtures proposing revisions to *BCO* 34-1, in 2009 and 2012, but both were unsuccessful. For a comprehensive Legislative and Judicial History of *BCO* 34-1, see this link to Google Drive: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UfhfQLFmvtvuaWyYADQmgZafv2RMQUWps/vi>
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³¹ The Record contains this statement from TE Johnson: "... I have no disagreement with the underlying theological or moral structure of the entire [AIC] report. The concerns I will voice will be pastoral and missiological in nature." (Response to SJC Question 6.b in Allegation 2. See also SJC Questions 6c, 8a, 8c, 10 and 11.)

due to original sin and (2) the willful giving over to actual sin, Christians will be too discouraged to “make every effort” at growth in godliness and will feel like failures in their necessary efforts to be holy as God is holy (2 Peter 1:5-7; 1 Peter 1:14-16). God is pleased with our sincere obedience, even though it may be accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections (*WCF* 16.6). (Report p. 9)

Statement 7 (Sanctification) ... Nevertheless ... The aim of sanctification in one's sexual life cannot be reduced to attraction to persons of the opposite sex (though some persons may experience movement in this direction), but rather involves growing in grace and perfecting holiness in the fear of God (*WCF* 13.3). (p. 10)

Statement 9 (Identity) Nevertheless ... There is a difference between speaking about a phenomenological facet of a person's sin-stained reality and employing the language of sinful desires as a personal identity marker. That is, we name our sins, but are not named by them. (p. 11)

Statement 10 (Language) ... Nevertheless, we recognize that some Christians may use the term “gay” in an effort to be more readily understood by non-Christians. The word “gay” is common in our culture, and we do not think it wise for churches to police every use of the term. Our burden is that we do not justify our sin struggles by affixing them to our identity as Christians. Churches should be gentle, patient, and intentional with believers who call themselves “gay Christians,” encouraging them, as part of the process of sanctification, to leave behind identification language rooted in sinful desires, to live chaste lives, to refrain from entering into temptation, and to mortify their sinful desires. (p. 12)

Essay 1: Confessional Foundations Regarding Nature of Temptation, Sin and Repentance

II.B.1. The Common Dynamic of Concupiscence - First, the dynamic of spontaneous sinful desire or attraction is not unique to those who experience homosexual desire. All people experience it. It is an essential point in the

Confession that all of us who are descended from Adam and Eve experience their corrupted nature and the complex of disordered affections, desires, and attractions that come with that corruption. The danger of this question arising in the context of the discussion of homosexuality is that some might be tempted to think of that particular example of disordered desire as qualitatively different from their own. Or worse, some may be willing to assert the sinfulness of one category of spontaneous desire but minimize or remain largely ignorant of the sinful concupiscence that is common to all.

The truth is that if we think humbly and carefully about our own spontaneous thoughts, feelings, and desires, we would recognize that we are all much more alike than different. ... Good Reformed teaching on sin places us all on equal footing in our need of Christ's imputed righteousness. (p. 21)

II.B.2. Continued Corruption - Second, according to the system of the Westminster Confession of Faith, we should not be surprised, but rather expect that concupiscence in general, and specific instances like homosexual attraction, would continue in the life of a believer. ... This acknowledgement of the remnants of corruption in believers does not negate the call to fight against that corruption; our endeavor to oppose and put to death what is earthly in us (Col.3:5) demands a commitment to fight all of our sin. However, to teach that our sinful corruption must be entirely removed from any part of us in order to be considered truly repentant is a spiritually treacherous perversion of the doctrine of repentance. (p. 21)

II.B.5. Moral Difference - Finally, we can discern a very practical value to the distinction between the sin that is constituted by our "corruption of nature...and all the motions thereof" and the "actual transgressions" that proceed from it. ... To feel a sinfully disordered sexual attraction (of any kind) is properly to be called sin—and all sin, "both original and actual" earns God's wrath (WCF 6.6)—but it is significantly less heinous (using the language of the WLC 151) than any level of acting upon it in thought or deed. ...

Our brothers and sisters who resist and repent of enduring feelings of same-sex attraction are powerful examples to us all of what this “daily mortification” looks like in “the best of believers.” We should be encouraged and challenged by their example and eager to join in fellowship with them for the mutual strengthening of our faith, hope, and love. (p. 23)

Essay 2: Biblical Perspectives for Pastoral Care - Discipleship, Identity and Terminology

How then should we think of the language of sexual orientation? Insofar as the term orientation is used descriptively to articulate a particular set of experiences, namely the persistent and predominant sexual attractions of an individual, it can remain useful as a way of classifying those experiences in contrast to the experiences of the majority of other people. However, insofar as the term orientation carries with it a set of assumptions about the nature of that experience that is unbiblical (e.g., overemphasized rigidity, its normativity, etc.), then the terminology may require qualification or even rejection in some circumstances. (p. 30)

Singleness, Friendship, Community - Insofar as such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin struggle automatically to disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor 6:9-11, 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet 1:3-11) (p. 31)³²

5. Reopening the Record - For two reasons, I abstained from the SJC’s March 25, 2021, post-Hearing vote to consider reopening the Record and sending 25 questions to Missouri. First, I judged that the Record already demonstrated sufficiently that Missouri had not clearly erred in its decisions declining to indict. But I also abstained because the proposal seemed to resemble a quasi-assumption-of-original-jurisdiction and the *post-assumption* investigatory step of SJC Manual 16.1.a. I’m confidently hopeful this procedure won’t become a common occurrence.

³² The AIC Report is at <https://pcaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AIC-Report-to-48th-GA-5-28-20-1.pdf>

Regardless, I think it should be clear to the impartial reader that the views expressed in the accused minister’s answers to the SJC questions are not fundamentally different from the views expressed in his answers to the questions posed by Missouri’s investigating committee. And it’s worth noting that the accused minister was under no constitutional obligation to answer any of the questions. (BCO 35-1) In addition, it seems unreasonable for anyone to object to the SJC question-sending if they also supported the *BCO* 34-1 assumption-of-original-jurisdiction petitions from Central Georgia, Savannah River, and SE Alabama, which asked the SJC to institute a process that most likely would begin with similar interrogatories — but ones drafted by a smaller three-judge SJC Panel whose members would have been *drawn by lot*. (*OMSJC* 16.1.a and *RAO* 17.3)

Moreover, the process by which the questions were *selected* was prudent and fair. The Minutes of the SJC’s meeting on April 30, 2021, record: “The Commission expressed its gratitude to the Committee members (Waters, Donahoe, Dowling, Bise, Chapell, Kooistra) for their thorough and meticulous work in compiling, refining and reporting the questions and recommendations.” I’m confident the six-judge Committee would have included additional questions above the 25 if any of the six members had said it was important to them. Likewise, I’m confident the SJC would have included additional questions if any SJC member had said it was important to them as well. Finally, in my opinion it would be inaccurate to interpret the vote to send questions to Missouri to mean that the SJC majority had concerns about how Missouri conducted its investigation. On the contrary, in judging Issue 1 in this Case, the SJC explicitly ruled Missouri did *not* violate *BCO* 31-2 in the manner of its investigation of the allegations.³³

³³ The SJC questioning in this Case was a slightly different procedure than in a similar one in June 2015. In Case 2014-01: *TEs Aven & Dively v. Ohio Valley*, the SJC ruled by a vote of 15-0: “The Complaint is neither Sustained nor Denied. The Commission cannot render judgment because the Record is insufficient regarding this minister’s particular expression of his view. Therefore, the Commission sends the matter back to OVP to hear further from [the minister] regarding his stated difference in order to create a more comprehensive Record.” The SJC supplied questions. (*M44GA*, 2016, p. 499). Sixteen months later, the SJC denied a follow-on complaint in Case 2016-01: *Aven v. Ohio Valley*, stating the following Issue and Judgment: “Did Presbytery fail to comply with the directive from the SJC’s Decision in Case 2014-01 to “hear further” from the minister regarding his view? No.” (*M45GA*, 2017, p. 496) The SJC judged that TE Aven had not complained against the answers provided in the accused minister’s nine-page document, which responded to the SJC-suggested questions.

TE David Coffin joins in Parts 1, 2 and 4 of the above concurring opinion.

**Concurring Opinion of
RE Frederick Neikirk and TE Guy Waters**

While we concur with the decision of the Standing Judicial Commission in case 2020-12, we feel compelled to offer the following additional comments, both by way of clarification and explanation. Our comments fall into three sections: why we could not conclude that Missouri Presbytery should have found that there was a “strong presumption of guilt” regarding TE Johnson; concerns regarding the use of *BCO* 31-2 to address alleged doctrinal errors; and ongoing concerns about some of TE Johnson’s views.

I. Why We Could Not Conclude that Missouri Presbytery Should Have Found a “Strong Presumption of Guilt”

The SJC’s decision in this case should not be read as a defense or affirmation of every statement or even every particular view of TE Johnson. That is not the role of the appellate court, particularly in a case arising out of a complaint that Presbytery failed to proceed to an indictment following a *BCO* 31-2 investigation. Further, we want to underscore, at the outset of our Concurring Opinion, the structure and conclusions of the SJC’s Opinion. That opinion repeatedly states that if the statements alleged in the Complaint were an accurate summary of TE Johnson’s views, then the Complaint would need to be sustained. The SJC found, however, based on the Record, that it was “not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude that TE Johnson does not hold these positions.” As a result, the SJC could not sustain the Complaint.

We wish to elaborate on that conclusion. For this Complaint to be sustained there would have had to have been a finding either that Presbytery somehow failed properly to conduct the *BCO* 31-2 investigation or that said investigation demonstrated “a strong presumption of guilt” but that Presbytery failed to take the next step by indicting TE Johnson.

The *BCO* does not specify any particular set of procedures that a court must follow in conducting a 31-2 investigation. Thus, lower courts have a great deal of latitude in how they proceed in this area. While we are not persuaded that the production of a large Record (over a thousand pages) is necessarily evidence that the lower court has done a good investigation, and while we might have wished that Presbytery had delved more deeply into some of TE

Johnson’s views, we cannot say that the Record demonstrates that Presbytery committed any “clear error” (*BCO* 39-3(2,3)) in how it conducted its investigation.

Of greater import here is how we are to understand “strong presumption of guilt.” Aside from minor stylistic changes, the language of *BCO* 31-2 dates back to the PCUS *Book of Church Order* of 1879. In discussing this provision in his 1898 work *Exposition of the Book of Church Order*, F.P. Ramsay offers this explanation of “strong presumption of guilt”: “A strong presumption means a belief by the members of the court that evidence as then known to them would indicate that guilt probably exists, unless evidence to the contrary can be produced not then known to them.”³⁴ In other words, to conclude that Missouri Presbytery erred, one would have to show that there is evidence in the Record that would demonstrate that it is likely that TE Johnson would be convicted at a trial unless new, exculpatory evidence were provided. We agree that the material provided in the Record does not meet this test.

As the SJC’s opinion demonstrates, some of the problematic comments that TE Johnson had made were subsequently clarified or qualified (see below our discussion in Part III). Further, in several cases, views that Complainant alleged TE Johnson to hold were not supported by the Record. In particular, there is no evidence in the Record that TE Johnson has made some of the statements that Complainant found most problematic, and, in some instances, the Record shows that TE Johnson explicitly denies ever having made the comments (e.g., he avows that he does not use and has not used the “couplet” “gay Christian” to identify himself). (ROC 975, 1029; SJC Opinion 18). Additionally, in some cases the allegations Complainant raised about TE Johnson’s views were apparently based on implications Complainant argued must underlie or follow from things TE Johnson has said or not said. This was particularly evident when the Complainant argued that TE Johnson’s failure to answer adequately (in the view of the Complainant) a question about identity must mean that TE Johnson does not recognize his identity as being in Christ (ROC 5-6). It was also evident in Complainant’s conclusion that TE Johnson’s cancer analogy (which we agree was ill-chosen) must mean that TE Johnson believes same-sex attraction is genetic and ordinarily as incurable as cancer

³⁴ For the history of *BCO* 31-2 see the relevant section of the PCA Historical Center’s *The Historical Development of the Book of Church Order*, available at <https://www.pcahistory.org/bco/rod/31/02.html>. The Ramsay quote is included in that section. It is originally from F(ranklin) P(ierce) Ramsay, *An Exposition of the Form of Government and Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publications, 1898), 187.

which must lead, in turn, to “the inexorable conclusion that someone who is same-sex attracted is not responsible for his genetic condition” (ROC 3). By any reasonable understanding of an appropriate judgment of charity we cannot impute to a speaker implications that he denies unless there is no other reasonable understanding of the statements in question, and this is particularly true here given that the Record shows that TE Johnson denies the conclusions Complainant drew (SJC Opinion 14-15).³⁵

All this is not to say that we do not have ongoing concerns with some of TE Johnson’s views and formulations. We do (see Part III). Indeed, Missouri Presbytery recognized that, at a minimum, TE Johnson has not always been as careful as he needed to be in how he has expressed some of his views (ROC 1003, 1004), and we agree with that assessment. But, having concerns about a man’s views is very different from a conclusion that there is a “strong presumption of guilt,” and that Presbytery erred by not reaching that conclusion and thus in not proceeding to indict TE Johnson. Our concerns notwithstanding, we cannot conclude that Presbytery should have found, from the Record (which is all we are allowed to consider in reviewing a Complaint (RAO 17.1(4)), that TE Johnson would likely have been convicted had a trial been held before an impartial presbytery.

II Concerns Regarding the Use of *BCO* 31-2 to Address Alleged Doctrinal Errors

In recent years we have seen several instances of efforts to use *BCO* 31-2 to address alleged doctrinal errors. By its very nature a 31-2 investigation is unlikely to develop a complete, fully documented Record. That, in turn, makes review by a higher court difficult, particularly in doctrinal matters. This case illustrates some of those difficulties.³⁶

³⁵ The SJC has previously underscored the importance of applying a reasonable judgment of charity when drawing conclusions based on implications that one might conclude follow from an individual’s statements. See Case 2010-04: *TE Art Sartorius et al. v. Siouxlans Presbytery* (M39GA, 2011, pp. 578-83), esp. p. 582.

³⁶ We recognize that Allegations 2 and 4 in the Complaint focused, at least in large part, on TE Johnson’s fitness for office (character) given his admission that he is tempted by same sex attraction. We leave it to the Opinion of the SJC and the Report of the PCA General Assembly’s Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality to address the question of whether one tempted by (but not acting on) same sex attraction is automatically disqualified from office in the PCA. Our concern here is to highlight the problems of seeking to address the related doctrinal issues via the 31-2 process.

First, there is no requirement for the transcription of testimony in a 31-2 investigation. Thus, in this case, at some key points, the Record provided only summaries of TE Johnson's views as understood by an investigating committee, rather than a transcript of TE Johnson's actual statements. Second, there is no requirement that witnesses be cross-examined in a 31-2 investigation. This risks a less critical engagement of a man and his views than would be afforded in a trial. In our judgment, that happened at some points in this case. Third, the gathering of evidence is typically less exacting in a 31-2 investigation than would be the case in a trial. That means, as was true in this matter, that there may well be material in the Record that does not bear directly on the matter at hand, or that key evidence may not be included because there is no one charged with gathering all the evidence as would be the case if there were a prosecutor. Fourth, since the 31-2 process is focused on investigation and information gathering, evidence may not be developed and presented in the systematic way that one would hope would occur in the context of a trial. That was certainly true in this case and, at times, it made it difficult for the appellate court to follow the reasoning that underlaid TE Johnson's views and the reasoning of the one(s) who have concerns.

None of these comments are intended to argue that Missouri Presbytery erred in its findings, although we could certainly wish that they had probed some key aspects of TE Johnson's views more deeply at some points. It is simply to point out the difficulties that come with trying to address doctrinal concerns through a 31-2 investigation.³⁷ Given those concerns, it is our conviction that doctrinal cases, such as this one, generally are better handled by concerned parties bringing charges against the individual about whose views there is concern, rather than seeking a 31-2 investigation or bringing a Complaint about the outcome of such an investigation.

III. Ongoing Concerns about Some of TE Johnson's Views.

The SJC has found that Missouri Presbytery did not "clearly err at its meeting on July 21, 2020, when it declined to commence process on" several allegations that were brought against TE Greg Johnson. As we noted above in Part I, the SJC's Reasoning in support of its Judgment should not be read as a

³⁷ Indeed, it is not clear that 31-2 is even intended to be a mechanism for getting at doctrinal issues. Note that what is required is that "They [Sessions and Presbyteries] shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character." That language suggests that 31-2 is intended primarily for "character related issues" rather than issues related to doctrine.

defense or vindication of TE Johnson or any of his statements or views. This is because defending or vindicating TE Johnson is not the role of the appellate court. The SJC, rather, found that Presbytery was not unreasonable in its decisions declining to indict. The statements of TE Johnson that were extracted from the Record of the Case, collated, and included in the Reasoning afford warrant for that particular finding.

At the same time, as those who concur in SJC’s Decision, we wish, for the sake of conscience and for the good of the broader church, to register concerns raised by certain statements of TE Johnson that appear in the record. TE Johnson has not been as careful as he ought to have been in expressing his views – an exhortation that Missouri Presbytery has formally conveyed to TE Johnson (ROC 1003, 1004). In particular, he has not given proper attention to how his expressions would be heard and received in the broader church. We offer three examples.

First, TE Johnson has spoken of his same-sex attraction and identity in ways that have unsettled and alarmed the church. In a public address, reflecting on his life before and after his conversion, Johnson states, “it’s not my sexual orientation that’s changed; it’s my life orientation, because Jesus rescued me, a sinner...” (ROC 555). In the same address, he refers to himself in the present as “gay” – “gay people excel in every field, driven by a never-ending need to accomplish enough, be successful enough, in order to become lovable. We decorate our lives to poster over our shame in the hope that we’ll become lovable” (ROC 556). Similarly, in a 2019 article for *Christianity Today*, TE Johnson states, “Jesus hasn’t made me straight. But he covers over my shame. Jesus really loves gay people” (ROC 904).

And yet, TE Johnson also speaks of his same-sex attraction and identity in more qualified and guarded fashion. The Record testifies to TE Johnson’s clear and longstanding refusal to speak of himself using the couplet “gay Christian” (ROC 812). TE Johnson no less disavows celebrating “fallen sexuality” and “sin-identity” (ROC 939, 829). He denies that any “Christian should have a fallen sexual orientation as their core identity [that is,] the core identity that defines me, the identity that then becomes what I aspire more fully to be.” Rather, “our core identity as Christians is that we have been adopted as sons of [the] Father into his family” (ROC 936). In response to a question put to him by the SJC, TE Johnson affirms that same-sex attraction is sinful (ROC 1023). In response to another SJC question, TE Johnson affirms that “homosexual immorality [is] more heinous than heterosexual immorality...” (ROC 1041).

The language that TE Johnson has publicly employed to express his same-sex attraction and identity, however, fails adequately to convey these beliefs to his audiences, particularly Christian audiences. In fact, given the way that such terms are used within our culture at large, to speak of himself as “gay” or to affirm that his “orientation” has “not ... changed,” without immediate qualifiers, risks communicating to the Church what TE Johnson declares is *not* true about his same-sex attraction and identity. Even so, at one point in the Record, TE Johnson speaks dismissively about this concern – “And sometimes religious people get really worked up about what terminology you use to describe your fallen life orientation” (ROC 555). The Record therefore not only indicates that TE Johnson speaks of himself in ways that have troubled and disturbed the church, but also evidences a tone-deafness on the part of TE Johnson about how his public self-descriptions are being understood and received within the Church.³⁸

Second, TE Johnson has drawn an analogy between same-sex attraction and physical illness in such a way as to unsettle and alarm the church. In his floor speech before the 2019 General Assembly, TE Johnson said the following:

We don’t tell alcoholics it’s a sin to conceive of yourself as an alcoholic because drunkenness is a sin We don’t tell paraplegics that they should conceive of themselves as able-bodied because that’s God’s ideal. We wouldn’t tell an infertile woman that she needs to conceive of herself as fertile, and she’s unbelieving to conceive of herself as infertile because that’s not God’s design. Friends, I’m fallen, I’m broken, and Jesus has washed me and saved me (ROC 556).

In these remarks, TE Johnson establishes an analogy between alcoholism, paraplegia, infertility, and his own same-sex attraction. TE Johnson draws comparable analogies in at least two other places in the Record – “[T]he biblical term [for identity] would be calling or vocation. We all have a calling. And for some that calling is to glorify God in a really difficult, empty feeling

³⁸ We may note the parallel but distinct ways in which TE Johnson may speak of a person who has not entertained pornography for 15 years as a pornography “addict” (ROC 568), and a person who “has been sober for 18 years – hasn’t had a drink in 18 years” as “absolutely an alcoholic” (ROC 565). What TE Johnson means by “addict” and “alcoholic” is that this particular sin is “part of [this person’s] story,” though not something that he “identif[ies]” with in the sense of “bow[ing] down to it” (ROC 565). But the effect of using these terms in such a way is inevitably to shock and disturb Christian audiences.

marriage. For some, it's to glorify God when they have cancer. For some, it's to glorify God with same-sex attraction – unwanted same-sex attraction” (ROC 566); “Some people have a vocation to glorify God with a really empty marriage that is a real struggle, but their calling is to glorify God with that. Other people have a calling to glorify God with leukemia. And other people have a calling to glorify God with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria or intersex condition” (ROC 464).

The Record testifies that, when asked by his Presbytery to explain his meaning, TE Johnson says paraplegia, infertility, cancer, and same-sex attraction were “similar in their being effects of the fall that cause suffering,” but “dissimilar in terms of moral status” (ROC 961). He expressly declared to his Presbytery that “same-sex attraction is different from these others in that it is not morally neutral” (ROC 961-2). He says that “in my GA floor speech, I was not claiming moral neutrality for same-sex attraction any more than I was for alcoholism. That was not the point of my comparison” (ROC 962). TE Johnson later declared that “sadly what many heard was a moral comparison. They misunderstood me to be stating that same-sex attraction is morally neutral like paraplegia and infertility. As I stated to my presbytery on June 14, 2020, ‘I regret not qualifying my analogy during my floor speech. I had qualified that analogy when I used it in the past and should have thought to do so at GA. I neglected to do so then by oversight....’” (ROC 1042).

TE Johnson’s subsequent explanations are certainly welcome and clarifying. Even so, as he acknowledges, the distinctions that he later employed to explain his analogy in his floor speech could not have been evident from his words to the Commissioners of the 2019 General Assembly. TE Johnson’s floor speech surfaces prominently in the Record both in outside correspondence directed to TE Johnson’s Presbytery and within subsequent investigations of TE Johnson. This prominence indicates the degree to which TE Johnson’s unqualified remarks had the effect of upsetting and disturbing the broader church.

Third, the way in which TE Johnson has spoken of change in the Christian life has needlessly troubled the broader Church. In response to a concern raised by Central Georgia Presbytery alleging TE Johnson’s belief “that those who experience same-sex temptations are not normally delivered from these, and are not normally changed in nature by the LORD” (ROC 801; compare the letter of Grace and Peace PCA, Anna, TX, ROC 653-5), TE Johnson told his own Presbytery, “God can do anything. He can do miracles. But the normal pattern in this fallen world is that this is a lifelong struggle.” (ROC 943).

Elsewhere in the Record, Johnson states that “orientation generally does not change. It’s very rare” (ROC 567; cf. ROC 813, 1057).

TE Johnson’s repeated emphasis upon the rarity of orientation change appears related to a concern that he has expressed with respect to the expectations of Christian audiences, “[religious people] want to make sure that I say I used to be gay, implying God didn’t leave me there, implying that I’ve experienced some level of sexual orientation change that has remained elusive for me and for most of the believers who stand where I stand” (ROC 555). But this emphasis upon the alleged rarity of orientation change has troubled the broader Church. Whether or not TE Johnson is correct in his assessment of orientation change is not our concern here. Our concern, rather, is that the vehemence of TE Johnson’s denials of orientation change has rendered the broader Church unsettled and uncertain with respect to TE Johnson’s commitment to progressive sanctification, particularly the mortification of indwelling sin.

The Record indicates that, in response to questions put to him by the SJC, TE Johnson declares his embrace of the Westminster Standards’ doctrine of sanctification (ROC 1033-35). He stresses that “nothing I have stated has ever been intended to suggest otherwise” than that “Jesus does change lives, and that change is progressive” (ROC 1034). He furthermore qualifies his statement “sexual orientation does not typically change” – “I am not saying that God doesn’t change lives ... All of these people [several persons whom TE Johnson mentions in the material elided] are walking miracles and proof of the gospel’s power to radically reorient a life to God. *My point has been and remains that none of this is evidence of a gay-to-straight cure*” (ROC 1037, emphasis original).

TE Johnson’s public statements about orientation change have not been adequately framed to convey to his audiences the kinds of affirmations and qualifications referenced in the previous paragraph. In other words, TE Johnson has not shown proper concern for how his statements relating to sanctification would be heard and received by the broader Church. In so emphasizing his beliefs about the rarity of orientation change, he has generated avoidable disturbance within the Church. Regrettably, the closing quotation in the paragraph above suggests that TE Johnson does not yet fully apprehend how his public statements about orientation change have been received within and have troubled the Church.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, we want to be clear about what we are not saying and what we are saying. We are not saying that the Church has merely misheard or misunderstood TE Johnson. Neither are we saying that the concerns raised before Missouri Presbytery by outside parties with respect to TE Johnson's public teaching were altogether unfounded. In fact, we ourselves have registered above serious concerns about certain of TE Johnson's public statements insofar as those statements lack clarity and reflect a tone-deafness with respect to the broader Church. But, as we stressed earlier, simply having concerns about certain of TE Johnson's public statements is not sufficient to find a "strong presumption of guilt" (see our discussion in Part I). The reason that we did not vote to sustain the Complaint is because the Record of the Case, taken as a whole, contains TE Johnson's subsequent clarifications or qualifications, particularly those offered in the course of Missouri Presbytery's investigations and later confirmed in his answers to questions posed by the SJC, of earlier, problematic statements. Based upon the totality of the evidence within the Record of the Case, we do not believe that there is a "strong presumption of guilt," notwithstanding the concerns that we have registered here about some of TE Johnson's public statements. This concurring opinion was written by RE Frederick (Jay) Neikirk and TE Guy Prentiss Waters and joined by RE Daniel A. Carrell, TE Bryan Chapell, TE David F. Coffin, Jr, TE Hoochan Paul Lee, TE Michael F. Ross, and RE Jack Wilson (as to Parts I, II, and IV of this opinion, but only as to portions of Part III).

DISSENTING OPINION OF RE Samuel J. Duncan

The Standing Judicial Commission, in ruling that Missouri Presbytery did not err in this case, found it was bound by the "great deference" standard in *BCO* 39-3 requiring a finding of "clear error." I believe the Presbyterian Church in America could benefit from a review of the civil/criminal and ecclesiastical meanings of "clear error," since many of our cases hinge on what "clear error" is, or is not, and how much deference should be given to presbytery decisions and actions.

When appellate courts, be they civil/criminal or ecclesiastical, decide cases that are properly before them, the starting point for this appellate review is to determine the correct "standard of review." Historically, the "standard of review" is the amount of deference given by a higher court in reviewing a decision of a lower court.

A low standard of review (very little deference given to the lower court decision) means that the decision under review will be reversed if the higher court considers there is any error at all in the lower court's decision. A high standard of review (much deference given to the lower court decision) means that more deference is accorded to the decision under review, so that it will not be reversed just because the higher court might have decided the matter differently; it will be reversed only if the higher court considers the decision to have obvious error. The standard of review may be set by statute, rule or precedent. Generally, there are different standards for reviewing questions of fact and questions of law, with factual findings given more deference than questions of law.

In considering civil/criminal appeals, there are several “standards of review:”

1. Arbitrary and Capricious: This standard of review is employed when an appellate court determines that a factual finding by a lower court should be reversed because it was made on unreasonable grounds or without any proper consideration of circumstances. This is an extremely deferential standard.

2. Substantial Evidence: This standard of review is employed when a factual finding is made by a jury and will be normally upheld on appeal, unless it is not supported by "substantial evidence." This means something "more than a mere scintilla" of evidence. It means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion. Under the "substantial evidence" standard, appellate review extends to whether there is any relevant evidence in the record which reasonably supports every material fact (that is, material in the sense of establishing an essential element of a claim or defense). Appellate courts will not reverse such findings of fact unless there is no reasonable basis in the evidence submitted by the parties. If the parties presented conflicting evidence at trial, appellate courts applying a "substantial evidence" standard assume that the jury or finder of fact resolved the conflict in favor of the prevailing party, and in turn, appellate courts must defer to such implicit findings of fact about which side's witnesses or documents were more believable, even if they suspect they might have ruled differently if hearing the evidence themselves in the first instance. This is a highly deferential standard.

3. Clearly Erroneous: This standard of review is employed when a trial court (bench trial, without a jury – judge is the finder/trier of fact) makes a finding of fact, which should not be reversed unless the appellate court is left with a "definite and firm conviction" that an error in a factual finding has been committed by the trial court. So if the appellate court finds that, although there

was evidence to support the lower court's factual finding, the evidence taken as a whole—including the eyewitness and the expert testimony—leaves the appellate court with a definite and firm conviction that an error was committed by the trial court in finding that fact, then clear error is present. This is a very deferential standard, but it is limited to factual findings, not the decisions upon which those factual findings are based.

4. De Novo: This standard of review is employed when an appellate court considers a matter as a question of law, affording no deference to the decisions below. Decisions of a lower court on questions of law are reviewed using this standard. This standard of review allows the appellate court to substitute its own judgment about whether the lower court correctly applied the law. This is a very low deferential standard.

5. Mixed Questions of Fact and Law: Lower court decisions containing mixed questions of law and fact are usually subjected to *de novo* review, unless factual issues predominate, in which event the decision will be subject to clearly erroneous review.

6. Abuse of Discretion: This standard of review is employed when a lower court has made a discretionary ruling (such as whether to allow a party claiming a hardship to file a brief after the deadline). This is a highly deferential standard.

The issue of what “standard of review” should be used by higher ecclesiastical courts when reviewing actions of lower ecclesiastical courts was presented to the 24th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America in June, 1996 in the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Judicial Procedure (the “Report”). See 24th General Assembly, 1996, 24-17, p. 65)

The Report noted that “one of the more difficult problems facing the PCA has been the question of how judicial cases should be handled by the Assembly” and stated that “one of the central concerns” at the founding of the PCA “was a failure of Church discipline.” The Report reminded the PCA, from the “Message to All Churches” that “[w]hen a denomination will not exercise discipline and its courts have become heterodox or disposed to tolerate error” the minority will find itself having to be “submissive to a tolerant and erring majority.” The “Message” declared that this development was the exercise of discipline in reverse, making separation a necessity (and the eventual forming of the PCA).

In other words, and bringing this age old conflict to the present, a lower court's relaxed (tolerant) or refusal to biblically discipline its members must not be protected from a higher court's review by a highly deferential standard of review.

The PCA's initial practice of handling all judicial matters at the General Assembly, and subsequently a standing judicial commission, whose decisions were then approved by the General Assembly, proved to be impractical or unsatisfactory, leading to the creation of this Ad Interim Committee, whose recommendations, including a new "standard of review," were adopted by the PCA and made a part of the *BCO*, which now constitute our current practice.

Part C of the Report's Recommendations covered "Standards for Review" noting that the issue was a "need for a common standard of judicial review, clearly reflecting Presbyterian constitutional principles, to guide the higher courts in fulfilling their obligations under this chapter." To address this need, the following "standards of review" were adopted and made a part of *BCO* 39-3:

....To insure that this Constitution is not amended, violated or disregarded in judicial process, any review of the judicial proceedings of a lower court by a higher court shall be guided by the following principles:

1. A higher court, reviewing a lower court, should limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court. Further, the higher court should resolve such issues by applying the Constitution of the church, as previously established through the constitutional process.
2. A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those factual matters which the lower court is more competent to determine, because of its proximity to the events in question, and because of its personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses involved. Therefore, a higher court should not reverse a factual finding of a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.

3. A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties. Such matters of discretion and judgment would include, but not be limited to: the moral character of candidates for sacred office, the appropriate censure to impose after a disciplinary trial, or judgment about the comparative credibility of conflicting witnesses. Therefore, a higher court should not reverse such a judgment by a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.
4. The higher court does have the power and obligation of judicial review, which cannot be satisfied by always deferring to the findings of a lower court. Therefore, a higher court should not consider itself obliged to exhibit the same deference to a lower court when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church. Regarding such issues, the higher court has the duty and authority to interpret and apply the Constitution of the Church according to its best abilities and understanding, regardless of the opinion of the lower court.

As grounds for this *BCO* amendment, the Report noted that this proposal would “insure that in judicial review the Constitution actually functions as intended, and is not amended, violated or disregarded in judicial process. Further, clear standards of judicial review will help to preserve the Constitutional graduation of authority while upholding each court’s rights and responsibilities.” Unfortunately, at this time, I do not believe these “standards of review” are as clear and properly applied as the drafters of this *BCO* amendment had hoped.

When does this “clear error” standard apply? How is this “clear error” standard applied? Does this “clear error” standard apply to every action or decision of a lower court, or is this “clear error” standard of review limited to the context of the trials of ordination, a trial/censure in a discipline case, or quasi fact finding situations?

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Surely a higher court is not expected to “rubber stamp” all actions of a lower court. And cutting to the heart of the matter, should higher courts give this “great deference” to all actions of a lower court, especially those actions involving the question of whether or not a member should be disciplined? Should a lower court’s failure or refusal to fully begin and complete the discipline process be given just a cursory review, justified by a potential misunderstanding of how the “clear error” standard of review should be applied? No and No!

In *BCO 39-3.2*, the “clear error” standard applies to “factual matters,” because the lower court is more familiar with the “parties” and “witnesses” than the higher court. The reference to “parties” and “witnesses” would seem to make this sub-section apply the “clear error” standard to factual findings from an actual trial, as opposed to a non-trial action or decision. At an actual trial, witnesses and evidence are presented that either fact “A” or fact “B” occurred. When this court of original jurisdiction or initial trier of fact determines that fact “B” is true, this is the type of “factual matter” to which the “clear error” standard of review applies. In other words, the lower court’s factual finding that fact “B” occurred should not be reversed without a ruling from the higher court that finding fact “B” was “clear error.”

In *BCO 39-3.3*, the “clear error” standard applies to matters of “discretion and judgment,” because the lower court is more familiar with the “events” and “witnesses” than the higher court. Given examples of these matters of discretion and judgment are: the “moral character of candidates for sacred office, the appropriate censure to impose after a disciplinary trial, or judgment about the comparative credibility of witnesses.” The reference to “events” and “parties” would seem to describe situations in which a lower court determines certain facts or makes decisions/takes actions after hearing conflicting testimony, statements, arguments, or reports from more than one person. The examples given relate to a lower court acting as an initial trier or finder of certain facts and making decisions or taking actions based on those facts. First, based on his testimony and answers to questions at his trials of ordination, a candidate’s moral character is either acceptable or not. Second, the imposition of a censure is obviously after a trial, or a confession, at which time certain facts were either determined by the lower court after a trial or confessed by the accused, and serve as the basis for a particular censure. Third, the credibility of witnesses giving conflicting testimony could serve as a basis for finding that one witness is more credible than the other.

When the court of original jurisdiction or the initial trier/finder of fact determines that a candidate’s moral character is bad, or the censure of

deposition from office is warranted, or that witness “A” is more credible than witness “B,” these are the types of matters of “discretion and judgment” to which the “clear error” standard of review applies. In other words, the lower court’s decision, after hearing a candidate’s answers to questions from the floor, or what is an appropriate censure after a guilty verdict, or confession, or conflicting statements from adversarial parties/witnesses, should not be reversed without a ruling from the higher court that the decision rendered by the lower court in the crucible of a disputed matter or quasi fact finding matter, was “clear error.” While these types of “factual” determinations would be subject to the “clear error” standard of review, it does not necessarily follow that a lower court’s actions/decisions based on those facts would be subject to the same “clear error” standard, especially in situations when the lower court’s action/decision is not supported by those facts.

It should be noted that no examples are given in *BCO* 39-3.3 outside of situations involving the trials of ordination, an actual trial (or confession), or quasi fact finding matters involving the credibility of witnesses. Accordingly, the “clear error” standard of review would not be applicable to a lower court’s decisions/actions that do not arise from similar contexts. Therefore, the “clear error” standard of review should not be applied to a decision/action of a lower court finding that no strong presumption of guilt existed. The proper standard of review in those situations would fall under *BCO* 39-03.4, which is basically the *de novo* standard of review.

In conclusion, the “clear error” standard of review would be applicable to the matters and situations set out above, but would not be applicable in situations that did not involve some type of factual finding of a lower court following the trials of ordination or an actual trial or confession or some action/decision of a lower court that was not the result of a quasi-fact finding situation. This dissenting opinion was written by RE Samuel J. Duncan and joined by RE John Bise, RE Steve Dowling and RE John White.

DISSENTING OPINION Of RE Steve Dowling

We respectfully dissent from the court’s ruling in this case on the following grounds:

1. That Presbytery did not exercise the “due diligence” required by *BCO* 31-2 in its investigation and that it therefore committed “clear error” [*BCO* 39-3] in making its determinations;

2. That the SJC was not bound by the “great deference” requirement of *BCO 39-3* because this is a case centering on Constitutional interpretation; and
3. That the substantive conclusions reached by Presbytery and confirmed by the SJC do not follow from the facts in the Record of the case.

The first two grounds are procedural, while the third is on the merits of the case. Each of these grounds is important, and each error has significant consequences for the denomination.

That Presbytery did not exercise the due diligence required by *BCO 31-2* in its investigation and that it therefore committed clear error [*BCO 39-3*] in its determinations

While this case is nuanced, it isn't particularly complex and some parts of it are simple. One of the easiest things to understand about it is that the SJC went through most of the judicial process, including its final hearing with the parties to the case, and then opened the record to get more information. Here is the court's reasoning for doing that:

*The SJC believes it is necessary to attempt to clarify the Record of the Case because its magnitude (over 600 pages covering multiple years of writing, speaking, and judicial processes) makes it **difficult to ascertain** if specific representations of perspectives of TE Johnson are his actual or present theological convictions.*

The first thing to notice here is that the SJC says it sought further clarification because the ROC was hard to understand. If the SJC -a group that is reasonably expert in these kinds of processes and issues- cannot make enough sense of the record to reach a conclusion, it's difficult to see how Presbytery understood it well enough to reach its conclusions. Further, the SJC had before it not only everything Presbytery had before it as a court, but also additional briefs, the benefit of a full hearing, and more oral examination of the parties. Though we have no doubt about the fair motives of the court, it proved through its actions that due diligence hadn't been exercised by Presbytery. If it had been, there could be no need to get clarification after a record had once been declared judicially in order, a hearing held, and SJC deliberations begun.

It bears noting that the extent of this clarification was substantial. It wasn't just that there was a question or two about some specific point in the record,

but instead the apparent need for the SJC to form a committee to create interrogatives, communicate them to the accused, and receive his responses. This process resulted in **103** questions being submitted by members of the SJC. From that catalog of questions, the committee chose 25 that it deemed the most useful (through a blind grading process). TE Johnson answered the questions, and these answers -over and against the contents of the original ROC- provide much of the substance cited by the SJC in its support of Presbytery. For example, Allegation #1 is denied with 7 citations, 6 of which are from SJC questions. The denial of Allegation #2 is supported by 4 citations from the original ROC, and 4 from the SJC's additional questions. For Allegation #3, the original ROC is cited once and the SJC's questions are cited 7 times, and the numbers for Allegation #4 are 4 from the original record and 4 from the SJC.

The SJC's supplemental work produced 67% of the citations used by it in support of Presbytery's conclusions, strongly suggesting that Presbytery's investigation was inadequate. If the investigation was inadequate, then Presbytery's conclusions constitute "clear error."

The second thing to observe in the decision's justification is that the SJC wasn't sure whether

*... specific representations of perspectives of TE Johnson are his actual or **present** theological convictions.*

BCO Preliminary Principle 8 says this:

*Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, **the approbation of an impartial public**, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church.*

It's hard to conceive that an 'impartial public' would approve of seeking the "present theological convictions" of an accused nearly two years after the discrete incident resulting in a complaint occurred, particularly in the absence of any effort to acquire contrary evidence. This extension of time to the present and *ex post facto* acquisition of information on the part of the court appears to be a misuse of judicial discretion, with the court having undertaken more of a pseudo-BCO 31-2 investigation than an action to perfect the record. Since the opportunity to answer questions two years after the fact was extended to TE

Johnson, then the door should have opened to evidence (if there is any) related to his actions, social media utterances, and writings over the past two years which might contradict the veracity of his carefully formulated responses. Collecting evidence in that manner would be consistent with the desire for a *complete* record rather than merely an *expanded* record.

Discussions of investigative balance aside, TE Johnson's *present* positions are irrelevant to the complaint against him. The actions of the court and TE Speck's subsequent complaint exist within a discrete timeframe that ended with the initiation of the complaint. It's a closed set of circumstances, and subsequent events and information cannot properly be introduced.

In summary, the SJC's actions bear testimony to the fact that Presbytery's investigation was inadequate, and since it was inadequate the subsequent determinations made on that inadequate investigation were "clear error." Moreover, the SJC distorted the record -however unintentionally- by soliciting the "present" views of TE Johnson.

That the SJC was not bound by the "great deference" requirement because this is a case centering on Constitutional interpretation

There are limitations on courts of review in the PCA. *BCO* 39-3 enumerates these, saying first that a higher court should limit itself in its decisions to issues raised by the lower courts, and that higher courts shouldn't overturn the decisions of lower courts unless there is "clear error." In applying these limitations there are conditions and exceptions. For example, *BCO* 39-3.2 presupposes that the lower court's proximity to the events in question better qualifies it to judge a case, and *BCO* 39-3.3 presupposes better ability to judge based on "familiar acquaintance" with events and parties. Putting aside the obvious argument that familiarity may actually compromise a court's objectivity in some cases, *BCO* 39-3.4 establishes that:

The higher court does have the power and obligation of judicial review, which cannot be satisfied by always deferring to the findings of a lower court. Therefore, a higher court should not consider itself obliged to exhibit the same deference to a lower court when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church. Regarding such issues, the higher court has the duty and authority to interpret and apply the

Constitution of the Church according to its best abilities and understanding, regardless of the opinion of the lower court.

The matter at hand is a doctrinal case requiring interpretation of the Constitution of the Church and the SJC was not obliged to grant “great deference” to the lower court. Moreover, the SJC had the duty to address the issues raised in the complaint without dependence on the “great deference” standard, but it conducted the case instead as if it were bound by the provisions of *BCO* 39-3.2 and 3. While we respect the SJC’s unwillingness to exceed its mandate, or to position itself as the arbiter of truth for the Assembly, this is an abdication of responsibility with respect to *BCO* 39-3.4.

Further, by not meeting its obligation to interpret the constitution of the church under *BCO* 39-3.4, the SJC has affirmed Presbytery’s authority to make Constitutional and theological declarations on behalf of the denomination. Since the decision made by Presbytery in declining to indict has been affirmed, the SJC not only has reinforced the idea that this authority lies with individual Presbyteries, it has also formalized a dubious Constitutional interpretation of SSA and how it applies to ordination.

That the substantive conclusions reached by Presbytery and confirmed by the SJC do not follow from the facts in the Record of the case

Again, while nuanced, this case only becomes complex when the things pertaining to sexual dysphoria among Christians generally are made indistinct from ordination requirements, and when the semantic ranges of terms used in the discussion are narrowed, expanded, or otherwise changed according to indiscernable criteria. In the first case, solid biblical arguments for the church to embrace “sexual minorities” are extended to ordained service as if there could be no category of sin, or no operative level of a specific type of sin, that is *a priori* disqualifying. In the second, the symbols (or words) with which we communicate are redefined without agreement, having been appropriated by those with special knowledge of the distinctions they desire from the symbols.

For example, the word “homosexual” appears just under 2400 times in the record for this case. In virtually all the places where it’s used the term is semantically equivalent to “same sex attracted,” so there seems to be a high correlation between the symbol and the thing signified in common usage, with some translators using the word to translate *arsenokoitai* 1 Corinthians 6:7-9. Even so, here is what TE Johnson says:

Neither *malakoi* or *arsenokoitai* map very tightly onto this modern use of *gay* or *homosexual* or *same-sex attracted* as an orientation.

He is saying that the biblical strictures are not closely aligned with the “modern” use of the words as an “orientation,” but there is no biblical support for arguing that the concepts in 1 Corinthians 6 are culturally bound. Pucci provides some insight here:

...the Muses sing a discourse similar to true things, but with some distortion, invention, or deflection -in a word, with some differences. The similarity vouches for the credibility of the discourse, while the invention, deflection, and difference make it false.

We mean by this that fine distinctions and novel interpretations may obfuscate truth rather than illuminate it, and that the effort to more narrowly define meaning can have the effect of removing meaning altogether, turning truth into falsehood and vice-versa. In this case, TE Johnson’s reinterpretation of the meanings of *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* through a modern lens to make a distinction related to “orientation” does little to clarify the issue from a biblical standpoint.

The ROC is clear that TE Johnson identifies himself as a “same-sex attracted man.” Irrespective of whether there’s a distinction between that and “homosexual,” and whether or not *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* “map tightly” to the scriptures condemning homosexuality, TE Johnson provides enough evidence from his own statements to make it obvious that this characteristic is so core to his being and so central to his personal narrative that it disqualifies him from ordained service.

TE Johnson’s testimony establishes that he has seen himself as same-sex attracted since he was 11 years old. He says he has never had an attraction to a woman and that he finds the idea of looking at a woman lustfully “disgusting.” He says that his public ministry as a same-sex attracted man is intended to help others who are suffering and ashamed about their own same-sex attraction, and in his 2019 General Assembly speech, he claimed that Article 7 of the Nashville Statement “hurt” because it asserts that it is a sin to adopt a homosexual self-conception.

TE Johnson's self-identification *per se*, then, is not a disputable issue; the real question is whether this identification "compromises and dishonors" his identity in Christ, and there is good reason to conclude that it does, because TE Johnson consistently palliates the sin of same-sex attraction such that he dishonors God. For example, he first appeals to the universality of sin to make the argument that same-sex attraction is just like any other sin, while the Constitution's exposition of Scripture asserts that some sins are more heinous than others (with homosexuality "more heinous" than even inappropriate heterosexual activity by virtue of it being against nature).

While it is true that all people are sinners, it is not true that all sins alike are equal. If they were, then every argument advanced by TE Johnson with respect to same-sex attraction would have to apply equally to every kind of sin. The sin of pedophilia would have to be considered no worse than anger; the sin of bestiality no worse than drunkenness. While it is true that all people are sinners and all deserve God's wrath, and while it is true that no one's righteousness is good enough to contribute to his salvation, arguments for sin equivalencies mock the word of God and dishonor Him.

Second, TE Johnson is a late middle-aged man of high achievement. He is well-educated and has an earned PhD establishing him as an expert historian. He is an author. He is a lifelong minister who carries the imprimatur of a Seminary education and ordination by one of the most biblically sound denominations in the world. All these things constitute *aggravations* of his sinful same-sex attraction and his teaching related to it according to the Constitution of the church. Question 151 of the Larger Catechism asks what constitute aggravating factors for sins more heinous, and they are these: "...if they (the persons offending) be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and those whose example is likely to be followed by others."

TE Johnson not only dishonors God in his prominent self-identification as a same-sex attracted man, the matter is made worse by his age, leadership position, and level of achievement.

The ROC demonstrates that TE Johnson is capable of formulating an orthodox view of sanctification, but it also demonstrates that he minimizes the possibility of change for people suffering from sexual dysphoria. He acknowledges that God can do anything in much the same way Cessationists acknowledge that God could still perform a miracle in the world; that is, He could, but He won't. He contends strongly -on the basis of his research and

experience- that orientation change practically never happens, citing statistics that establish that only 3.5% to 4% of people will ever experience any change from same-sex attraction to natural attraction.

In his arguments TE Johnson rests on appeals to his own authority, first as a same-sex attracted man, then as an academic, then as a theologian, and then as a minister. He communicates authoritatively and effectively, and he has clearly convinced many that his understanding of how God interacts with same-sex attracted people is the right one: God's ability to change people affected by this particular sin is only a remote possibility and should not be held out as a realistic hope for Christians; it would be extremely rare that they might change. There cannot be a more succinct denial of God's power to sanctify.

At the same time, the form of this argument is the opposite of TE Johnson's argument about the equivalency of sin. First, he claims that all sin is *alike* and SSA is no different from any other sin in order to establish that it cannot be a disqualifying factor for ordination. He subsequently says that while all sin is alike, and all people are sinners, sins related to sexual dysphoria are utterly *different* in that God hardly ever acts to change people from them and therefore those sins need to be accepted as an ontological phenomenon -they are part of being. By that line of reasoning any other sexual sin must also be accepted as a condition of being, whatever the perversion.

While the ROC doesn't show that TE Johnson entirely denies that sanctification could extend to a sexual orientation change, it clearly shows that he doesn't expect it to, even arguing that people need to understand the truth and not be optimistic about change when they are saved [ROC 461, ROC 928, etc.,]. In the same way, TE Johnson both claims the power of sanctification in his life and denies it, particularly when he speaks about his sexual appetites, which continue unabated:

*I share about once a year from the pulpit that I'm a porn addict. I haven't actually looked at pornography for 15 years, but when I did, I was all in and **that pull is still as strong as it was**. I've mortified this for 15 years and it still, you know, I see a computer terminal unmonitored and immediately my mind thinks, I want to look at porn. Fifteen years of strangling this thing, and it doesn't die, it doesn't go away [ROC 453}...*

And:

*TE Johnson: "You wanna know about my sexual brokenness? I am happy to talk to you about what I talked about in the pulpit two weeks ago, and that I think is relevant to this conversation. I am a pornography addict. I have had a pornography addiction for 15 years. Actually 18" Interviewer 2: "Are you still doing pornography, Greg?" TE Johnson: "No, I haven't for 15 years." Interviewer 1: "So you're not an addict." Interviewer 2: "So you're not an addict anymore." TE Johnson: "Oh, but I know what it does inside of me. You see, **I know that if I look at one image, I'm going to look at a thousand. I know I'm not going to come up for air for hours.**" [ROC 553-554, 568"]*

Some might be tempted to minimize these statements because of the circumstances of a live interview. TE Johnson says as much, having called the interaction a "train wreck." That is an assessment of the outcome but not necessarily the conversation, since the interviewers were clearly trying to dissuade TE Johnson from the point he was trying to make, while TE Johnson himself argued harder and harder for his vulnerability to these sins in order to impress upon them how powerful its control is over him. The Constitutional aggravations listed above apply here. If TE Johnson were young or naïve or inexperienced in public interactions, these might serve to mitigate his responsibility for what he said; it might provide an argument from extenuation. Instead, he is mature, educated, esteemed, and an accomplished public speaker. He clearly believes what he insistently told these interviewers and his words cannot be ignored.

By these beliefs and descriptions of his own experience, TE Johnson minimizes God's purposes and power in sanctification, while at the same time demonstrating the grip by which his sin holds him. In his testimony [ROC 610], his sermons [ROC 606], his public speeches [ROC 556] and his writings [ROC 812-830] TE Johnson has made his homosexuality central to his self-perception, his self-presentation, and to his ministry. He has become a public figure as a result, and it is clear from the record that he is regarded as an authority on the subject -one who expressly teaches and intends to teach his version of "truth" as it relates to SSA.

While the ROC and his public utterances demonstrate great facility with language and theological nuance and sometimes serve to obfuscate clear issues, TE Johnson's fundamental argument for serving as an ordained minister of the gospel is that he is now -and has always been- chaste, making him immune to disciplinary action for sexual misconduct.

By this standard no sexual predilection is disqualifying so long as it doesn't materialize in an act. Therefore, the pedophile who suffers in the way TE Johnson does -that is, one who had no hope of change or no resistance to a single look at child pornography such that he "...*wouldn't come up for air for hours...*" is eligible for ordination. The same would also clearly be true of someone who struggled with illicit heterosexual attractions under the same conditions, yet it is unimaginable that a man would be called as a minister of the gospel who said, "I struggle with lust for women to the point that I don't expect change, and I'm also an addict who is one look away from complete immersion in pornography -but don't worry, I only think about it. I'm not currently doing it."

Despite the many excellent points made by TE Johnson about the difficulties faced by Christians who experience SSA or sexual dysphoria, and despite much good advice on how to minister to "sexual minorities," these arguments cannot be applied without distinction to ordained service.

In summary, the SJC overlooked the clear deficiencies of Presbytery's investigation, which is proven by re-opening the record and admitting additional information that sought the "present" positions of TE Johnson, extending consideration of facts well beyond the events complained against. Moreover, it was incumbent on the SJC to deal with the matters raised by the Complainant as issues of Constitutional interpretation instead of deferring to the lower court in this case. For these procedural reasons and based on the merits of the complaint, we respectfully dissent from the majority decision.

This opinion was written by RE Steve Dowling and joined by joined by TE Paul Bankson, RE John Bise, RE Mel Duncan, RE Sam Duncan, TE Fred Greco, and RE John White.

**SJC ANSWER TO THE DISSENTING OPINION
of RE Steve Dowling et al.**

SJC Manual 18.12.c permits the SJC to "Answer" a Dissenting or Concurring Opinion, a procedure akin to the general answering provision in *BCO* 45-5.

While this procedure is rarely used, the Commission finds it necessary to take this step in this present Case because we conclude that the referenced Dissent mischaracterizes key conclusions of the SJC's Decision. We are concerned these mischaracterizations may lead to confusion in the Church regarding the PCA Constitution and what the SJC actually decided in this Case, and, in turn, how the Decision may apply to future situations.

Even as we take this step, however, we want to assure the Assembly the SJC seeks to operate as a collegial court, and we have been blessed with a good measure of success. We intend for our Answer to be understood in this light.

We organize our Answer by addressing some problematic assertions in the Dissent, by responding to the procedural concerns raised, and by interacting with the Dissent's allegation that "the substantive conclusions reached by Presbytery and confirmed by the SJC do not follow from the facts in the Record of the case."

1. Erroneous Assertions in the Dissent - Before addressing the specific procedural and substantive concerns raised by the Dissent, we believe it important to address three assertions in the Dissent that we find to be problematic.

1A. Erroneous Assertions 1 & 2: Concerning the Authority of a Church Court to Render a Constitutional Interpretation of SSA

The first two assertions are made in the following quote from the Dissent. (Emphasis added.)

[T]he SJC has affirmed Presbytery's authority to make Constitutional and theological declarations *on behalf of the denomination*. Since the decision made by Presbytery in declining to indict has been affirmed, the SJC not only has reinforced the idea that this authority lies within individual Presbyteries, it has also *formalized a dubious Constitutional interpretation of SSA* and how it applies to ordination. (p. 4.)

First, contrary to the assertion in the quote, our ruling and opinion in this Case do not "make" the Constitutional interpretation of "SSA" that is alleged in the second half of the Dissent (pp. 4-7). Such a claim mistakenly construes the ruling and opinion of the SJC in this Case. In each of the discussions of our reasoning for declining to sustain the four substantive allegations brought in

the Complaint, we concluded only that the Complainant had not met his burden, based on the Record, of demonstrating Presbytery erred in declining to indict TE Johnson. Thus, in responding to Allegation 1 we wrote:

“If the Record demonstrated that the above statements [from the Complainant] were an accurate summary of TE Johnson’s views, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint. Based on the Record, however, the SJC finds that it was not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude that TE Johnson does not hold these positions and that he affirms....”³⁹

In short, we indicated that holding the kinds of positions alleged in the Complaint would likely make an officer in the PCA liable to indictment by their court of original jurisdiction. The conclusion, however, was that the Record in this Case did not demonstrate Presbytery clearly erred in concluding TE Johnson did not hold the views alleged. The dissenters may conclude the SJC was wrong in that determination, and they have every right to make that argument in a dissent. It is not accurate, however, to assert the SJC is staking out a new position on “SSA” when the ruling and the opinion clearly affirm that the SJC Decision was based on a finding that the facts in the Record did not sustain the allegations that were made in the Complaint.

Having said that, we wish to highlight one other aspect of the SJC’s opinion that contradicts this assertion of the Dissent. For each of the first three allegations, our Opinion begins by providing quotes from the Complaint that were offered in support of the given allegation. In each instance we then go on to say: “If the Record demonstrated that the above statements were an accurate summary of TE Johnson’s views, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint.”⁴⁰ For the fourth allegation, while the Opinion does not offer statements from the Complaint, the Opinion does say:

“If the Complainant had demonstrated, for example, that the minister was involved in homosexual behavior, cultivated unrepentant lustings, taught that either of those were not sinful, or was not continually seeking to mortify those temptations, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint.”⁴¹

³⁹ Opinion p. 13. See identical conclusions on Allegations 2 and 3 on pp. 16, 18, and a similar conclusion to Allegation 4 on p. 23, changed only to reflect the different nature of this allegation.

⁴⁰ See Opinion pp. 13, 16, and 18.

⁴¹ Opinion p. 23.

Our point in including all these statements was to try to set forth some guiderails that reflect our understanding of the Confessional boundaries of orthodoxy regarding beliefs and practices that can characterize ordained men in the PCA on matters related to same-sex attraction, same-sex behaviors, etc. We believe those statements reflect quite well the conclusions of the PCA's Ad Interim Committee on Sexuality.⁴² Thus, ironically, rather than setting forth some novel "Constitutional interpretation of SSA" as the Dissent suggests, the SJC's Opinion contains a series of strong and consistent statements that are grounded in the Church's Confessional teaching on these issues, and that echo the testimony of the Ad Interim Committee Report to that teaching. The SJC did not find that the Record clearly provided evidence showing Presbytery had erred in its decision not to indict TE Johnson. That finding should not distract the reader from the clear, Confessional positions on same-sex attraction and sexual immorality that are contained in the Opinion.

Second, in the Dissent's quote cited above on page 1, the Dissent alleges the SJC has "affirmed Presbytery's authority to make Constitutional and theological declarations on behalf of the denomination." But this conclusion is based on a misunderstanding of our polity. Presbyteries (and Sessions) *already* have the right and responsibility to make Constitutional and theological declarations. That right, however, comes not from anything the SJC has done or could do, but from the nature of our graded courts. (See *BCO* 11-3,4.)⁴³ Thus, every court in the PCA is responsible to make theological

⁴² <https://pcaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AIC-Report-to-48th-GA-5-28-20-1.pdf>

⁴³ *BCO* 11-3 - All Church courts are one in nature, constituted of the same elements, possessed inherently of the same kinds of rights and powers, and differing only as the Constitution may provide. When, however, according to Scriptural example, and needful to the purity and harmony of the whole Church, disputed matters of doctrine and order arising in the lower courts are referred to the higher courts for decision, *such referral shall not be so exercised as to impinge upon the authority of the lower court.* (Emphasis added.)

BCO 11-4, para 2 - Every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline seriously and reasonably proposed, and in general to maintain truth and righteousness, condemning erroneous opinions and practices which tend to the injury of the peace, purity, or progress of the Church. Although each court exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters especially belonging to it, the lower courts are subject to the review and control of the higher courts, in regular gradation. These courts are not separate and independent tribunals, but they have a mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole Church performed by it through the appropriate organ.

and Constitutional determinations as such issues come before them. Indeed, it is precisely to protect that right of the lower courts that *BCO* 39-3 exists.⁴⁴

At the same time, we recognize that right of the lower courts is not unlimited. As *BCO* 11-4, *BCO* 39, and *BCO* 40 all make clear, there is a right and responsibility of higher courts to exercise “review and control” over the lower courts. But that oversight is clearly limited by the Constitution. It must also be conducted within the proper purview and procedures of the higher court as set forth in our Constitution and rules. Among other things, this means that the SJC, in dealing with a complaint, is limited to the issues raised by the parties⁴⁵ and to the evidence contained in the Record of the case.⁴⁶ For the SJC to reach a conclusion that cannot be sustained from the Record, no matter how popular that decision might be to some, would be a breach of its Constitutional limitations and would trample upon the rights and responsibilities of the lower courts in the PCA.

In short, far from affirming some new right for presbyteries, our Decision in this Case serves to preserve the proper prerogatives of the lower courts of the PCA and to underscore the right of review and control, appropriately exercised, including through judicial process. Again, it would be mistaken to conclude that the SJC has recognized some new right for presbyteries. Rather, the SJC acted within the scope of our Constitutional responsibilities and limits. In so doing, we found that the allegations in the Complaint regarding the views held by TE Johnson were not sustained from the Record.

1B. Erroneous Assertion 3: Concerning Acting on a Complaint and the Discipline of an Officer

The third erroneous assertion is found in this quote from the Dissent:

TE Johnson provides enough evidence from his own statements to make it obvious that this characteristic (identifying himself as a ‘same-sex attracted man’) is so core to his being and so central to his personal narrative that it disqualifies him from ordained service. (p. 5)

This conclusion, at least as stated, asserts that the SJC should have found TE Johnson guilty of an offence that must lead to his removal from ordained office

⁴⁴ Note the italicized material in the quote from *BCO* 11-3 in the footnote above.

⁴⁵ *BCO* 39-3.1. This is also the thrust of *BCO* 43-1,3; *OMSJC* 14.4, etc.

⁴⁶ *BCO* 32-18 (para. 5). See also the 4th vow for SJC members in RAO 17-1.

in the PCA. Such a finding, however, would go far beyond anything raised in the Complaint or the Statement of the Issues in the Case. The statement of Issue 2 reads “Did Missouri Presbytery clearly err...when it declined to *commence process* on any of the following four allegations?” (Emphasis added.) That is a very different issue than “Is TE Johnson *guilty* of any of the following four allegations?” Thus, to reach the conclusion publicly offered by the dissenters, the SJC would have had to go far beyond the issues raised in the Complaint.

Further, and more importantly, our Constitution does not allow a higher court to act on a complaint by declaring someone to be guilty. That is not one of the remedies available to a higher court in adjudicating a complaint under *BCO* 43-10, and properly so. A complaint, in our Constitution, is always against the action of a court. Therefore, the SJC, as the higher court, has no right to sustain a complaint by declaring an officer guilty. All we can do is act with respect to the lower court. Were the SJC to seek to declare a man to be guilty, such action would be the epitome of a higher court “acting for” a lower court in violation of the principles of *BCO* 11. Finally, it would be fundamentally unfair to any man to be judged guilty based on a complaint and without benefit of a trial. Yet, this is what a straightforward reading of the Dissent would have us do.

Thus, with all due respect for our brothers, we find that key assertions of their Dissent do not accurately reflect the ruling of the SJC in this Case and are inconsistent with the Constitution of the PCA. We now turn to the specific points of error which the Dissent alleges were committed by the SJC.

2. Answer to Allegations of Procedural Error

The Dissent addresses, at some length, two broad procedural issues: (a) due diligence, particularly regarding the additional questions posed by the SJC to Missouri Presbytery and to TE Johnson; and (b) the proper standard for review. We address each of these in turn.

2A. Due Diligence

The Dissent alleges “the SJC overlooked the clear deficiencies of Presbytery’s investigation, which is proven by re-opening the record and admitting additional information that sought the ‘present’ positions of TE Johnson.” Indeed, the Dissent’s entire discussion of the SJC’s alleged procedural failures in this area is tied to the SJC’s decision to reopen the Record and pose some questions to Presbytery and to TE Johnson. Thus, the Dissent alleges the SJC’s

action in posing these questions (and particularly our rationale) demonstrated the SJC had concluded the ROC was unclear and that Presbytery had failed in its due diligence. (p.1) The Dissent further alleges the citations from the “supplemental work” suggest Presbytery’s investigation was inadequate.

Additionally, the Dissent alleges these questions led the SJC to focus on TE Johnson’s “present positions,” apparently defined by the dissenters as his positions in early 2021, as opposed to his positions during the period in which Presbytery was conducting the *BCO* 31-2 investigation (2018-20).

It is important to recognize, first, that the Minutes of the SJC’s meeting on March 25, 2021, referencing the debate on sending the SJC questions to Presbytery and TE Johnson, state: “The Parliamentarian advised that this motion and process were in order.” In addition, this is not the first time the SJC has suggested or required the provision of additional information.⁴⁷ Thus, whether one agrees with the SJC’s course of action, it was based on a ruling that such action would be in order, and it is an action for which there is precedent.

With regard to sending Questions, the Dissent alleges:

This extension of time to the present and *ex post facto* acquisition of information on the part of the court appears to be a misuse of judicial discretion, with the court having undertaken more of a pseudo-*BCO* 31-2 investigation than an action to perfect the record. ... Discussions of fairness aside, TE Johnson’s *present* positions are irrelevant to the complaint against him. (Dissent p. 2, 3)

We are concerned statements such as this in the Dissent could easily lead people to conclude there was broad opposition expressed to sending the Questions. Because SJC discussions and actions relating to sending the Questions occurred in “closed session,” we don’t feel the liberty to go into much detail, but we assure the reader such a conclusion would be incorrect.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ For example, see *Aven/Dively v. Ohio Valley Presbytery (M44GA at 503-04)*; *Barnes v. Heartland Presbytery (M44GA at 480 ff.)*; *Fordice v. Pacific Northwest Presbytery (M45GA at 532)*.

⁴⁸ *OMSJC* 18.3 - “A Closed Session shall be understood as a meeting or portion of a meeting wherein only Commissioners, and others specifically invited by the Commission, are present. Unlike an Executive Session, however, the proceedings shall not be secret, but rather discussion of such matters outside of the meeting

More importantly, and with no disrespect to our dissenting brothers, we find that they have arrived at their conclusion by focusing on individual phrases in the SJC's explanation for its action, without considering those phrases in the context of the whole statement. The following is the entirety of the SJC's introduction to the list of questions that were sent to the Presbytery and TE Johnson.

The SJC believes it is necessary to attempt to clarify the Record of the Case because its magnitude (over 600 pages covering multiple years of writing, speaking, and judicial processes) makes it difficult to ascertain if specific representations of perspectives of TE Johnson are his actual or present theological convictions. We understand from the Record:

- he has acknowledged some of his perspectives have matured over time;
- he has acknowledged some were poorly stated due to time limits, situational pressures, or extemporaneity;
- some representations of perspectives are made unclear by imprecision or disagreement over what aspect of sin is being referenced in specific statements;
- some representations have been extrapolated by critics but denied by Johnson.

Thus, the SJC offers TE Johnson the opportunity to answer questions with reference to the specific Allegations in the Complaint now before the Commission. Below are 25 questions arranged by the Allegations, with a fifth category titled "Additional/General."

It should be clear from that introduction that the SJC's point in seeking these clarifications to the Record was not that Missouri Presbytery had failed in its duty to investigate, but that the large number of reports, investigations, and writings contained in the Record covered a period of years over which, by his own admission, some of TE Johnson's views were poorly stated and some had "matured." Further, some of the statements in the Record were ones that were

shall be at the discretion of each commissioner, and the minutes of such a closed session may be read and approved in open session. However, no person present at a closed session shall later identify in any manner the views, speeches, or votes of a member of the commission during the closed session, apart from that member's written permission."

made by TE Johnson's critics about his views, but which he denied. Thus, contrary to the conclusions of the Dissent on pp. 1-3, the effort by the SJC to seek clarifications from TE Johnson and from Missouri Presbytery was not a reflection on the quality of Missouri Presbytery's Record or investigative efforts (although some of us would have liked them to have pressed more deeply on some issues). Nor was it an effort to develop evidence on views TE Johnson held in May 2021 but did not hold during the time of Missouri Presbytery's investigations (2018-2020). Rather, it was a request to the minister and Presbytery to pull together and focus pieces of his views that were scattered throughout the Record and that had, in some instances, undergone refinement during Presbytery's investigations.

Further, none of the minister's answers to SJC questions contradicted his previous answers to the Presbytery. The Record does not indicate he answered Presbytery one way but answered the SJC differently. Thus, what the Dissent refers to as his "present" views are essentially the same as those expressed to the Presbytery committee, and the Dissent does not identify any conflicting pair of answers. Even the Complainant's Addendum Brief recognized that the answers to the Presbytery investigation committee and to the SJC were substantively the same, by stating, "TE Johnson's answers to the SJC questions elaborate and confirm the very concerns raised in [my] Complaint." (p. 1). The Complainant did not contend there were any different answers.

The Dissent concludes its discussion of the *BCO* 31-2 procedures used by Presbytery by contending: "If the investigation was inadequate, then Presbytery's conclusions constitute "clear error." (p. 2) But this is a *non sequitur* (a conclusion that does not follow from the previous statement). Investigative procedures and indictment decisions are distinct issues, which is why the SJC Decision specifies two Issues. Further, as we have explained, the thrust of the SJC's action to reopen the Record was not to assert the inadequacy of the Record or the investigation, but to provide a more focused rehearsal of TE Johnson's views that were spread throughout the Record.

2B. Standard of Review

The Dissent's second procedural allegation is that the SJC used an improper standard for review, arguing that the SJC was not bound by the "great deference" requirement of *BCO* 39-3.3 "because this is a case centering on Constitutional interpretation." (p. 3)⁴⁹

⁴⁹ This was also the claim of the other Dissent, from RE Duncan.

In considering this concern it is important to recognize there were two Issues in this Case and they were dealt with differently. In the first Issue: “Did Presbytery violate *BCO* 31-2 in the manner of its investigation of the allegations?” the SJC applied the “clear error standard” of *BCO* 39-3.3 because it found that no specific procedures are required by our Constitution in a 31-2 investigation and that the Record demonstrated that Presbytery “sought to exercise the requisite ‘due diligence and great discretion’ in seeking explanations from TE Johnson.” (Decision p. 12)

Regarding the second issue: “Did Missouri Presbytery clearly err at its meeting of July 21, 2020, when it declined to commence process on any of the following four allegations?” however, the focus is different. We grant that the Complainant alleged TE Johnson held views that violated the Constitution of the PCA. Had the Complainant been able to provide evidence that such views were an accurate summary of TE Johnson’s views, the SJC would have been obliged to consider questions of “Constitutional interpretation.” But such was not the case. As we state repeatedly in our ruling, the evidence provided in the Record and discussed by Complainant did not clearly support the allegation that Presbytery erred in concluding that there was not a “strong presumption of guilt” that TE Johnson held the views the Complainant alleged he held. Thus, for example, and as was stated above, in judging Allegation 1 we wrote: “If the Record demonstrated that the above statements [of the Complainant] were an accurate summary of TE Johnson’s views, it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint. Based on the Record, however, the SJC finds that it was not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude that TE Johnson does not hold these positions and that he affirms....” In other words, we did not have a basis for applying *BCO* 39-3.4 because there was no question of Constitutional interpretation before us. The evidence in the Record did not provide sufficient support for the allegations made by Complainant regarding TE Johnson’s views. Certainly, that is a *factual finding* with which the dissenters are free to disagree and argue against. But that is a very different discussion than one of whether the SJC failed to conclude that Missouri Presbytery had misinterpreted the Constitution as it reached its conclusions.

3. Answer to Substantive Concerns Raised by the Dissent

The Dissent alleges “the substantive conclusions reached by Presbytery and confirmed by the SJC do not follow from the facts in the Record of the case.” In considering this allegation, it is crucial to begin by understanding the SJC did not “confirm” any “substantive conclusions” reached by Presbytery. Our

Decision repeatedly states that our Decision is based on the finding that the Record does not demonstrate the Complainant’s interpretive conclusions of certain statements were “an accurate summary of TE Johnson’s views,” and thus it was “not unreasonable for Presbytery to conclude TE Johnson does not hold those positions.” It was on that basis that we concluded Presbytery had not erred in declining to commence formal judicial process against TE Johnson.

In addition to all the above, we believe the Church would also be aided by an Answer to two substantive issues raised in the Dissent: (a) the Dissent’s contention that the Record demonstrates that “homosexuality is central to [TE Johnson’s] self-perception, his self-presentation, and his ministry;” and (b) the Dissent’s contention that the Record demonstrates TE Johnson errs in his understanding of I Corinthians 6:9 and that he is engaged in “heinous sin.” We address each in turn.

3A. The Issue of Centrality

The Dissent alleges:

In his testimony [ROC 610], his sermons [ROC 606], his public speeches [ROC 556] and his writings [ROC 812-830] TE Johnson has made his homosexuality central to his self-perception, his self-presentation, and to his ministry.” (Dissent p. 7)

A review of those citations demonstrates the assertion is untenable.

- ROC 610 is a letter from Covenant Church, Fayetteville, AR to Missouri Presbytery, which only has *one* quoted sentence from the minister.
- ROC 606 is also from Covenant Church and identifies a *single* sermon — May 19, 2019: “Testimony of a Unicorn,” even though there are eight years of the minister’s sermons on the Memorial Presbyterian Church website.
- ROC 556 contains excerpts from the same May 2019 sermon and his short speech at the 47th GA critiquing Article 7 of the Nashville Statement and Overture 4 (which 40% of the GA commissioners also voted against).
- ROC 812-830 contain eight items the minister wrote from May 2019 through February 2020, which he submitted to the Presbytery’s investigating committee at its request. Of the eight items, only the

Christianity Today testimony was published. The other seven were unpublished private correspondences.

This hardly demonstrates a centrality of self-perception, self-presentation, and ministry. If there is some other evidence that leads the Dissent to make that assertion, it was not in the Record, and surely not in the ROC sections cited in the Dissent.

The minister's testimony in *Christianity Today* ends with this statement:

The gospel doesn't erase this part of my story so much as it redeems it. My sexual orientation doesn't define me. It's not the most important or most interesting thing about me. It is the backdrop for that, the backdrop for the story of Jesus who rescued me.

3B. 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Heinousness

We first note that the arguments in the Dissent in this area were not raised during the SJC debate on the draft Decision proposed by the Drafting Committee. But even if they had been raised, the Answer below would have been sufficient to settle them.

The Dissent alleges "some translators [use] the word *homosexual* to translate *arsenokoitai* in 1 Corinthians 6:7-9." (p. 4) While not explicitly saying so, the Dissent seems to regard that single word as the best translation of the two words *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*. This translation decision is very important, but the Dissent does not identify which translators it references or provide argument as to why they should be favored over the many others that translate those two words with a behavioral component. If the word *homosexual* is intended throughout the Dissent to be synonymous with *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*, that would be important to know.

The ESV translates those two words as "men who practice homosexuality." The NIV translates it as "men who have sex with men." The NRSV translates it as "male prostitutes, sodomites." The New English Translation renders it as "passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals" and ends its two lengthy footnotes with: "Since there is a distinction in contemporary usage between sexual orientation and actual behavior, the qualification "practicing"

was supplied in the translation, following the emphasis in BDAG.”⁵⁰ And while the NASB translates *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* simply as “homosexuals,” it also supplies this footnote: “Two Gr[reek] words in the text, prob.[ably refer to] submissive and dominant male homosexuals.” Thus, even the NASB recognizes the behavioral component.

In the same section, the Dissent critiques one sentence from the minister’s answer to Question 12 from Presbytery’s investigative committee, where he wrote:

Neither *malakoi* or *arsenokoitai* map very tightly onto this modern use of *gay* or *homosexual* or *same-sex attracted* as an orientation. [ROC 1070]

After quoting the sentence, the Dissent alleges:

He is saying that the biblical strictures are not closely aligned with the “modern” use of the words as an “orientation,” but there is no biblical support for arguing that the concepts in 1 Corinthians 6 are culturally bound. ... TE Johnson’s reinterpretation of the meanings of *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* through a modern lens to make a distinction related to “orientation” does little to clarify the issue from a biblical standpoint. (Dissent p. 4)

But it’s not reasonable to draw such a conclusion from the minister’s sentence, especially in context. Presbytery’s question was this: “*How do you understand 1 Cor. 6:9-11 and its application to Christians that identify as celibate gay Christians?*” In his answer, his sentence immediately following the one quoted in the Dissent says: “These [*malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*] speak of sex acts ... among men. Such men will not enter the kingdom.”

In addition, the minister’s sentence quoted by the Dissent does not say “the concepts” of 1 Corinthians 6 are “culturally bound.” And the Record does not demonstrate the minister has “reinterpreted” the meanings of *malakoi* or *arsenokoitai*, but simply recognizes the importance of the behavioral component in those two words, as do the ESV, NIV, NRSV, NET, NASB, etc.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament)

⁵¹ The Dissent’s use of the phrase “culturally bound” is itself unclear. Does ‘culturally bound’ mean the text is ‘culturally conditioned’ (which of course it is) or does it mean

It is more reasonable to understand the minister's sentence as highlighting the difference between the homosexual *behaviors* indicated by *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* and the *temptations* (orientation) of homosexuality. In other words, it was reasonable for Presbytery to conclude the minister's sentence simply affirms someone could be homosexually inclined, but not be *malakos* or *arsenokoitēs*.⁵²

Regarding heinousness, the Dissent also alleges the minister:

... appeals to the universality of sin to make the argument that same-sex attraction is just like any other sin, while the Constitution's exposition of Scripture asserts that some sins are more heinous than others (*with homosexuality "more heinous" than even inappropriate heterosexual activity* by virtue of it being against nature)." (p. 5. Emphasis added.)

If the Dissent is intending the word *homosexuality* in this parenthetical to be identical with *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* (contra how those Greek words are understood in this Answer), then we have less concern with the excerpt above. But the Dissent's parenthetical seems to use *homosexuality* in a more general sense, and if so, it seems to argue homosexual *temptations* are more heinous than heterosexual *sinful behavior* (which appears to be what's meant by "inappropriate activity.") If that's not what's being asserted, then it's hard to understand why the word "even" is used in the comparison.

Regardless, the Dissent's contention about the minister's view is contradicted by the following statement from the minister quoted in the SJC Decision:

Sins are not all equally heinous (WLC 150). But they are all heinous. Having sex with someone of the same sex is very heinous. Before we ever get to the Standards, the Bible is clear on this point. For a man to lie with another man as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination. Paul picks up the Hebrew of

that the text is only applicable in Corinth (which the minister clearly denies in his answer to the "heinousness" question)?

⁵² The minister also addressed 1 Cor. 6:9 in his lengthy answer to Question 7 from the Presbytery committee. In one part, he wrote: "The term *homosexual* is not in the Hebrew/Greek Bible. Sexual orientation is a nineteenth century scientific and social construct. In 1 Corinthians 6, for example, *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* refer not to sexual orientation or temptation but to actual sexual practice between two men." [ROC 1062]

Leviticus—*arsenokoitai*, literally “male bed”—to prohibit it in no uncertain terms as sin that that will keep a man out of the kingdom.

All other things being equal, I would consider homosexual immorality to be more heinous than heterosexual immorality on account of the way it further warps God's creational norm for sex. As in *WLC 151*, it goes against the “light of nature.” Romans 1 notes it is unnatural. (SJC Decision, p. 26-27)

In addition, the Dissent's parenthetical assertion would be difficult to demonstrate biblically and was clearly addressed and critiqued in the 2020 Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Sexuality.⁵³ Below is an excerpt, with emphasis added.

Finally, we can discern a very practical value to the distinction between the sin that is constituted by our “corruption of nature...and all the motions thereof” and the “actual transgressions” that proceed from it. ... To feel a sinfully disordered sexual attraction (of any kind) is properly to be called sin—and all sin, “both original and actual” earns God's wrath (WCF 6.6)—*but it is significantly less heinous* (using the language of the *WLC 151*) *than any level of acting upon it in thought or deed.* ... (AIC Report p. 23.)

Below are five other pertinent excerpts from the AIC Report. All emphasis is added.

Statement 6 (Temptation) ... Nevertheless ... We can avoid “entering into” temptation by refusing to internally ponder and entertain the proposal and desire to actual sin. Without some distinction between (1) the illicit *temptations* that arise in us due to original sin and (2) the willful giving over to *actual sin*, Christians will be too discouraged to “make every effort” at growth in godliness and will feel like failures in their necessary efforts to be holy as God is holy (2 Peter 1:5-7; 1 Peter 1:14-16). (p. 9)

⁵³ <https://pcaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AIC-Report-to-48th-GA-5-28-20-1.pdf>

Essay 1: Confessional Foundations Regarding Nature of Temptation, Sin and Repentance

II.B.1. The Common Dynamic of Concupiscence - First, the dynamic of spontaneous sinful desire or attraction is not unique to those who experience homosexual desire. All people experience it. It is an essential point in the Confession that all of us who are descended from Adam and Eve experience their corrupted nature and the complex of disordered affections, desires, and attractions that come with that corruption. The danger of this question arising in the context of the discussion of homosexuality is that some might be tempted to think of that particular example of disordered desire as *qualitatively different* from their own. Or worse, some may be willing to assert the sinfulness of one category of spontaneous desire but minimize or remain largely ignorant of the sinful concupiscence that is common to all.

The truth is that if we think humbly and carefully about our own spontaneous thoughts, feelings, and desires, we would recognize that we are all much more alike than different. ... Good Reformed teaching on sin places us all on equal footing in our need of Christ's imputed righteousness. (p. 21)

II.B.2. Continued Corruption - [To] teach that our sinful corruption must be entirely removed from any part of us in order to be considered truly repentant is a spiritually treacherous perversion of the doctrine of repentance. (p. 21)

II.B.5. Moral Difference - ... Our brothers and sisters who resist and repent of enduring feelings of same-sex attraction are powerful examples to us all of what this "daily mortification" looks like in "the best of believers." We should be encouraged and challenged by their example and eager to join in fellowship with them for the mutual strengthening of our faith, hope, and love. (p. 23)

Essay 2: Biblical Perspectives for Pastoral Care - Discipleship, Identity and Terminology Singleness, Friendship, Community - Insofar as such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin struggle automatically to

disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor 6:9-11, 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet 1:3-11) (p. 31)

Conclusion

While appreciating our dissenting brothers' zeal for truth, and their evident desire to promote the peace and purity of the Church, we believe, as we have shown above, that their Dissent does not accurately reflect either the Record in this Case or the ruling and opinion of the SJC. Unfortunately, it is likely that as these inaccuracies are spread in the Church, people will follow the dissenters in drawing conclusions about the SJC's ruling and its understanding of sexual ethics that are neither accurate nor fairly adduced from the Decision. It is for this reason that we find it necessary to provide this Answer.

**CASE NO. 2021-12
COMPLAINT OF
CHRISTIAN MICHELSON AND STUART MICHELSON
v.
NORTHWEST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
February 1, 2022**

The Complaint is not judicially in order, and the defect cannot be cured within the Rules of Discipline of the *BCO*; therefore, the case is dismissed. *OMSJC* 10.5-6.

RATIONALE

The Complaint as presented to the Session does not identify any act of that court alleged to be in error, thus failing to meet the standard set forth in *BCO* 43-1, "A complaint is a written representation made *against some act or decision of a court* of the Church. It is the right of any communing member of the Church in good standing to make complaint *against any action of a court* to whose jurisdiction he is subject. . ." (emphasis added). (See also *BCO* 43-10, "The higher court has power, in its discretion, *to annul the whole or any part of the action of a lower court against which complaint* has been made. . ." (emphasis added).) According to the ROC, the only act of the Midway Session with respect to the congregation meeting in question is that of the Session meeting of July 8, 2020: The act of calling a congregational meeting (ROC 217). That action is not objected to in the Complaint. Further, the congregational meeting of July 19, 2020 (ROC 226-252), afforded the

Congregation the opportunity to change any of the acts that the Complaint alleges to be erroneous:

[the] change the call of three Assistant Pastors to the role of Associate Pastor through a stand vote that was conducted without the recommendation of a pulpit committee (violating *BCO* 20-2), without ballots (violating *BCO* 20-4), as a slate (violating *BCO* 20-4), with no abstentions counted (violating *BCO* 20-4), and with a significant minority opposed (violating *BCO* 20-5). . . .” (p. 1, lines 13-17).

It was the Congregation that acted to call without a pulpit committee; it was the congregation that decided to place an all-or-none election slate, and so on. Any one of these acts could have been rejected by majority vote of the Congregation, and the Session would have been powerless to order it otherwise. But a congregation meeting is not a court of the Church, and the *BCO* has no provision that allows a Complaint against congregational actions.

This decision does not mean, however, that there is no redress should a congregation take an action that violates the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America. There are at least three possible ways by which an alleged unconstitutional action of a Congregation could be dealt with by the higher courts.

First, one with standing could complain against the action of the Congregation at the point a court of the Church sought to implement the alleged unconstitutional decision. Thus, for example, if a Congregation elected a man to their Session who had not been trained or examined by Session per *BCO* 24-1 the Session’s action to install the man would be subject to Complaint. Similarly, if a Congregation voted to call a pastor in a way that violated the Constitution, the action of the Presbytery in approving the call would be subject to complaint by one who had standing.

Second, Presbytery could take note of a Constitutional deficiency in a congregational meeting in their review of the records of the Session (note *BCO* 25-5, last sentence and *BCO* 13-9(b)).

Third, under *BCO* 13-9.f, the Presbytery has power, “. . . to visit churches for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them. . . .” Thus, any Constitutional irregularity at a congregational meeting, credibly brought to the attention of Presbytery, may be investigated, and upon a finding of error, may be redressed by the Presbytery.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

None of these possible responses was before us in this Complaint. The Complaint before us is focused directly on the actions of the congregational meeting themselves, and, as has been noted, there is no basis in our Constitution for a complaint against the actions of a Congregation *per se*.

This decision was unanimously approved by the Panel and amended and approved by the SJC on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Not qual.</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Dissent</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Dissent</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Dissent</i>
Carrell <i>Not qual.</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Dissent</i>
Chapell <i>Not qual.</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Dissent</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Dissent</i>
Dowling <i>Dissent</i>	McGowan <i>Not voting</i>	Wilson <i>Dissent</i>

(12-8-1)

**Dissenting Opinion
of RE Jack Wilson**

BCO 43-1 provides, “A complaint is a written representation made against some act or decision of a court of the Church.”

The Commission determined that the Complaint was judicially out of order for failing to identify an act of the lower court (in this case a local session). We believe the Complaint did identify an act or decision of the Session and complain against that act. For this reason, we respectfully dissent.

The Complainants alleged that their Session erred by calling a congregational meeting for stated purposes which were arguably at odds with the Constitution. They complain, “...against the actions of the Session...in connection with their [*sic*] recommendation of July 9, 2020 that the congregation...approve the transition of three assistant pastors to the status of associate pastor simultaneously...” (ROC 268). This action, according to the motion Session adopted at a called meeting the day before, proposed that the congregation consent to the election of pastoral candidates via a procedure that the Complainants contended was in conflict with *BCO* 20-2. No congregational meeting was called by the Session to elect a pulpit committee. The Complainants further alleged that the election was improperly conducted without ballots (which are prescribed in *BCO* 20-4).

The portion of the Complaint quoted above identifies an action or decision of the lower court, namely the calling of a congregational meeting at which the Session would recommend procedures which were alleged to be at odds with the Book of Church Order. We find this part of the Complaint sufficient to identify an “act” or “decision” under *BCO* 43-1. In our view, this allegation was sufficient to present a justiciable issue.

We note that the Complainants also present a number of issues regarding the actions of the congregation which may not be justiciable. We recognize, like the majority, that the *BCO* does not currently contain any express provision for complaint against the act of a congregation. That fact does not impair the viability of the complaint against the act or decision to call the meeting with the purposes and parameters stated by the Session. We express no opinion on the merits of the Complaint or whether the Record of the Case, as compiled to this point, would support or prove the allegations of the Complaint. We simply believe at least one justiciable issue was presented in the Complaint. We would have found the Complaint judicially in order and assigned it to a panel for adjudication.

This dissenting opinion was written by RE Jack Wilson and joined by RE John Bise, RE Steve Dowling, RE E.J. Nusbaum, RE John Pickering, TE Michael Ross, and RE John White.

CASE NO. 2020-02
In the Matter of
***BCO* 34-1 Requests to Assume Original Jurisdiction**
March 3, 2022

The SJC answers the *BCO* 34-1 requests from Central Georgia, Southeast Alabama, and Savannah River Presbyteries (2020 Overtures 2, 4 and 25), by reference to the SJC’s October 21, 2021, Decision in Case 2020-12: *TE Ryan Speck v. Missouri Presbytery* and the SJC’s March 3, 2022, Decision in Case 2020-05: *TE Ryan Speck v. Missouri Presbytery*. RE Mel Duncan requested that his negative vote be recorded.

CASE NO. 2020-05
TE RYAN SPECK
v.
MISSOURI PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
March 3, 2022

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

In July 2018, Memorial Presbyterian Church (PCA) (“Memorial”) in St. Louis hosted the first Revoice Conference (“Revoice 18”). Thereafter, several individuals, sessions, and presbyteries communicated concerns to Memorial and to Missouri Presbytery (“MOP” or “Presbytery”) regarding Revoice 18. In light of these concerns, in October 2018 the pastor of Memorial, TE Greg Johnson, and its Session requested that MOP accept, as a *BCO* 41 Reference, the Session’s request to investigate it with regard to the allegations pertaining to the hosting of Revoice 2018. MOP voted to approve a lengthy report issued by its investigative committee in May 2019. The report contained, among other things, nine theological judgments. Complainant complained against MOP’s adoption of the nine theological judgments in July 2019. MOP partially sustained his complaint in October 2019 and voted to reconsider its affirmation of the nine theological judgments at a future called meeting. Complainant unsuccessfully tried to add a question about adoption by gay couples and individuals to the matters to be considered at the future meeting.

In December 2019, at a meeting called to reconsider the nine theological judgments, Complainant raised a point of order concerning the procedures used by MOP’s Administrative Committee in preparation for the meeting, but Presbytery’s Moderator ruled the point of order not well taken, a ruling that was sustained after challenge. MOP reconsidered the nine theological judgments and adopted amended statements to eight of them, referring the ninth judgment to an ad hoc committee for reconsideration. In January 2020, Complainant complained against MOP’s actions at the December 2019 meeting, a Complaint which Presbytery denied in July 2020. Complainant then carried his complaint to the SJC. The Panel conducted the hearing on September 14, 2021 and recommended that the Complaint be denied. The full SJC reviewed the case on March 3, 2022 and approved the following decision to sustain the Complaint in part and to deny it in part.

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 07/26/18 Memorial hosted the three-day Revoice 2018 conference.
- 09/07/18 The Session of Covenant PCA, Harrisonburg, VA sent a seven-page letter to the Memorial Session regarding Memorial's involvement in Revoice 2018.
- 09/27/18 TE Andrew Dionne sent a letter to the Memorial Session, which was co-signed by 20 other PCA TEs. (At the time, TE Dionne was pastor of Trinity PCA in Spartanburg, SC. Trinity and TE Dionne left the PCA in May 2019 to affiliate with the non-PCA "Evangel Presbytery.") Among other things, the letter exhorted Memorial Session "to repent of [their] sin of promoting and hosting the 2018 Revoice Conference."
- 10/10/18 TE Johnson and Session of Memorial sent a letter to MOP requesting Presbytery, among other things, to accept, as a *BCO* 41 Reference, the Session's request for Presbytery to investigate it with regard to the allegations pertaining to hosting Revoice 2018.
- 10/16/18 At a Stated Meeting, MOP's Administrative Committee announced that "Presbytery had received a request for reference from Memorial Presbyterian's Session due to complaints the church has received due to the Revoice Conference" and that the Committee Chairman "had formed an investigative committee [hereinafter, "Committee to Investigate Memorial," or "CIM"] chaired by TE Ron Lutjens."
- 10/25/18 Calvary Presbytery sent a 9-page letter to MOP.
- 11/13/18 Southwest Florida Presbytery sent a 12-page letter to MOP.
- 01/15/19 At a Stated Meeting, MOP heard the CIM report on its progress. Presbytery referred all letters pertaining to Revoice to CIM (including the letters already sent from Calvary Presbytery and Southwest Florida Presbytery).
- 01/26/19 Savannah River Presbytery sent a one-page letter to MOP supporting the October 2018 letter from Calvary Presbytery.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 05/18/19 At a Called Meeting, MOP considered the 115-page CIM report, which had been previously distributed by email. MOP voted to approve the concluding statements and nine theological judgments (“9 Theological Judgments”).
- 07/08/19 TE Ryan Speck filed a complaint with Presbytery regarding the 9 Theological Judgments. (This is not the complaint later carried to the SJC; this is a separate complaint that was not carried forward.)
- 07/11/19 TE Greg Johnson and Memorial Session sent a two-page letter to Presbytery responding to the May 2019 CIM Report.
- 07/16/19 At a Stated Meeting, MOP appointed a committee to respond to Memorial Session’s July 11 letter and appointed a Complaint Review Committee (“CRC1”), composed of TEs Polski, Porter and York and REs Myers and Lauerman, to review TE Speck’s July 8 Complaint.
- 10/15/19 At its Stated Meeting, MOP considered the thirty-page CRC1 Report, which recommended sustaining part of the Complaint, as follows: “The finding of the CRC is that the MOP did err by failing to judge Revoice 18 for advancing positions contrary to the scriptures and our confessional standards and therefore we recommend that this aspect of the complaint be sustained.” MOP partially sustained TE Speck’s July 2019 complaint and voted to reconsider its affirmation of the 9 Theological Judgments at a future called meeting. TE Speck moved to put the following question on the December 7, 2019, called meeting docket: “Did Revoice 18 err by encouraging gay couples and gay individuals to adopt children, and, if so, is this a serious error that [MOP] needs publicly to correct and clearly warn against?” MOP voted against this motion. Presbytery also created an ad hoc study committee to create a short statement of affirmations and denials regarding human sexuality (hereafter, “A&D Committee.”)
- 10/18/2019 TE Speck emailed the MOP’s Moderator, TE Tim LeCroy, asking him to consider adding to the docket of the December 7, 2019, called meeting the gay adoption question requested on October 15, to be discussed alongside the 9 Theological Judgments.

APPENDIX T

11/30/2019 MOP's Stated Clerk emailed members of MOP, with documents attached, to prepare members for the December 7, 2019, meeting of MOP which had been called to reconsider the 9 Theological Judgments.

12/07/2019 At the called meeting, TE Speck raised a point of order objecting to some of the procedures of MOP's Administrative Committee as out of order. MOP's Moderator ruled TE Speck's point of order not well taken; after a challenge to the ruling, MOP voted to sustain the ruling. MOP reconsidered the 9 Theological Judgments and adopted amended statements to eight of them, referring one question to an ad hoc committee to reconsider the question of "Queer Treasure." (Judgment 7) The newly amended and adopted statements included both affirmation and criticism of parts of Revoice 18. MOP authorized its Administrative Committee to draft a letter communicating these changes.

01/03/20 TE Speck filed a Complaint with MOP against MOP's actions taken at the December 7, 2019, meeting (this is the Complaint which later became the basis of Case 2020-05) alleging the following errors:

1. Approval of Theological Judgments 1-5 and 9 of the "MOP Presbytery Ad Hoc Committee to Investigate Memorial Presbyterian Church for Hosting the Revoice 18 Conference in July 2018" (CIM), which Complainant contends are contrary to the Scriptures and to the Confessional Standards of the Presbyterian Church in America; and
2. Denial of TE Speck's point of order regarding the Administrative Committee's (AdCom) handling of the December 7, 2019, meeting; and
3. Refusal to debate and rule on the propriety of gay couples adopting children, as advanced at Revoice 18.

Below are the six MOP Judgments complained against in the first item of TE Speck's Complaint.

1. We concur with the CIM's judgment that the evidence does not demonstrate the allegation that Revoice 18 grounded

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

homoerotic desire and actions in Creation rather than in the Fall, thereby advocating for a position contrary to Scripture and our confession of faith, and one grave and serious enough that it needs to be repudiated by Memorial.

2. We concur that terms like “gay,” “sexual orientation,” “queer,” “sexual minorities,” etc., are not always or necessarily unbiblical; and therefore, that Revoice 18’s use of the terminology in question, though confusing to some and potentially unwise, was not a grave and serious doctrinal error.
3. We concur with the CIM’s judgment that the evidence was such that this question as to whether a “gay beneath the gay” exists could not have been judged to be a key teaching of Revoice, but continues have the potential for becoming a grave and serious error if it begins to play a more central role, and thus we exhort those involved with Revoice to consider our position on this matter.
4. We concur with CIM and deny that it is always a grave and serious error worthy of repudiation to claim something which can be traced to our sin nature as in any sense a part of our “identity,” of part of “who we are,” as Revoice does with being SSA. While enduring patterns of brokenness and sin remain part of “who we are,” of our “identity,” as children of Adam, nevertheless sinful desires and deeds must be put to death. We concur that the core question is not: “Is that which rises from sin part of who you are?” but rather: “What are you doing with all the broken parts and places of who you are?”
5. We concur that (i) celibate SSA believers face complex barriers in developing friendships with people of the same gender and that, (ii) Christians must labor to empathize with this difficulty and that, (iii) it was unwise and hence an error of judgment rather than an error striking at the vitals of religion for Revoice leaders to be entertaining publicly the possibility of celibate partnerships without more careful boundaries proposed and that, (iv) TE Johnson adequately warned about the dangers of these type of friendships in his own Revoice 18 talk.

APPENDIX T

9. We concur with the CIM's judgment that although Memorial erred in failing to make clear to their congregation our doctrinal differences with Roman Catholicism before and after the Revoice 18 conference, it did not err in allowing Roman Catholics to speak in their church building under the aegis of Revoice, an outside organization, and therefore did not act in such a way as to strike at the vitals of religion.

01/21/20 At a Stated Meeting, MOP referred TE Speck's Jan. 2020 Complaint to a new Complaint Review Committee ("CRC2") composed of TEs Polski, TE Dey, RE Jones and RE Bauer. In addition, Presbytery discussed a draft from the A&D Committee.

06/02/20 At a called meeting, Presbytery adopted the 49 Affirmations and Denials proposed in its A&D Committee Report. A&D Members included TEs Dan Doriani, Mark Dalbey, and Ryan Laughlin, and RE Sean Maney. The 8-page Report was posted at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/197ZR63Fg_TCwOswHjjz7II2JaF1O7mjI/view.

The 49 A&D's were in two Parts:

1. Concise Biblical Theology of Sexuality with Reference to Homosexuality (1-28).
2. Homosexuality and Identity in Current Debate (29-49).

07/21/20 At a Stated Meeting, MOP considered the forty-page CRC2 Report, which recommended denying all the specifications of error in the Complaint, but also recommended revising Theological Judgments 2 (Terminology) and 5 (Spiritual Friendships). Presbytery declined the Committee's proposed revision to Judgment 2 and adopted its recommended revision to Judgment 5. Presbytery then denied TE Speck's January 3, 2020, Complaint. It also heard the report of the Committee to Reconsider Queer Treasure (the one of the 9 Theological Judgments not approved on December 7, 2019), voting to find fault with this lecture given at Revoice 18.

7/23/2020 TE Speck carried his January 3, 2020, Complaint to the General Assembly (Case 2020-05).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9/14/2021 The Panel (Chairman RE John Pickering, Secretary TE Paul Bankson, RE Dan Carrell, and Alternates RE John Bise and TE David Coffin) conducted the hearing.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

- 1 At its December 7, 2019, Called Meeting, did Missouri Presbytery (MOP) err in approving six theological judgments (specifically, Judgments # 1-5 and #9) recommended by CIM (Committee to Investigate Memorial)? Complainant's specifications of errors concern:

MOP Theological Judgment 1 ("Origins of Homoerotic Desire")

MOP Theological Judgment 2 ("Terminology")

MOP Theological Judgment 3 ("The Gay Beneath the Gay")

MOP Theological Judgment 4 ("Gay Identity")

MOP Theological Judgment 5 ("Spiritual Friendship")

MOP Theological Judgment 9 ("Roman Catholic Speakers")

2. Did the MOP err when it acted to deny TE Speck's point of order regarding the Administrative Committee's handling of the December 7, 2019 meeting?
3. Did the MOP err when it acted to refuse to debate and rule on the propriety of gay couples adopting children, as Complainant suggests was advanced at Revoice 18?

III. JUDGMENTS

1. Yes, particularly with regard to MOP Theological Judgments 2, 3, and 5.
2. No.
3. No.

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

- A. Issue 1 –Did Missouri Presbytery err in approving the Committee to Investigate Memorial's (CIM) Theological Allegations and Judgments on #1-5 and #9?**

Missouri Presbytery erred when it approved Judgments # 1-5 and #9 of CIM. Two matters account for Presbytery's error. The first is that MOP employed incorrect criteria for review in adjudicating the allegations presented within the Complaint. The second is that MOP failed to act properly in light of what it found based even on those incorrect criteria. This is reflected in its actions on Theological Judgments #1-5, #9, and considered in light of the findings of CIM and the Complaint Review Committee (CRC). The matter of the incorrect criteria for review and the matter of MOP's failure to act properly will be reviewed in turn.

MOP's Criteria for Review

On December 7, 2019, at the recommendation of its Committee to Investigate Memorial (CIM), MOP adopted eight "Theological Judgments." TE Ryan Speck filed Complaint against six of these Judgments (Theological Judgments #1-5, #9).⁵⁴ In presenting these recommendations, CIM employed criteria for review that it explicitly articulated in its committee report. CIM urged that "the core principles of justice enumerated in *BCO* Chapter 34 ought to govern ... the Memorial Session's role in their decision to host Revoice 18; and ... those principles should also govern our assessment of the theological teachings of Revoice, as we found them in the talks of the Revoice 18 speakers and in their writings and teachings in other venues". CIM further appealed to the "stipulations in *BCO* 40.5" as "relevant ... to this situation...". *BCO* 40-5, CIM reasoned, "seems to have in view not simply doctrinal teaching of ministers that may be erroneous or divisive (which seems to be the focus of *BCO* 34.5), but any and all 'constitutional' breaches that a lower court may have committed." CIM therefore argued that they were to make a determination whether "the Memorial elders and pastor [are] guilty of an **important delinquency** and/or a **grossly unconstitutional proceeding** in allowing the outside group, Revoice, to use its facilities for its conference" (emphasis in original). Any alleged errors could "not simply [be] errors, but errors so serious that they **strike at the vitals of religion** (in faith or morals) AND as well, **are industriously spread** (emphasis in original). Thus, CIM declared that "in our process we considered *BCO* chapters 29, 34, and 40 in determining whether either Revoice or Memorial committed errors that strike at the vitals of religion or simply errors resulting from the weakness of human understanding."

⁵⁴ CIM presented nine Theological Judgments to MOP. On December 7, 2019, MOP adopted eight of those Theological Judgments, and referred a ninth to a committee of Presbytery. TE Speck filed complaint against six of the remaining eight Theological Judgments.

CIM's recommendations to Presbytery with respect to Theological Judgments #1-5, #9 contain language explicitly reflecting these criteria – “grave and serious” (#1, #2, #3, #4), “error of judgment rather than an error striking at the vitals of religion” (#5), “strike at the vitals of religion” (#9). Since Presbytery adopted each of these motions, it thereby employed, whether intentionally or not, CIM's standard in assessing the teachings of Revoice 18 that were before it.⁵⁵

But, in doing so, CIM and Presbytery conflated the language of *BCO* 34 and 40 into a single criterion. By so doing, they defined “any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” from *BCO* 40-5 as consisting only of “Heresy and schism...that strike at the vitals of religion and are industriously spread” as set forth in *BCO* 34-5. This is, however, an inaccurate reading of *BCO* 40-5 and thus was an erroneous criterion for MOP to apply to the teachings of Revoice. In conflating the language of *BCO* 34 and 40, CIM and Presbytery crafted a criterion for assessing the actions of courts of the PCA that is based on the Constitutional standard to be used when undertaking process against a teaching elder. There is no Constitutional reason that the latter should define the former. *BCO* 34 governs “special rules pertaining to process against a minister.” But the teachings in question at Revoice 18 were not being taught exclusively by member teaching elders of MOP. The individuals teaching at Revoice 18 were both officers and non-officers, within the PCA and outside the PCA. There is no Constitutional reason why the standard articulated in *BCO* 34-5 should have been applied beyond its narrow scope, that is, process concerning a PCA teaching elder. Further, in creating this new criterion CIM and MOP apparently overlooked Constitutional material regarding the responsibilities of the courts of the PCA that should have guided their application of *BCO* 40-5 to this matter.

The proper Constitutional criteria to be applied in matters arising under *BCO* 40-5 are those found at *BCO* 11-3,4 and at *BCO* 13-9(f) which deal with the responsibilities of courts. *BCO* 11-4 affirms that “every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline seriously and reasonably proposed, and in general to maintain truth and righteousness, condemning erroneous opinions and practices which tend to the injury of the peace, purity, or progress of the church.” *BCO* 11-3 permits “disputed matters of doctrine and order arising in the lower courts” to be “referred to the higher courts for

⁵⁵ In several places in this Reasoning, for the sake of brevity, we use the phrases, “the teachings of Revoice 18” or “the teachings of Revoice.” By those phrases we mean the teaching of some of the speakers at the Revoice 18 Conference.

decision,” while *BCO* 13-9(f). enumerates among the powers of Presbytery, “to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the Church.” *BCO* 11-3 affirms, then, that when “disputed matters of doctrine” are Constitutionally brought from a lower court to a higher court, then the higher court may lawfully render “decision” with respect to those matters. *BCO* 13-9(f) articulates the proper criteria for evaluation. If an “opinion” is not only “erroneous” but also “injure[s] the purity or peace of the Church,” then Presbytery may lawfully “condemn” that opinion.

MOP’s Findings

The Findings of MOP

The importance of applying the proper Constitutional criteria surfaces when we consider Presbytery’s motions with respect to the Theological Judgments that are the subject of this Complaint. The motions that MOP adopted with respect to these Theological Judgments reflect some measure of concern relating to teachings of Revoice 18 –

Revoice 18’s use of the terminology in question, though confusing to some and potentially unwise, was not a grave and serious doctrinal error” (Theological Judgment #2).

We concur with the CIM’s judgment that the evidence was such that this question as to whether a ‘gay beneath the gay’ exists could not have been judged to be a key teaching of Revoice, but continues to have the potential for becoming a grave and serious error if it begins to play a more central role, and thus we exhort those involved with Revoice to consider our position on this matter (Theological Judgment #3).

We concur that i) celibate SSA believers face complex barriers in developing friendships with people of the same gender and that, ii) Christians must labor to empathize with this difficulty and that, iii) it was unwise and hence an error of judgment rather than an error striking at the vitals of religion for Revoice leaders to be entertaining publicly the possibility of celibate partnerships without more careful boundaries proposed and that, iv) TE Johnson adequately warned about the dangers of these type of friendships in his own Revoice 18 talk. (Theological Judgment #5)

Importantly, the language of concern in the motions cited above was left in place by the findings of a subsequent committee, the Second Speck Complaint Review Committee [CRC2], and the actions of MOP on the July 21, 2020 recommendations of that committee.

Although MOP registered concern with respect to the teachings of Revoice 18 in view in Theological Judgments 2, 3, and 5, it declined to take further action than it did. MOP unnecessarily restrained itself by the incorrect criteria for review that it opted to follow in evaluating the teachings of Revoice 18. Consequently, it did not take adequate action with respect to the errors that it had identified (Theological Judgments 3, 5), and with respect to teachings that it identified as “confusing to some and potentially unwise” (Theological Judgment 2).

The Findings of Committees of MOP

Significantly, the committees of MOP (CIM, CRC) registered greater concern in their findings than did MOP in its adopted Judgments. Consider first the findings of CIM. With respect to the teachings addressed by Theological Judgment 2, CIM noted, “we do agree that the way Revoice and Side B believers in general use terms has been confusing to many in our churches, and we expressed regret that they were not more sensitive to this confusion”; “These terms [“like ‘gay,’ ‘sexual orientation,’ ‘queer,’ and ‘sexual minorities’”] [have] potential to cause offense and division within the church”; and “We sincerely wish that Revoice leaders would have had a greater sense of the responsibility they carry to explain their use of terms more fully to the church they profess to need.” Compare the subsequent and confirmatory finding of CRC2, “some of these terms [‘gay,’ ‘sexual orientation,’ ‘queer,’ ‘sexual minorities’] may well have been used at Revoice 18 in such a way in which they were inconsistent, unwise and confusing to many observers of the conference, thereby contributing to the disturbance of the peace of the church.”

With respect to the teachings addressed by Theological Judgment 3, CIM noted, “The use of terms such as ‘same-sex-attracted’ or ‘gay’ in the way Revoice 18 and many Side B people use them ... indulges in needless and potentially dangerous speculation”; “If one takes these terms the way that Revoice and many Side B people take them ... then the allegation is true that Revoice has committed at least an error of imprudence by indulging in needless and potentially dangerous speculation, and it remains to be seen whether this error will be used in such a way as to strike at the vitals of religion”; “Revoice leaders and speakers do use terms that historically were

synonymous with ‘homoerotic desire’ in a way that expands them to include morally good features that are claimed to be underneath or behind the illicit sexual desires. These terms include ‘homosexual,’ ‘same sex attraction,’ ‘gay,’ and ‘homosexual attraction.’ This leads them to say that not everything about ‘being gay’ or ‘same-sex-attracted’ has to do with sinful sexual desires”; “[the danger is that] this speculation [regarding morally benign qualities tied to homoerotic desire] appears to us to be the prospect of this becoming a central plank in the thinking and approach of some of Revoice’s leaders” ; and “We feel constrained to warn against any expansion of the terms ‘same-sex-attraction’ and ‘being gay’ with its creation of a category of ‘gayness,’ understood as a way of experiencing the world. This seems to us to be a potentially dangerous error of speculation; yet we cannot say with unwavering confidence that we believe it to be an error so serious and obviously destructive of good morals and sound doctrine that we judge it to be an error which ‘strikes at the vitals of religion’ in the areas of doctrine and morals. We do believe it to be at least a lesser error of indulging in necessary and potentially dangerous speculation, something we are warned against as believers (see 1 Timothy 1:3-4).”

With respect to the teachings addressed by Theological Judgment 5, CIM noted, “we concluded that entertaining celibate partnerships was unwise – at least *to whatever degree* they were being given *serious* consideration. CIM regarded this as an error of judgment and not of doctrine...” (emphasis in original); “[I]t is ... our judgment that, to the extent that Revoice event entertains the possibility of ‘celibate partnerships’ ... it has erred in offering unwise, unedifying relational arrangements to SSA Christians (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12)”; and “[W]e ... believe that [Revoice] are open to the danger of a preoccupation with technical boundaries on physical limits in friendships to the neglect of the deeper inner dynamic involved in SSA romantic coupling, and the way it mimics the longing and the personal pull toward the other person that draws a man and woman together toward an exclusive intimacy that is designed by God to move them toward marriage.”

With respect to the teachings addressed by Theological Judgment 4, MOP concluded, “We concur with CIM and deny that it is always a grave and serious error worthy of repudiation to claim something which can be traced to our sin nature as in any sense a part of our ‘identity,’ of [*sic*] part of ‘who we are,’ as Revoice does with being SSA. While enduring patterns of brokenness and sin remain part of ‘who we are,’ of our ‘identity,’ as children of Adam, nevertheless sinful desires and deeds must be put to death. We concur that the core question is not: ‘Is that which rises from sin part of who you are?’ but rather: “What are you doing with all the broken parts and places of who you

are?” But CIM’s findings with respect to Theological Judgment 4 raised concerns that MOP’s action did not: “[W]e believe that the language of ‘gay Christian’ ... poses a particularly challenging problem for both the Revoice project and its critics. We encourage Revoice and those who would adopt such language to do so with great care, recognizing its potential to cause offense and division within the church.”

Consider next the findings of CRC. The Complaint Review Committee (CRC), which was appointed to hear an earlier (July, 2019) complaint of TE Speck against actions of MOP taken on recommendation of its CIM, registered particular concerns with Revoice 18. As to same-sex friendships, “The majority on the CRC along with the CIM itself ... were very concerned with this way [i.e. the way advocated at Revoice 18] of applying the truths that are in this passage [i.e., 1 Sam 18:3, Ruth 1:16-17] and concluded that applying texts in this manner was a significant hermeneutical error that needed to be clearly corrected and warned against by the MOP and MPC.” As to a particular speaker’s specific statement with respect to gay orientation – “Without wishing to disparage the speaker whatsoever (who herself acknowledged that she was engaging intentionally in speculation) the CRC nonetheless must conclude that, in this confined moment, speculations were put forward that caused damage to the peace and purity of the church and possibly to the souls of her members.” As to so-called gay culture, “The CRC concurs with complainant’s concerns, based primarily on the language of WCF 20-1 and its supporting proof texts, that [a Revoice speaker] went too far in suggesting that believers in Christ should closely identify with and willfully associate themselves with even the so-called ‘non-homoerotic’ aspects of LGBTQ/Queer Culture and in so doing did indeed make assertions that ‘struck at the vitals of religion.’” As to use of language, “We ... believe that some of the terms being used are so provocative and so widely misunderstood that believers ought to be extraordinarily careful in their use and perhaps even refrain from using them at all, especially when speaking in public venues.”

CRC no less registered broad concern with the way in which Revoice 18 had disrupted the church. In its October, 2019 report to Presbytery, CRC acknowledged that “the peace of the church ... had been highly disturbed by some aspects of what was said at the *Revoice 18* conference”; [W]e judge that some of the matters of controversy at *Revoice 18* were of ... a variety of error (whether they be errors “arising from the weakness of human understanding” or “striking at the vitals”), ... widely misunderstood by the wider church and

... damaging to the peace of the church;⁵⁶ “there was such grave confusion in the church about what some of the speakers at *Revoice* 18 meant by what they were saying that it became incumbent on the MOP to be more clear about its own views in those areas where the confusion was greatest.”

The failure of MOP to deal properly with the issues raised in the Complaint is magnified by two additional points. First, the concerning teachings did not occur in isolation. In other words, it was not a situation where one individual made a concerning statement on one day in one area of the Presbytery, while another individual offered a different concerning statement on a separate issue on another day in another part of the Presbytery, while a third individual made a concerning statement on yet another issue in yet another part of the Presbytery. All of the statements cited in the Complaint and in the various reports of MOP committees and commissions were made at the same Conference dealing with the same general topic. Thus, it is most reasonable to judge the level of error and level of potential harm by considering the cumulative impact of the errors and concerns across the whole of the Conference. In disposing of the allegations by dealing with each one as a separate entity and stating, in essence, that if there was an error in the specific area it was only minor, MOP apparently missed the fact that the cumulative impact of those errors could and did add up to a major concern.

Second, while MOP did take action to try to make sure that the Congregation of Memorial Presbyterian Church was alerted to possible errors and that steps were taken to mitigate the possible harm to the peace and purity of that Congregation as a result of those errors, it is not evident that MOP dealt appropriately with its responsibility to take similar steps with regard to the broader Church. Certainly, the question of the breadth of impact of erroneous teachings at *Revoice* 18 was raised with the Presbytery. Significantly, the chair of CIM declared to MOP in January, 2019 “his sorrow over his own passivity in failing to ask Presbytery ... to get involved in the *Revoice* controversy, especially after it was over, when our brothers at Memorial could have benefitted from our counsel, encouragement, and inquiry, and when it ought to have been clear to him that the controversy was proving to be so divisive and widespread that it virtually constrained Presbytery’s involvement.” Similarly, the communications from various individuals and courts throughout the Denomination gave indication that the peace and purity of the broader church were being impacted. Yet, while MOP was, commendably,

⁵⁶ The CRC makes this statement of its comment that MOP was hasty in its action in May, 2019. MOP, in October, 2019 “rescinded” its May, 2019 action and called a December, 2019 meeting to “reconsider the nine judgments of the CIM.”

willing to interact with those communications, there is no evidence that Presbytery clearly stated to the broader church that it recognized the errors that were taught at Revoice 18 and the impact of those teachings. Further, it is not clear that Presbytery sought to do what it could to mitigate the impact of those erroneous teachings on the peace and purity of the Church. We recognize that this lack of response by MOP may well have come about because of their use of the incorrect criteria as discussed above, but that does not change the fact that MOP did not do what it needed to do to protect the peace and purity of the broader Church, particularly in light of the responsibilities set forth in *BCO* 11-3, 4.⁵⁷

The Record shows, therefore, that more than one committee of Presbytery acknowledged multiple teachings at Revoice 18 to have been erroneous in themselves and disruptive to the peace of the Church. Similar concerns were registered about the conference as a whole. MOP adopted language that, if anything, was milder and weaker than statements (cited above) appearing in its committees' reports to Presbytery. But even so, Presbytery adopted language that, according to the Constitutional criteria set forth in *BCO* 11-3, 4 and 13-9(f), required it to take action that it neglected to take.

B. Issue 2 –Did Missouri Presbytery err when it acted to deny a point of order regarding its December 7, 2019, meeting?

Complainant argues that MOP violated its own standing rules when its Stated Clerk circulated materials prepared by MOP's Administrative Committee in advance of the December 7, 2019, meeting. According to Complainant, MOP's Standing Rule 8.3.C. limits the Administrative Committee to a purely administrative role; it is "specifically forbidden to institute new work." Complainant argues that the portion of the materials circulated comprised of what the Stated Clerk described in his email to the members of Presbytery as

⁵⁷ *BCO* 11-3, "When ... according to Scriptural example, and needful to the purity and harmony of the whole Church, disputed matters of doctrine and order arising in the lower courts are referred to the higher courts for decision..." *BCO* 11-4, "Every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline seriously and reasonably proposed, and in general to maintain truth and righteousness, condemning erroneous opinions and practices, which tend to the injury of the peace, purity, or progress of the Church These courts are not separate and independent tribunals, but they have a mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole Church performed by it through the appropriate organ."

“briefs on the nine theological questions we will be considering” constituted impermissible “new work.” Complainant also objects to the characterization of the briefs by the Stated Clerk as having been prepared by “[t]he CIM in conjunction with the Administrative Committee” because the CIM had been dismissed with thanks by MOP some six months earlier. Complainant finds the latter matter particularly irksome because Complainant was himself a member of the CIM, and he was not invited to participate in the preparation of the briefs. Finally, to add insult to injury, “select CIM members were allowed the last 5 minutes of each debate time in order to speak for approval of each of the 9 Judgments.” Complainant raised a point of order concerning these matters at the beginning of the December 6, 2019, meeting, but the Moderator ruled it not well taken, and his ruling survived a challenge by vote of the Presbytery.

Since the facts are not disputed, the question of whether MOP’s actions violated its Standing Rules is a pure question of law, but unlike the other questions of law in this case, it is not a question to be decided under the PCA’s Constitution. It is, instead, a question to be decided under MOP’s Standing Rules, and the leading authority on that subject, MOP, has already ruled. It is not the place of the SJC to instruct MOP on what its own Standing Rules mean. In any case, by voting to uphold the Moderator’s ruling, MOP set aside any violation of its Standing Rules by effectively modifying them for purposes of the materials circulated by the Moderator. We will not disturb that decision.

It is possible, of course, that MOP’s actions also violated the *BCO*, and we do have the authority and responsibility to interpret and apply the *BCO* without deferring to MOP’s interpretation. The *BCO* contains no “new work” prohibition for administrative committees generally, so that part of Complainant’s argument fails to advance. But the *BCO* does contain clear rules for the appointment and dismissal of committees. To that extent, the Stated Clerk’s email was in error; the briefs were not prepared by the CIM at all, as the CIM no longer existed. However, they were evidently prepared by men who had been members of the CIM and who had evidently voted in the majority on the CIM concerning the CIM’s report. Had the Stated Clerk’s email described the briefs as being prepared by “men who were members of the CIM in conjunction with the [Administrative Committee],” Complainant would have had no basis to object regarding the CIM reference. It strains credulity, however, to believe that presbyters’ votes on the 9 Theological Judgments were swayed by the mistaken impression that the full CIM had participated in the preparation of the briefs rather than some of its members who supported the CIM’s report, particularly since Complainant brought the

inaccuracy of the Stated Clerk's email to the attention of the Presbytery at the beginning of the meeting. We conclude that the Stated Clerk's error was harmless error as to the outcome of the vote, although understandably it was not harmless to the feelings of the Complainant. It appears to be an error of the type for which a personal apology would be appropriate, and which should be accepted absent evidence of malice on the part of the Stated Clerk, which Complainant has not alleged. Finally, there is the issue of permitting former members of the CIM to have the last 5 minutes in debate. Presbyteries are free to structure debate on matters of this nature as they see fit within the governing rules, and we see nothing in the rules to prohibit this process as adopted by MOP.

C. Issue 3 –Did Missouri Presbytery erred when it acted to decline a proposal for debate at its December 7, 2019, meeting?

Complainant objects that MOP, at its October 15, 2019, meeting, voted down his proposal to consider at the December 7, 2019, called meeting the question of statements at Revoice 18 concerning the adoption of children by gay couples. He notes that the Complaint Review Committee that considered his July 8, 2019 Complaint (not the complaint at issue in this case, but the prior complaint) stated in its report that it agreed with Complainant “that the MOP owes a clearer statement to the church in relation to its views on non-traditional adoptions and especially adoptions by actively homosexual ‘married’ couples.” (quoting report of MOP's Complaint Review Committee). He also emphasizes the comments of one invited guest at a Revoice 18 workshop who stated that she was “thrilled” to see gay couples adopting children. However, as detailed in the Complaint, the CIM apparently spoke with the leader of the workshop in question, who said that “the comment was made in the context of talking about whether it was better to leave unadopted children in the state foster care system until they ‘age out’ of it, or be in favor [of] allowing gay couples to adopt them.” (quoting CIM report). The CIM report went on to state that “[W]hile we can understand how someone might take a comment like that to be a general endorsement of gay couples adopting children, we consider it unwarranted to construe an off-hand remark, made in the context of that very particular conversation – and by only a guest of the speaker – as an endorsement made by the workshop and thus by Revoice.”

We are sympathetic to Complainant's desire for his Presbytery to consider an important issue raised by a comment made by a guest at a Revoice 18 workshop. However, that is insufficient reason for us to order a presbytery to take up a question of this nature. If Complainant had shown that adoption was a central issue of Revoice 18, or even that multiple speakers had spoken in

favor of it, we would want to know why MOP did not include that issue in its 9 Theological Judgments. But that is not the case. One comment by one guest of a speaker at a conference, taken out of context, is not enough to require a theological determination by a presbytery.

D. Amends

This matter is remanded to MOP Presbytery with instructions that it “hold a new hearing” (*BCO* 43-10) which need focus only on the following matters: “What steps must MOP take to make clear to the broader Church the errors that were identified in Presbytery’s various investigations with regard to some of the teachings at Revoice 18, particularly with regard to Theological Judgments 2, 3, and 5, and what steps must MOP take to fulfill its responsibilities to protect the peace and purity of the broader Church under *BCO* 11-3, 11-4 and 13-9(f) in light of those errors?”

In its new review, we encourage Presbytery to consider interacting with the May 2020 Report of the General Assembly’s Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality and how specific statements of some speakers at Revoice 18 may have differed from the propositions in that Report. We understand the AIC Report had only been published for two months when Presbytery declined to sustain this Complaint, and we recognize the Report does not have Constitutional status.

The Statement of the three Issues, the Judgments on Issues 2 and 3, and the Reasoning for Judgments 2 and 3, are largely as they were proposed by the Panel, as drafted by RE John Pickering, and amended and approved by the Panel. Judgment 1, the Reasoning for Judgment 1, and the Amends are largely as they were proposed as a substitute by TE Guy Waters and RE Frederick Neikirk.

The SJC adopted amendments to several parts and adopted the final decision on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Dissent</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Chapell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Dissent</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Concur</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>
(22-2-0)		

**CONCURRING OPINION
of RE Howie Donahoe**

I write to explain the extent of my concurrence, with reasons, and my understanding of the Decision. Note, however, a Concurring Opinion is not, by any means, an authoritative interpretation of any Decision.

1. The Panel’s Proposed Decision - When a case comes to the SJC, a three-judge panel is randomly drawn to conduct the hearing and draft a proposed decision. In our present Case, I regarded the reasoning in the Panel’s proposed decision to be some of the finest writing and clearest argumentation I’ve read in my 23 years on the court. I hope some of that reasoning will appear in a dissenting opinion. I agreed with the Panel’s proposed judgments on each of Presbytery’s six Theological Judgments (“TJs”), and for the reasons provided by the Panel.

The Panel addressed the allegations of error as specifically stated and characterized in the Complaint. That was a fair and reasonable approach. The final SJC Decision, however, dug deeper to address underlying criteria, which wasn’t necessarily required to adjudicate the Complaint, but it wasn’t Constitutionally prohibited either. I simply agreed it was reasonable for the SJC to remand for Presbytery to consider whether the errors already identified by its several committees (CIM, CRC1, CRC2) “[tended] to the injury of the peace, purity, or progress of the Church” (the “TIPPPC” criteria, *BCO* 11-4). Such errors might not have been identified as such because Presbytery ultimately applied the narrower “strikes at the vitals of religion” criteria when adopting the six TJs (the “SVR” criteria, *BCO* 34-5). This scenario might be akin to hiring a home inspector to assess all the major systems (plumbing, HVAC, electrical, foundation), and though he judged all those were working properly, he didn’t comment on some of the leaks in the roof even though he noticed them.

2. SJC Standards of Review - I was not initially supportive of the judgment offered as a substitute for the Panel’s proposed judgment on Issue 1, because I thought it raised an issue not raised by the parties, which is something ordinarily restrained by *BCO* 39-3.1 (below). Subsequently, however, I came to a different view.

BCO 39-3 ... To insure that this Constitution is not amended, violated or disregarded in judicial process, any review of the

judicial proceedings of a lower court by a higher court *shall* be guided by the following principles:

1. A higher court, reviewing a lower court, *should* limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court. ... (Emphasis added.)

Some might contend the review limitation of *BCO* 39-3.1 allows no exceptions. But the *BCO* ordinarily recognizes an important distinction between “should” and “shall.” In the *BCO* excerpt above, those different words are used in adjoining sentences and it’s hard to imagine that textual choice was accidental. The review principles in *BCO* 39-3, sections 1-4, are meant to ensure our Constitution is “not amended, violated, or disregarded in judicial process.” It follows that an overly-strict adherence to only matters raised by the parties could create the very damage *BCO* 39-3 is designed to prevent.

More importantly, and directly related to this present Case, the question about proper Constitutional criteria is not a new or separate *issue*, per se, but simply a *reason* for the SJC finding a procedural defect in reaching the six TJs. Addressing an unraised-but-critical procedural matter is different than raising a new issue.⁵⁸

While the following is not a perfect illustration, it might help. Let’s say a church member is convicted at trial by his Session, and he appeals to Presbytery. In adjudicating the appeal, the Presbytery declines to “hold a hearing” and denies the appeal based on the Record sent up by the Session, which failed to include the trial transcript (contra *BCO* 42-8 and 34-7). The SJC might be hesitant to overrule the Session and Presbytery on the merits of the conviction but sustain the appeal nonetheless and remand for a new hearing based on Presbytery’s significant Constitutional and procedural mistakes - regardless of whether the appellant raised the questions in his appeal carried to the SJC.

Another example that might pertain occurred 18 years ago in Case 2001-32. A session denied “John Doe’s” complaint, he carried it to the Presbytery, and it sustained his complaint on the merits. The Session then carried a complaint to the SJC against Presbytery’s decision. But the SJC declared the matter judicially out-of-order on the procedural grounds that Doe had filed his

⁵⁸ It’s also worth noting the Complainant himself used the SVR criterion in his Complaint and in his Brief, and repeatedly asked the SJC to declare that certain teachings at R18 “struck at the vitals of religion.”

complaint with the Session *one day* after the filing deadline in *BCO* 43-1. Nobody had ever raised the *BCO* 43-1 matter, but the SJC apparently did not interpret *BCO* 39-3.1 as prohibiting it from reaching to that Constitutional breach as its reason to rule it out-of-order. And even though the SJC’s ruling was procedural, it essentially annulled Presbytery’s judgment and rejected Doe’s original complaint against the Session, despite the Session adjudicating it, and Presbytery sustaining it. (The SJC ruling came 24 months after Doe filed his original complaint with the Session.)⁵⁹

More recently, at the SJC’s March 2022 meeting where our present Case was decided, the SJC ruled a complaint judicially out-of-order because the record showed the complainant did not have standing, and this was *after* his Presbytery had adjudicated his complaint without raising the Constitutional irregularity. (Case 2021-07 *RE Acree v. TN Valley*). With reference to *BCO* 39-3.1, I understand the present Decision to be akin to the examples above.

3. “Revoice 18” - Both the Complaint and Presbytery’s six TJs used phrases like “the teaching of Revoice 18” or “Revoice 18’s use of” This could lead some to think Presbytery was evaluating *an organization* rather than allegations about teachings of individuals at a conference sponsored by that organization. Some statements in the Complaint and in Presbytery’s TJs seem to speak as if R18 was a document or an entity, rather than a collection of different speakers. The SJC Decision is more careful by providing this footnote on page 7: “In several places in this Reasoning, for the sake of brevity, we use the phrases, ‘the teachings of Revoice 18’ or ‘the teachings of Revoice.’ By those phrases we mean the teaching of *some* of the speakers at the Revoice 18 Conference.” (Emphasis added.) It’s reasonable to assume that some things said by speakers at R18 might not have been officially-adopted statements or positions of what was then a relatively new organization, and that the organization’s board may have subsequently adopted official statements or positions on some of these matters. I understand the Complaint only references teachings at the July 2018 conference, but the broader church (and the TIPPPC criteria) might warrant Presbytery also interacting with any subsequent official statements of the organization. And it would seem any

⁵⁹ *Session of Christ Covenant v. Central Carolina*, M31GA, p. 107. This was decided five years *after* the 25th GA added *BCO* 39-3 standards of review at the Colorado Springs GA in 1997. While the Ad Interim Committee on Judicial Procedures (which proposed *BCO* 39-3 in a multi-recommendation, single package to the Ft. Lauderdale GA in 1996) might have intended the new standards of review section to preclude what the SJC did in our present Case, the members of the SJC five years later did not interpret *BCO* 39-3.1 that way. (M24GA, p. 97; M25GA, p. 116; M31GA, p. 107)

official statements in place today might be more pertinent to the broader church than any teachings from July 2018 that might be judged as TIPPPC.

It's also important to realize the SJC judges were not required to review any of the seminar videos from R18. We have no jurisdictional responsibilities for that conference, and more importantly, none of them were in the Record of the Case, nor was the SJC required or asked to take judicial notice of them. SJC Vow 4 requires us to affirm the following: "I will judge according to the Constitution of the PCA, through my best efforts applied to nothing other than the record of the case and other documents properly before me."

4. Amends - I don't interpret this Decision to say Presbytery must conduct a new investigation to apply the TIPPPC criteria (just like the home inspector doesn't need to return to the house.) Presbytery can simply review and express some or all the critiques previously offered by its various committees, assuming it deems them valid and if they reasonably trigger concern under the TIPPPC criteria. While the Decision doesn't also suggest the following, it might help if Presbytery cited parts of its own 49 "Affirmations and Denials on Sexuality," which was in the Record of this Case. For the members of the Memorial Presbyterian Church and the members of the PCA, what this Presbytery believes and teaches is probably more clearly and accurately reflected in Presbytery-adopted statements like the A&Ds rather than in any critique of some person's teaching at a conference four years ago.⁶⁰

The Amends also instruct Presbytery to "[take] steps ... to fulfill its responsibilities to protect the peace and purity of the broader Church ... in light of those [TIPPPC] errors" previously identified by MOP Committees. While the SJC was not obligated to define those "steps," it could have. And it's quite possible different SJC judges might have different things in mind. To be frank, it's sometimes easier for judges to reach agreement on language when the language seems to have some flexibility. Ultimately, however, whether Presbytery's response results in greater peace in the broader church is not solely its responsibility. Maintaining peace is a two-way street (or, better yet, an eight-lane highway).

This Concurring Opinion was written by RE Howie Donahoe and joined by TE Ray Cannata.

⁶⁰ It's worth noting the 47th GA's AIC Report was published four months *after* TE Speck's January 2020 Complaint was filed with Presbytery, and the Presbytery adopted the 49 A&D's five months *after* that same January filing. https://drive.google.com/file/d/197ZR63Fg_TCwOswHjjz7II2JaF1O7mjl/view

DISSENTING OPINION
Of RE John D. Pickering,

I dissent in the Judgment as to Issue 1 and concur in the Judgments as to Issues 2 and 3.

The Court holds that MOP applied the wrong standard in its search for erroneous teaching at Revoice 18, pointing to MOP's emphasis on "[h]eresy and schism...that strike at the vitals of religion and are industriously spread" as set forth in *BCO* 34-5. Court Opinion at 7, lines 12-13. Instead, MOP should have applied the standards in *BCO* 11-3,4 and *BCO* 13-9(f), which permits courts to resolve questions of doctrine, maintain truth and righteousness, and condemn erroneous opinions and practices which impinge on the purity and peace of the church. Because it "unnecessarily restrained itself by the incorrect criteria for review that it opted to follow," it "did not take adequate action with respect to the errors that it had identified." Court Opinion at 8, lines 34-36. In other words, MOP was hunting for the trophies of heresy and schism while passing over the lesser game of erroneous opinions.⁶¹ Significantly, though, the Court does not hold that the erroneous opinions voiced at Revoice 18 rise to the level of heresy and schism that strike at the vitals of religion. If the Court held that view, it would have been unnecessary to comment on the standard of review employed by MOP in order to justify the Court's decision. There simply were no trophies to be had on this hunt.

In any case, I am unconvinced by the Court's "cumulative impact" approach. The Court's view is that "disposing of the allegations by dealing with each one as a separate entity" misses the fact that the "cumulative impact of those errors could and did add up to a major concern." Court Opinion at 11, lines 8-11. Or, as the saying goes, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." But in some cases, taken literally, that could mean that $2 + 2 = 5$. I believe the Court has arrived at the wrong answer to the equation, at least with respect to MOP Theological Judgments 1, 3, and 9.

⁶¹ While I agree with the Court's analysis of the correct standard of review to be applied by presbyteries in cases of this nature, I note that the Complainant neither raised this issue in his Complaint nor at oral argument. TE Coffin's dissent, in which I join, explains the significance of this fact.

Standard of Review for This Court

Regardless of the standard of review MOP should have used, this Court is obliged to consider the factual issues in this case under the standards of review set forth in *BCO 39-3*, which call for “great deference to a lower court regarding those factual matters which the lower court is more competent to determine, because of its proximity to the events in question, and because of its personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses involved.” This Court is not permitted to reverse a lower court’s factual findings “unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.” Thus, with respect to facts determined by the lower court and reflected in the Record of the Case, clear error is our standard of review.

On the other hand, we are not required to defer to the lower court “when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church.” With respect to such issues, we are to interpret and apply the Constitution according to our “best abilities and understanding, regardless of the opinion of the lower court.” This standard applies to questions of law, as opposed to questions of fact.

We face pure questions of fact on some issues and pure questions of law in the remaining issues. For example, some of CIM’s theological judgments include *factual findings* about what was actually taught at Revoice 18, and some contain *determinations of law* as to whether what was taught violates our Constitution. We must defer, absent clear error, to the lower court as to the factual findings about what was actually taught, which is decisive for some issues, but we are not required to defer to the lower court as to the constitutional application of those facts where such application is at issue. If, for example, MOP determined that a speaker at Revoice 18 taught that the world is flat, we would have to defer to that finding of fact regarding what was taught unless the Record of the Case contained clear and direct evidence that the speaker taught otherwise. But if MOP also determined that flat-earth teaching is consistent with our Constitution, we would be free to apply our own abilities and understanding to determining whether that is the case. I greatly regret that the Court did not examine each specification of error concerning our appropriate standard of review, as I believe it would have provided a more credible path to the Court’s result, a result with which I might have been able to concur as to MOP Theological Judgments 2, 4 and 5.

Analysis of the Complainant’s Six Specifications of Error Concerning the Theological Judgments of MOP

1. At its December 7, 2019, Called Meeting, did MOP err in approving six theological judgments (specifically, judgments #1-5 and #9) of CIM (the Committee to Investigate Memorial)?

A. MOP Theological Judgment 1 (“Origins of Homoerotic Desire”)

This specification involves a pure question of fact. Complainant objects to MOP’s adoption of the judgment that “the evidence does not demonstrate the allegation that Revoice 18 grounded homoerotic desire and actions in Creation rather than in the Fall.” The only question at issue is where Revoice 18 grounded homoerotic desire and actions. If MOP were to argue that it is permissible under our Constitution to ground homoerotic desire in Creation, we would have a question of law to decide, but that is not the case. Thus, absent clear error on MOP’s part established in the Record of the Case, this Court should defer to MOP’s decision on this specification.

Complainant admits in his Complaint that “Revoice 18 speakers and writers say plainly that homoerotic desires do not arise from creation but from the Fall” (Complaint at 2) and that such speakers “clearly said (that it believes homoerotic desire is sinful and grounded only in the Fall).” (Complaint at 3). His argument is that the Revoice 18 speakers’ other teachings are inconsistent with this theological position. In terms of our flat-earth analogy, having admitted that the world is round, the speakers go on to assert the inconsistent proposition that, if one sails too far, one will fall over the world’s edge. Complainant raises valid questions about some of the arguments voiced at Revoice 18, but, in my view, none sufficient to demonstrate clear error on the part of MOP, especially since most, if not all, of Complainant’s arguments were reasonably addressed in the CRC Report at pages 7-9.

B. MOP Theological Judgment 2 (“Terminology”)

This specification argues against the judgment that “terms like ‘gay,’ ‘sexual orientation,’ ‘queer,’ ‘sexual minorities,’ etc., are not always or necessarily unbiblical; and therefore that Revoice 18’s use of the terminology in question, though confusing to some and potentially unwise, was not a grave and serious doctrinal error.” There is no dispute over whether terms such as those listed were used at Revoice 18; the only issue here is whether the use of such terms is “always or necessarily unbiblical” when used as they were used at Revoice

18. That is a question of law under our Constitution; hence, no deference to the lower court is required.

Complainant does not object in principle to the use of these terms by Christians in all contexts, or as descriptors of specific sins or temptations to sin. His argument is more specific. He stated in his Complaint that the use of these terms at Revoice 18 necessarily carried with it “the underlying assumption of some sort of intrinsic goodness inherent in the gay orientation. . . . [T]his language of ‘gay Christian’ necessarily implies a proper and good quality of ‘gayness’ that could endure into Heaven itself.” To the extent that Complainant’s argument is that speakers at Revoice 18 really meant more than they said on the surface, it is an argument about facts and an area in which this Court should defer to the lower court absent clear error in the Record of the Case. But, as noted above, this issue is best classified as a question of law – does the use of the terms in question, in the context in which they were used, violate our Constitution? I would find that it does not, at least in the context in which the terms were used in this case.

The problem is one of definition of terms. As the CRC Report explains, the meaning of the term “gay” and other like terms when associated with “Christian” differs from speaker to speaker. CRC Report at 12; *see also* Appendix 2 to CRC Report. That meaning may even be shifting in the English language. It seems apparent from the Record that different speakers at Revoice 18 may have intended different meanings in the use of these terms. Complainant disagrees, arguing that that “[t]he Church has a right to understand ‘gay’ and ‘LGBT’ and ‘sexual minority,’ etc., as referring to a group of people who identify as such and live out this lifestyle” (emphasis added). But Complainant cites no authority for the Church’s alleged right to define these terms for the people using them.

This specification of error is really a conflation of issues raised in other specifications of error. For example, the only specific instance cited in Complainant’s brief of a speaker at Revoice 18 advancing a view that clearly carries with it a problematic meaning for “gay” is the same instance used to support Specification of Error 1.C. (The Gay Beneath the Gay). *See* Complaint’s Brief at 3; *see also* subsection C. below. I believe that issue is more properly dealt with in 1.C., which addresses it directly. His other examples are from written works by Revoice 18 speakers, but they are not from statements made at the conference. Those examples may inform worrisome statements by those authors made at the conference, but Complainant does not cite any such statements. But, setting all this aside and

assuming for purposes of argument that some speakers at Revoice 18 used terms like “gay” in a manner that violated our Constitution, it is not clear why that is a problem. Surely the peace and purity of the church can withstand civil discussion of a timely theological issue at a conference convened in part for that purpose?

And yet, caution is certainly in order. The CRC Report expressed reservations about the insufficiency of the wording of the judgment in its lack of caution concerning the careful use of “gay” and like terms, and MOP followed the CRC Report’s recommendation in adopting four general principles along with the judgment to be utilized within the Presbytery when discussing these issues. As expressed in the Report:

1. Go overboard in defining your terms AND your beliefs about homosexual desires.
2. Seek to employ the least controversial terms in the widest public settings.
3. In general settings, such as a worship service, it may be best to refrain from using terminology that requires multiple layers of complex distinctions.
4. Employ the full orbbed principles of the weaker brother.

Minutes of the Stated Meeting of MOP (July 21, 2020), at 7. I commend these principles along with this statement quoted in the CRC Report from the PCA’s *Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality*:

Nevertheless, we recognize that some Christians may use the term “gay” in an effort to be more readily understood by non-Christians. The word “gay” is common in our culture, and we do not think it wise for churches to police every use of the term. Our burden is that we do not justify our sin struggles by affixing them to our identity as Christians. Churches should be gentle, patient, and intentional with believers who call themselves “gay Christians,” encouraging them, as part of the process of sanctification, to leave behind identification language rooted in sinful desires, to live chaste lives, to refrain from entering into temptation, and to mortify their sinful desires.

(Report of the PCA’s *Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality*, page 10, lines 12-19, as quoted in CRC Report at 12.)

Finally, implicit in this specification of error is the concept that Memorial endorsed all the views taught or offered at Revoice 18, an argument made explicit in Specification of Error 1.F. concerning the statements of a Roman Catholic speaker at the conference. If Revoice 18 speakers had used terms like “gay” in a manner that would violate our Constitution, Memorial’s primary error would appear to be failing to warn its congregation that not all speakers at the conference should be presumed to be reliable teachers of sound doctrine, not necessarily in permitting the speakers to participate in the conference.

Although it is admittedly a close question, for the reasons explained above, I would hold that Complainant has failed to demonstrate that the use of the terms in question at Revoice 18 violates our Constitution.

C. MOP Theological Judgment 3 (“The Gay Beneath the Gay”)

This specification takes issue with MOP’s judgment that “the evidence was such that this question as to whether a ‘gay beneath the gay’ exists could not have been judged to be a key teaching of Revoice, but continues to have the potential for becoming a grave and serious error if it begins to play a more central role, and thus we exhort those involved with Revoice to consider our position on this matter.” Like the first specification, this one involves a pure question of fact – is there sufficient evidence in the Record of the Case to support MOP’s judgment that the existence of a “gay beneath the gay” was not a key teaching of Revoice 18? I would find that such evidence exists. As explained in the CRC Report, only one Revoice 18 speaker could be found to broach this subject directly, and even she may not be an advocate of the view. CRC Report at 16-17. Complainant believes this view underlies much of what was taught at Revoice 18, but MOP concluded otherwise, and Complainant has failed to show that MOP committed clear error in doing so. Thus, I would defer to MOP’s conclusions on this issue.⁶²

D. MOP Theological Judgment 4 (“Gay Identity”)

⁶² This specification of error is in some sense the opposite side of the coin that is specification of error 1.A. If same-sex attraction were grounded in Creation and not the Fall (a view inconsistent with our Constitution), then presumably the positive attributes associated with it could be celebrated as the “gayness beneath the gay.” In that sense, specifications 1.A. and 1.D. are the same. Said differently, a theory of the “gay beneath the gay” would likely violate our standards because same-sex attraction is grounded in the Fall, not in Creation. But Missouri found that a positive creational view of “gay beneath the gay” was not taught at Revoice 18, and I do not see sufficient factual evidence in the Record of the Case to reverse that factual finding.

This specification argues against MOP's judgment that it is not a grave and serious error "to claim something which can be traced to our sin nature as *in any sense* a part of our 'identity,' of [*sic*] part of 'who we are,' as Revoice does with being [same-sex attracted]." The judgment also included the following statement of application: "[T]he core question is not: 'Is that which rises from sin part of who you are?' but rather: 'What are you *doing* with all the broken parts and places of who you are?'" Like the second specification, this one raises a constitutional question, not a factual question. There is no real dispute over whether some Revoice 18 speakers and teachers used terms like "gay" as an identity marker.

Not surprisingly, nothing in our Constitution prohibits a Christian, in any circumstance, from making known that he or she is persistently tempted by a particular sin. Complainant's argument, of course, goes deeper, and says that use of terms like "gay" in connection with one's identity "describ[es] or modif[ies] his Christian identity." Complaint at 7. The core of the argument is that the label being used describes not only the particular Christian, but Christianity's moral doctrine concerning same-sex attraction. "I am gay, and I am a Christian," or its equivalent, according to the argument, always and necessarily becomes an affirmation of same-sex attraction (as opposed to same-sex sexual activity) as a morally neutral characteristic of some people. Complainant's comparisons to a physical handicap like blindness illustrate this point; Complainant (reasonably) objects to comparing same-sex attraction to a morally neutral condition like blindness *because* same-sex attraction is not morally neutral. I agree with Complainant on this point; same-sex attraction and blindness are not morally equivalent. However, although it is a close question on which there is room for disagreement, I do not agree that the Record of the Case supports the conclusion that the use of terms like "gay" as an identifier at Revoice 18 necessarily implies that the conference speakers and teachers hold or endorse a morally neutral view of same-sex attraction.⁶³

As with Specification of Error I.B. (Terminology), it appears that, if and to the extent that any speakers at Revoice 18 did teach a morally neutral view of same-sex attraction, Memorial's error was one of failing to caution its congregation about the likelihood of heterodox views being taught at the

⁶³ It is possible that I would reach a different conclusion on this issue if I listened to all the presentations made at Revoice 18, which I have not done. As RE Donahoe's concurring opinion points out, under our rules, the Court's decisions are to be made solely on the bases of what is contained in the Record of the Case, and neither recordings nor transcripts of the Revoice 18 presentations were contained within the record, although excerpts were quoted.

conference, not necessarily the sponsorship of the conference. But, as with I.B., I would not reach that issue, because I do not agree that it violates our Constitution “to claim something which can be traced to our sin nature as *in any sense* a part of our ‘identity,’ of [*sic*] part of ‘who we are,’” at least not as those concepts were expressed at Revoice 18 as reflected in the Record of the Case.

E. MOP Theological Judgment 5 (“Spiritual Friendship”)

This specification contends that MOP erred in concluding that Revoice 18 did not teach “that ‘quasi-romantic’ kinds of relationships are legitimate before God as long as explicitly sexual lines are not crossed” and in concluding that Revoice 18’s “entertaining publicly the possibility of celibate partnerships (and thereby implicitly commending them, even if unintentionally)” was an error of judgment rather than an error of doctrine. A key statement in this judgment was that “Memorial PC, through its pastor, TE Johnson, adequately warned in his Revoice 18 talk – and does generally, in his pastoral counsel – about the danger of friendships morphing into romances, stressing the importance of boundaries.” Complainant stresses the same dangers as Memorial and TE Johnson – the obvious peril of allowing a close personal relationship, particularly a one-on-one relationship, between two persons who are or may be sexually attracted to one another to become a sexual relationship. He points to Revoice 18 speakers who dwelt on the relationships recorded in the Bible between Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, and Jesus and John as the basis for pledges of friendship between people attracted to the same sex. Complainant’s Brief at 6-7. In Complainant’s words, “This dangerous teaching encouraged lonely men and women to take fire into their bosoms – will they not be burned (Proverbs 6:27)?” Complaint at 8.

The wording of this judgment points toward a reading of it as a factual judgment, not a determination of law, as it focuses on what “Revoice leaders or speakers at Revoice 18 have taught.” However, I see no real dispute over what was said at Revoice 18 on this topic. The real dispute is over whether what was said, which all parties appear to agree was unwise at times and ran the risk of leading people astray, rises to the level of a constitutional violation. Complainant believes that it does, but MOP judged that the statements were errors of judgment, not doctrine. Although it is a close question, I would agree with MOP, primarily because our Constitution plainly does not prohibit close personal relationships between members of the same sex, and it does not contain a carve-out along the lines of “except for gay people.” The wisdom of focusing on the Biblical examples of these relationships at a conference like

Revoice 18, particularly without qualifying cautions, is a very different issue, as Memorial, TE Johnson, MOP, and Complainant all appear to appreciate. But that is not the issue before us. Just because something is a bad idea (or is executed in an unwise manner) does not make it a violation of our Constitution.

F. MOP Theological Judgment 9 (“Roman Catholic Speakers”).

This specification rejects MOP’s judgment that “although Memorial erred in failing to make clear to their congregation our doctrinal differences with Roman Catholicism before and after the Revoice 18 conference, it did not err in allowing Roman Catholics to speak in their church building under the aegis of Revoice, an outside organization” This issue presents a pure constitutional question – may a PCA church allow a Roman Catholic to speak in its church building in a context like the Revoice 18 conference? Complainant provides a description of that context:

When a church hosts a conference, advertises that conference amongst its membership, calls one of the conference speakers to fill its pulpit on the following Lord’s Day, and agrees to have its own senior pastor speaks [sic] at that conference, the host church is commending that conference to its members. This necessarily implies that the speakers at this conference are generally trustworthy and orthodox speakers.

Complaint at 10. I agree with Complainant’s first sentence. It is not credible to argue that Memorial did not commend Revoice 18 to its members. I do not necessarily reject the second sentence, unless the church explains to its members in some reasonable fashion that one or particular speakers, or possibly all of them except for the church’s senior pastor and other named speakers, should not be uncritically considered as generally trustworthy and orthodox. For example, a church might host a conference on serving the needs of the poor and invite speakers with varying backgrounds and perspectives, including unbelievers and Marxists. But a reasonable caution of some kind to the church’s membership would be in order. That is precisely what MOP said in its judgment – “Memorial erred in failing to make clear to their congregants our doctrinal differences with Roman Catholicism before and after the Revoice 18 conference.” I take no position on exactly how such cautions should be communicated, as that will differ according to time and place. But I agree with MOP that Memorial erred in this way.

Complainant does not appear to be arguing (and the Court’s opinion should not be interpreted to hold) that no Roman Catholic may speak in a PCA church

building under any circumstances. His objection is limited to the context of this particular conference. He emphasizes the particular relevance of the Roman Catholic doctrine of concupiscence, the teaching that the appetite for sin, although the effect of sin, is not itself sinful unless consented to and acted upon. At least one Roman Catholic Revoice 18 speaker apparently characterized this view as a “traditional Christian ethic.” Obviously, in light of the other issues already discussed in this opinion, the Roman Catholic doctrine of concupiscence (which is contradicted by our Constitution (*see, e.g.*, WCF 35; WSC 18; James 1:14-15)) could be used to support a morally neutral view of same-sex attraction. I believe this danger illustrates the need MOP identified for the importance of a session making its congregation aware that non-PCA views will likely be presented at a conference being hosted by the church. I do not believe that it compels us to conclude that Memorial violated our Constitution by hosting Revoice 18 or that MOP did so through this judgment.

I am particularly troubled by the Court’s cumulative approach as it attaches to this issue. Were the Court’s opinion to be read too broadly, it could easily be misunderstood to prohibit any Roman Catholic from ever addressing a group of people in a PCA church building on any matter of faith. I do not believe that is at all what the Court intends, but I also believe that, had the Court considered each specification of error individually, it would have answered this one in the negative.

A Note on the Court’s Amends

Although I dissent from the Court’s decision, I am not troubled by the Amends required by the Court, which fall well short of Complainant’s requested prosecution of TE Greg Johnson and Memorial. Complaint at 14. The Amends focus on MOP’s responsibility to “make clear to the broader Church the errors that were identified in Presbytery’s various investigations with regard to some of the teachings at Revoice 18.” All parties appear to agree that there were errors taught at Revoice 18, and additional clarity regarding those errors should benefit us all. I am hopeful that MOP’s efforts in response to the Court’s decision will contribute to the peace and purity of the Church.

This dissenting opinion was written by RE John D. Pickering and joined by joined by TE David F. Coffin, Jr.

**DISSENTING OPINION
of TE David F. Coffin, Jr.**

I dissent from the decision of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) to sustain the above cited Complaint in Issue 1.

The SJC sustained the Complaint in Issue 1, in part, because of the Commission's objection to the significant error made by CIM at the outset of their investigation, an error acquiesced in by Presbytery in their reception of CIM's report.

CIM was assigned to undertake a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of TE Greg Johnson and a *BCO* 40-5 investigation of the Session of Memorial. The standard governing such investigations are clearly set forth in each: *BCO* 31-2, whether the investigation discovers "a strong presumption of guilt" with respect to "reports affecting their Christian character"; *BCO* 40-5, whether the investigation discovers "any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings". However CIM believed that the *BCO* implicitly allowed the Committee to set aside the standards above and put in place a standard of their own invention. That is to say, CIM took a standard treating the censure of deposition at the conclusion of a guilty verdict at trial in *BCO* 34-5, i.e., "errors [that] . . . strike at the vitals of religion and are industriously spread," and made that the standard for their pre-trial investigation of both TE Johnson and the Memorial Session. This was a profound error, and would have led to harmful consequences, had it not been for Missouri's subsequent deliberations in the matter, which largely abandoned the CIM invention in favor of the appropriate *BCO* standards as set forth above.

That being granted, the SJC had no right to sustain the Complaint on an issue never raised by the Complainant. *BCO* 39-3.1. plainly states: "A higher court, reviewing a lower court, should limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court." No party raised the issue of CMI's error, certainly not the Complainant. TE Speck was a member of CMI and participated in its formulation of the erroneous standard. He never raised or recorded an objection, in any of the many hearings before Presbytery or its committees, but rather used the standard in his submissions, arguing that the evidence for the Complaint showed the invented standard had been met. One can see this, for example, in the text of the Complaint filed with Presbytery:

MOP's consideration of the CIM Report's Judgments concluded with MOP re-affirming its positions on such areas

as homosexuality, homosexual identity, and same-sex attraction, namely: “We do not believe that doctrinal positions contrary to the Scriptures and our confessional standards were advanced at Revoice 18. . . .” Complainant contends that MOP erred grievously in vindicating the teachings of Revoice 18, *errors that strike at the vitals of religion and will cause significant harm* to the peace and purity of the Church. [Emphasis added.]

The Record of the Case shows that every party to this case employed the faulty standard multiple times without any hint of doubt as to its legitimacy.

Faced with this reasoning, in the SJC’s debate concerning its decision, an argument was raised to counter it that was apparently persuasive. It was urged that “should,” in the *BCO*, refers to a procedure that is highly recommended and will ordinarily be followed, the exception being only in unusual circumstances. On the other hand, it was alleged, “shall” in the *BCO* refers to a required procedure that must be followed in every circumstance. In light of this alleged interpretive rule, in debate on the substitute in this case, the SJC was plausibly urged that *BCO* 39-3.1 says “should” rather than “shall,” and therefore compliance was only a matter of wisdom, in most cases, but can be set aside at will.

It might be nice if there were such a clear, handy, rule. Unfortunately, that rule is in no place adopted and published in our governing documents, and in many and important instances, the *BCO* does not “recognize” such a rule and uses the word “should” in a well-established grammatical sense, a sense that can only be discovered contextually, not by rule. Woodenly following the above-mentioned rule would lead to disastrous misinterpretations of the Constitution of the PCA.

One must remember that in the English language “should” is a modal verb that is used for a variety of purposes: 1. giving advice, suggestion, or recommendation; 2. predicting the future and talking about expectations; 3. expressing an order, obligation, or instruction (e.g., “All visitors should pay the fee beforehand.”); and 4. advising not to do something. The *BCO* of the PCA regularly uses the word “should” in the third sense. A few important instances will suffice to make the point. A helpful test is to consider, in its context, whether “should” could be modified by “most often” and still preserve the sense of the rule. Emphasis is added throughout.

2-3. “It is according to scriptural example that the Church *should* be divided into many individual churches.”

4-5. “Churches without teaching elders ought not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but *should* be convened by the Session on the Lord's Day. . . .”

5-2.c. “Should it become necessary, the Presbytery may dissolve the mission church. Church members enrolled *should* be cared for according to the procedures of 13-10.”

5-9. “A new church can be organized only by the authority of Presbytery.”

a. A Presbytery *should* establish standing rules setting forth the prerequisites that qualify a mission church to begin the organization process. . . .”

8-2. “He that fills this office *should* possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He *should* exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He *should* rule his own house well and *should* have a good report of them that are outside the Church.”⁶⁴

11-4. “For the orderly and efficient dispatch of ecclesiastical business, it is necessary that the sphere of action of each court *should* be distinctly defined. . . .”

12-1. “if there is only one ruling elder, he does not constitute a Session, but he *should* take spiritual oversight of the church, *should* represent it at Presbytery, *should* grant letters of

⁶⁴ N.B.: The *BCO*, in paraphrasing 1 Tim. 3:2–4, is using “should” for “must”: “2 Therefore an overseer *must* be above reproach, [*must* be] the husband of one wife, [*must* be] sober-minded, [*must* be] self-controlled, [*must* be] respectable, [*must* be] hospitable, [*must* be] able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He *must* manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive. . . . 7 Moreover, he *must* be well thought of by outsiders. . . .” [ESV; emphasis added]. Would our *BCO* be worded to relax the standard of Scripture? Of course not! It is using the word “should” in the perfectly acceptable grammatical sense of expressing an order, obligation, or instruction.

APPENDIX T

dismissal, and *should* report to the Presbytery any matter needing the action of a Church court. . . .”

14-1.11. “Each alternate *should* attend each meeting and fill any vacancy necessary to meet a quorum.”

16-3. “. . . And it is indispensable that, besides possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, every one admitted to an office *should* be sound in the faith, and his life be according to godliness.”

19-7. “. . . The nature of the internship shall be determined by the Presbytery, but it *should* involve the candidate in full scope of the duties of any regular ministerial calling approved by the Presbytery. . . .”

20-2. “Every church *should* be under the pastoral oversight of a minister, and when a church has no pastor it *should* seek to secure one without delay. . . .”

21-4.b. “In all cases, he *should* be asked to indicate whether he has changed his previous views concerning any points in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America. . . .”

24-1. “Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer *should* be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.”

34-3. “If any one knows a minister to be guilty of a private offense, he *should* warn him in private. But if the offense be persisted in, or become public, he *should* bring the case to the attention of some other minister of the Presbytery.”

35-6. “. . . If, however, at any time a witness should present himself before a court, who for conscientious reasons prefers

to swear or affirm in any other manner, he *should* be allowed to do so.”

All this notwithstanding, the crucial instances for this Dissent are found throughout *BCO 39-3*.

39-3. “. . . To insure that this Constitution is not amended, violated or disregarded in judicial process, any review of the judicial proceedings of a lower court by a higher court shall be guided by the following principles:

1. A higher court, reviewing a lower court, *should* limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court. Further, the higher court *should* resolve such issues by applying the Constitution of the church, as previously established through the constitutional process.
2. A higher court *should* ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those factual matters which the lower court is more competent to determine, because of its proximity to the events in question, and because of its personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses involved. Therefore, a higher court *should* not reverse a factual finding of a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.
3. A higher court *should* ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties. Such matters of discretion and judgment would include, but not be limited to: the moral character of candidates for sacred office, the appropriate censure to impose after a disciplinary trial, or judgment about the comparative credibility of conflicting witnesses. Therefore, a higher court *should* not reverse such a judgment by a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.
4. The higher court does have the power and obligation of judicial review, which cannot be satisfied by always deferring to the findings of a lower court. Therefore, a higher court *should* not consider itself obliged to

exhibit the same deference to a lower court when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church. Regarding such issues, the higher court has the duty and authority to interpret and apply the Constitution of the Church according to its best abilities and understanding, regardless of the opinion of the lower court.

To relieve the reader from a proliferation of needless argumentation, I will simply assert, without fear of contradiction, that this Court has, with perfect consistency, interpreted “should” in this provision, to have the sense of “must.” With respect to principles 2 and 3 the Court has repeatedly noted that under these standards the higher court *is required* to defer unless there is a showing of clear error.

However, a close reading of principle 1 is demonstrative: “A higher court, reviewing a lower court, *should* [most often?] limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court. Further, the higher court *should* [most often?] resolve such issues by applying the Constitution of the church, as previously established through the constitutional process.” Clearly such a construction in the *second* part of the principle would lead to a profound failure to grasp our Constitutional order. Just as clearly, the sense of the word does not shift in the two sentences. In each case, contextually, “should” can only be properly construed as “must.”⁶⁵

Thus it is that, for what were doubtless the best of intentions, the SJC violated the *BCO* in its decision to sustain the above cited Complaint in Issue 1. It is hard to overstate the importance of *BCO* 39-3.1. in its requirement that the SJC “limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court.” Before this provision was adopted, it was possible for judges to raise matters unrelated to the issues brought before the court, and thus use the case to advance, not the litigant’s, but their own favored causes. This possibility was a serious threat to the integrity of the SJC as an appellate court. In my

⁶⁵ Of course nothing asserted in this interpretation relieves an appellate court from the responsibility to enforce the obligations of the Rules of Discipline with respect to appellate proceedings and dismissing a case for failure to comply. These are formal *issues* that belong to the prerogatives of the appellate court, that in the nature of the case could not be raised by the parties, as compared to the material *issues* as raised by the parties, that limit the appellate court’s consideration. For the SJC these formal issues are addressed in the Court’s responsibility to consider whether a case is Administratively or Judicially in order.

judgment all members of the court must be vigilant to protect and uphold this principle.

Further, I note that the Complaint, in each of the specifications of Issue 1, is alleging specific doctrinal errors. The Panel's recommended decision asserted that each of those doctrinal errors were not proven from the ROC (with evidence from the Panel proposed in each instance), and thus denied the complaint. A substitute for the Panel's recommendation in Issue 1 sustained the complaint, ostensibly with respect to the doctrinal errors alleged, *but it does not even address the enumerated errors*. Upon the adoption of the substitute sustaining the Complaint, the SJC, without providing evidence, by implication declared that the doctrinal errors alleged *are* proven. In fact, the SJC's reasoning addresses only a number of instances where the presbytery grants that there were problems with Revoice teaching. But this evidence, however certainly available in the Record of the Case, simply does not sustain the Complaint *as set forth in Issue 1*. It does sustain another complaint that might have been, but was not, in fact, before the court.⁶⁶

This dissenting opinion was written by TE David F. Coffin, Jr. and joined by RE John D. Pickering.

CASE NO. 2021-03
COMPLAINT OF RE DONAVON. J. DEJONG
v.
SESSION OF VILLAGE SEVEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
March 3, 2022

I. CASE SUMMARY

This case came before the SJC on the Complaint of RE Donavon J. (DJ) DeJong against the Session of his church, Village Seven Presbyterian Church (V7PC) in Colorado Springs, Colorado, within the Rocky Mountain Presbytery (RMP). At issue are changes made to the governing structure and procedures of V7PC.

⁶⁶ For a full discussion and persuasive defense of this point, see RE Pickering's dissent, in which I join.

APPENDIX T

The case was heard by the Panel on November 11, 2021, via GoToMeeting. RE DeJong appeared with his assistant, TE Dominic Aquila. TE Stephen Reese appeared as RMP's representative. This Complaint was subsequently sustained in part and denied in part by the SJC.

II. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 06/12/2018 The Session of V7PC appointed an Elder Job Description Committee (EJDC).
- 02/10/2020 The EJDC presented its report to the Session of V7PC.
- 03/09/2020 The Session of V7PC adopted three motions presented by the EJDC, amending two of those motions.
- 04/13/2020 The Session of V7PC adopted as amended the fourth motion presented by the EJDC.
- 05/06/2020 RE DeJong filed a Complaint against the actions of the Session of V7PC taken on March 9, 2020 and April 13, 2020
- 05/11/2020 The Session of V7PC denied the Complaint.
- 06/12/2020 RE DeJong carried his Complaint to RMP.
- 01/04/2021 The Shepherding Committee of RMP, acting as a Commission of RMP, heard the Complaint.
- 01/28/2021 RMP "approve[ed] the RMP commission's ruling ... to deny the complaint."
- 02/18/2021 RE DeJong carried his Complaint to the General Assembly.
- 09/22/2021 The SJC Panel conducted a hearing on objections to the Record of the Case, ruled on the objections, and finalized the Record of the Case.
- 11/11/2021 The SJC Panel heard oral arguments via GoToMeeting. The Panel included TE Fred Greco (Chairman), RE Dan Carrell, and TE Paul Kooistra, with RE Sam Duncan (Secretary) and TE Guy Prentiss Waters attending as alternates.

III. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

1. Did Presbytery err when it denied a Complaint against an action of the V7PC Session that proposed a V7PC bylaw change removing the restriction against a ruling elder who has served two consecutive terms from serving further until at least one year has elapsed?
2. Did Presbytery err when it denied a Complaint against an action of the V7PC Session that erected a Judicial Commission of the Session to function in accordance with the document “Village Seven Judicial Commission”?
3. Did Presbytery err when it denied a Complaint against an action of the V7PC Session that erected a Governance Commission of the Session to function in accordance with the document “Village Seven Governance Commission”?

IV. JUDGMENT

1. No.
2. No.
3. Yes, and the Session’s action on the 3rd motion is annulled.

V. REASONING AND OPINION

On March 9, 2020, the EJDC presented four motions to the V7PC Session. On that date, Session adopted three of those motions. The first motion was to adopt a “Ruling Elder Job Description as amended” The second motion was to “recommend to the congregation” a bylaw change to remove the restriction against a ruling elder who has served two consecutive three-year terms, full or partial, from serving further until at least one year has elapsed. The third motion (adopted with amendments) was to erect a “Governance Commission (per *BCO* chapter 15) to oversee the governance of Village Seven Presbyterian Church (as described in *BCO* 12-5) in accord with the document called ‘Village Seven Governance Commission.’” On April 13, 2020, the Session adopted with amendments the fourth of the committee’s motions. That motion was to “adopt [the] document describing our Judicial Commission.”

The Complainant contends that the Session was correct when it adopted the **first motion**, but erred when it adopted the second, third, and fourth motions. In particular, the Complainant contends that these latter three motions were not only in “contradiction” to the first motion, but also “contrary to . . . the PCA Constitution.” Complainant reasons that Presbytery, therefore, should have

sustained the Complaint and annulled Session's actions on the second, third, and fourth motions. We will address in turn the Complainant's claims with respect to each of these motions.

The first motion as adopted reads, "The role of the Ruling Elder at Village Seven Presbyterian Church, according to a comprehensive and Biblical and Book of Church Order understanding is that of governance and shepherding. The Complainant has not demonstrated that the **second motion** conflicts with the first. There is nothing inherently incompatible between this statement of the work of the elder and eliminating the requirement of a year off the Session after serving two consecutive terms. Furthermore, the Complainant has not demonstrated a constitutional conflict. The Constitution is silent on the matter of terms of office, neither prescribing nor proscribing terms. With respect to terms of office, the particular proposal envisioned by this action of Session is constitutionally permissible and unobjectionable.

We also fail to see any constitutional conflict in erecting through the **fourth motion** a Judicial Commission to function in accordance with the document "Village Seven Judicial Commission." The Constitution makes express provision for judicial commissions of Presbytery (*BCO* 15-3) and of General Assembly (*BCO* 15-4, 5), and there is no constitutional barrier to a Session erecting a judicial commission. Furthermore, although the document "Village Seven Judicial Commission" authorizes a separate commission (the "Governance Commission") to present annually a slate of nominees for the Judicial Commission, that slate is presented to the Session. It is the Session that "shall elect one RE per year from a slate of nominees presented by the GC. The Senior Pastor shall present the initial slate of nominees to the Session for election." Therefore, one may not fairly characterize this provision as "demot[ing]" or "disenfranchise[ing]" the ruling elders of V7PC, because it is the Session and not a commission thereof that determines the membership of its Judicial Commission.

Finally, the Complainant alleges that Session erred when it amended and adopted the **third motion** in order to erect a Governance Commission of the V7PC Session to function in accordance with the document "Village Seven Governance Commission." The Complainant contends that this Governance Commission deprives Session members who are not part of the GC of their "responsibility to govern" as members of Session. But the Constitution provides for commissions of church courts and places no barrier to such commissions executing matters relating to governance. The Complainant also objected because the GC was erected as a standing commission, and the

Complainant contends that *BCO 15-2* requires a commission to be “dissolved automatically when the task is completed.” But there is no constitutional barrier to a court erecting a standing commission. The “matters that may be properly executed by commissions,” listed in *BCO 15-2*, are representative and not exhaustive (“*Among the matters* that may be properly executed by commissions are”;emphasis added). The Complainant therefore has not identified a constitutional barrier to a governance commission as such.

Nevertheless, the document “Village Seven Governance Commission” adopted by Session does contain two constitutionally objectionable provisions. In the section delineating the GC’s “Role,” Item 6 reads, “The GC shall work to govern through policy. The GC will be accountable to ensure policy/position/philosophy statements are created when needed, organized for reference, and updated with each change.” This provision is broad, sweeping, and general in setting forth the scope of the GC’s responsibilities. As such, it does not meet the standard of *BCO 15-1* (“a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it”), which limits a commission to the particular business referred to it by the court. This provision adopted by Session is sufficiently broad to permit the GC to function as the Session itself. In addition, Item 4 in the GC document stipulates:

4. The GC shall refer decisions regarding the calling of pastors and senior level staff, capital campaigns, incurring of new debt, anything that would go to the whole congregation for a vote, and the approval of officer candidates, deacon assistants, and Shepherd Team members, to the entire Session for a vote.

This provision permits the GC to function like a session, with the V7 Session functioning like a commission for the specific items mentioned in Item 4. However, in the relationship between a commissioning body and its commission, the power to refer (to delegate authority) should be reversed. A session should refer specific business to its commission, and reserve the remainder to itself, rather than vice versa. These two provisions adopted by the Session permit the GC to function like the Session itself. As such it extends beyond the limits the Constitution sets for an ecclesiastical commission.

Contrast the Session’s creation of its Judicial Commission. The adopted document, “Village Seven Judicial Commission,” makes explicit that the Judicial Commission “shall adjudicate all cases of process,” and then proceeds to define a case of process. As such, this provision meets the constitutional standard that “a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the

APPENDIX T

business referred to it” (BCO 15-1). In the motion it adopted, Session clearly delineated what business would be referred to this particular commission.

Presbytery erred when it did not sustain the Complaint challenging the formation a governance commission to operate in accordance with the document “Village Seven Governance Commission.” Session’s action on its third motion therefore is annulled. This annulment, however, in no way precludes V7PC Session from refining its document to avoid constitutional infirmity.

This decision was written by TE Guy Waters and revised and approved by the Panel and adopted/amended by the full SJC on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Disqual.</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Chapell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Concur</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>
(23-0-0)		

CASE NO. 2021-07
RE J. LANCE ACREE
VS.
TENNESSEE VALLEY PRESBYTERY
COMPLAINT
March 3, 2022

This case began as an attempt by a Ruling Elder to file a BCO 43-1 Complaint with Presbytery as the original court, even though he was not a commissioner at the Presbytery meeting where the action was taken. The Officers reviewed the Complaint and recommended the Case be found Administratively Out of Order. (OMSJC 9.1.a) The Officers determined that the Case could not be put in order (OMSJC 9.2), because the Complainant was not identified in the roster of Ruling Elder Commissioners at the April 2021 meeting of the Presbytery in which the action was taken from which his Complaint arises. The Presbytery Clerk confirmed he was not a commissioner at that meeting. The Officers

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

notified RE Acree that they were making this recommendation to the SJC. Therefore, the SJC rules the Complainant did not have standing to file a *BCO* 43-1 complaint with Presbytery. Presbytery should have also found his Complaint out of order and declined to adjudicate at its July 2021 meeting. See similar SJC rulings on standing in:

- Case 2020-13, *Benyola v. Central Florida*, (M48GA, 2021, p. 817),
- Case 2020-01, *Benyola v. Central Florida* (M48GA, 2021, p. 801),
- Case 2013-08, *RE Warren Jackson v. Northwest Georgia* (M43GA, 2015, p. 568),
- Case 2012-06, *Deacon Don Bethel v. Southeast Alabama* (M41GA, 2013, p. 614), and
- Case 92-9b, *Mr. Overman v. Eastern Carolina* (M21GA, 1993, p. 223).

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Chapell <i>Disqual.</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Concur</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i> (23-0-0)	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>

CASE NO. 2021-08
IN THE MATTER OF
KOREAN SOUTHWEST ORANGE COUNTY PRESBYTERY
March 3, 2022

The SJC cited Korean Southwest Orange County Presbytery (KSWOC) to appear at the March 3, 2022 Stated Meeting in Case No. 2021-08, unless the Presbytery provided satisfactory responses in writing by January 14, 2022 to part (d) of the RPR Report presented to the 2021 General Assembly in the review of Presbytery’s records.

The SJC has not yet received a response adopted by Korean Southwest Orange County Presbytery. We understand the Presbytery did not have a Stated Meeting scheduled between the SJC’s October 21, 2021 Decision and the SJC’s March 3, 2022 meeting. We appreciate that the Presbytery’s Clerk has

APPENDIX T

provided the SJC with draft responses he plans to recommend to KSWOC at its Stated Meeting on March 22, 2022, regarding the General Assembly’s 23 exception-of-substance citations from 2015-2018. Assuming Presbytery files its adopted responses by April 1, 2022, the SJC will forward them promptly to the General Assembly Committee on Review of Presbytery Records for RPR to consider at its June Stated Meeting. If Presbytery does not file its adopted responses by April 1, the SJC will cite Presbytery to appear at a called SJC meeting for an *OMSJC* 15.4 hearing, on a date prior to the 49th General Assembly (which commences June 21, 2022). The decision was approved on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Chapell <i>Not qual.</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Concur</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>

(23-0-0)

IV. AMENDMENTS TO SJC OPERATING MANUAL

The Commission recommends adoption of the following amendments to its Operating Manual. (New provisions indicated by underlining; provisions to be removed indicated by ~~strike~~):

A. That *OMSJC* 2.6 be amended as follows (underlining for additional wording):

- 2.6. So long as he complies with Section 2.5 above, a member may make public or private statements in the course of his duties as a presbyter or Session member with respect to biblical teaching, confessional interpretation, the principles of the form of government and discipline, the requirements of the *BCO*, the Rules of Assembly Operation, Robert's Rules, and may explain Commission procedures. If such statements seem to the member especially liable to be construed to address a pending or impending matter before the Commission, a member making such public or private statements shall expressly qualify the statements indicating that they are limited to the

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

subject matters permitted by this subsection and are not made with a view to any pending or impending matter.

Rationale: This addition does not broaden the speaking rights of SJC members. It simply adds a provision whereby a member who is already fully complying with *OMSJC* 2.5 must take this step in an effort to ensure his listeners and readers do not misconstrue his *OMSJC* 2.6 statements in a way “that might reasonably be expected to affect the outcome of a pending matter or impending matter [of process] in any court of the church.” (*OMSJC* 2.5)

B. That *OMSJC* 18.12 be amended by the addition of (d) and (e) as follows:

OMSJC 18.12

(d) Members may join in pending concurring or dissenting opinions at any time until the 14-day deadline to request the meeting described in *OMSJC* 18.12(c).

(e) No concurring or dissenting opinion shall be circulated to anyone outside the SJC or the PCA Clerk’s office, until the completion of the procedure described in Section 18.12(c) or the passage of the deadline established in 18.12(c) in the event no such meeting is requested.

Rationale: The Manual does not currently specify a time in which members may join in concurring or dissenting opinions. Similarly, the Manual does not direct the officers or staff as to when such opinions should be transmitted to the parties. This amendment provides an objective timeline for reviewing, finalizing, and distributing concurring and dissenting opinions. And, with the other amendments proposed below, these concurring and dissenting opinions would be released at the *same time* as the SJC decision, and *along with it*.

C. That *OMSJC* 17.8 be amended by the deletion of (h) and (j); the rewording of and addition to (k), and the relettering of i to h and of k to i:

OMSJC 17.8

g. No change in wording-

APPENDIX T

- ~~(h) After the vote on the decision on the whole, the Chairman of the Commission will communicate the judgment to the parties; and the Stated Clerk shall mail a copy of the decision to the parties.~~
- ~~(ih) No change in wording.~~
- ~~(j) When a decision has been approved under this Manual by the Full Commission, a copy thereof shall be mailed immediately to the parties and shall then be public.~~
- (ki) After a decision has been reached by the Full Commission, any member may file, within 14 days after the date the text of the decision is sent by the Secretary to the members of the Commission, a concurring or dissenting opinion, which, if it conforms with the requirements of OMSJC 18.12, shall be promptly sent to the parties as an appendix to the decision shall be included as an appendix to the ~~opinion~~ decision when it is sent to the parties. The ~~controlling opinion~~ decision and any concurring or dissenting opinions shall be sent to the parties and released to the public at the same time and only after the procedures of OMSJC 18.12 have been completed. (See also 17.2)

Rationale: The revision to (k) aligns this subsection with *OMSJC* 18.12 and mirrors the pattern of civil courts. More important, while agreeing that the decision of the SJC should be privileged, it seems the parties and the Church would benefit from getting the full expression of the views of the members of the SJC *at the same time*. Because concurring or dissenting opinions are currently published weeks later than the decision, the additional opinions may be missed or treated as an afterthought, and the later release may unfortunately have the effect of rekindling conflict or uncertainty in the Church. Further, if there are differences of opinion within the SJC, the Church should be able to know the basis of those in a way that cannot happen simply by reporting the vote in the decision. Finally, if, as 18.12.a notes, concurring and dissenting opinions are vital to allow judges to declare and clear their consciences, it seems this is best accomplished if the decision and opinions are all released together. This would also, for example, ensure any SJC-adopted answer (18.12.c) would *accompany* a dissenting opinion rather than follow several weeks later.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This revision would ordinarily result in a five-week delay in the release of SJC decisions so they can be accompanied by any concurring or dissenting opinions, and be released *together*, rather than weeks apart as presently happens. If no concurring or dissenting opinions are filed, the delay would be reduced by two weeks. However, with the change proposed to *OMSJC* 17.2 in Item D below, any SJC decision could be announced immediately to the parties if approved by 2/3 of the SJC voting members in such case. If the revision to (k) is adopted, it would void (h) and (j) and thus they would be stricken.

D. That *OMSJC* 17.2 be amended as follows:

17.2 A judgment of the Standing Judicial Commission shall be effective from the time of its announcement to the parties in accordance with *BCO* 15-5(b) except in the case of a minority report in accordance with *BCO* 15-5(c). The Statement of the Issue and Judgment in Any SJC decision can be announced immediately to the parties if approved by 2/3 of voting members in such case. Otherwise, the Decision Issue and Judgment will not be announced until after the procedures of *OMSJC* 18.12 have been completed.

Rationale: As described in the previous Rationale, the change to *OMSJC* 17.8 in Item C above would ordinarily result in a five-week delay in the parties receiving the decision. However, in certain instances, like an appeal sustained in a case involving the censure of deposition, it might be wise and just to immediately release the decision, even though this would mean any concurring or dissenting opinions would need to follow later.

V. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Officers of the Standing Judicial Commission elected for 2022-2023 are as follows:

Chairman:	RE Jack Wilson
Vice Chairman:	RE Sam Duncan
Secretary:	RE Howie Donahoe
Assistant Secretary:	TE Fred Greco

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Fred Greco, Chairman

/s/ RE Sam Duncan, Secretary

/s/ RE John Bise, Vice-Chairman

/s/ RE Jack Wilson, Asst. Secretary

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT
OF THE STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION
TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
June 20, 2022**

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the completion of its original report to the 49th General Assembly, the Standing Judicial Commission held two additional meetings: a video conference called meeting on April 27, 2022 and a video conference called meeting on June 2, 2022.

II. JUDICIAL CASES

The SJC submits this Supplemental Report of the decisions from its April 27, 2022 and June 2, 2022 called meetings. The cases are listed in the order in which they were decided:

- 2021-09 Miller v. Ohio Valley Presbytery
- 2021-10 Williams v. Chesapeake Presbytery
- 2021-13 Dudt v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery
- 2021-06 Herron v. Central Indiana Presbytery
- 2022-01 Eagle, et al. v. Savannah River Presbytery

In addition, the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) requested the SJC to provide a response regarding a request from a third party that CCB take certain exceptions to the SJC's minutes. The SJC's response to that request of CCB is included in this Supplemental Report.

III. SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE CASES

**CASE NO. 2021-09
GARY LEE MILLER**

v.

**OHIO VALLEY PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

April 27, 2022

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

In December 2019, Grace and Peace PCA in Bellevue, Kentucky (near Cincinnati) purchased a Lutheran Church building. Soon thereafter, Mr. Gary Lee Miller, a member of Grace and Peace, requested in writing that certain windows be removed, alleging they violated the Second Commandment. Twelve months later, after discussions between the Session and Mr. Miller and the Session's decision not to remove any of the windows, he filed a Complaint to the Session, which was denied. He carried that Complaint to the Presbytery, which appointed a *BCO* 15-3 Commission to adjudicate it. Seven months later, Presbytery's Commission filed its report recommending Presbytery deny the Complaint, and Presbytery adopted that recommendation by a vote of 25-0. Mr. Miller carried that Complaint to the SJC, a Panel Hearing was held on February 5, 2022, and the Panel later voted 3-0 to recommend the SJC deny the Complaint.

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 12/30/19 Grace and Peace PCA purchased Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.
- 01/02/20 Mr. Miller emailed TE Lee Veazey, pastor of Grace and Peace, requesting that certain things be removed from the church building. Below are some excerpts.

All of these [stained-glass] windows should be removed. Worship should be simple without pictures or images. However, two are profoundly perverse and disgusting. The first window on the left of the sanctuary, as one is facing the pulpit, depicts creation. It images God's hand reaching down to craft the worlds. ... The second window on the right of the

APPENDIX T

sanctuary, as one is facing the pulpit, depicts the seven spirits of God and images the Holy Spirit via a dove.
... I am aware [the] perverse image [of a painting of Christ kneeling] will be removed from the sanctuary.
... The pulpit should be center and higher than the people.”

- 01/03/20 TE Veazey responded to Mr. Miller’s email and forwarded the response to the other members of the Session (three ruling elders).
- 05/31/20 Grace & Peace held its first public worship service in remodeled sanctuary.
- 07/04/20 Mr. Miller emailed his 12-page paper to RE Frey, titled “Position Paper - Against Imaging Any of the Three Persons of the Triune God.”
- 08/28/20 TE Veazey emailed various pastors and professors for counsel on the matter.
- 09/24/20 RE Frey emailed Mr. Miller’s 12-page position paper to the Session.
- 09/28/20 At the invitation of the Session, Mr. Miller attended a stated Session meeting to discuss his concerns regarding the stained-glass windows and his paper “Against Imaging.”
- 10/03/20 At a called meeting, the Session discussed “whether the images in the stained glass windows were a violation of the Second Commandment and whether they are in conflict with the Westminster Standards concerning images of the Godhead.” The Session considered the following question: “Do the images in the stained glass windows in the sanctuary need to be removed?” By a vote of 3-1, the Session adopted “No” as the answer. On this same day, Session Clerk RE Burkhard notified Mr. Miller of this decision by email, as shown below.

Dear Lee, Thank you again for joining us this past Monday evening to provide additional and clarifying information on your position paper “Against Imaging Any of the Three Persons of the Triune God”. We are

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

grateful for your concern for the glory of God, the holiness of God, the keeping of the law of God, the love of Christ and the purity of the church. With that said, it is the decision of the Session that the images in the stained-glass windows are not in violation of the Second commandment. The windows do not serve as objects of worship nor are they used as aids in worship. Therefore, the images in the stained-glass windows do not need to be removed.

- 11/08/20 Mr. Miller approached RE Burkhard requesting a biblical response for keeping the images.
- 11/12/20 After two weeks of emails amongst Session members, Pastor Veazey, on behalf of the Session, sent a one-page letter to Mr. Miller, shown below.

Dear Mr. Miller - Based on your ongoing discussions with a ruling elder and your recent meeting with another elder, it would appear that the communication to you from the session on Saturday, October 3, 2020, on the subject of stained-glass windows in the church building has not been well received. Therefore, in order to provide clarity and to conclude the matter, we offer the following comments.

We have studied and prayed individually as well as jointly well over 100 hours to receive instruction and wisdom from God's Word. We have consulted over a dozen Presbyterian and Reformed pastors and scholars in order to better understand the biblical, theological, and pastoral issues involved. After much study, prayer, consultation, and discussion, the session reached the conclusion that the stained-glass windows in the church building do not contain images of the Triune God and thus are neither sinful (according to Scripture) nor violations of our doctrinal standards (according to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*). As a result, the images do not need to be removed nor will they be removed. The windows simply are decorative works of art in a church building that the Lord has graciously provided to our

APPENDIX T

congregation that together reflect biblical and church history through the time of the Reformation.

As for your desire to be given a biblical reason for the position of the session regarding the windows, it is not necessary. Here is what we mean. The position of the session is that the images in the windows are not images of God; therefore, they do not violate the Second Commandment and thus no further argument is needed or will be given.

In view of the concern you have brought to our attention, we remind you of your fifth membership vow to “*submit [yourself] to the government and discipline of the Church*”. We respect your conscience on this matter. If the decision and position of the leadership of the church on this matter causes you to believe that you will have to violate your conscience, it may be best for you and your family to find a local church where you can worship the Lord with a clear conscience and without distraction or hindrance. Please do not hesitate to let us know if we can be of assistance.

- 11/15/20 Mr. Miller spoke to TE Veazey to discuss the Session’s letter of 11/12/20. Mr. Miller claimed the images at the front door show the intent to represent each person of the Trinity.
- 11/23/20 RE Livingston and TE Veazey met with Mr. Miller. Afterwards, the Session began discussing RE Livingston’s draft of a brief “Biblical and Confessional argument.”
- 12/04/20 As a follow-up to their Nov. 23 meeting, RE Livingston emailed Mr. Miller this clarification:

The position of the Session was communicated to you by the clerk of the Session on October 3 and again by the pastor on behalf of the Session on November 12. Although I believe the communication of the Session’s position on October 3 was clear, we will consider the letter of November 12 to be the date of our notification to you of our decision in view of a timeline for a complaint.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

12/13/20 Mr. Miller filed a *BCO* 43-1 Complaint with the Session alleging the Session's "failure to remove images in worship in violation of the Bible, the *BCO*, and the Westminster Standards ..." and the Complaint asked, "for the removal of all images."

The Record to the SJC included photographs of 14 different items. These were previously added to the Record that was reviewed by Presbytery's Commission, at the Complainant's request. At the SJC Panel Hearing, Complainant indicated he was referencing all 14 items in his phrase "all images." Items are listed below.

- 3 etchings on clear glass in foyer/narthex
 - Hand with the word "Father"
 - Cross and Crown with the word "Son"
 - Dove with the word "Holy Ghost"
- 2 banners - Alpha/Omega w/Titus 2:11, and three Circles w/Eph. 2:14
- 9 stained-glass windows without any writing
 - Hand
 - Tree
 - Dove
 - Heart
 - Red Thistle
 - Blank Scroll
 - Two Tablets w/ Numerals I-X
 - XP (Chi Rho)
 - Circle of Thorns & Three Nails

01/11/21 At its next stated meeting, the Session discussed and then subsequently denied the Complaint, by a vote of 3-1. In addition, the Session adopted a two-page statement, titled "Why the Pictures in the Stained Glass Windows Are Not Images of the Triune God: A Brief Statement by the Session."

01/12/21 Session Clerk RE Burkhard emailed Mr. Miller notifying him the Session had denied his Complaint, and Mr. Miller then carried/filed his complaint to Ohio Valley Presbytery the same day.

01/30/21 At Presbytery's January Stated Meeting, a *BCO* 15-3 Judicial Commission was established to hear the case. Commission eventually met eight times.

06/08/21 The Commission conducted the Hearing on the Complaint.

APPENDIX T

- 06/17/21 Commission voted 4-0 to recommend Presbytery deny the Complaint.
- 07/06/21 The Commission adopted a written Decision to report to Presbytery, recommending the Complaint be denied.
- 07/31/21 At Presbytery's Summer Stated Meeting, and without debate, Presbytery voted 25-0 to approve the Commission's judgment and denied the Complaint.
- 08/02/21 Mr. Miller took that Complaint to the Standing Judicial Commission, and it was styled as SJC Case 2021-09.
- 02/05/22 Panel Hearing via GoToMeeting. Panel included TE McGowan, RE Neikirk and RE Donahoe (chairman). Alternates TE Ross and RE Terrell were also present. Present for the parties were Complainant Miller and TE Aquila who acted as his assistant, and TE Reitano as the Respondent's representative.
- 03/29/22 Panel adopted Proposed Decision and filed it with the SJC, copying the parties.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Did Ohio Valley Presbytery err on 07/31/21 when it approved its Commission's Judgment that the Session of Grace and Peace did not err on 01/11/21 when it denied Mr. Miller's 12/13/20 Complaint?

III. JUDGMENT

No. Therefore, the Complaint is denied.

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

This Case involved the Second Commandment and how *Westminster Larger Catechism* 109 ("LC 109") understands it, but more specifically, how those teachings are *applied* to specific items. The application of those teachings is a matter of discretion and judgment, i.e., the Session's judgment about the permissibility of the three clear windows, the nine stained-glass windows, and the two banners. Thus, the standard of review in *BCO* 39-3.3 most closely

applies. The burden of proof was on the Complainant to demonstrate that the windows and banners violate LC 109, and that burden was not met.

The Second Commandment and LC 109 are below.

Exodus 20:4-6: ⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. (ESV)

Q. 109. What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; *the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever;* all worshipping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever; parsimony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ For the italicized clause in LC 109 above, three Scriptures are cited - Deut. 4, Acts 17, and Romans 1. (ESV. Emphases added below.)

Deut. 4:15–19. ¹⁵“Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, ¹⁶beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, ¹⁸the likeness of

The Complainant contended each of the 14 items were violations of LC 109 and the Second Commandment. The Session judged they were not. In its two-page November 2020 response to Mr. Miller (the month before his Complaint filing), the Session presented arguments and concluded: “It is therefore the position of the Session that the images in the windows are not images of the Triune God and consequently do not need to be removed.” We do not find clear error in the Session’s conclusion in that matter of discretion and judgment and thus uphold the decisions of the two lower courts. We find the Session’s application of LC 109 to fit within the general application of LC 109 in Reformed churches in the last few centuries.

We also note the Respondent’s Brief reported the following:

“Further, the Presbytery believes it is clear the Session of Grace and Peace takes the Second Commandment, along with the Catechisms’ explanation, very seriously. This is evidenced by the removal of an image they did believe would violate our system of doctrine (a kneeling image of Christ).”

The Complainant further alleged the windows and banners were used as “aids in worship” at Grace and Peace Presbyterian Church. There is, however, no evidence in the Record of any action by the Session regarding the use of, or

anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. ¹⁹ *And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.*”

Acts 17:29 [vss. 22-24 included for context: ²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the *objects of your worship*, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you *worship* as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man ...] ²⁹ Being then God’s offspring, *we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.*

Rom. 1:21-23, 25 ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ... ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and *worshipped and served* the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

reference to, the windows or banners in worship. Similarly, there is no evidence in the Record that any reference was made to the windows or banners during gathered corporate worship. In this regard, the evidence offered by the Complainant simply consisted of his understanding of, and inferences from, comments of some individual members of Session.

In the absence of clear evidence demonstrating that any of the 14 items violated the Second Commandment and *WLC* 109, and in the absence of evidence that any of these items were used in worship or were intended by Session to be used in worship, we have no basis for finding that the Session erred in its decision to allow the 14 items to remain in the Church building. Therefore, the Complaint is denied.

The Panel decision was drafted by REs Donahoe and Neikirk and was adopted by a Panel vote of 3-0.

The SJC revised and approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Absent</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Recused</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Absent</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>
M. Duncan <i>Absent</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>	

(19-0-0)

TE Cannata recused himself because of his relationship with one of the Presbytery's representatives.

CASE NO. 2021-10
F. TODD WILLIAMS
v.
CHESAPEAKE PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON APPEAL
April 27, 2022

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 09/25/18 TE F. Todd Williams was indicted by the Chesapeake Presbytery Judicial Commission (CPJC) and charged with “failure to maintain his own family well... and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock... of God.” Three specifications were formulated in the indictment.
- 11/13/18 TE Williams confessed to some of the sins outlined in the indictment and requested that the matter be treated as a *BCO* 38-1 Case Without Process.
- 01/08/19 After several iterations related to the statement of the accused and the processes being followed, Chesapeake Presbytery met and received the CPJC report, which included the indictment, TE Williams’ written confession to the charges in the indictment, the pronouncement of judgment and censure, and admonition of the accused. Presbytery voted 42-3-3 to approve the judgment and censure.
- 03/05/19 TE Williams lodged a Complaint against the acts of CPJC and the decisions made by Presbytery on 01/08/19.
- 05/15/19 Chesapeake Presbytery voted to deny TE Williams’ Complaint.
- 06/11/19 TE Williams carried his Complaint to the Standing Judicial Commission of the PCA (SJC 2019-04).
- 08/24/20 The SJC sustained TE Williams’ Complaint, finding that Chesapeake Presbytery erred in approving the CPJC report because it conflated *BCO* 32 and 38-1, thus violating the due process rights of the accused. Further, the SJC ruled that the matter be returned to Chesapeake Presbytery for dismissal or proper adjudication.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 09/28/20 Presbytery instituted process by indicting TE Williams on charges of (1) failure to manage his household, (2) slandering his wife, and (3) inappropriate behavior with other women.
- 11/02/20 The CPJC held a plea hearing, at which TE Williams pled “not guilty” to charges #1 and #2, and “guilty” to the third charge. A trial date was set for 12/12/20.
- 11/05/20 The CPJC met and voted to dismiss charges #1 and #2, and to cancel the scheduled trial in favor of dealing with TE Williams according to the Court’s discretion in accordance with *BCO* 32-3. The court set 11/16/20 as the date of a meeting called in order to discuss its response to pre-arraignment motions filed by TE Williams and to establish TE Williams’ level of repentance prior to imposing a sentence.
- 11/16/20 The CPJC met and approved its response to TE Williams’ requests. TE Williams did not appear. A follow up meeting was set for 12/07/20.
- 12/07/20 The CPJC met with TE Williams in order to determine his level of repentance. A motion passed to meet with the Session and staff of Safe Harbor Presbyterian Church (TE Williams’ former church) before imposing a censure; to that end a follow up meeting was set for 01/06/21.
- 01/06/21 The CPJC met with members of the Safe Harbor Session and Cindy Williams (TE Williams’ former wife). TE Williams was not present. At the conclusion of the meeting a motion to depose TE Williams and suspend him from the Sacraments was deferred. A follow up meeting to resume debate was set for 01/18/21.
- 01/07/21 The CPJC solicited the Stated Clerk for advice regarding reinstatement of the two charges the Court had previously dropped.
- 01/18/21 The CPJC met to discuss the motion deferred from its 01/06/21 meeting, deciding to again defer the motion to its next meeting, which it set for 02/01/21.
- 02/01/21 The CPJC met as scheduled, with Cindy Williams and five other visitors present to be interviewed by the Court. After the

APPENDIX T

interviews were conducted, the Court passed motions to rescind its dismissal of charges and to proceed with trial on 04/17/21.

- 02/02/21 TE Williams was informed that the decision to drop charges #1 and #2 had been rescinded by the CPJC.
- 04/16/21 TE Williams communicated to the CPJC via email that he had just learned of the trial date. As a result, he failed to appear on 04/17/21 and the Court set a new trial date of 05/15/21.
- 05/05/21 TE Williams wrote the CPJC requesting dismissal of the case. Barring that, he requested that another body hear the case, along with objecting to some of the witnesses scheduled to testify and requesting “discovery statements.” These requests were denied. A final request to provide recordings and transcripts after the trial was granted with respect to the recordings and denied with respect to a transcript (on the basis that it was not required unless and until TE Williams chose to appeal the decision of the Court at trial).
- 05/15/21 The trial was held, with the Court finding TE Williams guilty of all three charges against him and imposing the punishments of Deposition from office and Suspension from the Sacraments.
- 07/10/21 Chesapeake Presbytery voted in the affirmative (43-1-5) on the motion to accept the judgment of its CPJC.
- 07/30/21 TE Williams appealed the decision of Chesapeake Presbytery to the Standing Judicial Commission of the PCA, listing five specifications of error. (1) That there was an irregularity in the proceedings of the lower court, (2) that there was a refusal of reasonable indulgence, (3) that the Court received improper evidence and declined to receive proper evidence, (4) that there was prejudice manifested in the case, and (5) that there was an error in the Court’s judgment and censure.
- 03/09/22 A Panel consisting of RE Steve Dowling (Chair), RE John Bise (Secretary), TE Mike Ross, and Alternates TE Hoochan Paul Lee and RE John Pickering heard the case.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

At its meeting on July 10th, 2021, did Chesapeake Presbytery err in approving the judgment and censure of its Presbytery Judicial Commission because of the following specifications of error?

1. That there was an irregularity in the proceeding of the court
2. That there was a refusal of reasonable indulgence
3. That the Court received improper evidence and declined to receive proper evidence
4. That there was prejudice manifested in the case, and
5. That there was an error in the Court's judgment and censure.

III. JUDGMENTS

1. No
2. No
3. No
4. No
5. No

The decision of Chesapeake Presbytery is upheld in whole.

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

With respect to the guilty verdict Appellant raises five specifications of error on the part of the Chesapeake Presbytery Judicial Commission.

In the 1st specification of error, Appellant alleges an irregularity in the proceedings of the lower court based on the argument that he did not see his citation to appear at trial until the day before the trial was scheduled to occur, and that the Court declined his request to re-schedule in favor of citing him to appear a second time.

BCO 32-4 governs the citation process, saying in part that "Indictments and citations shall be delivered in person or in another manner providing verification of the date of receipt. Compliance with these requirements shall be deemed to have been fulfilled if a party cannot be located after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to accept delivery." There are two elements contained herein, the first designed to ensure that a citation was actually delivered in accordance with Constitutional timelines, and the second a modifier of the first designed to recognize the possibility of evasion. The

Appellant does not dispute that the citation was delivered on the date the Appellee asserts it was, and instead has admitted that he overlooked it, which is concomitant to receiving a letter and failing to open the envelope. That is not the fault of the sender, but of the receiver. Even if this court of review were to determine that Appellee's failure to obtain a delivery receipt was an irregularity, it would not be sufficient to overturn the decision because there was no damage to the Appellant or his case by virtue of a second citation to appear. There is no evidence that the CPJC used the Appellant's initial failure to appear to support an argument that he was not sufficiently repentant. In the 2nd specification of error, Appellant asserts the refusal of reasonable indulgence prior to, and at, the trial based on the argument that the CPJC members hearing the case were the same men who conducted the previous case that was appealed as SJC 2019-04.

There is no Constitutional prohibition against the same members of a court re-hearing a case. If that were a Constitutional imperative, then a Presbytery *not* operating its judiciary through a commission (and acting, instead, as a whole) could never receive the instruction contained in the SJC's decision in SJC 2019-04 and decide to re-try an accused person. Every member of Presbytery who participated in the court, holding to this argument, would have to recuse himself.

Moreover, *BCO* 32-16 establishes the right of an accused to challenge any member sitting in the trial of the case by reason of *cause*. No individual member of the CPJC was challenged and no cause given, and the argument that *BCO* 32-17 applies because the members of the CPJC made their opinions known in adjudicating the previous case is specious because, by advancement of the argument made by the Appellant, all SJC judges should be, and some must be, disqualified from sitting on the current case.

In the 3rd specification of error, Appellant alleges that the CPJC received improper evidence while declining to receive proper evidence based on the argument that his former wife (and those she influenced) provided the bulk of evidence against him, and that in accordance with *BCO* 31.8 this evidence should have been excluded.

Yet *BCO* 31.8 *does not prohibit* a court from receiving accusations from a person who "...indulge(s) a malignant spirit towards the accused; who is not of good character; who is himself under censure or process; who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused..." and so on. Instead, it requires of a court receiving such accusations that it must exercise

“great caution” in dealing with such persons. There is no evidence in the Record of the Case that the CPJC failed to exercise such caution and, in this connection, *BCO 39-3.3* applies:

A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties. Such matters of discretion and judgment would include, but not be limited to: the moral character of candidates for sacred office, the appropriate censure to impose after a disciplinary trial, or *judgment about the comparative credibility of conflicting witnesses*. Therefore, a higher court should not reverse such a judgment by a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court (emphasis added).

In the 4th specification of error, Appellant alleges that the CPJC manifested prejudice in the case on the basis of two exemplary arguments. The first contends that CPJC exhibited prejudice by including elements of SJC 2019-04 in its full statement of the case to Presbytery, and the second that CPJC demonstrated prejudice by suspending him from official functions and the Sacraments; that is, that according to *BCO 42-6* such suspensions must never be done by way of censure, but since such suspensions are inherently punitive, they necessarily demonstrate prejudice.

With respect to the first argument, *BCO 15-3* does not provide specific guidance on what it means to submit a “...full statement of the case and the judgment rendered.” Such discretion is left to the court conducting a case, and even while admitting the possibility that a court might go beyond the “full statement” of a case, there is no proof that the statement in view here prejudiced the Presbytery vote. Further, there is no way for a court of review to properly assess this sub-specification in the absence in the ROC of the full statement delivered to Presbytery.

With respect to the second argument, it does not so much demonstrate prejudice in the case as a difference of opinion about the exercise of constitutional authority. That Presbytery had sufficient reasons, and that it documented its reasons through charges and by initiating process, is clear from the record. The imputation of prejudice because Suspensions are inherently punitive might be asserted, but it is not clearly deduced from nor demonstrated in the record.

APPENDIX T

In the 5th specification of error, Appellant alleges an error and injustice in the judgment and censure decided by the Court.

While there is no question that the censures leveled in this case are severe (having only stopped short of actual excommunication), the *BCO* does not prescribe specific punishments for particular offenses, nor does it rule out applying any available censure to any conceivable offense. Instead, it preserves the right of courts of the church to exercise their discretion:

A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties. Such matters of discretion and judgment would include... the appropriate censure to impose after a disciplinary trial... Therefore, a higher court should not reverse such a judgment by a lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court. (*BCO* 39-3.3)

Because there is no clear error on the part of Presbytery, this Specification cannot be sustained.

This decision was written by RE Steve Dowling and edited and adopted by the Panel unanimously. The SJC amended and approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Absent</i>	M. Duncan <i>Absent</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Concur</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Lee <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Absent</i>
Donahoe <i>Recused</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>	

(19-0-0)

RE Donahoe recused himself because he was on a PCA Session 23 years ago when the Appellant was one of two ministers on staff.

CASE NO. 2021-13
PHIL DUDT
v.
NORTHWEST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON APPEAL
April 27, 2022

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 07/16/18 The Midway Presbyterian Church (MPC) Session determined not to invite Dan Crouse to participate in officer training after being nominated for the office of Ruling Elder by RE Dudt.
- 08/20/18 A motion to rescind the July 19, 2018 action by the MPC Session not to invite Dan Crouse to the training class failed.
- 08/30/18 Dan and Angelia Crouse filed a Complaint that the MPC Session action on July 16, 2018 was a violation of the officer training and examination process outlined in the *BCO*.
- 01/21/19 The MPC Session denied the Complaint and appointed a Shepherding Committee of five REs and one TE to assist in shepherding Dan and Angelia Crouse.
- 02/18/19 Four REs, including RE Dudt, filed a dissent with the MPC Session regarding the denial of the Complaint.
- 04/02/19 The Northwest Georgia Presbytery (NWGP) adopted the recommendation of its Judicial Commission that the Complaint be denied.
- 04/04/19 Dan Crouse carried his Complaint to the General Assembly.
- 10/18/19 The Standing Judicial Commission (SJC 2019-03) ruled that the MPC Session erred in setting aside the nomination of Crouse to be a ruling elder prior to training and examination.
- 05/11/20 RE Dudt made a speech at a MPC Session meeting imploring the Session to call a congregational meeting to inform them of the SJC 2019-03 decision, publicly repent, and apologize to Dan and Angelia Crouse. No motion was made related to the speech.

APPENDIX T

- 06/15/20 RE Dudt made a motion at a MPC Session meeting “That the Midway Session inform the Midway Congregation of case 2019-3, the SJC’s decision, and the Session’s formal response. That this be done before the nomination process starts on the 2020 elections.” The motion failed when a substitute motion passed.
- 07/08/20 The MPC Session called a Congregational Meeting for July 19, 2020 to elect three assistant pastors as associate pastors.
- 07/12/20 Seven days prior to the congregational meeting, RE Dudt emailed the congregation the following (emphasis original):

RE: The congregational meeting of July 19, 2020

I am writing to you as an Elder of Midway Presbyterian Church with regards to the congregational meeting set for Sunday 7-19-2020, however I am not representing the Midway Session.

Whereas: This recommendation was hastily established. A Session meeting was called on July 4, 2020 and the Session met on July 8, 2020 to discuss and decide this matter.

Whereas: The entire Session was not able to be present for the meeting.

Whereas: This was not a unanimous decision by the Midway Session and a significant minority is opposed to this motion.

Whereas: The current pandemic will prohibit full participation by the congregation in said meeting.

Whereas: According to the *Book of Church Order* of the PCA (chapter 20-2) “A church shall proceed to elect a pastor in the following

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

manner: The Session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pulpit committee which may be composed of members from the congregation at large or the Session, as **designated by the congregation.**”

Whereas: The Standing Judicial Committee of the PCA ruled against the Midway Session and the Northwest Georgia Presbytery in the case of Dan and Angelia Crouse vs. the Northwest Georgia Presbytery (SJC Case 2019-03) **for unconstitutionally handling officer nominations.** See pages 44-47 of the following link: <https://pcaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SJC-Report-to-GA-2020-6-9-20.pdf>

Whereas: The proposed action will expand the Session to 16 members and unduly enhance the influence of the church staff in the governance of the church. This will give the staff a voting block that will require a supermajority of ruling elders to prevail on any motion including the budget and other financial issues.

Therefore: I am asking the congregation to support a substitute motion to postpone this meeting until January 2021 to allow the congregation reasonable time to prayerfully consider the church’s needs, the men’s qualifications, the establishment of a pulpit committee, and the subsidence of the global pandemic to allow for greater congregational participation.

09/21/20

The MPC Session approved a resolution defining how a member of the Session can dissent from an action of the Session which included, among other requirements, that an elder must first resign from his office if he feels compelled to publicly communicate “dissatisfaction with or any opposition

APPENDIX T

to a decision or action of the Session.” Otherwise, the elder would be in violation of vow #5 and/or vow #6.

- 10/07/20 The MPC Session approved moving forward with process against RE Dudt and issued an indictment with two charges. Those charges are shown below:
(1) Violating of his ordination vows (#5, 6) distributing the SJC case 2019-03 [Crouse v. NW GA] to the entire congregation against the express will of the Session and therefore failing to be in subjection to his brethren (vow #5), and
(2) Violating the ninth commandment and vow #6 in the letter he sent [to the congregation] on July 12, 2020.
- 10/19/20 RE Dudt pled “not guilty” to the two charges outlined in the indictment.
- 10/22/20 Three MPC Session ruling elders requested the Moderator call a meeting for the purpose of considering two motions: (i) approval an independent moderator from the NWGP for the process and trial and (ii) engagement of a court reporter for the trial.
- 10/26/20 The MPC Session met to consider the two motions. Both motions failed.
- 11/11/2020 The trial commenced at 7:30 pm and concluded at 5:40 am the next day. RE Dudt was found guilty of the two charges in the indictment and censured by indefinite suspension from office. The MPC Session appointed both a Restoration Committee and a Respondents Committee (in case of an appeal). The Session also approved a summary statement of its actions against RE Dudt to be sent to the congregation on November 12, 2020.
- 11/12/20 RE Dudt submitted a Notice of Intention to Appeal dated 11/11/2020 with the NWGP Clerk.
- 11/12/20 MPC Session sent an email to the congregation communicating that RE Dudt had been censured.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 11/16/20 MPC Session approved a revised statement regarding RE Dudt to send to the congregation.
- 12/07/20 RE Dudt submitted an Appeal with the NWGP Clerk.
- 04/27/20 NWGP Judicial Commission conducted the Appeal Hearing.
- 08/21/20 NWGP approved the Judicial Commission Decision that the MPC Session did not err procedurally or manifest prejudice in its prosecution of RE Dudt.
- 02/11/20 The SJC Panel Hearing was conducted via GoToMeeting. The Panel included TE Coffin, RE Terrell, and TE Waters (chairman). Alternates RE Dowling and TE Kooistra were present. Also present were RE Dudt and RE David who acted as his assistant, and TE Daniel who served as the Respondent's representative.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

At its meeting on November 12, 2020, did the Session of Midway Presbyterian Church err in finding RE Dudt guilty at trial of the two charges in the indictment and thereafter imposing upon RE Dudt the censure of indefinite suspension from office; and at its meeting on August 21, 2021, did Northwest Georgia Presbytery err in approving its Judicial Commission's decision that the Midway Presbyterian Church Session did not err in its prosecution and censure of RE Dudt?

III. JUDGMENT

Yes. The decisions of the Session of Midway Presbyterian Church and Northwest Georgia Presbytery are reversed in whole. The SJC renders the decision that should have been rendered, to wit, not guilty. RE Dudt is relieved of his conviction and censure and is restored to the full exercise of his office.

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

With respect to the guilty verdict, Appellant raises 40 specifications of error on the part of MPC Session and 15 specifications of error on the part of NWGP. Of the specifications of Session error, 14 were sustained (3, 4, 5, 6, 9

in part, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 33, 34). Of the specifications of Presbytery error, eight were sustained (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 15). The specifications of error sustained, taken together, demonstrate clear error on the part of the lower courts with respect to factual findings and matters of discretion and judgment, as well as violations of the Constitution of the PCA, all of which vindicate the Judgment of the SJC in this case. The Session and Presbytery alleged errors will be taken up in turn below.

In the 1st specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in not pursuing a *BCO* 31-2 investigation into his actions, establishing a strong presumption of guilt, and on that basis instituting process.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. *BCO* 32-2 provides that “Process against an offender shall not be commenced unless some person or persons undertake to make out the charge; or unless the court finds it necessary, for the honor of religion, itself to take the step provided for in *BCO* 31-2.” The Session followed the path of the former disjunct.

In the 2nd specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session misrepresented him in the indictment when it charged that RE Dudt had “distributed” the SJC case 2019-03 to the entire congregation.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Providing a link in an email is a commonplace means of document distribution.

In the 3rd specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in failing to demonstrate that the distribution of SJC case 2019-03 to the entire congregation, against the will of the Session, is properly an offense according to *BCO* 29-1.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Regardless of the means employed to express its will, Session has no right to make that will a rule requiring obedience from a Session member that is not based upon Scripture. Preliminary Principle 7 declares: “All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or by representation, is only ministerial and declarative since the Holy Scriptures are the only rule

of faith and practice. No church judicatory may make laws to bind the conscience”. The Session had a right to refuse to distribute the SJC decision in question. The Session had no right to forbid RE Dudd from doing so, the 5th ordination vow notwithstanding. The promise to be in “subjection to your brethren” is always qualified and limited by “in the Lord.” As the Larger Catechism instructs us, we owe authorities over us “obedience to their *lawful* commands and counsels. . . . (emphasis added, LC 127).” (*BCO* 14-7)

In the 4th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in finding RE Dudd guilty of the first charge of the indictment, to wit, distributing SJC case 2019-03 to the entire congregation against the express will of the Session, when at trial no evidence of such an express will was forthcoming.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. “Express” is defined as “Directly and distinctly stated or expressed rather than implied or left to inference: not dubious or ambiguous: definite, clear, explicit, unmistakable.” (*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* (1976)). The ROC did not provide *any evidence* of such an express will. An action by the Session to decline itself to distribute a document does not imply that a Session member is prohibited from such a distribution. In fact, the ROC shows that during the trial, defense’s questioning witnesses on this point was repeated so frequently, with no evidence forthcoming, that the Moderator sought to preempt further pursuit of the matter with witnesses to come: “May we try something on that line of questioning? May we by common consent agree that on that series of questions, there was no explicit mandate to Elder Dudd? Is there any objection? So we will stipulate that there was no explicit mandate to Elder Dudd not to distribute. . . .” Apparently, before he could rule, there was objection voiced; however, the Moderator’s proposal is a clear indication of the state of the evidence-gathering, at least at that late point in the proceedings. Further, the Presbytery Judicial Commission’s written decision plainly grants the point: “In this case, the will of Midway’s session, regarding how SJC 2019-03 was to be handled by the leadership of the church, was consistent and recognizable, even if it was not explicit. . . .” The charge in the indictment, however, was that the action was “against *the express* will of the Session.” [emphasis added. Session clearly erred in finding RE Dudd guilty of the first charge of the indictment.

In the 5th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in finding RE Dudt guilty of the second charge of the indictment, to wit, violating the ninth commandment by including false statements in the July 12 email sent from RE Dudt to the congregation.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC does not show evidence for the allegation that there were false statements in the Appellant's July 12 email. Absent such evidence, the Session's finding is clearly in error.

In the 6th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in finding

RE Dudt guilty of the second charge of the indictment, to wit, violating the ninth commandment, by the July 12th email as a whole. Appellant alleges that Session, without evidence, found that "The purpose of the Letter (specifically, his use of the SJC decision) was to challenge the competency, credibility, and trustworthiness of the Session. Mr. Dudt did not accurately represent the Session's process or position. He employed partial truth to bias the congregation against its elders in order to defeat their recommendation at the forthcoming . . . congregational meeting."

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Appellant's purpose in the letter is clearly stated: "I am asking the congregation to support a substitute motion to postpone this meeting until January 2021 to allow the congregation reasonable time to prayerfully consider the church's needs, the men's qualifications, the establishment of a pulpit committee, and the subsidence of the global pandemic to allow for a greater congregational participation." This purpose is misstated in the Session's indictment: "in order to defeat their recommendation at the forthcoming . . . congregational meeting." The Session clearly erred in the judgment made about the content of the email. The ROC does not sustain the claim that Session showed that RE Dudt's email to the congregation constituted an offense as defined by *BCO* 29-1.

In the 7th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in finding RE Dudt guilty of the second charge of the indictment, to wit, violating ordination vow 6 when evidence to the contrary, from SJC 2015-11, was prohibited from being introduced at the trial.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. There is no citation in the ROC that sustains this allegation. However, it is of interest to note that the case referred to in the specification shows that the SJC ruled that: “The admonitions given [the accused] as represented in the Indictment could be interpreted as instructing [the accused] not to send any emails regarding church business, not even one composed with temperate language, and with accurate, non-confidential content, and sent to willing recipients. . . . A ban of that scope would be beyond the powers of a Session because that prohibition would have no basis in the general moral regulations of Scripture.” (SJC 2015-11, *Thompson v. S. Florida*, M44GA, p. 539)

In the 8th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by not investigating the alleged offenses prior to indicting RE Dudt, thus violating *BCO* 31-2.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 1st specification of Session error.

In the 9th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by not investigating the alleged offenses prior to indicting RE Dudt, thus violating *BCO* 31-2. Further, the specification alleges that the Session erred passing a resolution prohibiting all active officers from publicly disagreeing with the Session. Appellant alleges that this resolution provided a foundation, *ex post facto*, for the accusations against RE Dudt with respect to his July 12th email.

This specification of error is not sustained, in part, and sustained, in part.

A Minute Explanatory. As to the first part, concerning *BCO* 31-2, see specification of error 1. As to the second part, it is sustained. The so-called “Talley Resolution” clearly violates *BCO* PP II.7 and WCF 20-2. Such *in thesi* deliverances form no part of the Constitution of the Church and have no binding power. Yet the question of their authority and of their binding power typically at once become a subject of controversy and needlessly divide the Church. A Session cannot authoritatively establish the meaning of the *BCO*, it can only interpret

it in light of its history and its sense as received by the Church. No officer can be subject to discipline for disagreeing with, or violating, such a resolution. Further, the Resolution is effectively a bill of attainder, i.e., an act of a legislature declaring a person, or a group of people, guilty of some crime, and punishing them, without a trial, and as such it is invalid. It is instructive to note that a bill of attainder is prohibited in the United States Constitution and that every state constitution also expressly forbids bills of attainder. The *BCO* clearly forbids such a procedure in, for example, 24-7 and Preliminary Principle 8.

In the 10th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by classifying the alleged offenses as “general” when no heresy or immorality was involved.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Appellant appears to understand the difference between “personal offenses” and “general offenses” (*BCO* 29-3) to be the kind of criminality involved. In fact the difference is concerning the offended: Personal, when one or more particular individuals are the subject; general, when that is not the case.

In the 11th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by classifying the alleged offenses as “public,” while he alleges that they were only known to a few.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Whatever the degrees of understanding of relative criminality might have been, the email to the congregation makes it categorically “public.”

In the 12th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by not sending a committee to converse with RE Dudt before instituting process.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The provisions of *BCO* 31-7 make the use of such a committee entirely at the Session’s discretion and the Appellant

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

has provided no evidence that such a committee would have “promote[d] the interests of religion” in this case.

In the 13th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in not following the principles of Matthew 18.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC shows that the two elders, Keesee and Talley, who initiated the charges, first spoke with RE Dudt privately.

In the 14th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in assigning malicious motive to RE Dudt in the production and distribution of his July 12th email, contrary to his expressed intent.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 6th specification of Session error.

In the 15th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in failing to follow the procedures of *BCO* 32-3.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The minutes of the Special Session Meeting of October 7, 2020, and the dating of the indictment clearly show that the Session conflated the provisions of *BCO* 32-3. However, Appellant did not raise a point of order, as was his right, at that meeting, nor at the Stated Session Meeting of October 19, 2020 when he was called upon to plead with respect to the indictment; and the error did not cause material harm to Appellant’s cause.

In the 16th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in that the indictment did not match the charges made received at the October 7, 2020, Special Session Meeting.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. There is no provision in the Rules of Discipline that requires an indictment to include all of the wording included in a

APPENDIX T

charge received. Further, if there was an error, it is the error of the Prosecutor, not the Session. In any case, the error did not cause material harm to Appellant's cause.

In the 17th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges Session erred by instituting process as if the prosecution was instituted by the court when it was initiated by two elders when they called for the October 7, 2020 Session meeting to indict the RE Dudt.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC shows the MPC Session voted to commence process against RE Dudt at a duly constituted meeting of the court on October 7, 2020. (187)

In the 18th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges Session erred by allowing an elder to prosecute the case without first attempting to reconcile and reclaim the offender in violation of *BCO* 31-5.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 13th specification of Session error.

In the 19th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred when several members of the court failed to study the Rules of Discipline in preparation for the trial.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. It is wise for the members of a church court to study the Rules of Discipline, but the ROC does not establish that the Rules were not understood by the court. Additionally, the ROC indicates the moderator summarized the Rules in the Session meeting on October 7, 2020.

In the 20th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by not demanding that the members of the pastoral staff attempt the means of reconciliation.

This specification of error is not sustained.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A Minute Explanatory. There is no constitutional requirement that the Session direct the pastoral staff to pursue reconciliation. Also see Minute for the 13th specification of Session error.

In the 21st specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred because three associate pastors did not recuse themselves since the alleged offenses were directly related to the calling of them to associate pastor and two of them argued in favor of the indictment and conviction of RE Dudt.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC does not indicate the Appellant challenged the right of any member of the court to sit in the trial. (*BCO* 32-16)

In the 22nd specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by denying RE Dudt's request for an independent moderator.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. While it would have been wise to have procured an independent moderator in this case, it was not constitutionally required.

In the 23rd specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by allowing RE Dudt only one communing member of the congregation to represent him at trial before the Session when *BCO* 32-19 states "an accused person, if he desires it, may be represented before the Session by any communing member of the same particular church."

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The substance of *BCO* 32-19 is that professional counsel is not permitted, not that the accused is limited to only one representative.

In the 24th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by receiving accusations from witnesses deeply interested in the conviction of the accused (*BCO* 31-8).

This specification of error is sustained.

APPENDIX T

A Minute Explanatory. The Record indicates there are at least two instances of evidence of accusations being received from individuals who were “deeply interested in any respect to the conviction of the accused.” *BCO* 31-8 does not prohibit accusations from witnesses that are deeply interested in a conviction, but the provision does require the exercise of great caution. There is no evidence in the ROC that any caution, great or otherwise, was exercised by the court with respect to these witnesses. (*BCO* 31-8).

In the 25th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred during the trial by allowing the moderator to relinquish and reassume the chair, which allowed him to examine witnesses.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. *Robert’s Rules of Order* states: “The presiding officer who relinquished the chair then may not return to it until the pending main question has been disposed of, since he has shown himself to be a partisan as far as that particular matter is concerned. Indeed, unless a presiding officer is extremely sparing in leaving the chair to take part in debate, he may destroy members’ confidence in the impartiality of his approach to the task of presiding.” RONR (12th ed.) 43:29

In the 26th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred when several elders testified that they had been angry with RE Dudt and therefore should have recused themselves to avoid violating *BCO* 27-4 and *BCO* 31-8.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC does not indicate the members of the court exercised their power out of “wrath” (*BCO* 27-4).

In the 27th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by not allowing members of the congregation to attend the trial when they voted to conduct the proceedings in executive session.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. It was constitutionally permissible for the Session to conduct the trial in executive session.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In the 28th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by conducting the trial in executive session in conflict with the requirement of minute keeping of the procedures stated in *BCO* 32-18.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC indicates that careful records of the procedures, including the trial with transcript, were completed as directed in *BCO* 32-18.

A 29th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by not allowing RE Dudt's wife to attend the trial.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 27th specification of Session error.

A 30th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred by declining to receive proper evidence (*BCO* 42-3) that could have contradicted the indictment's claims that RE Dudt's actions that "led to a divisive congregational meeting" when lines of questioning to witnesses about the congregational meeting were ruled out of order by the moderator on grounds of relevancy.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The Moderator improperly ruled out of order questions that may have led to testimony that contradicted the indictment's charge of divisiveness. When an objection was raised against the Moderator's ruling, Session upheld the Moderator's ruling.

A 31st specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred when the moderator, when questioned during the trial, did not definitely state that the burden of proof rests with the prosecution.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The burden of proof is placed on the prosecution.
SJC 1998-08 states:

APPENDIX T

"The fact that the burden of proof is on the prosecution is clear from several procedures in our Book of Church Order. First, the reason why the prosecution argues first at trial, and has the closing remarks, is because the burden of proof is on the prosecution. Second, the accused is not required to testify and the defense need not even present a case. The prosecution, however, must present a case. Third, if an accused person ignores repeated citations to plead, or to appear for trial, that person can be censured for contumacy. He is not, however, censured for the offense on which he was indicted because his guilt on that charge has not yet been proven." (Beverly Smith v. Southwest, M28GA, pp. 218, 227)

A 32nd specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session's moderator and clerk refused to distribute copies of the trial audio recordings to the accused within four weeks of Appellant's conviction and, therefore, Session erred in violation of *BCO* 32-18.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC does not furnish evidence of such a request having been refused by Session, whether through Session's moderator or through Session's clerk. However, if the ROC had demonstrated this, it would have been a Session error.

A 33rd specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in violation of *BCO* 42-6 when it announced to the congregation the Appellant's censure approximately an hour and a half after Appellant had filed notice of appeal with the Clerk of Session.

A 34th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that the wording of Session's November 12 letter to the congregation, announcing Session's judgment and Appellant's censure, violated *BCO* 42-6.

These two specifications of error are sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. *BCO* 42-6 reads in part, "Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court." Appellant filed notice of appeal, dated November 11, 2020, to Clerk of Presbytery .

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

That notice had the effect of suspending Session's judgment in the trial of Appellant. Session therefore erred when it communicated to the congregation on November 12 that Appellant had been censured.

A 35th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in violation of *BCO* 42-6 when it prevented Appellant from exercising his official functions without documenting sufficient reasons.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Invoking *BCO* 42-6 and 31-10, Session acted to suspend Appellant from the functions of office, without censure, and offered grounds for its action.

A 36th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in violation of *BCO* 42-6 in prohibiting RE Dudt from "performing non-office related duties."

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC indicates that a member of Session's Restoration Committee communicated to Appellant that his suspension from office did include activities that the specification characterizes as "non-office related duties." But the ROC does not indicate that Session acted to prohibit Appellant from performing particular duties not related to his office.

A 37th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in the "harshness of its censure to suspend RE Dudt from the functions of office for his alleged offense," and should have, rather, imposed the censure of admonition.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The censure of admonition is to be administered to "an accused, who, upon conviction, satisfies the court as to his repentance and makes such restitution as is appropriate. Such censure concludes the judicial process" (*BCO* 30-1). In the judgment of the Session at the time of the imposition of censure, Appellant had not met the requisite conditions for the censure of admonition and, therefore, the Session was in no position to inflict this censure upon Appellant. This

APPENDIX T

Minute should not be construed as an endorsement of Session's judgment at the time of the imposition of censure.

A 38th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in violation of *BCO* 42-6 when the Session's Restoration Committee sent an email to Appellant on November 16, 2020 "to begin the process of restoration even though all committee members knew that the notice of appeal, which suspended the judgment, had been filed, thus not respecting RE Dudt's right of appeal (*BCO* 42-6)."

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The email in question was written by a member of the committee "on behalf of the restoration committee." As such, any alleged error would be of the committee and not of the Session. The ROC does not demonstrate that the contents of the email communicated actions of the Session.

A 39th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred when it allowed a TE "who testified during the trial that he did not privately discuss this matter with RE Dudt due to a perceived conflict of interest" to write, on behalf of the Restoration Committee, to Appellant the email of November 16, 2020.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC does not indicate that Session appointed or expressly permitted this TE to write the email of November 16, 2020.

A 40th specification of Session error, Appellant alleges that Session erred in violation of *BCO* 42-6 when an email sent by a member of the Session's Restoration Committee communicated to Appellant that his suspension would "persist even in the presence of an appeal [citing *BCO* 36-5]" notwithstanding the judgment of the lower court having been suspended by Appellant's filing notice of appeal.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The ROC shows that the language in question is that of a member of a committee of Session but does not show that this language is that of the Session.

A 1st specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred in violation of *BCO* 42-5 when it allowed testimony taken after the trial to be included in the ROC.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. The Session does not dispute that such testimony was so added, but argues that this inclusion is permissible under *BCO* 42-5 (“any papers bearing on the case”). But testimony taken after the trial is not a “paper bearing on the case” (*BCO* 42-5; cf. *BCO* 35-13,14) and, as such, should not have been added to the ROC.

A 2nd specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred in violation of *BCO* 42-3 (“refusal of reasonable indulgence to a party on trial”) when it declined Appellant’s request to reformat the ROC.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. *BCO* 42-3 governs the lower court’s actions in the course of a trial. As such, it does not regulate a higher court’s responsibilities with respect to reformatting the existing transcript of a trial conducted by a lower court.

A 3rd specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred in violation of *BCO* 42-4 when it concluded that Appellant had not submitted notice of appeal on November 12, 2020 because Appellant’s filing lacked supporting reasons, and that Appellant only properly submitted (that is, with supporting reasons) his appeal on December 7, 2020.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. *BCO* 42-4 envisions two distinct actions that Presbytery has conflated in its adjudication of this matter. First, “notice of appeal may be given the court before its adjournment.” Second, Appellant has thirty days to submit “written notice of appeal, with supporting reasons” to the clerks of the lower and higher courts.

A 4th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred in its ruling that Session did not violate *BCO* 42-6 when Session announced to the congregation the Appellant’s conviction and censure on November 12.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 33rd and 34th specifications of Session error.

A 5th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred in violation of *BCO* 42-8 when it failed to answer each specification of error alleged in Appellant's appeal.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Presbytery declined to address the Appellant's specifications "in an *ad seriatim* fashion" and adopted "a summative approach," "rul[ing] against all 40 grounds, with only some given a response". But *BCO* 42-8 requires the higher court "to vote on each specification in this form: Shall this specification of error be sustained?"

A 6th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges Presbytery erred by concluding that the claim that the MPC Session was prejudiced was "never substantiated."

This specification of error is not sustained.

A 7th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred by not overturning RE Dudt's conviction on the first specification of the indictment. Appellant alleges that he was indicted and convicted for lack of submission to the "express" will of the Session. He further alleges that Presbytery found only that RE Dudt had violated what they took to be the implied will of the Session, and, without warrant, found that supposed implication sufficient to convict.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Presbytery's substituting of implied will for express will is clearly in error. See Minute for the 4th specification of Session error.

An 8th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred by not sustaining the Appellant's claims that he was denied reasonable indulgences (*BCO* 42-3) that included an independent moderator, a court

reporter, the trial not be held in executive session and permitting his wife to attend the trial.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 22nd, 27th, 28th, and 29th specifications of Session error.

A 9th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred in violation of *BCO* 32-18 when it declared in its Written Decision that Appellant had mischaracterized as “hasty” a decision of Session that “in fact ... had been discussed and deliberated upon for several months prior to the called congregational meeting”. Appellant alleges that this declaration (“in fact ... meeting”) “is not one of the Facts of the Case.”

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. *BCO* 32-18 prevents the higher court from taking into consideration anything “not contained” in the ROC. But Appellant’s allegation reflects a difference between Appellant and Appellee with respect to the interpretation of the contents of the ROC.

A 10th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery “due to its conflict of interest regarding the inclusion of the SJC decision” acted prejudicially against the Appellant when it devoted “nearly one-third” of its Written Decision to Appellant’s distribution of an SJC Case to the congregation.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Appellant has not demonstrated either that Presbytery had a conflict of interest in this matter or that such alleged conflict of interest accounts for the proportion of the treatment of this matter relative to the length of Presbytery’s Written Decision as a whole.

An 11th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred in concurring with the Session in classifying the alleged offenses as “public,” while he alleges that they were only known to a few.

This specification of error is not sustained.

APPENDIX T

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 11th specification of Session error.

A 12th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred when it accepted the Session's claim that RE Dudt's email divided the congregation.

This specification of error is not sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. Presbytery, not having found clear error on the part of the Session with respect to this factual claim, exhibited appropriate deference to the lower court's finding.

A 13th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred by not recognizing that the MPC Session failed to exercise great caution by receiving accusations from witnesses "deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused" (*BCO* 31-8).

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 24th specification of Session error.

A 14th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred by ruling that charge 1 of the Session's indictment, citing Acts 15:24-25; Titus 1:6-7, 10, gave adequate Scriptural support for the charge that RE Dudt's email constituted an offense as defined by *BCO* 29-1.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 3rd specification of Session error.

A 15th specification of Presbytery error, Appellant alleges that Presbytery erred by condoning the indictment's assigned motive to RE Dudt's July 12, 2020, email to the congregation.

This specification of error is sustained.

A Minute Explanatory. See Minute for the 6th specification of Session error.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Panel decision was written by TE David Coffin, RE Bruce Terrell, TE Guy Waters, RE Steve Dowling, and TE Paul Kooistra, and edited and approved by the Panel 3-0-0.”

The SJC modified and approved the decision on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Absent</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Not Qual.</i>
Cannata <i>Concur</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Concur</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Concur</i>	White <i>Absent</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Concur</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>
M. Duncan <i>Absent</i> (19-0-0)	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>	

Concurring Opinion

of RE Howie Donahoe, joined by TE Sean Lucas, TE Charles McGowan, TE Mike Ross, RE Dan Carrell, RE EJ Nusbaum, RE Bruce Terrell

We concurred with the Decision but believe two comments are warranted - one as a critique of a Session trial court procedure and the other as a general caution regarding individual elders emailing their congregations.

1. The Summary of the Facts indicates that on November 11, 2020, “The trial commenced at 7:30 pm and concluded at 5:40 am the next day.” The Record indicates the meeting concluded at 5:40 am, but it’s unclear when the defense and prosecution closing arguments occurred. Presumably, because there were three prosecution witnesses and 16 defense witnesses, it was probably well after midnight. That is a highly unreasonable way to conduct a trial. An overnight trial is extraordinary, and so is a court discussing the verdict and censure during the wee hours of the morning. The Record does not indicate time was of the essence in this matter. The trial court committed a clear error of judgment in this procedure, despite the defendant’s failure to object.

However, because the Appellant didn’t cite this matter as a specification of error, the SJC did not address it, following *BCO* 39-3.1: “A higher court, reviewing a lower court, should limit itself to the issues raised by the parties to the case in the original (lower) court.” While we agree the SJC should avoid basing judgments on issues unraised by the parties, it is proper to raise concerns about a lower court error, nonetheless. Doing so helps to clarify that

serious errors evident in the Summary of the Facts, and thus evident to the reader, are not necessarily judged as benign.

2. It would be unfortunate for anyone to conclude, that because this Appeal was sustained, it is appropriate for a Session member to email his congregation expressing disagreement with a Session decision. Such conduct would rarely be wise or appropriate.

It would be unfortunate if any elder feels emboldened by this ruling. Session members have several avenues for expressing disagreement with a Session decision, some wiser than others, depending on the circumstances. And ordination vows 5 and 6 certainly must have some bearing on the matter - #5. "Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?" #6. "Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity, and edification of the Church?"

In addressing Appellant specification of error #3, the SJC ruled: "The Session had a right to refuse to distribute the SJC decision in question. The Session had no right to forbid RE Dudt from doing so, the 5th ordination vow notwithstanding." We agree. The SJC Decision in Case 2019-03 *Crouse v. Northwest Georgia* was a General Assembly action and one which the congregation had a right to see, regardless of whether the SJC Decision found error in a Session action. (BCO 14-7)

But the Session's decision declining to distribute the Decision was not the lone concern expressed by the Appellant in his July 2020 email to the congregation. He offered other critiques of the Session, including his disagreement with the Session's decision to recommend the congregation promote three assistant pastors to associates and his disagreement with the Session's interpretation of BCO 20-2.

The Decision ruled that the Appellant's distribution of the *Crouse* Decision was not a censurable offense. (Charge 1; Appellant specification of error #3, sustained by the SJC) The Decision also ruled that the Session did not prove the email contained false statements or that the email "as a whole" violated the 9th commandment. (Charge 2; Appellant specifications of error #5 and #6, sustained by the SJC) Nevertheless, the propriety and wisdom of sending such an email to the congregation is, in our opinion, highly questionable.

There are few things that disturb the peace and unity of a church more than individual elders bringing to public attention their disagreements with Session decisions. And few things disturb the peace and unity of a church more than

a Session putting an elder on trial for actions related to disagreements with the Session. Not many things divide a church more quickly.

CASE NO. 2021-06
DANIEL HERRON, ET AL.
v.
CENTRAL INDIANA PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
June 2, 2022

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The genesis of this case is a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of TE Daniel Herron on various reports concerning his Christian character. The *BCO* 15-1 non-judicial commission, appointed by CIP on September 13, 2019, met with the TE in question and his accusers over a period of months in the fall of 2019 and made a full report to CIP's Church Planting team in January 2020. The report concluded: "The Commission does not believe there is a 'strong presumption of guilt of the party involved.'" The Commission added, "[I]t is the judgment of the commission that there is enough weight to the allegations that pastoral, corrective measures are in order."

Presbytery "received" an edited version of the full report containing the two recommendations. A complaint was ultimately filed with the SJC against CIP's not finding "a strong presumption of guilt" regarding the accused and for not receiving the full report. The SJC referred the matter back to CIP with instructions to appoint a committee to conduct a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of reports concerning the TE and to "pursue whatever other lines of investigation may be prudent."

The Investigative Committee (IC), appointed by CIP on March 5, 2021, reported on May 14, 2021, finding a strong presumption of guilt regarding TE Herron and recommending that six charges be brought against him. CIP 1) approved the report and approved a motion to try the case as a committee of the whole, 2) suspended TE Herron per *BCO* 31-10 and, 3) released a public statement about actions taken by CIP. After the suspension, CIP denied TE Herron access to meetings and minutes from subsequent meetings of CIP. TE Herron, joined by four others, complained against CIP's actions.

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 07/02/2019 Five former members or attenders of a PCA Mission Church sent a letter to Central Indiana Presbytery (CIP) accusing a Teaching Elder (TE) of alleged sins.
- 09/13/2019 CIP appointed a non-judicial commission to begin a *BCO* 31-2 investigation.
- 11/21/2019 Having met with the accusers of the TE as well as the TE himself over the past two months, CIP's Commission decided to interview more witnesses.
- 01/2020 CIP's Commission submitted a full report to the CIP Church Planting Team: "The Commission does not believe there is a 'strong presumption of guilt of the party involved' (*BCO* 31-2) with regard to the accusations sexual harassment, intimidation, and bullying, or that the TE is guilty of an offense as defined in *BCO* 29 (no violation of divine law, heresies, or immoralities)." They then observed, "It is the judgment of the commission that there is enough weight to the allegations that pastoral, corrective measures are in order."
- 02/14/2020 The initial report of the Commission was presented to CIP. After objections were raised to the Commission's initial report, the Commission met during lunch and decided to withdraw their initial report and present an edited report. This edited Commission report was received by CIP. The full report of the Commission was never presented to CIP.
- 02/27/2020 TE Marusich filed a complaint against the actions of CIP. This complaint had four allegations: (1) CIP erred in not finding a "strong presumption of guilt" against the accused; (2) CIP's Commission erred by exceeding its mandate and taking up business not referred to it; (3) CIP's Commission erred by not submitting a full record of its proceedings to the court appointing it; (4) CIP's Commission erred in not delivering the full report of their findings to the Presbytery, the accused's court of original jurisdiction.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 07/10/2020 CIP met to address the complaint from TE Marusich. The presbytery sustained items (2) and (3) and denied items (1) and (4).
- 07/20/2020 TE Marusich carried his complaint regarding items (1) and (4) to the General Assembly. The Case was designated as Case No. 2020-04.
- 12/01/2020 The proposed panel decision for Case No. 2020-04 was sent to the parties. The CIP moderator called a meeting to determine how CIP would proceed with the requirements sent down with the SJC's preliminary panel decision.
- 01/08/2021 At the called meeting, and following representations from TE Marusich, CIP voted to rescind the original commission report (vote 23-0-1). CIP moved to dismiss the committee formed to rewrite the commission report (voice vote). CIP approved referring the case back to the SJC contingent on the full court's acceptance of the proposed panel decision (vote 18-5-2).
- 02/04/2021 The SJC issued the final ruling for Case No. 2020-04.
- 02/10/2021 TE Marusich filed charges against TE Herron, citing violations of the 5th and 7th Commandments, *BCO* 21-4.1a, and violations of his ordination vows.
- 02/12/2021 CIP met in executive session to consider the charges brought by TE Marusich. The presbytery voted to move to trial (27-0-1). First date of trial was set for 03/05/2021.
- 02/18/2021 CIP called a meeting for 03/05/2021 to discuss CIP contracting with Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE) to investigate charges against TE Herron. This meeting was scheduled to precede the start of the trial on 03/05/2021. Prior to this meeting of the CIP, a series of social media posts going back to December 2020 were posted by one of the accusers. Also, certain highly sensitive and privileged executive session materials were posted on social media
- 03/02/2021 CIP Stated Clerk distributed documents of motions intended to be made at the 03/05/2021 Called Meeting.

APPENDIX T

03/05/2021 At the called meeting a letter from TE Marusich was read in which he communicated his desire to “rescind” his charges against TE Herron. A point of order was raised challenging the motion made in the letter. Moderator Passwater ruled that the motion was in order and his ruling was challenged. The ruling was challenged, and the vote (13-15-3) was mistakenly ruled by the Moderator as a vote that sustained his ruling. Eventually, CIP voted to “endorse the dismissal of the charges by TE Marusich by a vote of 25-6-1.

CIP also passed a motion to form a new IC “to consider evidence of a strong presumption of guilt of a chargeable offense with regard to allegations against the Christian character to TE Dan Herron, concerning accusations of sexual harassment and intimidation pursuant to *BCO* 31-2, and Bylaws, IV and in accordance with the directive of the Standing Judicial Commission in case 2020-04...” committee to investigate the matter and report back to CIP (24-6-2).

03/23/2021 TE Herron reached out to the *BCO* 31-2 Committee chair TE Josh Hollowell to provide his email address and expressed willingness to provide any needed information to the committee.

04/18/2021 TE Hollowell reached out to TE Herron to update him on the proceedings of the Committee and communicated, in part, “...I wanted to reach out to you and let you know that we are continuing to process all the information provided to us by the record of the case for the SJC and investigating any new information. At this point we do not plan to reinterview anyone that the prior commission had interviewed unless we have a clarifying question. We don't want to go over the same ground that the previous commission did nor subject anyone to more questioning than is necessary. If, however we receive new information we may reach out to ask you some questions regarding anything new. If you have information that you would like to pass on to the Committee please contact me by email or phone and provide a short summary of the information you would like to pass along so that we can discuss how we want to proceed...”

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 05/12/2021 *BCO* 31-2 Committee chair TE Josh Hollowell emailed TE Herron requesting limited responses to questions from the Committee. TE Herron emailed his responses.
- 05/14/2021 CIP Stated Meeting. 31-2 Committee presented its report describing that they believed there was sufficient evidence for a strong presumption of guilt. CIP also approved a motion to suspend TE Herron from office (*BCO* 31-10) and to publicly distribute an official statement that included information about the charges, suspension, and eventual trial of TE Herron. CIP declared that the statement was “releaseable [sic] to all TE’s and RE’s of CIP and releaseable [sic] to the public upon request. The Stated Clerk emailed TE Herron the results of the meeting
- 05/16/2021 Information about the actions taken by CIP appeared on social media.
- 05/20/2021 TE Herron requested minutes of the 05/14/2021 Stated Meeting and a copy of the report from the committee that conducted the *BCO* 31-2 investigation. The State Clerk denied his request.
- 06/18/2021 Complainants (TE Herron, et al) filed with CIP a Complaint against the action taken on 05/14/2021.
- 07/07/2021 CIP called meeting to consider the complaint of the actions taken on 05/14/2021. The CIP denied all parts of the Complaint.
- 07/13/2021 TE Herron and others bring their Complaint to the Standing Judicial Commission.
- 11/23/2021 Case assigned to Original Panel REs John White, Mel Duncan, and E. J. Nusbaum (Alternate) and TEs Sean Lucas and Paul Lee (Alternate)
- 12/21/2021 The Panel was expanded. RE E. J. Nusbaum and TE Paul Lee were designated to be primary members. RE Howard Donahoe and TE Mike Ross were added as alternates.

APPENDIX T

- 01/17/2022 Panel conducted a Hearing to perfect the Record of the Case.
- 03/21/2022 Panel conducted Hearing. Hearing was conducted by GoToMeeting. Panel members RE White (chairman), RE Nusbaum (secretary), RE M. Duncan, TE Lucas, TE Lee, RE Donahoe (alternate) and TE Ross (alternate) were present. The Complainant, TE Herron was present and accompanied by RE Huber and TE O'Bannon. The Respondent was represented by TE Holroyd and RE Barber.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

- A. Did CIP err when they proceeded to process after hearing the report of the Investigative Committee (IC)?
- B. Did CIP err when they suspended TE Dan Herron per *BCO* 31-10?
- C. Did CIP err when they restricted TE Herron from receiving the report of the *BCO* 31-2 Investigative Committee and the minutes and attachments from meetings of CIP?
- D. Did CIP err when they approved and issued a public statement that communicated the decision made by CIP on May 14, 2021?

III. JUDGMENTS

- A. No
- B. No
- C. Yes
- D. No

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

Specification A - Proceeding to Process after hearing the Report of the IC.

In this specification of error, the Complainants raise the Constitutional issue of what constitutes “due diligence and great discretion” and “satisfactory explanations” concerning an accused in a *BCO* 31-2 investigation. The *BCO* provides neither detailed standards for such investigation nor for what is required to determine “a strong presumption of the guilt of the party involved.” Those matters are left to the judgment of the court, which is subject to review by a higher court.

In reviewing actions of a lower court, “A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties.” (*BCO* 39-3).

In this case, we note that all the documents and interviews of the first non-judicial commission that investigated TE Herron were provided to the IC. The IC also conducted additional interviews and received additional documentation. This additional evidence collected by the IC contained 19 statements in support of TE Herron and 8 statements providing evidence against him. In total, the IC reviewed nearly 300 pages of documentation. The documentation included a seventeen-page letter from the accused, a 56-page transcript of an interview of the accused and an email response from the accused.

The Complainants argue that the IC 31-2 investigation, in demanding “satisfactory explanations” concerning the Christian character of the accused, should have “elicit[ed] appropriate exculpatory communications and conversations with TE Herron...” Since the *BCO* is silent on what constitutes “satisfactory explanations,” it is left to the discretion of the lower court to judge what constitutes those explanations. Yet, the primary purpose of a *BCO* 31-2 investigation is to determine whether the threshold of “a strong presumption of the guilt of the party” is met.

Dr. Morton Smith, in his *Commentary on the PCA Book of Church Order*, notes, “The Court may, even when believing that there is no guilt, institute process for the purpose of vindicating the innocent party. Thus, the Court has unlimited discretion, except when a strong presumption of guilt has been raised by investigation.”

A trial allows both the prosecutor and the accused to present their cases under oath so that those sitting in judgment are able to weigh point-by-point the totality of the testimony and other evidence. It is for those who sit in judgment at the trial to be impartial and view the competency of witnesses testimony and evidence, discounting “accusations from any person who is known to indulge a malignant spirit towards the accused; who is not of good character; who is himself under censure or process; who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused; or who is known to be litigious, rash or highly imprudent.” (*BCO* 31-8) *BCO* 32-13 also provides, “In order that a trial be fair and impartial, the witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the accused...” and also allows for cross-examination by the parties.

Because the Record does not show evidence that clear error was committed by CIP, the complaint concerning this specification of error is denied.

Specification B - Suspension of TE Herron per BCO 31-10.

BCO 31-10 - “When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court’s discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure.”

The Complainant contends the imposition of his suspension from official functions violated *BCO* 31-10. However, absent some censure statement from the original court, the intention to censure is difficult to demonstrate or for the higher court to notice. The Record did not sufficiently demonstrate evidence warranting finding that Presbytery violated the final clause of *BCO* 31-10.

We understand a minister’s suspension from “all his official functions” would certainly feel like a censure, and very likely have a similar effect. The *BCO* does not stipulate a deadline for commencing a trial after a prosecutor has been appointed. And the appeal process takes many months. Furthermore, unless his church can afford to pay him and his temporary replacement, the non-disciplinary suspension would likely impact his salary and his family's finances (unlike ruling elders under similar non-disciplinary suspensions). And a non-disciplinary suspension could eventually result in the minister losing his job, even if he eventually was acquitted or prevailed on appeal. Therefore, courts should be careful to ensure this is “never” done in the way of censure.

In the Judgment for Issue C, we note that access to presbytery meetings and minutes is not ordinarily to be treated as one of a minister’s “official functions” covered in *BCO* 31-10. He ordinarily still retains those rights even when the non-censure suspension of *BCO* 31-10 is imposed.

Because the Record does not show evidence that CIP clearly erred in the application of *BCO* 31-10, the Complaint concerning this specification is denied.

Specification C – Restricting the Complainant from receiving the report of the BCO 31-2 investigative committee and other minutes and attachments from meetings of CIP.

While judicatories are allowed to suspend those under process from their official functions, following *BCO* 31-10, this suspension is administrative in nature. Such suspensions do not have the effect of removing someone as a member of the body; as a result, as a member of that court, Complainant would have the same rights to the minutes and reports of the Presbytery as any other member would have. In this regard, the SJC sustains Complainant on this point.

By restricting his access to the minutes of the Presbytery, including executive session minutes, Presbytery demonstrated a “refusal of reasonable indulgence” to a person against whom process was beginning (*BCO* 43-2). And by restricting his access to called meetings, which are themselves public meetings, Presbytery also created an unreasonable burden on Complainant in understanding fully what the action of the Presbytery against him was. While there might be reasons where it would be appropriate to ask Complainant to recuse himself from executive session meetings where matters of his disciplinary process would be discussed, Presbytery went too far and created a potential future ground of appeal if they continued down this path.

That said, the SJC does not agree with the Complainant that he would necessarily have the right to “the minutes and documents of the *BCO* 31-2 Committee.” An investigative committee might interview several people who may or may not have ended up being significant for determining whether there was a strong presumption of guilt in a certain matter. Likewise, a committee might collect a range of documents that are not germane to their investigation. Surely it would be inappropriate to disclose each witness, all testimony, and every document to an accused individual upon his request. Those witnesses, documents, and evidence that are germane to the charges and specifications will be made known in the indictment; at that point, the accused should have access to those materials to prepare a defense (*BCO* 32-4, 5, 8).

Specification D – Approval and Release of a Public Statement that Communicated the Decision Made by CIP on May 14, 2021.

Once again, this issue turns on *BCO* 39-3(3): “A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties.” While other judicatories may have handled the matter differently based on their own local circumstances, CIP decided to approve and authorize a “public statement, releasable to all TEs and REs of CIP and releasable to the public upon request”.

Because this matter was already public, and because the Presbytery needed to care for the peace, purity, and unity of the Church at large and the churches of the Presbytery, they exercised their judgment to make a statement on the matter. Because this is a matter of discretion and judgment, the SJC exhibits deference to CIP in this matter and rules that it did not err in approving a public statement in this matter.

Conclusion - In several recent complaints arising from this Presbytery, procedural confusion has come from allowing people to file *BCO* 43-1 complaints against some aspect of the judicial process *after* the court has found a strong presumption of guilt, and thus, after process has commenced. Allowing and adjudicating such pre-trial *BCO* 43-1 complaints could significantly delay a trial, especially if adjudication of each complaint needs to wait for the next meeting of presbytery, or wait for an SJC decision. For example, an accused person might seek to file complaints against:

1. the investigative procedures (as in this Case)
2. the appointment of a particular prosecutor
3. the wording of the indictment
4. the appointment of a particular member of the trial commission
5. the date of the trial
6. any pre-trial rulings of the trial court (allowable defense counsel, witness citations, length of briefs, scheduled length of trial, length of closing arguments, etc.)

Allowing such pre-trial *BCO* 43-1 complaints could also ping-pong matters indefinitely. For example, an accused person might file a *BCO* 43-1 complaint against the appointment of a particular prosecutor. If Presbytery sustains it, then some other presbyter might file a *BCO* 43-1 complaint against that decision. And either of those complainants might take their complaint to the SJC. Theoretically, the matter might never get to trial if objections are handled as *BCO* 43-1 complaints rather than as objections the trial court addresses via *BCO* 32-14.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *BCO* 32-14. “On all questions arising in the progress of a trial, the discussion shall first be between the parties; and when they have been heard, they may be required to withdraw from the court until the members deliberate upon and decide the point.”

Amends - The SJC instructs the Presbytery to proceed to a trial, given that Presbytery found a strong presumption of guilt on certain allegations on May 14, 2021, and the SJC has declined to sustain the Complaint against those findings. Absent a confession or the dismissal of all charges, Presbytery does not have the option to decline to institute process. This is clear in the 1898 F. P. Ramsay quote below. (Emphasis added throughout.)

And after an investigation is once originated, the court no longer has discretion not to institute process if the investigation results in raising a strong presumption of guilt of the accused. It appears, then, that, after an investigation, the court must always institute process, except where the court judges that the investigation fails to result in raising a strong presumption of guilt, and, of course, the court may institute process, even when the members of the court believe that there is no guilt, if they are persuaded that this is desirable for the vindication of innocence or for other reasons. The sum of the matter is, that the court has unlimited discretion (subject, as in all matters, to the review of higher courts), only that it has not discretion to raise by investigation a strong presumption of guilt and then not institute process. A strong presumption means a belief by the members of the court that evidence as then known to them would indicate that guilt probably exists, unless evidence to the contrary can be produced not then known to them. (Ramsey, *Exposition of the Book of Church Order* [1898, pp. 185-186], on RoD, V-2.)

The Record indicates Presbytery adopted the motion below on January 8, 2021, by a vote of 18-5-2, which read:

Pending the acceptance of the panel decision by the full SJC [in Case No. 2020-04 *Marusich v. CIP*], per *BCO* 41-2 we refer the case [trial] back to the SJC for it to conduct the case with process. Out of concern for the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of those involved, we ask the SJC to please expedite this process.

If Presbytery had filed that Reference, things would have been far simpler. In addition to this present Complaint, there have been three others filed with regard to this matter (one prior and two pending), and this matter has been in various levels of adjudication since 2019. The

Records of these Cases total over 2500 pages. The Record and the Hearing on this present Case indicated countless pages of comments and accusations have regularly appeared on social media and in the Bloomington press. Indeed, the entire Record of the Case for the previously decided SJC Case 2020-04 has appeared on a social media platform - including Presbytery executive session minutes. The peace and purity of the Church has been disrupted as the resolution of these issues has been delayed.

Finally, the SJC temporarily suspends all decisions relating to censures against TE Herron until after the completion of the judicial process growing out of Presbytery’s *BCO* 31-2 findings of 05/14/2021.

The SJC notes it has postponed consideration of all pending (i.e., Case Nos. 2021-14, 2021-15, & 2022-02) and future Complaints on any matter related to TE Daniel Herron or related judicial matters until the completion of the judicial process growing out of Presbytery’s *BCO* 31-2 findings of 05/14/2021 and the adjudication of any subsequent appeal.

The decision was drafted and edited by the Panel and revised by the SJC. The final decision was approved on the following roll call vote:

Bankson <i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <i>Concur</i>
Bise <i>Concur</i>	Ellis <i>Concur</i>	Pickering <i>Absent</i>
Cannata <i>Recused</i>	Greco <i>Concur</i>	Ross <i>Concur</i>
Carrell <i>Concur</i>	Kooistra <i>Concur</i>	Terrell <i>Concur</i>
Coffin <i>Concur</i>	Lee <i>Absent</i>	Waters <i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <i>Concur</i>	Lucas <i>Absent</i>	White <i>Concur</i>
Dowling <i>Concur</i>	McGowan <i>Absent</i>	Wilson <i>Concur</i>
M. Duncan <i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <i>Concur</i>	
(18-0-0)		

TE Cannata recused himself because of his relationships with the parties and their representatives. *OMSJC* 2.10(d).

Concurring Opinion of RE Howie Donahoe

I concurred with the Judgments on Issues A, B, & C but believe further reasoning is warranted in A & B. I dissented on the Judgment for Issue D (regarding Presbytery’s press release).

However, before addressing those, it's worth revisiting a significant procedural problem. As the Decision implies, much of the procedural congestion in related cases in this Presbytery arises from what's known in the civil courts as "interlocutory appeals." Seven years ago, I expressed concern about allowing interlocutory appeals in a concurring opinion in *Marshall v. Pacific*. (Case 2013-03, M43GA, p. 547 ff.) And in that Case, a fellow judge's dissenting opinion expressed confidence this scenario would be unlikely, or at least easily managed. But the several complaints out of Central Indiana this year demonstrate otherwise. To avoid this in the future, perhaps *BCO 43-1* could be revised to further restrict such complaints, using something like what's shown below:

43-1. A complaint is a written representation made against some act or decision of a court of the Church. It is the right of any communing member of the Church in good standing to make complaint against any action of a court to whose jurisdiction he is subject, ~~except that no complaint is allowable in a judicial case in which an appeal is pending.~~ However, in matters related to judicial process, no complaint is allowable after process has commenced (i.e., after the court has directed the appointment of a prosecutor - *BCO 31-2; 32-2*). If a complaint is filed after process has commenced, adjudication shall be delayed until after the judicial case has been completed or, if an appeal is filed, after it has been adjudicated or withdrawn.

In this present Case, 13 months elapsed between when Presbytery voted to commence process and the SJC denied the accused minister's Complaint against investigative procedures. Would a trial be suspended again if someone filed a pre-trial *BCO 43-1* complaint against the appointment of a particular prosecutor, the trial date, the final wording of the indictment, or the appointment of some member of the trial commission? ⁶⁹

⁶⁹ In U.S. law, an "interlocutory appeal" is the appealing of a lower court ruling to an appellate court prior to the final judgment of the lower court (which is essentially what the Complainant did in this present Case.) U.S. civil courts sometimes allow such "appeals," but only if they meet very narrow requirements. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court delineated requirements for U.S. federal courts, holding that a pre-judgment appeal would be permitted only if:

1. the outcome of the case would be conclusively determined by the issue;
2. the matter appealed was collateral to the merits (i.e., of a secondary nature to);
3. and the matter was effectively unreviewable if immediate appeal were not

No party – neither the defendant nor some third party - should be granted appellate review of a decision of a court or its commission via a *BCO* 43-1 complaint *while the judicial case is in process* unless there is some clear demonstration of impending, irreparable harm. The SJC made a similar ruling in 2015 in *Marshall v. Pacific*, where an accused person filed a complaint prior to his trial alleging the indictment was incomplete. The SJC ruled as follows:

The Complaint is Judicially Out of Order, because it has to do with matters in a judicial case that an accused should reserve for proper disposal in an appeal, not through a complaint (*BCO* 32-14; 42-3), ...⁷⁰

We'll now address Issues A, B and D

Issue A – Investigative Procedures

Limited Guidelines - This Case is one of many that have come to the SJC where there is disagreement about investigative processes. Because the *BCO* says little about how to conduct investigations, presbyteries might consider adopting something in their standing rules like that employed by another PCA Presbytery, in which a five-man standing committee has rules and guidelines for how it commences, conducts, and concludes investigations.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nJVTcgBLzuwtqnD9hI_SItD5XyVFKQ6/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110515225575322482419&rtpof=true&sd=true

“Reports” - Part of the confusion with investigations probably arises from an overly-broad interpretation of the noun “reports” in *BCO* 31-2.

31-2. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning *reports* affecting their Christian character. (Emphasis added.)

allowed. (*Lauro Lines v. Chasser*, 1989) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/490/495/case.html>

And interlocutory appeals are even rarer in criminal cases. A defendant’s petition for permission to appeal a trial court’s pre-verdict ruling usually must demonstrate he will be irreparably harmed if he must wait until the end of the trial to appeal.

⁷⁰ See also a concurring opinion two years after *Marshall*: Case 2015-04: *Thompson v. S. FL.*, M44GA, p. 515.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In the history of American Presbyterianism, the *BCO* word "reports" has ordinarily referred to widely-known accusations, public "reports," or allegations of "common fame." It has not referred to every accusation presented to a Session or a Presbytery. In this present Case, it was not public rumors that generated the initial investigation, but rather, a letter from five people. Thus, the letter was more like what's described in *BCO* 34-3 (below) rather than the "reports" of *BCO* 31-2.

BCO 34-3. If anyone knows a minister to be guilty of a private offense, he should warn him in private. But if the offense be persisted in, or become public, he should bring the case to the attention of some other minister of the Presbytery.

Who is the "aggrieved" person of BCO 31-2? - While not paramount to Issue A in this Case, the parties differed in their interpretation of the italicized clause below in *BCO* 31-2 and even addressed the question in both of their Briefs.

BCO 31-2. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character. This duty is more imperative when *those who deem themselves aggrieved* by injurious reports shall ask an investigation. (Emphasis added.)

The Complainant (rightly) argued the aggrieved person in view is the subject of the "reports" in the second sentence. But the Respondent (mistakenly) argued the italicized clause refers to the authors of those reports. The "injurious reports" are those alleging something negative about the accused and not reports of injuries felt by accusers. The reports are "injurious" to the accused's character unless investigated and either dismissed or prosecuted. And for that reason, the investigation is "more imperative" if the *accused* (the aggrieved) asks for it.

Issue B - *BCO* 31-10 contains an important and often disregarded prohibition regarding administrative (non-censure) suspensions.

BCO 31-10 - When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court's discretion; *but this shall never be done in the way of censure.* (Emphasis added.)

It is difficult to determine whether a purported non-censure suspension is, instead, improperly imposed as an unofficial censure. Thus, higher courts will ordinarily be reticent to overrule such. However, presbyteries should realize non-censure suspensions will very often have the same *effect* as a censure, especially if the accused minister loses his job prior to the conclusion of process. Presbyteries should heed the 1879 counsel of F.P. Ramsay: “This is a particular application of the principle that one may have the exercise of his official functions suspended without censure; but the court should be slow to do this, unless prudence requires it, lest it work to the prejudice of the accused or make the court appear precipitate.” Unfortunately, rather than being “slow to do this,” these non-censure suspensions have seemed to become the rule rather than the exception in many recent Cases that have come to the SJC. *BCO* 31-10 does not require a presbytery to record a reason for why it administratively suspends a minister pre-trial, and it only requires a simple majority to do so. However, we note an inconsistency between *BCO* 31-10 and *BCO* 42-6 (which requires such recording).

BCO 42-6. Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, *for sufficient reasons duly recorded*, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord’s Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. *BCO* 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done in the way of censure. (Emphasis added.)

It’s unclear why the *BCO* would require reasons to be “sufficient” and “duly recorded” when administratively suspending a *convicted* minister during an appeal, but not require the same for a minister who is simply *accused* and awaiting trial. It seems those should, if anything, be reversed. The legislative history might explain how we got this inconsistency.^{71 72}

⁷¹ *BCO* 31-10 - The current text dates to PCUS 1879, differing from subsequent editions only in the capitalization of the word "Church."

⁷² *BCO* 42-6 - The first sentence of our current *BCO* 42-6 was added in 1990 (M18GA, p. 49). The second was added in 1996 (M24GA, p. 60). Here is the legislative history.

1879 If the infliction of the sentence of suspension, excommunication or deposition be arrested by appeal, the judgment appealed from shall nevertheless be considered as in force until the appeal be issued.

Issue D – I am dissenting in this Judgment because I consider Presbytery’s post-indictment, pre-trial press release to have been a clear error of discretion and judgment (*BCO* 39-3.3).

The Record contained Presbytery’s Bylaws, which included the following provision common in many presbyteries: “Rules of Order: The edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order* used in the General Assembly will govern Presbytery during the business portion of its meetings unless it is in conflict with the *Book of*

1925 Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. If, however, the censure is suspension or excommunication from the sealing ordinances, or deposition from office, the court may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, put the censure into effect until the case is finally decided.

1973 Same text as PCUS Book of 1925. (*MIGA*, p. 153.)

1990 Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. If, however, the censure is suspension from the sacraments, and/or his office, or excommunication from the ~~sealing ordinances~~ sacraments, or deposition from office, the court may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, put the censure into effect until the case is finally decided.

1996 Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. ~~If, however, the censure is suspension or excommunication from the sealing ordinances, or deposition from office, the court may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, put the censure into effect until the case is finally decided.~~ However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord’s Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. *BCO* 31-10; 33-3). This shall never be done in the way of censure.

The 1996 change to *BCO* 42-6 was in omnibus package of 11 changes regarding disciplinary procedures recommended to the 17th GA by the Committee of Commissioners on Judicial Business. The package was approved and sent down to the presbyteries, which approved it by a vote of 37-6. (Changes were made to *BCO* 30-1, 30-3, 34-7, 34-8, 36-4, 36-5, 37-1, 37-2, 37-3, 37-7 and 42-6). The 1996 change (our current version) was recommended by the Ad Interim Committee on Judicial Procedures in 1995 and approved by the presbyteries on a 40-14 vote. (*M23GA*, p. 85). The AICJP had provided the following as its reason for the proposed change: “In the [*BCO* 42] chapter as written there is a conflict between the treatment of an appealing party, where censures may be enacted before the final resolution of the appeal, and other provisions of *BCO*, where a temporary suspension of privileges is permitted while an appeal is processed, but never by way of censure. The amendment applies the latter principles consistently.” (*M23GA*, p. 85)

Church Order or these by-laws.” *Robert’s Rules* contains an important provision that requires a degree of confidentiality that Presbytery did not follow:

A society has the right to investigate the character of its members and officers as may be necessary to the enforcement of its own standards. But neither the society nor any member has the right to make public any information obtained through such an investigation; if it becomes common knowledge within the society, it may not be revealed to anyone outside the society. Consequently, a trial must always be held in executive session, as must the introduction and consideration of all resolutions leading up to the trial. *RONR* (12th ed.) 63:2

73

Rather than clarify or calming things, Presbytery’s press release seems to have resulted in greater misunderstandings, as Presbytery actions were interpreted differently by various press sites and blogs. And the Complainant demonstrated how these negatively impacted him.

Our *BCO* does not explicitly prohibit a presbytery from publishing a press release related to an investigation or an indictment. But it seems the *BCO* implies that doing so would be, at best, irregular. *BCO* 36-2 provides: “In the case of public offenses, the degree of censure and *mode of administering it* shall be within the discretion of the court ...” *BCO* 36-3 stipulates: “If the offense is public the Admonition should be administered by the moderator in presence of the court *and may also be announced in public should the court deem it expedient.*” *BCO* 36-4 specifies: “Definite suspension from office should be administered in the presence of the court alone or in open session of the court, as it may deem best, *and public announcement thereof shall be at the court’s discretion.*” (All emphases added.) But unlike our present Case, all those public announcements would *follow* a finding of guilt and imposition of censure, not precede it.

A similar restriction would also apply to any post-conviction press releases: “If (after trial) a member is expelled or an officer is removed from office, the society has the right to disclose that fact - circulating it only to the extent required for the protection of the society or, possibly, of other organizations. Neither the society nor any of its members has the right to make public the charge of which an officer or member has been found guilty, or to reveal any other details connected with the case. To make any of the facts public may constitute libel. A trial by the society cannot legally establish the guilt of the accused, as understood in a court of law; it can only establish his guilt as affecting the society’s judgment of his fitness for membership or office.” *RONR* (12th ed.) 63:3

Concurring and Dissenting Opinions – Finally, it was troublesome to see in the Record that the Presbytery Clerk made a unilateral and unexplained decision to withhold from Presbytery the February 2021 Dissenting Opinion signed by four SJC judges in Case 2020-04: *Marusich v. Central Indiana*. (M48GA, p. 806) SJC Manual 18.12.a describes concurring and dissenting opinions as “an essential element of the work of the Commission.” In addition, a concurring or dissenting opinion is regarded as an “appendix” to an SJC Decision and is to be “promptly sent to the parties.” (*OMSJC* 17.8.k) Fortunately, at the upcoming 49th GA, the SJC is recommending a change to its Manual to require all concurring and dissenting opinions to *accompany* an SJC decision (rather than being sent to the parties weeks after the decision has been sent).

**CENTRAL INDIANA PRESBYTERY
REQUEST FOR REFERENCE
June 2, 2022**

The Chairman presented the request for reference from Central Indiana Presbytery for the trial at issue in the foregoing Case No. 2021-06. The Commission approved a motion to accede to the request and accept the reference subject to the following stipulations: Presbytery shall provide the Prosecutor for the case; counsel for TE Herron from Case No. 2021-06 may serve as his counsel at trial; a trial arrangements committee shall be appointed by the Chairman to consider arrangements for conducting the trial of the and report to the SJC at the earliest possible date; and for economy, the Commission takes judicial notice of the Record of the Case in Case No. 2021-06 and approves the use and reference of materials in that Record in the trial.

**CASE NO. 2022-01
ERIC EAGLE, et al.
v.
SAVANNAH RIVER PRESBYTERY
DECISION ON COMPLAINT
June 2, 2022**

The Officers reviewed the Complaint and found the case Administratively Out of Order and determined that it cannot be put in order because the Complaint was not timely filed. *OMSJC* 9.2. The Complainants

APPENDIX T

originally filed this complaint with the SJC on December 15, 2020. (then styled as Case 2020-10). The SJC ruled Case 2020-10 administratively out of order as prematurely filed and reset the clock for the filing of that Complaint “so that timing begins on the later to occur of the notification of: (a) this action by the SJC (which occurred on October 21, 2021) or (b) ruling by Presbytery on the Complaint.” Presbytery ruled on the Complaint on October 20, 2020. The Complaint was filed more than 30 days after the later of those two events and is therefore not timely (*BCO* 43-3). For these reasons, the case is dismissed.

The SJC approved this decision on the following roll call vote:

<i>Bankson Concur</i>	<i>S. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Nusbaum Concur</i>
<i>Bise Concur</i>	<i>Ellis Concur</i>	<i>Pickering Absent</i>
<i>Cannata Concur</i>	<i>Greco Concur</i>	<i>Ross Concur</i>
<i>Carrell Concur</i>	<i>Kooistra Concur</i>	<i>Terrell Concur</i>
<i>Coffin Concur</i>	<i>Lee Absent</i>	<i>Waters Concur</i>
<i>Donahoe Concur</i>	<i>Lucas Absent</i>	<i>White Concur</i>
<i>Dowling Concur</i>	<i>McGowan Absent</i>	<i>Wilson Concur</i>
<i>M. Duncan Concur</i>	<i>Neikirk Concur</i>	
(19-0-0)		

Attachment

**STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION
RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS
June 2, 2022**

The SJC is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the individual's objection and his request for an "exception of substance" citation to its minutes. For the reasons outlined below, the SJC proposes that the request should be denied.

A. The request for exception is not timely.

The actions against which objections have been raised were initially approved in the March 25, 2021 SJC meeting. They were recorded in the SJC's minutes as follows:

The Chair reported that the committee of the whole approved a motion to recommend that the Commission rescind the declaration that the case is judicially in order, for the limited purpose of perfecting the record with answers to written questions propounded by members of the Commission. *OMSJC* 7.4(f). The Parliamentarian advised that this motion and process were in order. The Chair also reported that the committee of the whole approved a motion to recommend the statement of the judgment consisting of ROC page 3, lines 8-28, reformatted in the proper form for a statement of the issue. The Commission further agreed without objection to postpone consideration of the final report of the committee of the whole until the Commission next meets at the call of the Chair.

The Chairman appointed the following committee to collect and collate questions from members of the Commission and to draft parameters to be communicated to Presbytery to perfect the Record of the Case: Kooistra (convener), Chapell, Waters, Donahoe, Dowling, and Bise. Commissioners' questions and proposals should be submitted to the committee by Wednesday March 31, 2021

The SJC's March 25, 2021 minutes were reviewed and approved without exception by the CCB in May 2021. CCB's report to the 48th General Assembly includes the report of its review of the SJC minutes of March 25,

2021. CCB noted, “The minutes were found to be in order without exception...” (*M48GA*, p. 20, 467) Thus, the undated objection lodged in 2022, against the March 25, 2021 Minutes, is not timely and should be disregarded.

Moreover, at the March 25 meeting, the SJC made specific parliamentary inquiry regarding the propriety of its actions at the time they were initiated and received advice that its actions were proper. The SJC relied upon the advice of its Parliamentarian in the process it initiated on March 25, 2021. While the actions were unusual, the SJC thought it best and most efficient to gather as much information as possible to have the most complete Record possible, given the posture of the case, the time devoted to it, and the attention to the case from across the denomination,

In communicating this action regarding the Record of the Case to the parties, the SJC explained its reasoning for requesting additional information. (See Section C(5) below.) The purpose of the SJC’s actions against which objections have been raised was to obtain the most complete and current Record for rendering a decision.

B. The requesting party failed or refused to present his arguments to the SJC.

It is noteworthy that the party making the instant objection and request to the CCB was the representative of the Complainant, TE Speck, in the proceedings before the SJC. As such, he had the opportunity to participate fully in the hearing, briefing, and submissions of TE Speck to the SJC. The objections lodged with the CCB in 2022 were never presented to the SJC during the course of the proceedings before it or any time after. For this reason, the CCB could consider those objections waived by the failure to present them to the SJC for consideration.

C. The request for an exception is based on multiple misunderstandings and misapplications of the provisions of the *OMSJC*.

The claims and contentions in the request include several erroneous assertions regarding the language and application of the *OMSJC* provisions cited.

1. Purported 40-day requirement - The requesting party contends: “*OMSJC* 10.10 requires that when a case is heard by the full SJC, a preliminary decision must be submitted within 40 days after the hearing date.”

(Request, p. 1 line 45. See also p. 2 lines 26, 32-34, 37; p. 3 line 14; p, 5 lines 44-45).

He is mistaken. *OMSJC* 10.10 only applies to Panels. *OMSJC* 14.4.b applies to hearings before the full SJC, and there is no 40-day post-hearing requirement when a matter is heard by the full SJC. *OMSJC* 14.6 simply stipulates: "As soon as the judgment is rendered, when the complaint is heard by the full Commission rather than by a Judicial Panel, the Chairman shall designate a member or committee of members voting with the majority to prepare a proposed written decision." No deadline is stipulated for when a proposed decision must be submitted or adopted. The operative sections of the *OMSJC* provide:

OMSJC 10.10 AFTER THE ORAL ARGUMENTS. A Judicial *Panel* immediately after hearing the oral arguments of the parties, shall go into closed session and discuss the issues in the case. In that discussion, the Panel may (1) frame the issues, (2) vote on a judgment and (3) announce these to the parties. Or, the Panel may take all these matters under advisement and reconvene within the next 20 days, as often as necessary, to frame the issues and render a judgment. This "reconvening" may be held by telephone conference call. The Chairman of the Panel shall designate a Panel member voting with the majority to prepare a written decision. This [*Panel*] decision shall be mailed or sent by electronic means to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly within 40 days from the date *the Panel* heard the oral arguments. Any Panel member may file, within said 40 day period, a concurring or dissenting opinion which shall be appended to the decision. (Emphasis added.)

OMSJC 14.4 AFTER THE ORAL ARGUMENTS

- a. After the oral arguments have been completed and if the complaint is being heard by a Judicial Panel, *the Panel* shall proceed under *OMSJC* 10.10.
- b. After the oral arguments have been heard and if the complaint is being heard by the full Commission rather than by a Judicial Panel the Commission shall go into closed session to discuss the complaint and consider its merits.

APPENDIX T

- c. When the Judicial Panel acting under *OMSJC* 10.10 is ready to vote or when the full Commission has completed its discussion under Section 14.4.b, above, the vote shall be taken, without further debate, as to what disposition should be made of the complaint.

The SJC did not “complete its discussion under Subsection 14.4.b” until its meeting on October 21, 2021 after receiving the proposed decision from the Drafting Committee randomly selected at the SJC meeting on July 13, 2021. When the full SJC hears a case, it is not unusual for a final decision to follow several months after the hearing.

The request for an exception also cites *OMSJC* 17.9.a (p. 2 line 25, and below), but that subsection does not set any time requirement for SJC to render a post-hearing decision or to adopt a final decision when the matter is heard by the full SJC. The Operating Manual provides:

OMSCJ 17.9 a. In the event of a hearing by the Full Commission where the case was not heard by a judicial panel, the Commission shall issue to the parties a preliminary judgment. [See item 6 below.]

The time spent reaching a decision did not prejudice the Complainant in the case. The SJC’s action reopening the Record of the Case and allowing the parties to submit additional information had the effect of resetting the deadline outlined in the *OMSJC* for decision making. The SJC proceeded as expeditiously as possible in deciding the case. The subcommittee compiling questions completed its report in 19 days, the SJC meeting to consider that report occurred 17 days later, and the SJC letter was sent to the parties on or about April 30, 2021.⁷⁴ In late May 2021, the Presbytery submitted its response, with TE Johnson’s answers, and the Complainant and Respondent both filed Addendum Briefs. At a reconvened SJC meeting on July 13, the SJC’s Chairman appointed a drafting committee of five SJC

⁷⁴ The SJC met on April 30, 2021, after the deadline for submitting minutes to the CCB for the 2021 GA. The CCB met on May 3, 2021, and thus did not have the SJC-approved Minutes of the meeting, which had only occurred three days prior. The April 30 Minutes were approved by the SJC at its meeting on July 13, 2021. (Minutes, p. 3 line 15: “The SJC approved the minutes of its April 30, 2021 meeting without objection.”) The SJC does not submit Minutes to CCB until they have been reviewed and approved by the SJC.

members, drawn randomly, to prepare a proposed decision. That drafting committee filed its report on September 21 and a final decision was adopted by the SJC at its stated meeting on October 21, 2021. (48th GA Commissioner Handbook, p. 2046.) No party was prejudiced by the additional time spent in the decision making process.

2. *OMSJC* 9.4 (below) gives parties the right, after the Record is perfected, to file briefs and present oral arguments at a hearing. Thus, the requestor is correct when he contends the provisions cited by the SJC its May 3, 2021 letter (*OMSJC* 11.1.e and 7.4.e.(3)) do not ordinarily “envision the ROC being amended after the hearing on a case has been concluded.” However, in this instance, the SJC made it clear to the parties that they would retain the rights of *OMSJC* 9.4 after the Record had been reopened and perfected:

OMSJC 9.4 If it is determined that the case should be heard by the Full Commission, the parties shall be notified and a full copy of the Record of the Case shall be sent to each member of the Commission. When the Record of the Case has been perfected under *OMSJC* 7, and when the parties have had opportunity to file briefs under *OMSJC* 8.1, the case shall be docketed for hearing by the Full Commission at its next stated meeting, or at a called meeting set to hear the case.

TE Speck and his representative chose to file an Addendum Brief after the Record was perfected but declined to request an additional hearing. These facts were included in the Summary of the Facts in the SJC’s Decision in Case 2020-12. (49th GA Commissioner Handbook, p. 2046) Thus, the SJC complied with *OMSJC* 9.4.

3. *OMSJC* 7.4.f provides: “The Judicial Panel, or the Commission if the case is to be heard by the Commission, may extend any of the deadline dates in this section [for perfecting the Record] if it determines that so doing is in the interest of justice.” While this ordinarily applies to perfecting the Record prior to the initial hearing, the same principle applies in this Case.
4. The requesting party asserts: “And in any case, neither party in the case requested that the ROC be amended following the hearing on March 25, 2021” (p. 2 line 41; p. 3 line 4). But neither the SJC nor a Panel needs permission from the parties to delete or add material to the Record that is relevant to the Case.

OMSJC 7.4.b - The hearing body may delete any portions of the Record as submitted that violate justice or due process, a provision of the BCO or Roberts Rules of Order, or that are extraneous to the matter before the Commission. The hearing body may also require the addition of material to the Record that is relevant to the Case. Deletions and additions shall always be recorded in the minutes of the hearing body, with the approved rationale for the change. Any deletions or additions shall be reported to the parties, and may be addressed in argument from the parties in any hearing requested by a party on the ROC.

5. The request concedes the following: “The SJC could have ruled that the ROC was insufficient and remand the case to MOP with direct instructions with proposed questions to further investigate the allegations raised against TE Johnson” (p. 3 line 55). That is not substantially different from what the SJC did. Below is the text of the May 3, 2021 letter from the SJC to the Presbytery’s Representative, which was also sent to the Complainant.

In the SJC’s deliberations on Case 2020-12, the SJC decided the Record does not yet appear to be “complete and sufficiently documented” (*OMSJC* 11.1.e) and that fairness and justice dictate the accused should have a chance to provide additional documentation for the Record (per the principle of *OMSJC* 7.4.e.(3)) Therefore, the SJC rescinded the SJC Officers’ previous ruling that the Record was complete and sufficiently documented, thereby also suspending the ruling that the Case was judicially in order at present. Here is the procedure we will now follow.

We are sending the attached questions to you as Presbytery’s Representative with a request that you invite TE Johnson to consider providing written answers, which would be added to the Record per *OMSJC* 7.4.b: “The hearing body may also require the addition of material to the Record that is relevant to the Case.” We have copied the Complainant on this letter.

We understand that you, as Presbytery’s Representative, are empowered to represent Presbytery in the perfection of the Record. Note that Question #15 in

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the “Additional/General” category calls for a response from Presbytery’s Representative. It is also included in the list for TE Johnson, in case he needs to assist you with the answer.

If TE Johnson chooses to answer the attached questions, please send his response document to the SJC within 14 days after his confirmed receipt of the Questions. Please use the email addresses below. If TE Johnson is able to respond before the deadline, we would welcome it. If TE Johnson declines, please notify us promptly.

If a Response Document is provided, it would be added to the Record, but there would not be a need to re-brief or have another Hearing. However, if either you or the Complainant wish to file an addendum to your previous Brief, dealing only with any additional information provided by TE Johnson, the Complainant’s filing deadline would be seven (7) days after his receipt of the Response Document from the SJC, and the Respondent’s would be ten (10) days after his receipt of the Response Document from the SJC. Any such additional Briefs are limited to five-pages.

If there is no Response Document to add to the Record, the SJC Chairman would reconvene a SJC meeting and the SJC would plan to continue with post-hearing adjudication of the Complaint.

The SJC does not believe another hearing is required, even if TE Johnson responds to the questions. However, the SJC would schedule another Hearing, on the additional material only, if requested by one of the parties within 7 days after his receipt of the last additional Brief filed.

The introduction to the SJC’s 25 Questions read as follows:

The SJC believes it is necessary to attempt to clarify the Record of the Case because its magnitude (over 600 pages covering multiple years of writing, speaking, and judicial processes) makes it difficult to ascertain if specific representations of perspectives of TE Johnson are his

actual or present theological convictions. We understand from the Record:

- he has acknowledged some of his perspectives have matured over time;
- he has acknowledged some were poorly stated due to time limits, situational pressures, or extemporaneity;
- some representations of perspectives are made unclear by imprecision or disagreement over what aspect of sin is being referenced in specific statements;
- some representations have been extrapolated by critics but denied by Johnson.

Thus, the SJC offers TE Johnson the opportunity to answer questions with reference to the specific Allegations in the Complaint now before the Commission. Below are 25 questions arranged by the Allegations, with a fifth category titled “Additional /General.”

Neither the Complainant nor the requesting party (his representative in the Complaint) ever registered any objection after being notified of this procedure. For example, there is no objection of any sort in the Complainant’s Addendum Brief of May 27, 2021. It was not until after the requesting party learned of the SJC’s final decision that he registered any objection to the procedure. And he registered his objection with the CCB, not the SJC, and apparently almost six months after the decision was published.

6. The requestor contends the SJC never sent the parties a “preliminary judgment” after the SJC’s October 21, 2021, meeting at which it was adopted. (p. 4 lines 15-50)

OMSJC 17.9.a In the event of a hearing by the Full Commission where the case was not heard by a judicial panel, the Commission shall issue to the parties a preliminary judgment. Within 14 days after receiving the preliminary judgment, a party may request reconsideration of the judgment by filing a supplemental brief as set forth in

OMSJC 8.2. This supplemental brief shall state the reasons for requesting reconsideration of the preliminary judgment. The commission at its next meeting shall consider the request for reconsideration. Reconsideration of the preliminary judgment shall be granted only by majority vote of the Full Commission.

The SJC's decision was transmitted to the parties and their representatives on October 22, 2021. The cover letter transmitting the decision was specifically addressed and delivered to the requesting party lodging this objection to CCB. (See Exhibit A attached, p. 2206.) In that letter, the Stated Clerk expressly provided notice and an opportunity for reconsideration. The Clerk wrote, "*OMSJC* 17.9(a) affords parties the opportunity to request reconsideration in a case. Should you wish to do so, please note the deadline and follow the procedure outlined in *OMSJC* 17.9(a)." Thus, contrary to his assertion in his request to the CCB, the requesting party had notice and an opportunity to request reconsideration before the SJC and declined to do so. Neither party nor their representatives requested rehearing or reconsideration. It matters little whether the letter from the Clerk's office called the Decision a "preliminary judgment." Instead of timely requesting reconsideration before the SJC, the requesting party delayed such a request and presented it to some members of CCB more than five months after receiving the SJC's Decision. This request inaccurately alleged that the SJC had failed to afford the Complainant an opportunity to request reconsideration. The effect of withholding such a request from the SJC would be to gain a reconsideration improperly through the CCB, when it was expressly made available, but never requested, through the SJC.

D. The claims presented in the request do not warrant rehearing the case.

RAO 19-5 stipulates:

The [SJC] minutes shall be examined [by CCB] for conformity to this *Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission* and *RAO* 17, violations of which shall be reported as "exceptions" as defined in *RAO* 14-11.d.(2).

RAO 14-11(d)(2) defines "exceptions" as follows:

Exceptions: Violations of the Assembly's Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees of the General Assembly, prejudicial misstatements of fact, and actions which in substance appear not to conform to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church in America, or to be out of accord with the deliverances of the General Assembly, should be reported under this category.

At best, the issues identified in the objection are procedural in nature, not substantive or substantial. The objection does not identify any prejudice or harm to the Complainant. Even if we granted that some variation from the *OMSJC* exists, it is procedural, not substantive in nature. As outlined above, the additional time devoted to perfecting the Record and formulating a decision was warranted and not prejudicial to any party. The issues presented in the objection do not rise to the level of "exceptions," and certainly none warranting rehearing of the case.

As noted above, the timing of the decision making process and delivery of the final decision were warranted by the complexity of the case and the multiplicity of facts and issues presented. The SJC has recently employed a similar procedure in other cases in which additional information was requested to complete the record of a case. See *Aven/Dively v. Ohio Valley Presbytery*, *M44GA* at 503-504; *Barnes v. Heartland Presbytery*, *M44GA* at 480 and following; *Fordice v. Pacific Northwest Presbytery*, *M45GA* at 532. In those instances, CCB did not note any exceptions to the SJC's employment of similar procedures. While such requests are not typical, they do aid the decision making process by ensuring that records are complete.

E. Approval of the request as submitted would constitute an unwise precedent.

Historically, neither the parties nor their representatives have enjoyed the right to post-decision petitions for CCB review the SJC's decision making practice. To allow such in this instance would set a dangerous precedent in which any party or party representative could attempt to gain an extra-constitutional outlet for judicial review.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the SJC has five primary concerns with this objection and its request for the CCB to rule that the SJC violated the OMSJC:

1. The request is not timely.
2. The requesting party failed or refused to present his arguments to the SJC.
3. The request for a citation is based on multiple misunderstandings and misapplications of the provisions of the *OMSJC*.
4. The request's claims do not warrant rehearing the case.
5. And approval of the request as submitted would establish a dangerous precedent.

Therefore, the SJC respectfully requests that CCB deny this objection and its request for an *RAO* 17-1 "exception" with regard to this Case.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TE Fred Greco, Chairman

/s/ RE Sam Duncan, Secretary

/s/ RE John Bise, Vice Chairman

/s/ RE Jack Wilson, Asst. Secretary

APPENDIX U

RESOLUTION OF THANKS FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA June 2022

“Ascribe to the LORD” Commissioners of the 49th General Assembly, “ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.” (Psalm 29:2)

This year, the PCA has convened our General Assembly in Birmingham, Alabama. This is the fourth time this great city has hosted our national meeting, and each visit evokes memories of our denomination’s founding. In December 1973, desiring to worship and serve in a church body that was faithful to the scriptures and true to our Reformed convictions, our inaugural Assembly was held in Birmingham and hosted by Briarwood Presbyterian Church. The Honorable Jack Williamson was elected moderator, and the church then known as the National Presbyterian Church formally conducted business for the first time.

It was our pleasure to return to Birmingham this year and join our hearts and voices to *ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name*. We are grateful to the host committee from Evangel Presbytery for so skillfully enabling us to do so. The host committee was very capably led by its Co-Chairmen Daniel Leavenwood and Taylor Denard, family program chairs Bobby Parks, Donna Evans, Cindy Ball, and Jason Ellerbee, plus Steve Whitmer and David Driskill, who oversaw our worship. These servants, along with all other members of each sub-committee and a host of volunteers from local churches, have labored well for the benefit and practical service to this General Assembly. To these brothers and sisters, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

We want to extend our love and thanks to Dr. Roy Taylor, our long time Stated Clerk and outgoing Moderator, who capped his honorable service to our denomination by, along with Rev. Elbert McGowan, Jr., and Rev. Kevin DeYoung, preaching God’s word to us. These pastors blessed us with Christ-honoring sermons, and the musicians and liturgists led us into rich times of worship and praise to our God. Our gratitude goes out to all who led us. We particularly want to thank the staff of the Administrative Committee, who

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

serve this church so well and who have worked so hard to plan and execute this our largest-ever Assembly with its unique challenges.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere thanks to the chairs and members of the various committees that met as part of this General Assembly: the Committees of Commissioners, Overtures, Review of Presbytery Records, Committee on Constitutional Business, Theological Examining Committee, and the Nominating Committee.

Mr. Moderator, we move that this motion be received with thanksgiving and acclamation.

RE Phil VanValkenburg, Missouri Presbytery

TE Jon Medlock, Northern California Presbytery

APPENDIX V

REPORT OF THE AD INTERIM COMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (2022)

The Ad Interim Committee to study and report on domestic abuse and sexual assault in the church was created at the 47th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America that met in June 2019 in Dallas, Texas, when the following overture was adopted (*M47GA*, pp. 90-91):

1. That the 47th General Assembly create a seven-man Study Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault tasked to accomplish the following:
 - a. The Committee shall prepare an annotated bibliography of resources the Committee endorses on topics related to child abuse and sexual assault, domestic abuse and sexual assault, and domestic oppression. The annotated bibliography should also include pastoral resources for the care of victims of these sins, as well as ministry and counsel for those overtaken by these sins.
 - b. The Committee shall report regarding best practices and guidelines that could be helpful for elders, Sessions, Presbyteries, and agencies for protecting against these sins and for responding to them. However, no practice, policy, or guideline will be proposed for adoption or approval. It is simply information, which shall not be binding or obligatory in any sense.
 - c. The Committee may recommend to the 48th GA any statement(s) it believes would be prudent and warranted for the Assembly to adopt.
2. The 47th GA authorizes the GA Moderator to appoint the seven voting members of this Committee, per *RAO* 9-4 and *RAO* 19-1 (*Robert's Rules, RONR*, 11th ed., pp. 174-175, pp. 495-496, and p. 579).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- a. These members shall be PCA teaching elders or PCA ruling elders, and the Committee shall include at least three of each. (Anyone may suggest names to the Moderator.)
- b. The 47th GA authorizes the Moderator to make his appointments after the 47th GA adjourns.
3. The 47th GA authorizes the Moderator to appoint others to serve the Committee as non-voting advisors, regardless of denominational affiliation or gender. The 47th GA recommends the Moderator consider appointing, as advisors, at least two subject-matter experts and at least two women.
4. The budget for the Study Committee shall be \$25,000 and that funds be derived from gifts to the AC designated for that purpose.

The Committee is comprised of the following members and advisors:

Teaching Elders

Rev. Dr. Timothy R. LeCroy, Missouri Presbytery, *Chair*

Rev. Dr. Lloyd Pierson, Rocky Mountain Presbytery

Rev. Shane Michael Waldron, Rocky Mountain Presbytery

Rev. T. Cal Boroughs (Hon. Ret.), Tennessee Valley Presbytery

Ruling Elders

Dr. Kelly H. Dehnert, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Lander, WY, *Secretary*

Dr. David R. Haburchak, MD, East Cobb Presbyterian Church, Marietta, GA

Mr. Robert D. Goudzwaard, Christ Covenant PCA, Matthews, NC

Advisory Members

Mrs. Ann Maree Goudzwaard, MDiv Counseling

Executive Director Help[H]er Resources

Member, Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Matthews, NC

Mrs. Darby A. Strickland, MDiv Counseling

Christian Counseling Educational Foundation Faculty

Member, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Center Valley, PA

Dr. Barbara W. Shaffer, PhD, Psychologist

Member, Faith Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, DE

Dr. M. Diane Langberg, PhD, Psychologist

APPENDIX V

Director, Diane Langberg and Associates
Member, Calvary Presbyterian Church, Willow Grove, PA

Mrs. Rachael J. Denhollander, JD
Member, Reformed Baptist Church of Louisville, Louisville, KY

Biographical information for each member and advisor is contained in Attachment 12.

The Committee met thirteen times in person and via video conference and has produced the following report for the General Assembly. This report was unanimously adopted by the Committee.

Due to the fact that the 47th General Assembly expressly forbade the committee from proposing any “practice, policy, or guideline . . . for adoption or approval,” the committee will not be bringing any recommendations to the Assembly. Instead, we offer the following *advice* to presbyteries, sessions, and other ministries within the PCA:

1. That all elders in the Presbyterian Church in America assiduously study this report and consider its advice when shepherding the flock of God;
2. That Presbyteries and Sessions consider using this report to train their members and those seeking ordination in the PCA in order to be ready for situations that will likely arise during their ministries;
3. That Sessions consider using this report to inform their congregational members so that they will be better able to protect, identify, and respond well to abuse when it arises;
4. That all Presbyteries, churches, and other ministries in the PCA develop robust policies for both the prevention of and response to abuse;
5. That competent third parties be engaged by Presbyteries, churches, and other PCA ministries when allegations of abuse arise;
6. That Presbyteries, churches, and other PCA ministries share information regarding helpful pastoral, sessional, and third-party resources and regularly set aside funds for engaging those that can provide competent assistance and, if necessary, conduct investigation of alleged abuse;
7. That all ministers, elders, Presbyteries, Sessions, Permanent Committees and Agencies, and all other PCA ministries inform

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

themselves as to the particular laws regarding mandatory reporting to the civil magistrate in their civil jurisdictions;

8. That a Permanent Committee or Agency of the PCA consider forming an office of abuse prevention and response in order to serve the denomination when needs arise; and
9. That the 50th General Assembly of the PCA receive overtures from the lower courts to perform a denomination-wide assessment of the state of abuse in the PCA. One aspect of the overtures might be to create a committee tasked with overseeing the work.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

1. The Structure of the Ad Interim Committee Report on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault 955
2. How To Read This Report..... 955
3. Introduction to Terminology 956
4. Case Studies 957

SECTION ONE: Biblical and Confessional Foundations for Understanding

- Abuse..... 957
- Conclusion 1045

SECTION TWO: Domestic Abuse..... 1047

1. Summary Description of Domestic Abuse 1047
2. Expressing God’s Heart..... 1048
3. Recognition 1049
4. Responding..... 1061
5. Reporting..... 1064
6. Redemptive Shepherding..... 1069
7. Case Study 1087

SECTION THREE: Women Who Abuse..... 1089

1. Introduction 1089
2. Biblical Examples..... 1094
3. Abuse? Or a Response to Abuse?..... 1099
4. Case Study 1102

SECTION FOUR: Adult Sexual Abuse 1104

1. Summary Description of Sexual Abuse 1104
2. Expressing God’s Heart..... 1105
3. Recognition and Impacts of Sexual Abuse..... 1106
4. Responding to an Adult Sexual Abuse Disclosure or Discovery . 1110
5. Reporting..... 1117
6. Redemptive Shepherding..... 1120
7. Prevention of Sexual Abuse 1128
8. Case Study 1129

SECTION FIVE: Child Abuse 1132

1. Summary Description of Child Abuse 1132
2. Expressing God’s Heart..... 1132

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3. Recognition of Child Abuse and Neglect	1133
4. Responding to a Child Abuse Disclosure or Discovery	1139
5. Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect	1145
6. Redemptive Shepherding	1153
7. Child Abuse Prevention	1157
8. Case Studies	1159
SECTION SIX: The Misuse of Spiritual Authority	1163
1. Summary Description of Misuse of Spiritual Authority	1163
2. Expressing God’s Heart	1164
3. Recognition of the Misuse of Spiritual Authority	1165
4. Responding to Reports of the Misuse of Spiritual Authority	1171
5. Reporting	1174
6. Redemptive Shepherding	1179
7. Prevention of the Misuse of Spiritual Authority	1182
8. Case Studies	1185
ATTACHMENTS	1190
Attachment 1: Definitions	1190
Attachment 2: DSM Definitions	1201
Attachment 3: Child Abuse Definitions	1203
Attachment 4: Signs of Child Abuse	1206
Attachment 5: Consequences of Child Abuse	1212
Attachment 6: Comprehensive Child Protection Policy	1214
Attachment 7: Myths about Abuse	1218
Attachment 8: Shepherding the Whistleblower	1223
Attachment 9: Forgiveness	1224
Attachment 10: Repentance	1229
Attachment 11: Divorce and Domestic Abuse	1232
Attachment 12: Committee Bios	1244
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	1246

INTRODUCTION

1. The Structure of the Ad Interim Study Committee Report on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

This report is divided into two main sections:

1. Biblical and theological foundations of understanding abuse (Section One), and
2. Practical pastoral aspects of abuse in the church (Sections Two through Six).

The biblical and theological foundations section articulates a rationale for this topic. This section may also serve as a reference for instances of judicial process. Relevant confessional material further provides an understanding of abuse from our denomination's shared theological commitments.

The practical pastoral sections that follow build on the theology of abuse, providing information for how to understand, prevent, and respond to various forms of abuse. There are sections discussing abuse perpetrated against adults, abuse perpetrated against children, and the misuse of spiritual leadership.

Included in the attachments are material that cover various important practical matters pertinent to the main body of the report that can serve as reference material.

Cross references between the sections help aid the reader.

2. How To Read This Report

This report is designed to be utilized in two ways:

- **Read straight through as a monograph, and**
- **Serve as a reference.**

Reading the report straight through will help inform the reader of the relevant subjects related to abuse and the church. It will also serve to train officers and leaders on the issue of abuse. Referencing the report will serve the leaders when related questions arise in the life of the church.

3. Introduction to Terminology

“Abuse” comes from the Latin *abutor*, which means to misuse. In a general sense the word can be used to denote misuse of a thing, as in abuse of privilege, substance abuse, or prosecutorial abuse. In this report the word is used in its more technical sense, referring to “persistent maltreatment that causes lasting damage.” In this sense, abuse is a misuse of power. Misuse of power can take several forms (physical, verbal, positional, etc.), but the essence of abuse is that it is a misuse of power which wounds another person physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually.

The word “abuse” appears in the English Standard Version five times, two of which can be interpreted according to the subject matter of this report.¹ However, the most common word Scripture uses for abuse is “oppression,” appearing 116 times in the ESV. The Hebrew word for oppression is עָנָה (*‘anah*) which means “affliction” or “humiliation.” When used in the Piel, oppression often means to afflict by mistreating. (Piel is a verbal form in Hebrew that indicates intensiveness.) Examples of this usage are when Sarah mistreats Hagar, Laban charges Jacob not to oppress his daughters, the oppression of the Israelites by the Egyptians, and the command in Exodus 22:22-23 not to oppress orphans and widows. The biblical definition, therefore, is “to afflict by mistreatment.” “Oppression” is also the word that the *Larger Catechism* uses for abuse, appearing in *WLC* 136 and *WLC* 142. This report will use the terms “abuse” and “oppression” interchangeably to refer to the biblical and confessional understanding outlined below.

For the purposes of this report, all forms of physical and non-physical (emotional, psychological, spiritual) abuse will be considered equally sinful. Manipulation, physical force, words, finances, authority, religion, position, and inappropriate sexual contact are all tools that might be implemented by those who misuse their power and control. When someone seeks power and control over another for their own gain, the result is harm. Scripture tells us that the fundamental issue is the heart of a person who diminishes another by using any of these tactics rather than the supposed severity of the method (Matt. 15:19).

For a more comprehensive treatment of definitions, please see the glossary of terms in Attachment 1.²

¹ The two are the crimes of Gibeon who abused the Levite’s concubine (Jud. 19:25), and where Paul says that abusive people will abound in the last days (2 Tim. 3:2).

² See Attachment 1: Definitions.

4. Case Studies

The case studies in this report are based on actual circumstances that have occurred in the PCA. However, names, dates, participants, and details have been rearranged and/or changed in order to protect the people associated. To the best of our ability, we have sought to honor the privacy and dignity of the victims and survivors. The integrity of this report and its ministry to people in crisis is of utmost concern to the contributors. Resemblance in these stories to actual persons and/or events should be considered coincidental.

SECTION ONE: BIBLICAL AND CONFESSIONAL FOUNDATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING ABUSE

Elders in the Presbyterian Church in America take the vow to “sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures,” (*BCO* 21-5, 24-6). Therefore, the Larger Catechism’s teachings (hereafter, *WLC*) on the Ten Commandments are the official ethical teachings of the PCA. As such, the *WLC* serves as the basis for how elders are to engage in church discipline.

BCO 27-1 teaches that discipline has two aspects:

1. the one referring to the whole government, inspection, training, guardianship and control which the church maintains over its members, its officers and its courts;
2. the other a restricted and technical sense, signifying judicial process.

Therefore, the Constitution of the PCA requires elders, as a part of the discipline of the church, to train its members in the ethical teachings of the *WLC*, to inspect the members of the church in their adherence to ethical behavior as taught by the *WLC*, and to govern, guard, and control the church according to the ethical teachings of the *WLC*. When correction necessitates judicial process, the subject matter of the *WLC* serves as the basis for adjudication.³

³ *BCO* 29-1, “An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God. *The Confession of Faith* and *The Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly*, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in America as standard

For these reasons, this report will ground its understanding of abuse in the ethical teachings of the *WLC* found in its exposition of the Ten Commandments.

While the technical terms describing abuse do not appear in The Westminster Standards, the sinful behaviors that these terms describe do. All forms of abuse described in this report are instances of “misuse,” but more specifically they are misuses of power. This includes power that is (but is not limited to):

- *Physical force* that is used to strike, wound, or force someone to do something to which they do not consent;
- *Authority* that forces someone against their consent and wounds:
 - Formally recognized authority,
 - Familial authority, such as parents have over children,
 - Informal relational authority, such as exhibited by Sunday School teachers or other workers who have charge over children, and/or
 - Relational authority, such as that of respected members of the church.

Misuse of power may also be exhibited in differences of age, in those who are developmentally or intellectually more advanced, and/or in numbers or financial influence.⁴

The Westminster Larger Catechism

The *WLC* lays out the sins of misuse of authority very clearly: aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others, failure of superiors in their duty towards inferiors, and sins of superiors against inferiors.⁵ These serve as the theological basis for our understanding of abuse.

expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture,” (emphasis added).

⁴ Please see below under *WLC* 129, 130, and 151 for a fuller theological discussion.

⁵ For those that are unfamiliar with the Westminster Standards, the language of superiors and inferiors may seem jarring. This is because in modern usage, these words imply a value judgment of being of better or poorer in quality or worth. However, in the 17th century the terms “inferior” and “superior” simply referred to a reference of position. For example, the phrase, “the ground is inferior to the sky,” means simply that the ground is lower than the sky. In modern American society further questions may be raised by the implication of position or class among peoples. To this we must

In the analysis below we will state the catechism question and answer in full and then work through pertinent clauses from the answer with the Scripture verses cited by the Westminster Assembly. While we do not receive and adopt the Scripture references as a part of our Constitution, we should give them due consideration as they are the biblical basis that the Assembly adopted for what they wrote. Some of the more pertinent Scripture citations will be printed in full, but the reader is encouraged to keep Bible in hand in order to read all the references.

WLC 151 on Aggravations That Make Sins More Heinous

The basic principle gleaned from this catechism answer is more heinous sins cause more damage. Because heinous sins cause significant damage, they are to be punished more severely, and victims are to be shown greater care. Many instances are abusive due to the aggravating factors mentioned below. Abuse is not merely one instance by a "hot head," nor is it excusable because of the infrequency of the aggression. Apologizing does not negate abuse. Women do not deserve to be abused because of their actions, wardrobe, or any other factor. Aggravating factors such as power differentials, the presence of covenant relationships, multiform sins, and repeated sins greatly magnify the damage to a victim's soul. Recognizing these factors is key to identifying and responding well.

Q. 151 What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?

A. Sins receive their aggravations, 1. From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others. 2. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace; the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings; against superiors, men of eminency, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them, or any other, and the common good of all or many. 3. From the nature and quality of the offence: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but breaks

understand that the Westminster Standards are not advocating for a societal class system. Rather, this language is used to describe relationships of authority and submission, a concept that is thoroughly biblical.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit of no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of consciousness, publick or private admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men: if done deliberately, wilfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, continuance, or relapsing after repentance. 4. From circumstances of time and place: if on the Lord's day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these, or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages: if in publick, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.

“From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others.”

(Scriptures cited: Jer. 2:8; Eccl. 4:13; 1 Kings 11:4, 9; 2 Sam. 12:14; 1 Cor. 5:1; James 4:17; Luke 12:47-48; Jer. 5:4-5; 2 Sam. 12:7-9; Ezek. 8:11-12; Rom. 2:17-24; Gal. 2:11-14.)

The *WLC* and supporting Scripture show that the sins of those in authority are more heinous, causing more damage and deserving of greater punishment because of the position of authority. The confession supports the existence of a differential of power in certain relationships. In each of the instances mentioned, summarized as leadership status, age, and knowledge of the faith, we find accompanying power over another. Power can be misused in order to control, oppress, and harm others. When the misuse of power occurs, it may be considered an abuse of authority.

Superiors are not necessarily official, ordained leaders of the church. Superiors can be prominent members who are well-respected due to their knowledge or faith practice. They can be Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, committee chairpersons, or ministry team leaders. They can also be someone more advanced in age. These power differentials should be considered in an abusive situation. The harm done by leaders has a greater impact on the ones they harm. A shepherd that takes advantage of his position to pillage his own flock is not a shepherd (Ezek. 34).

“Particularly weak brethren, the souls of them”

(Scriptures cited: 1 Cor. 8:11-12; Rom. 14:13, 15, 21; Ezek. 13:19 Rev. 18:12-13; Matt. 23:15.)

The power differential is especially true of anyone who is weaker, but especially those who are substantially helpless, such as children, those with mental or physical disabilities, or those otherwise vulnerable due to their condition. Peter also notes that women in marriages are the weaker vessel, acknowledging the power dynamic between the sexes in general (1 Peter 3:7). Peter’s declaration is interpreted as a statement about physical strength, the vessel being a metaphor for the human body.⁶ Therefore husbands, and men in general, are cautioned: men are, in general, physically stronger than women. This power is provided to protect and serve their sisters in Christ, not to harm.

Some persons are vulnerable due to their position in relation to church power, especially in access to church courts. Because the PCA ordains only men to the office of presbyter, officers in the church must take special care to make sure all laypeople, women in particular, have proper access and representation in ecclesiastical courts. Church officers are instructed to ensure all parties in judicial process have access to the rules of discipline and can obtain good representation (*BCO* 32-3).

In Revelation 18:12-13, souls are equated to precious goods—valuable individuals that ought to be treasured and kept safe. Abuse is a sin that damages the soul. The Pauline passages cited above discuss the destruction of those for whom Christ died. Modern scientific discoveries have shown us that abuse trauma causes lasting damage to the psyche.⁷ The biblical word for psyche is

⁶ So, Matthew Henry, who says that, “she is the weaker vessel by nature and constitution... but in other and higher respects equal to her husband,” in his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1 Peter 3:7. This interpretation is confirmed by other NT uses of the term σκευός that more clearly refer to the human body (2 Cor. 4:7, Rom. 9:22, 1 Thess. 4:4). John Calvin affirms this in his comments on 1 Thessalonians 4:4, “As for the expression, that every one of you may know to possess his vessel, some explain it as referring to a wife, as though it had been said, ‘Let husbands dwell with their wives in all chastity.’ As, however, he addresses husbands and wives indiscriminately, there can be no doubt that he employs the term vessel to mean body,” John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*.

⁷ H. D. Gingrich and F. C. Gingrich. *Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 55-77.

soul. This confessional clause, “the souls of them,” with its accompanying Scripture citations, therefore, gives the theological basis for abuse-related trauma and speaks to the evil nature of causing damage to another image-bearer’s soul.⁸

“Break many commandments, contain in it many sins”

(Scriptures cited: Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; Prov. 5:8-12; 6:32-33; Josh. 7:21.)

The damage of abuse is the result when multiple sins are committed. When a person verbally abuses, they are transgressing the sixth and ninth commandments. If it is a husband of a wife, the fifth and seventh commandments are transgressed as well. All abuse involves deception (a violation of the ninth commandment): the abuser’s self-deceit, the deception of the victim, and the deception of the community. The sin of abuse is deemed more heinous because of this multiplicity of transgressions.

“Promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men”

(Scriptures cited: Ps. 78:34-37; Jer. 2:20; Jer. 42:5-6, 20-21; Eccl. 5:4-6; Prov. 20:25; Lev. 26:25; Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 17:18-19.)

The *WLC* considers sin that transgresses vows and promises as base. This includes spouses who make vows to one another, parents who make vows to their children, church officers who make vows to the flock, and congregations who make vows to their pastors, elders, and deacons. Whenever these vows and promises are broken, it causes great damage. Thus, when a parent abuses a child, great damage is done due to not only the transgression of so many commandments, but also due to the breach of the covenant bond between them. When a husband abuses his wife, great damage is done. When a pastor or elder, who swore to feed the sheep for whom Christ died, abuses his own sheep, it is grievous. This is why Jesus says it would be better to have a great millstone hung around their necks and be thrown into the depths of the sea (Matt. 18:6,

⁸ While the Bible does not use the terms “psychological damage” or “trauma,” it does refer to the damage of souls. The Greek word ψυχή is the word used in the Bible for “soul.” This word also serves as the etymological root for the word “psychology.” Revelation 18:12-13 shows that the soul has great value, the implication being that great care should be taken not to damage souls. Further, Proverbs 14:30 and Habakkuk 3:16 speak of “bone rot” and Psalm 31:10 speaks of “bones wasting away.” These three references seem to be metaphors for harm being done to the soul.

Mark 9:42, Luke 17:2). The implication is that the dread Judge of all will have His vengeance (Rom. 12:19).

“If done . . . frequently, [or] with . . . continuance”

(Scriptures cited: Num. 14:22; Isa. 57:17.)

Non-physical forms of abuse are established by the evidence of a pattern of sinful behavior. The catechism validates this framework with the statement that sins committed frequently or with continuance are more heinous.

“Relapsing after repentance”

(Scriptures cited: Jer. 34:8-11; 2 Peter 2:20-22.)

One of the factors for judging if repentance is genuine, and if restoration of an abuser is warranted, is when they demonstrate fruits in keeping with repentance. Paul writes,

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter (2 Cor. 7:10-11).⁹

Apologizing is certainly expected when a sin is committed against another. However, simply stating “I’m sorry” is inadequate considering the substance found in Paul’s letter. Is the abuser earnest for God to produce a grief in them that is eager to deal with their sin? Are they grieving how they’ve sinned against God (primarily) and their fellow image-bearer (specifically)? Do they recognize the full impact of their sin on the victim? Are they submitting to the process of repentance? What does restitution look like, and do they desire to do whatever it takes to make the wrong right?

Or, conversely, is the abuser experiencing worldly sorrow? Do they regret their actions, but grieve simply the consequences? Are they upset about what they did or that they got caught? Repentance is a work of the Holy Spirit. A person who diligently deals with their sin positions themselves humbly before their

⁹ See Attachment 10: Repentance for an extended exegesis of this passage.

Lord and pleads for Him to work restoration—restoration to a right relationship with Him. Discerning repentance is difficult especially when the presenting sin involves manipulation and deception, which are key features of a heart that oppresses.¹⁰

The WLC on the Ten Commandments

Having discussed the aggravating factors that cause sins to become more heinous, we now move to the Catechism content of the Ten Commandments. While the transgression of any commandment is grievous, the locus of our analysis will be focused on the fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth commandments as they relate particularly to abuse.

The Fifth Commandment

“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Ex. 20:12).

Q. 129 What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

A. It is required of superiors according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors, to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reprovng, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honour to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

Authority, according to the catechism answer, is the power a “superior” receives from God. God gifts that power to benefit those under authority. This includes (but is not limited to) loving, blessing, praying for, instructing, counseling, and admonishing. Those with positions of authority reward and commend those under their care when they do right, as well as discountenance, reprove, and chastise when they do wrong. Superiors are also to protect and provide for all things necessary for soul and body. In accomplishing these goals, those in authority procure glory for God and preserve the authority God

¹⁰ See Attachment 10 on Repentance. Also see this resource to help you discern if what you are seeing is godly repentance. https://www.ccef.org/jbc_article/how-to-discern-true-repentance-when-serious-sin-has-occurred/

gives. Practically, the catechism states this is applied through instruction, counsel, protection, and provision.

As this relates to abuse, it is the duty of the elders to instruct and counsel their congregations according to God’s Word (Deut. 6:6-7), the confessional standards, and common grace informed resources. Superiors thereby provide members with the tools necessary to care for one another. Learning what the Bible teaches regarding abuse and those who abuse, helps create a culture in the church that quickly identifies and thereby prevents sinful abusive behaviors.

It is also the duty of elders to protect and provide. Churches protect their members with policies that take into consideration the most vulnerable in the congregation.¹¹ Leaders—to the best of their ability—provide both children and adults, every age group and gender, with the tools necessary for abuse prevention.

Two areas in the catechism answer address response to abuse:

- *The duty to deal with those who sin.* The catechism states church leaders are to “discountenance.” “Discountenance” is defined as to “discourage by evidence of disapproval.”¹² This evidence is not only exhibited toward the offender, but also witnessed by any victims and the church-at-large. To discountenance is to “call out and thwart” those who do wrong. Calling out the evildoer helps prevent the evil from continuing. It also acts as a deterrent, warning others who might do similarly. Discretion and wisdom are necessary in doing this, as instructed in the *BCO* and in Holy Scripture (*BCO* 32-1, Gal. 6:1). Yet elders should not shy away from the duty of discountenancing the evil of abuse in our midst out of the desire to protect reputations. The catechism directly charges us to discountenance such evil.
- *The charge for elders to “reprove and chastise.”* This speaks directly to the infliction of censures as found in *BCO* 36. Note, according to

¹¹ Examples might be Presbyteries and Sessions enacting policies to hire qualified independent parties to investigate claims of abuse, policies detailing appropriate workplace interactions to inform and protect against harassment, Presbyteries enacting policies to require background checks and abuse training for all ordinands and transfers, and policies to protect whistleblowers against retribution. The basic idea is that the job of prevention is not completed once a Sunday morning child protection policy has been adopted.

¹² *Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “discountenance,”

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discountenance>.

the *BCO*, censures may be inflicted on those who are repentant (*BCO* 38-1). Indeed, when a great evil has occurred, it is the duty of the courts of the church to inflict censures in order to operate as a means to reclaim the offender, deliver the church from scandal, and inspire fear by example (*BCO* 30-4). Discretion and wisdom are necessary in making censures known. Protecting any victims is the primary concern.

The second duty of superiors is to provide for those under their authority. This instructs parents to provide for their children. To fail to provide for a child's needs is child neglect. This neglect can also manifest as spousal neglect and/or economic abuse. The standard in the catechism is the duty of familial superiors to provide for the needs of those under their care. Since the catechism notes that provision includes "all things necessary for *soul* and body," spiritual harm by the misuse of power falls under this clause.

The final duty of superiors is to bless inferiors. As it relates to abuse, lack of properly responding to evil when it happens is a failure to bless the vulnerable. Lack of response, and/or a poor response, may lead to spiritual disillusionment and perhaps the inferior departing from the church.¹³

Scripture References for WLC 129

The Scripture references of the *WLC* are a valuable tool to understand the biblical basis of the sin of abuse and further elucidate the thinking of the divines. Below are some of the relevant Scriptures.

The Confessional Definition of Abuse

- Colossians 3:19 – Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

¹³ One example of this is a Pew Research study on the religious "nones" that stated, "One-in-five express an opposition to organized religion in general. This share includes some who do not like the hierarchical nature of religious groups, several people who think religion is too much like a business and others who mention clergy sexual abuse scandals as reasons for their stance." <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/24/why-americas-nones-left-religion-behind/>. See also this article from The Gospel Coalition, that cites "church hurt" as a reason why many young evangelicals are deconstructing: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-causes-deconstruction/>.

- Ephesians 6:4 – Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
- 1 Peter 3:7 – Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

These verses describe behaviors of harshness, provocation, and insensitivity through words and/or actions as sinful behaviors in various relationships (husband to wives, parents to children). All relationships struggle with these sins. What makes the sinful behavior abusive is that it is a repeated, persistent pattern of sin over a prolonged period that causes significant and lasting damage. This report understands non-physical forms of abuse in this way. An individual who perpetrates repeated, persistent sins of abuse must not be dismissed as someone who “sometimes loses his cool.” All forms of abuse, whether physical or non-physical, negatively impact both the inner and outer man.

The Requirement To Report Abuse to the Civil Authorities

- 1 Peter 2:14 – or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.
- Romans 13:4 – for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

These verses instruct how to deal appropriately with the evil of abuse when it occurs. “Governors” exist in both the state and the church. When it comes to criminal abuse, the governors of the church should submit to the laws and authority of the state (Rom. 13:1-7). When it comes to forms of abuse that the state does not criminalize or does not hold criminally liable, it remains the duty of church governors to discountenance those sins.¹⁴

Oppression as the Biblical Category for Abuse

¹⁴ It should also be noted that many times the civil authorities will decline to investigate a matter or prosecute the perpetrator. This is not a statement of innocence by the magistrate and thus does not necessarily remove the responsibility of the church courts to deal with sin.

- Job 29:12-17 – . . . because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him. The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. I broke the fangs of the unrighteous and made him drop his prey from his teeth.
- Isaiah 1:17 – “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.”

These verses speak generally to the duty of leaders to seek justice and correct oppression. They also direct leaders to pay particular attention to those who have less power. We are to plead the widow's cause because she has no one to help her. In dealing with abuse, the Scriptures call us to carefully attend to those in the situation who have less power.

Protecting the Reputation of Church Leaders

- 1 Timothy 4:12 – Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
- Titus 2:3-5 – Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. (Emphasis added.)
- 1 Kings 3:28 – And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.
- Titus 2:15 – Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

These verses speak to the duty of superiors to accrue glory to God and preserve their reputations by doing what is right. One of the qualifications for an elder is to be thought well of by outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7). If outsiders lack respect for the church due to its failures in both preventing and adequately responding to abuse, leaders are those primarily responsible to seek the ways in which the church has failed to obey God (Amos 3:2; 1 Peter 4:17).

The Sins Forbidden in the Fifth Commandment

Q. 130 What are the sins of superiors?

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure, commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counselling, encouraging, or favouring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonouring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour.

In this question and answer, one instance of these sins may not constitute abuse. It is the repeated persistent pattern of sin over a prolonged period that causes significant and lasting harm.

“An inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure.”

- Ezekiel 34:2-4 – “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.”
- Philippians 2:21 – For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

The sin of “seeking of themselves,” as mentioned in this first phrase, may lead to an incessant pattern of demand, minimization, humiliation, blame-shifting, coercion, denial, threats, and/or treating a person like a servant. Sometimes, this may also include stringent limits on access to financial resources. If the self-centeredness of a husband, parent, or caregiver leads to the harm of the family due to its severity and prolonged persistence, then it could be abuse. This is especially true when it leads to the family’s physical or spiritual neglect.

“Commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counselling [or] encouraging them in that which is evil.”¹⁵

(Scriptures cited: Dan. 3:4-6; Acts 4:17; Ex. 5:10-18; Matt. 23:4; Matt 14:8; 2 Sam. 13:28.)

This phrase speaks of when an authority figure asks or commands those under their charge to do something illegal or immoral. Church leaders are responsible to know what constitutes illegal behavior in their community, when, how, and to whom to report a crime, and public resources available to both victims and abusers. This is in addition to wise shepherding care, which has a broad, biblical understanding of what constitutes immorality in the body of Christ. Doctrines of suffering, submission, headship, gossip, slander, and intimacy in marriage, are all relevant to helping congregants respond well to the sins of abuse. It is a grievous sin when an authority figure uses his or her authority (by force or coercion) to secure participation in sinful acts. Related to this, there is an erroneous teaching that submission owed to the husband/father is such that wives and children must submit even if he commands something sinful. It has also been taught that a wife or a child cannot report the husband/father’s (or mother’s if applicable) moral failures to the authorities (church or civil). These are false teachings that must be suppressed.

Further, when a superior “ties up heavy burdens, hard to bear,” through impossible demands and exacting punishments, great soul damage can be done, and thus can be a factor in spiritual abuse or leadership abuse.¹⁶

“Favouring them in that which is evil”

- 1 Samuel 3:13 – “And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.”

The Scripture reference for “favoring them in that which is evil,” is Eli’s inaction in disciplining his sons. Passive forbearance with his sons’ great evil is what led to Israel’s downfall. We must not forebear with abusers in the church. This is a sinful favoring of evil. Leaders should instead restrain evil by thoroughly educating themselves and their congregations regarding the

¹⁵ “Favoring” is removed from this section in order to deal with it separately below.

¹⁶ See Attachment 1: Definitions for meanings of these terms and Section Six: Misuse of Spiritual Authority in this report.

dynamics of abuse, carefully constructing robust policies to prevent abuse, and responding adequately when it occurs.

“Dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly”

(Scriptures cited: John 7:46-49; Col. 3:21; Ex. 5:17; 1 Peter 2:18-20; Heb. 12:10; Deut. 25:3.)

When leaders, either in the home, workplace, or church, berate or belittle those under their care, it diminishes the image of God in man. The body and the mind, heart, will, and emotions are all a reflection of God’s image.

Diminishing others is how abusive people manipulate to control. It is an insidious tactic that causes significant (psychological) damage to the inner man. Similarly, an act of discipline or correction that is not reciprocal to the wrong committed can also be weaponized by an abuser. Patterns of devaluing God’s image in another over a prolonged period of time results in a victim’s inability to reason appropriately, make wise personal decisions, and/or mediate reality. Ultimately, it diminishes their capacity to steward their God-given gifts and glorify their Creator.

“Careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger”

- Genesis 38:11 – Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up” for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house.
- Genesis 38:26 – Then Judah identified them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not know her again.
- Acts 18:17 – And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

Exposing children to danger is undeniably abuse and neglect. One instance is sufficient for identifying exposure as abuse, especially when physical harm is involved. Even when there is no physical harm, exposure is sinful. Exposure disrupts the bond of trust between children and their parents and causes lasting damage. “Adverse Child Experiences” or the ACE study, meticulously identified multiple and long-lasting effects of not only physical harm and

exposure, but also of the more overt forms of physical and sexual abuse.¹⁷ Exposure occurs also when children live in a home where substance abuse or other dangerous and sinful behavior occur. ACEs demonstrated lasting damage to a child's developing brain, especially in how that person responds to certain stimuli and social interactions. These experiences can lead to PTSD similar to the severity soldiers experience on a battlefield.

Included in these sins of exposure is when authorities, whether civil or ecclesiastical, require abuse victims to stay in abusive relationships. Requiring an abused wife to reconcile with her unrepentant abuser, return to the marriage home and bed, is careless exposing to danger. The abuser's genuine repentance must be observed, confirmed, and proven through the test of time [see Attachment 10: Repentance]. It involves more than (but is not limited to) admitting to being caught, saying "I'm sorry," and/or pledging to work with the Session.

Similarly, forcing children to reconcile relationally with abusive parents may cause great harm. Care, discernment, and wisdom must be taken in these situations.

The rules of discipline are inappropriate tools for forcing compliance of abuse victims.

Careless exposure to wrong and danger also occurs when authorities in the church fail to properly educate the congregation on issues of abuse and institute appropriate policies for abuse prevention.

As pointed out above in the discussion of Question 129, many people are leaving the church due, in part, to the way the church has responded to abuse. When anyone abandons the bride of Christ for an unbiblical reason, it is sinful. However, if authorities expose "them to temptation," the greater sin lies with leaders. Judah said in Genesis 38:26, "She is more righteous than I." Jesus likewise said, "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).

"Provoking them to wrath"

¹⁷ For a helpful description of adverse child experiences, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/aces/index.html>

- Ephesians 6:4 – Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Superiors in the family may provoke those under their care by many of the aforementioned *WLC* prohibitions. They might apply exacting punishments, diminish and belittle, have unrealistic expectations, favor their own desires to the exclusion of everyone else in the family, and/or expose them to dangerous situations. When little ones under the authority of others have been caused to sin, far greater sin has been done by those that have provoked them by their abuse. Shepherds care for victims with kindness while simultaneously (justly) punishing abusers.

This principle applies to other “superior-inferior” type relationships as well. Abuse victims are not without sin. However, there is a significant inequality between their sin issues and the evil of abuse. Wrath is an appropriate response to evil. Victims must not sin in their response to the abuse, yet it is within reason that they are very angry about the sins committed against them. This doesn’t excuse sin. It does mean church leaders and members should patiently shepherd the victim with care and understanding, and to never equate their anger with the sins of their abusers.

“Or any way dishonouring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour”

- Genesis 9:21 – He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.
- 1 Kings 12:13-16 – And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, “What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.” So Israel went to their tents.
- 1 Kings 1:6 – His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, “Why have you done thus and so?” He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

- 1 Samuel 2:29-31 – “Why then do you scorn My sacrifices and My offerings that I commanded for My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?” Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: “I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before Me forever,” but now the LORD declares: “Far be it from Me, for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.”

When leaders, whether in the home, workplace, church, or civil government, dishonor themselves through sinful behavior, harsh discipline, or lax discipline, they bring dishonor on themselves and to God. Leaders in the church should not be surprised when sheep chafe under such authority. When those under authority are provoked to wrath, or otherwise begin to reject authority because of the leader's sin, the greater fault lies with the leader. The charge from the people of Israel is poignant, “Look now to your own house, David!” Church leaders must first see to their own duties before bemoaning and laying blame on those who are leaving the church and speaking derisively of her. The examples of Eli and his sons, David and his sons, and Solomon in his later reign are poignant. As the Lord promised Samuel, He will judge church leaders for such behavior (1 Peter 4:17). The duty of those in authority is to right the ship.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not murder (Ex. 20:13).

The locus of many sinful behaviors falling under the heading of abuse is found in the sixth commandment. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expands the scope of the commandment from the unjust taking of life, to the inner working of our hearts and to the realm of speech.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, you fool! will be liable to the hell of fire (Matt. 5:21-22).

The Divines follow in this vein to expound upon the sixth commandment in all its facets:

Q. 135 What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavours, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defence thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physick, sleep, labour, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behaviour; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succouring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

There is some repetition between *WLC* 135 and 136, thus the overt actions that are related to abuse will be covered below. However, there are several relevant matters in the answer, especially as it relates to the positive duty to preserve life and protect those under threat.

“To preserve the life of ourselves and others . . . by just defense thereof against violence”

- 1 Kings 18:4 – And when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.
- Psalm 82:4 – Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
- Proverbs 24:11-12 – Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,” does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will He not repay man according to his work?

(Additional Scriptures cited: Eph. 5:28-29; 1 Sam. 14:45; Jer. 38:7-13.)

Scripture is clear that preserving life includes defending victims of abuse. The first duty is to preserve our own lives. This speaks to the obligation victims have to protect themselves from an abuser. This may include removing herself and her children from an abusive home, resisting living with a spouse that a church court acknowledged has been abusive, and separating as a matter of protection, even as others urge reconciliation with the abuser. This is the duty to preserve life.

The second duty falls under preserving the life of others. This type of preservation removes the victim, and any other potential victims, from the immediate vicinity of the abuser. Any avenue that the abuser uses to further abuse must be removed. The sixth commandment duty also includes fulfilling the Romans 13 obligation to inform the civil authorities when the situation requires mandated reporting (See Section Five: Child Abuse).

“Patient bearing of the hand of God”

(Scriptures cited: James 5:7-11; Heb. 12:9.)

This duty speaks to the nature of repentance. Genuine repentance patiently bears with the consequences of one’s sin. A truly repentant abuser will recognize the gravity of his or her sin and not force the process of reconciliation. Rather, those truly repentant will wait patiently until the abused are ready for relational restoration.¹⁸

Abusive church leaders should patiently bear under the hand of God and not rush to be restored to a position of leadership. Damage done by abuse can be severe and long lasting. Protecting survivors means continuous safeguarding throughout the recovery process.

“Forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil”

(Scriptures cited: Matt. 5:24; Eph. 4:2; Eph. 4:32; Rom. 12:17; Rom. 12:20; Rom. 12:21.)

Because preserving life implies patience with victims, impartiality requires a careful examination of this seemingly opposite clause. In order to understand

¹⁸ See Attachment 9: Forgiveness and Attachment 10: Repentance.

how these duties work together, a biblical understanding of reconciliation and forbearance is needed. Forgiveness is not reconciliation, and forbearance is not antithetical to preservation.

Forgiveness

These passages show that believers must forgive one another. Forgiveness is required by the gospel. However, the duty to preserve life requires protecting victims from their abuser. It also requires protecting those who choose to remain with their abuser. Protection includes trying to persuade a victim to move to safety.

Forgiveness does not always involve relational restoration.¹⁹ When it comes to reconciliation and forgiveness, this must be also measured against the duty to protect. The duty that follows below states, “comfort and succor the distressed.” If the abused person is distressed, leaders are called to continue protecting them while they seek healing.

The catechism answer requires, “requiting good for evil.” Insisting on accountability, justice, and rehabilitation may be the cause of an abuser truly repenting of his or her sins and receiving eternal reward. What greater good can be requited than salvation?

Forbearance

The duty of forbearance does not negate the duty to preserve one’s life from violence. The duty to preserve is primary and supersedes the duty of forbearance. The Scripture reference for forbearance is Ephesians 4:2, “bearing with one another in love,” and the Greek word is ἀνέχω. This word is defined as “endurance.” The context of Ephesians 4 is not intimate relationships but the unity of the church body. Paul is asking believers to be patient with one another’s shortcomings in order to preserve unity and peace in the church. He is not asking abuse victims to endure further abuse. “One another” is plural, implying not an endurance between two persons but an endurance between one person and the larger community. Paul is clear in his writings that patient endurance does not mean allowing grave sins to persist, saying, “purge the evil person from among you,”²⁰ and, “I have handed [them] over to Satan.”²¹ Moreover, the citation for Romans 12 states “repay no one

¹⁹ See Attachment 9: Forgiveness.

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 5:5.

²¹ 1 Timothy 1:20.

evil for evil.” Moving victims out of abusive situations is not repaying evil for evil but protecting from further harm. Abuse is a grave sin against the image-bearer of God. Biblical forbearance does not include remaining in abusive situations.

Nevertheless, adults should not be moved into protective situations against their will unless there is a grave threat of the loss of life.

“Comforting and succouring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.”

- Matthew 25:35-36 – “For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.”
- Proverbs 31:8-9 – Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

(Additional Scriptures cited: 1 Thess. 5:14; Job 31:19-20; Isa. 58:7.)

To give comfort and succor to those distressed by abuse is to protect. This includes the provision of qualified medical care for both the wounds of the body and the wounds of the mind. According to our own Reformed distinctives, man consists of two parts: a body and a soul.²² Though delineated into two, the inner and outer “designate the one spiritual substance of man . . . (Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:5).”²³ Both body and soul constitute the whole man, therefore when someone experiences abuse, the whole man is in need of care. The human mind is a mysterious example of this. What we call the mind can in some ways be attributed to the soul. However, we also know that the mind has a physical component.²⁴

For many forms of abuse, including child abuse, sexual abuse, physical assault, sexual assault, and any other abuse that causes severe psychological distress,

²² See *WLC Q. 29* and *Q. 37* and Matt. 6:25; 10:28; Eccl. 12:7; and 1 Cor 5:3, 5.

²³ L. Berkhof. *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1933), 121-123.

²⁴ See Matthew 22:37 where Jesus substitutes mind for might, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with your soul and with your mind.”

damage to the brain and central nervous system is significant.²⁵ This damage can manifest itself as PTSD, OCD, depression, anxiety, and a variety of other disorders. Shepherds are called to care for the soul; however, wisdom directs church leaders to partner with trained individuals with experience working with these conditions for the purpose of comprehensive caregiving.²⁶

Financial provision for counseling and medical treatment is considered an appropriate restitution from the abuser to the abused (see Exodus 22). It can also be an act of mercy for the church to assist victims with the cost of their care. Due to privacy issues as it relates to medical and mental healthcare, consider hiring a third-party administrator to handle reimbursements. Due to the intimate nature of the care, the choice of a counselor belongs to the victim. Stipulations should not be placed on the usage of funds by those granting.

The Sins Forbidden in the Sixth Commandment

The sixth commandment contains overtly sinful behaviors that can be abusive.

Q. 136 What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of publick justice, lawful war, or necessary defence; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labour, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarrelling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

“All taking away the life of ourselves, or of others”

- Acts 16:28 – But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”

²⁵ H. D. Gingrich and F. C. Gingrich. *Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 67.

²⁶ Does a psychologist need to be a Reformed Christian in order to partner in providing care for victims? While the issue is complex, the short answer is no. Certainly, treatment providers who are not antagonistic to Reformed beliefs, or seek to undermine them, can be engaged. A non-Christian provider can work with a patient’s religious beliefs and still care for them well. The key factor in identifying a treatment provider is that the person is qualified to treat disorders related to abuse trauma.

- Genesis 9:6 – “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image.”

The foundational principle found in this commandment is that all abuse is a taking away of life. This is why abuse is so damaging. Genesis 9:6 states that the severity of the sin is due to the fact that great damage has been done to an image-bearer of God. Since all human beings are made in God’s image, any attempt to take away life is a grave sin with grave consequences.

“Withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life”

- Matthew 25:42-43 – “For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”
- James 2:15-16 – If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

As seen in the duties of the fifth commandment, the sin of neglect is a form of abuse. Here, in the sixth commandment, the sin of neglect is the taking away of the necessary means for life. The sin of neglect applies to those in authority, but it also applies generally to all human beings. However, only those who have immediate responsibility for the one who is suffering are accountable.

Churches have the duty to care and provide for those who have need due to abuse. If such persons need food, clothing, and shelter because they have fled for their own safety, the church should attempt to provide. This seems to be the very least that the Scriptures cited above require.

“Sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions”

- Matthew 5:22 – “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”
- 1 John 3:15 – Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

- Leviticus 19:17 – You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.
- Proverbs 14:30 – A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.
- Romans 12:19 – Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.
- Ephesians 4:31 – Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

The sins covered under the sixth commandment do not all lead to the literal loss of life. The catechism does not begin with the sin of physical wounding with an intent to kill and then move to sins of lesser severity. Instead, as in the Sermon on the Mount, the Divines begin with the sins of the heart and move outward. Special note is taken of the citation of Matthew 5:22 and 1 John 3:15. Matthew 5:22 moves from the sin of the heart to verbal abuse. Jesus says that the one who insults his brother should be subject to church discipline. Verbal abuse is evidence of the status of the heart. John writes that the one who hates his brother in his heart is a murderer and will not inherit eternal life. The sins of the tongue reveal the heart. Scripture considers verbal abuse a very serious sin. The church is called to respond to the same extent.

These sins, along with some of those that follow, serve as the confessional basis for the existence of non-physical forms of abuse. Many people struggle to define verbal, emotional, and/or psychological abuse because they are difficult to prove. Indeed, victims of these forms of abuse recognize the difficulty, often wishing their abusers would wound them physically so that there would be evidence. Yet, because of what is shown in this catechism answer, non-physical forms of abuse should be taken as seriously as if there were visible bruises. These sins are a form of the taking away of life. By them the life of an image-bearer is devalued, and great damage is done to the mind and the soul.

Proverbs 14:30, cited here for envy, states that these non-physical sins have an effect on the body, “rotting the bones.” This metaphorical language by Solomon seems to acknowledge that non-physical forms of abuse can be manifested physically in the nervous and immune systems. Our Reformed distinctives affirm that a human being is not in essence only a soul, but a soul-body union, so it should not be surprising that scientists have discovered that damage to the soul affects the body.

Finally, the reference for “sinful passions” in Ephesians 4:31 demonstrates that passions are not only sexual in nature. They include bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice. “Sinful passions,” biblically, include verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse.

“Distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labour, and recreations”

- Matthew 6:31, 34 – “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”
- Isaiah 5:12 – They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of His hands.

(Additional Scriptures cited: Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13; Eccl. 2:22-23; 12:12)

The primary relationship of the sins mentioned in these passages is of the sinner to himself. These sins can be classified as either contributing factors to abuse, or tools the abuser implements. Self-harm, or the threat of self-harm, is the ultimate form of controlling behavior. It is used to manipulate others to speak or act a certain way. This causes grave damage to those under their authority. Children in particular suffer severe trauma when a parent self-harms, having no categories for how to mediate what happened, how (if) they contributed, and/or what they could have done to prevent the circumstances.

The catechism begins with anxiety as a root cause. Anxiety is often a reason why an abuser does what he does. Many abusers were abused themselves. Abuse can lead to disordered desires which cause people to sin and subjugate others. Not all abusers are evil psychopaths. Many of them abuse others out of a need to regulate their own fears, anxieties, and other negative feelings. There may not even be a strong volitional intent to harm others, but they continue to do harm in pursuit of their own self regardless of the harm that this self-pursuit does to others. Addictive behaviors such as substance abuse, workaholism, and an immoderate lifestyle, can be factors that compound the effects of abuse.

“Provoking words”

- Proverbs 15:1 – A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- Proverbs 12:18 – There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Another confessional basis for verbal abuse is causing a person to sin by using provoking words. In the first reference from Proverbs 15, harsh words stir up anger in the one sinned against, moving them to wrath. Under the fifth commandment, causing someone to sin is a sin. In *WLC* 151, the multiplication of sins makes a sin more heinous. Thus, when sinful speech causes another person to sin, the sin is compounded. Also in *WLC* 151, power differentials cause a sin to be even more heinous as when a superior uses provoking words with an inferior. In Proverbs 12, verbal abuse is likened to stabbing with a sword, a deadly weapon. Deadly weapons do grave damage. This is why Jesus warns repeatedly: woe to those who cause “little ones” to sin (Matt. 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2).

“Oppression”

- Ezekiel 18:18 – “As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.”
- Exodus 1:14 – And made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

Oppression is the biblical word for abuse, cited here by the Divines and appearing 116 times in the English Standard Version. The Divines cite Exodus 1:14, which states that the Egyptians made the lives of the Israelites bitter. Verse 12 tells us that this bitterness is due to the oppression of the Israelites by the Egyptians. The word used for oppression in verse 12 is אָנַח (‘*anah*), which means “affliction.”²⁷ When used in the Hebrew Piel, the word often means to afflict by mistreating, as it does here. Examples of this usage are when Sarah mistreats Hagar, Laban charges Jacob not to oppress his daughters, and the command in Exodus 22:21-23 not to oppress orphans and widows. In studying these usages of the verb, we can define oppression as it is used in the Bible as “to afflict by mistreatment.” *Anah* (אָנַח) literally means, “to humble.” To oppress is to cause someone to be humbled by ill-treatment. Humiliation in this sense speaks to lasting damage: a person is brought low by mistreatment.

²⁷ This is the standard Hebrew word used for oppression in the Old Testament, appearing some 57 times in the Piel. (Piel is a verbal form in Hebrew that indicates intensiveness.)

“Quarrelling”

- Galatians 5:15 – But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
- Proverbs 23:29 – Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

Abusive relationships can be difficult to discern. Often, church leaders feel trapped between the “he said, she said” dilemma and are unsure whom to believe. This catechism question, along with the two verses cited, might even be used as confessional evidence for that claim. Although victims of abuse can be provoked to sinful responses to the oppressive behaviors against them, the greater responsibility rests with the abuser. In the vast majority of cases, one party has greater responsibility and has committed a more heinous sin. This is especially true when the abuser is in authority over the abused. For increased clarity regarding the nature of quarrels, Proverbs 23:29 suggests that asking questions regarding the environment of the home (church, institution) can be helpful.

“Striking, wounding, whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any”

(Scriptures cited: Num. 35:16-18, 21; Ex. 21:18-36.)

The Divines demonstrate in these verses that striking, even when it does not result in death, is sin. Exodus 21:18-19, cited here, sheds light on this:

When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and the man *does not die* but takes to his bed, then if the man rises again and walks outdoors with his staff, he who struck him shall be clear; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall have him thoroughly healed.

This passage describes physical assault that results in the incapacitation of the victim (he “takes to his bed”). The assault described also results in long-term damage (walks with a cane). This passage distinguishes between manslaughter and assault. However, the one who assaults remains liable for his sin even if he escapes the death penalty. Other penalties that remain include restitution. The assailant is required to pay restitution to the victim for the loss of his time, as well as pay for whatever care required to make the man whole. Presumably,

if the victim is permanently disabled, the assailant would be required to pay more restitution. Physical abuse and assault that causes lasting damage is a grievous sin necessitating disciplinary process. Protecting victims and requiring restitution are appropriate responses by the church to cases of physical assault. The same principle applies to nonphysical forms of abuse that cause lasting damage.

The Divines conclude this answer with a catchall phrase lest implying that the taking away of life is not limited to the examples provided. As biblical evidence they cite an extended passage from Exodus 21. In studying this passage, other forms of sin beyond physical abuse and assault require a weighty response to all abuse. The text says, “But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (v. 24).

Consistent application of the principles gleaned from a study of the fifth and sixth commandments exemplifies nonphysical forms of abuse as an unjust taking away of life and is biblically and confessionally warranted.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14).

The Divines’ exposition of the seventh commandment includes assault, abuse, and harassment of a sexual nature.

Q. 139 What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company, lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

“adultery, fornication, . . . lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others”

(Scriptures cited: Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:4; Ezek. 23:14-16; Isa. 23:15-17; Isa. 3:16; Mark 6:22; Rom. 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40.)

The Westminster Standards clearly prohibit sexual activity outside of marriage and participating in and viewing pornography. Illicit sexual behavior is a tactic abusers use. When an abuser coerces a victim to participate in illicit activities, their shame is overwhelming. Shame is then a powerful weapon used to perpetuate abuse and discourage the victim from reporting to authorities. Coercion, or forcing victims to participate in sexual activities, can also fall under the category of sexual assault. These sins are not simply sexual immorality but may be considered forms of abuse.

“rape”

- 2 Samuel 13:14 – But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he forced [oppressed] her and lay with her.

The goal of the biblical and theological introduction has been to ground an understanding of abuse in the teachings of the Westminster Standards, the adopted interpretation of Scripture by the Presbyterian Church in America.²⁸ The Westminster Standards do not have a separate category for sexual abuse outside the sin of rape.²⁹ Rape has a technical, legal definition that excludes many additional forms of sexual abuse. In addition, some victims of sexual abuse may not describe what happened to them as rape. However, in terms of our Confessional Standards and the judicial basis for prosecution of ecclesiastical cases of sexual abuse in the PCA, other forms of sexual abuse fall under the prohibition of rape. In other words, the Standards’ prohibition of rape is broader than what we would commonly call rape. Without the inclusion of sexual abuse under the confessional category for rape, there is no other clear

²⁸ See Introduction: The Structure of the Ad Interim Committee Report on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault.

²⁹ There are some sins forbidden in WLC 139 that may contribute to sexual abuse, but they do not constitute an overarching category.

prohibition of sexual abuse in our confessional standards. Therefore, it is necessary to include all forms of sexual assault and abuse under the confessional umbrella of rape.

The Scripture reference for rape given by the Divines is the story of Amnon's and his half-sister Tamar.³⁰ The story is very clear. Amnon propositioned his sister. She refused his proposition. Amnon forced Tamar to comply, and he raped her. The use of force and vaginal penetration make this story a clear instance of rape.

By analyzing the features of this story, we find that not only is rape described, but sexual abuse in general, since many aspects of sexual abuse are present. Amnon and Tamar were close acquaintances. He had a power dynamic over her. He stalked her, groomed her, sexually harassed her, propositioned her, and when she refused, he used force to initiate illicit sexual contact.³¹ After the abuse occurred, he shunned her. The word used for rape here is the same Hebrew word mentioned above for "oppression," which is the general biblical word for abuse. In fact, some older translations say that he "forced" her or "humbled" her. The point is, while this is rape, it is not only rape. If there was

³⁰ While this biblical story contains many of the aspects of sexual abuse, there is one feature that may not occur in every instance: Tamar's argument with and implied struggle against Amnon. It is not a requirement for abuse to be considered abuse that a victim must argue with and physically struggle against their abuser. Of note here is that the passage does not explicitly record her crying out. The Mosaic Law required betrothed virgins to cry out if they are being raped; however, Tamar was not betrothed, so the same stipulations did not strictly apply. Nevertheless, she was in the city and in a house where servants were located, so if she had cried out, someone may have come to her aid. Despite the fact that she did not cry out, the Scriptures do not place any blame on her, laying the fault solely on the evil actions of Amnon. Note also that the Scriptures do not explicitly say that she struggled against him. It implies a struggle when it says, "being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her" (2 Sam. 13:14). The fact that it does not explicitly record a struggle, then makes it a feature of the story but not a factor in consideration of whether or not something is sexual abuse.

³¹ The Hebrew word *chazaq* ("to be strong") can be used in the Scriptures in a nonphysical way. In Exodus 12:33, the Egyptians "urge" the Israelites to leave in haste. In 2 Kings 4:8, the Shunammite "urges" Elisha to stay with her. This semantic range opens up our understanding of Deuteronomy 22:25 and 2 Samuel 13:14 to include forceful urging or coercion. See Katie McCoy, "God Is Not Silent: What the Bible Teaches about Sexual Assault," *The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention* (2017), <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/god-is-not-silent-what-the-bible-teaches-about-sexual-assault/>.

any other form of sexual contact in this story it would still be considered sexual abuse.

Consent is a major part of the story of Amnon and Tamar. In verse 12, Tamar pleads with her brother, “Do not oppress me, for such a thing is not done in Israel.” The verb is in the Piel, thus a forceful affliction by mistreatment is signified. In both the 1611 King James Version and the 1599 Geneva Bible, the translations the Divines used, this verb is translated “to force.” In those translations Tamar says, “Do not *force* me” (v. 12). Consent is key. If she had consented to be a willing participant, it would have been the sin of incest, not rape.³²

Since consent is a key factor in the confessional definition of rape, it follows that any sexual activity where consent is not given, can’t be given, or consent is impaired, falls under the umbrella of the confessional prohibition of rape.³³ Impairment of consent exists in a differential of power (boss with subordinates, pastor with parishioners), age, or state of consciousness (including a person impaired by a substance). If two peers attend a party and one of them becomes intoxicated, it is considered sexual assault if the other takes advantage of the impaired person. The requirement for consent also extends to the marriage bed. If an intimate partner does not consent and the other persists and engages in sexual relations, it is considered sexual assault.

With regard to child sexual abuse, whenever an adult sexually abuses a minor, it falls under the confessional umbrella of rape because children are unable to consent to sexual activity with adults.

Often, abuse in the church involves young adults and/or teenagers. Young adult or youth leaders possess a power dynamic with younger teens that impairs the ability to consent. This raises the heinousness of the sin beyond sexual immorality to abuse.

The sins *WLC* 139 includes in rape are recognized as crimes in many legal jurisdictions. Presbyteries and Sessions must understand mandatory reporting laws applicable to their locale. When a crime has been committed, Romans 13 takes precedence over Matthew 18. Adult victims must be consulted before

³² Note here that we use the phrase, “consenting to be a willing participant.” A person may be berated and coerced into giving in, but that may not be the same as willing consent. Wisdom is required in discerning the difference.

³³ This is not to say that all sexual abuse is the same in degree of severity. *WLC* 151 still applies here.

reporting their abuse to authorities. No report should be made against an adult victim's consent.³⁴ However, if the civil authorities decline to investigate or prosecute, the church is responsible to pursue the matter within the ecclesiastical court. The duties outlined for responding to abuse remain in effect. (See "Reporting" in each section of this report for further information on reporting different forms of abuse.)

"All corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks"

(Scriptures cited: Eph. 5:3-4; Prov. 7:5, 21-22; Isa. 3:16; 2 Peter 2:14.)

Scripture forbids all crude or lascivious speech and behavior. This type of speech and/or behavior toward others sinfully diminishes image-bearers. If there is any form of power differential in the relationship, it is classified as sexual harassment. It is also considered harassment in the absence of a power differential if the comments are unwanted and are severe or repeated. If a pattern of such harassment persists over a prolonged period, it can be classified as abusive. All forms of sexual harassment are subject to the discipline of the church. (See considerations of WLC 151 above for further discussion on power differentials.)

"Impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel . . . gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company, lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others"

(Scriptures cited: Prov. 7:10, 13; Ezek. 16:49; Prov. 23:30-33; Gen. 39:10; Eph. 5:4; Ezek. 23:14-16; Isa. 23:15-17; Isa. 3:16; Mark 6:22; Rom. 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40.)

Do these passages indicate victims contribute to their abuse?

First, no person is without sin. But does sin contribute or lead to abuse or assault? Abuse or assault is never stipulated as a form of punishment in the Scriptures, speaking to the fact that no one deserves abuse or assault. Attributing a victim's sin, appearance, friends, and/or recreations to an assault minimizes the sin of the abuser. Scripture is clear: we cannot make someone sin; people choose to sin (James 1:14). Predators have been known to

³⁴ The exception to this is if the adult was a minor when the abuse occurred and there is reason to suspect that ongoing abuse may be occurring involving other minors.

intentionally pursue these vulnerabilities because the target is easier prey and society will attribute at least part of the blame on them. In the church, we must judge justly with clear eyes. All sin is not equal. God deals with sin proportionate to the evil that has been committed and directly with the heart that commits it. A victim's sin can be addressed outside of the abusive situation, giving adequate time and resources to heal from the effects of the more heinous crime committed against them. However, care must be taken to express that the abuse is not their fault.

Second, these verses regarding the seductress, along with many similar passages, characterize the danger of idolatry in general, or of the people of Israel, the bride of Yahweh. This can be seen in many of the Proverbs, the Prophets (especially Ezekiel), and Revelation. Throughout the Prophets, enemy cities are also personified as women. The use of this analogy is not necessarily meant to emphasize the danger women pose to men. In reality, the majority of instances of sinful seduction recorded in the Bible are of men taking advantage of women (Gen. 19:4-5; Gen. 34, 38; Judg. 19:22-25; 2 Sam. 11; 2 Sam. 13).

Blaming the victim is one of the main reasons wounded people don't come forward. Shepherds help victims report by listening, hearing them, and reserving judgment.

“Unjust divorce, or desertion”

- Malachi 2:16 – “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “covers his garment with violence,” says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.
- Matthew 5:32 – But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
- 1 Corinthians 7:12-13 – To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

The 20th General Assembly of the PCA produced a study Report on Divorce and Remarriage.³⁵ The committee concluded that grounds for divorce is *porneia*.³⁶ It also acknowledged the possibility of a believer divorcing an unbelieving spouse because of desertion.³⁷ The report states that in a case when “words and actions on the part of one spouse that threatens the life of the other spouse and/or children, that the one(s) threatened should be counseled by the Session, or representative thereof, to remove themselves from the threatening situation.”³⁸ After those threatened are protected and moved to safety, “the Session should investigate, whether these words and actions are in effect breaking the one-flesh relationship by ‘hating’ the abused spouse and not ‘nourishing and cherishing’ this one (Eph. 5:28-29). . . . When it is determined by the Session that the abuser does not appear to them to be Christian and the abuse continues,”³⁹ the church court should excommunicate the abuser. After this, the believing spouse may seek a divorce in the civil courts.⁴⁰ In response to this report, the 20th General Assembly adopted the following recommendations (see *Minutes of the 20th General Assembly*, pp. 59-60.):

- When an unbeliever separates from the marriage relationship with a believer, the believer is free from that marriage and free to remarry but only in the Lord (1 Cor. 7:15, 39) [Recommendation 2.f].
- The believer in the aforementioned case is free to make the biblical divorce legal in the eyes of the state [Recommendation 2.h].
- Under extreme circumstances, a Session following the *BCO* may properly judge that such desertion (separation) has occurred, even though the deserting spouse is still physically present in the home (“desertion” being viewed in the sense understood in the study report on divorce, Chapter 2, Section II.E.4.) [Recommendation 2.g].

Section II.E.4 of the report begins by saying:

³⁵ This report is found in the *Minutes of the 20th General Assembly* (1992), 513-636.

³⁶ *Minutes of the 20th General Assembly* (Atlanta: Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, 1992), 633-635.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 634-635.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

“. . . We must be careful not to open the floodgate of excuses. On the other hand, we need to recognize the reality of the ‘separation.’ We should allow sessions the liberty to discern with much prayer what would be the proper response in particular circumstance.

Several considerations incline us to agree with those of our authorities who have maintained that desertion can occur as well by the imposition of intolerable conditions as by departure itself. We are struck by the fact that, taking Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7 together, it appears that the Lord concedes the necessity of the abolition of marriage in certain cases precisely so as to protect a blameless spouse from intolerable conditions. Further, taking into account both the general principles of biblical ethics and the Scripture's characteristic manner of ethical instruction, viz. the statement of commandments in a general form to which is added case law sufficient to indicate the manner of application, it seems to us that those Reformed authorities are correct who have argued that sins which are tantamount in extremity and consequence to actual desertion should be understood to produce similar eventualities (cf. *Larger Catechism*, Q. 99, A. 6).

What is more, a husband's violence, particularly to the degree that it endangers his wife's safety, if unremedied, seems to us, by any application of Biblical norms, to be as much a ruination of the marriage in fact as adultery or actual departure. This is so precisely because his violence separates them, either by her forced withdrawal from the home or by the profound cleavage between them which the violence produces, as surely as would his own departure, and is thus an expression of his unwillingness—to consent to live with her in marriage (1 Cor. 7:12-13; Eph. 5:28-29). Further, insofar as the “passivity” of the blameless spouse is an important prerequisite in Paul's permission of the dissolution of marriage on account of desertion, it seems right to note that in the case of physical abuse, for example, the blameless spouse is similarly victimized.”⁴¹

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 562-563.

In Appendix 1 of the report, an ad hoc committee of Philadelphia Presbytery formed and was chaired by Rev. Dr. William S. Barker.⁴² Dr. Barker is the former Dean of Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, President of Covenant Seminary, St. Louis, and the Moderator of the 22nd General Assembly of the PCA. In the *ad hoc* committee analysis of the Westminster Divines' allowance for divorce due to abuse, the report concluded:

... When physical abuse is occurring in a marriage, the church must deal with a situation which, as the Puritans saw, is contrary to God's purpose for marriage. A temporary separation may be necessary for safety, which the church may need to facilitate, and the abusing partner should be disciplined, with helpful counsel but eventually to the point of excommunication if there is no repentance in deed as well as in word. The situation is complicated in our cultural setting when the marriage partner is not a member of a church, or is a member of some other church; nevertheless, discipline must be attempted. Only after a suitable length of time and a sufficient process of church discipline should a divorce be granted for such a desertion of one's marriage partner and the marriage covenant. (This is essentially the conclusion reached by David D. Prescott in *The Problem of Wife Abuse: Wife Abuse and Pastoral Counseling*, Westminster Theological Seminary D.Min. project, 1991; cf. pp. 212-221 on "Divorce: Is It a Possibility?")

In its understanding of the Bible's teaching on divorce as "nothing but adultery or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage,"⁴³ the Westminster Assembly was seeking to steer the Scriptural path

⁴² Ibid., 607-621. In this analysis the committee leaned heavily upon the work of Dr. David C. Jones, erstwhile professor of ethics at Covenant Seminary, and member of several PCA GA study committees. See also David C. Jones, "The Westminster Confession on Divorce and Remarriage," *Presbyterion* XVI, 1 (Spring 1990), 17-40.

The complete report as well as other PCA documents on divorce and remarriage can be found in *What God Has Joined Together: The PCA Papers on Divorce and Remarriage* (Lawrenceville, GA: PCA Administrative Committee and Committee on Discipleship Ministries, 2021).

⁴³ WCF 24:6.

between two demonstrable extremes⁴⁴ and in the process uphold God's high ideal for marriage. On the one hand, this ruled out the Roman Catholic concept of no divorce, allowing divorce for adultery and under certain circumstances desertion. On the other hand, it ruled out divorce for incompatibility as some such as Milton were advocating. Physical abuse of a spouse was seen as contrary to the biblical purpose for marriage and would thus be grounds for church discipline and could, if it led to prolonged separation without remedy, become a cause for dissolution of a marriage. Such circumstantial details can be handled only by a body of elders cognizant of and close to the situation. Whereas proven adultery would be readily acknowledged as grounds for a divorce, desertion on the basis of physical abuse as a cause for dissolution of a marriage should be determined from the circumstances by the local session or in the case of a minister by the presbytery.⁴⁵

To summarize, the *Westminster Confession* (24:6) allows for divorce in the case of willful desertion, and the 20th General Assembly study committee report on divorce and remarriage allowed divorce in certain circumstances of abuse when a spouse is living under intolerable conditions. Intolerable conditions consist of more than physical violence on the part of the abuser. An abuser can create intolerable living conditions without ever laying a hand on his spouse or children. The Domestic Abuse section of this report will cover nonphysical tactics the abuser might use to create intolerable living conditions.

Secondly, the Divines' citation of Malachi 2:16 included the phrase, "God hates divorce." While this was the former understanding, many scholars understand this to be a mistranslation. Thus, the ESV translates the verse, "When a man hates his wife and divorces . . ." This translation is supported by both the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate.⁴⁶ Excommunication should be

⁴⁴ These extremes were the Roman Catholic position of no divorce and the Zwinglian position that had six allowable grounds for divorce, "adultery, impotence, willful desertion, grave incompatibility, sexually incapacitating illness, and deception," *M20GA*, 609-610.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 620-621. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶ Please see the following essay by Covenant Seminary Old Testament Professor C. John Collins. It is quite thorough: https://www.academia.edu/5304267/Malachi_2_16_again_. Collins argues that the translation, "God hates divorce," relies on changing the vowel "pointings" of the Masoretic Text. Collins further states that

avoided as a penalty for a wife who has fled her abuser. Even if it is eventually determined she was erroneous for pursuing divorce, the primary duty of a shepherd is a careful and prayerful approach to best address the difficulty of a wife living in a situation that threatens her (and/or her children's) well-being.

This report will deal with the issue of divorce in more depth in Attachment 11: "Divorce and Abuse." The topic of divorce in cases of domestic abuse constitutes more study on desertion and how one should think and adjudicate covenant breaking behavior. It must be asked, at what point is nonphysical abuse intolerable and dangerous?

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (Ex. 20:16).

The sins of the ninth commandment that contribute to abuse have been covered above (under the sixth commandment). This section will address three additional items in the exposition of the ninth commandment that relate to the investigation of abuse allegations, the response of the church to abuse, proper repentance of an abuser, and the issue of false reports.

Q. 144 What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?

A. The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbour, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbours; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and

the LXX and Vulgate both testify against the KJV rendering and that Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the 1560 Geneva Bible agree with the Vulgate in their own translations. Therefore, the King James Version's translation of Micah 2:16 as "God hates divorce," was an innovation. The influence of the KJV is evident in many of our modern translations, including the NASB and NKJV, translations used by many PCA elders. Interestingly, as Collins points out, *The Westminster Annotations and Commentary on the Whole Bible* list both translations ("God hates divorce" and "if a man hates his wife and divorces") as potential options and favors neither one. See also the PCA GA AIC on Marriage and Divorce which agrees, in essence, with our exegesis: *M20GA*, 207.

covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging tale-bearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practising of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

“preserving and promoting of truth . . . appearing and standing for the truth . . . in matters of judgment and justice”

- Zechariah 8:16 – These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace;
- Proverbs 31:8-9 – Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.
- Joshua 7:19 – Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to Him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.”
- Leviticus 19:15 – “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.”
- Proverbs 14:5, 25 – A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies. A truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.

The positive duty under the ninth commandment is to preserve and promote truth. Application of this principle results in the duty of church courts, to the best of their ability, to discover the truth in allegations of abuse. This translates to a duty to undertake a thorough, competent, and unbiased investigation as demonstrated in the Scriptures cited above. Zechariah 8:16 (NAS 1995) says, “Judge with truth.” Proverbs 31:9 (NAS 1995) instructs, “. . . judge righteously, and defend the rights of the poor and afflicted.” Leviticus 19:15 (NAS 1995) implores, “do no injustice in judgment.” The key to judging righteously, as Scripture commands, is to discover the truth.

Joshua 7:19 depicts an investigation. Even after Achan was discovered by lot to be the source of God’s judgment in the defeat at Ai, Joshua calls Achan forward and questions him. Joshua follows up in order to fully discover the

truth. It was not enough to know Achan was guilty; the truth needed to be discovered and disclosed.

The perniciousness of false reports is included in the discussion of *WLC* 145 below. While false reports are rare, the best way to protect against them is to undertake an investigation to discover the truth.⁴⁷ The question (Q. 145) below also warns against prejudicing the truth. The best way to avoid prejudging a matter is to engage a competent third party to perform an unbiased investigation. The question below further warns against passing unjust sentence. The best way to avoid passing unjust sentence is to perform a competent and thorough investigation.

The duty to investigate is codified in the *Book of Church Order* (emphasis added):

31-2. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character. This duty is more imperative when those who deem themselves aggrieved by injurious reports shall ask an investigation.

If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the guilt of the party involved, the court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case. This prosecutor shall be a member of the court, except that in a case before the Session, he may be any communing member of the same congregation with the accused.

The *BCO* clearly states the court's duty when someone reports abuse: it is to perform a thorough investigation and demand explanations concerning the report. If the investigation raises a strong presumption of guilt, the court must institute process by appointing a prosecutor and preparing an indictment. The *BCO* does not prohibit a Session from enlisting the help of a third party in performing an investigation.

⁴⁷ See Attachment 7: Myths about Abuse for information on the frequency of false reports.

Therefore, the duty of a church court is to perform thorough, competent, and unbiased investigations in order to preserve and promote the truth and to judge righteously. While a direct and explicit duty to engage a competent third party is not found here, it is advised by this committee in order to best fulfill the duties required and sins forbidden in the ninth commandment.

Q. 145 What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbours, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, out-facing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale-bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vain-glorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumours, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavouring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practising, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name. (*WLC 1:145 WCS*)

“Concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others”

- Leviticus 5:1 – “If anyone sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify, and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity;”
- 1 Kings 1:6 – His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, “Why have you done thus and so?” He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

(Additional Scriptures cited: Deut. 13:8; Acts 5:3, 8-9; 2 Tim. 4:6; Lev. 19:17; Isa. 59:4.)

This clause furthers the duties covered under the fifth commandment. Abusers thrive on silence. Evil loves darkness. Thus, leaders should speak generally about the issue of abuse and specifically when abuse occurs in the community. The church or institution’s reputation is secondary to reproving and discountenancing evil. When church leaders are not open about abuse, they discourage members who notice problematic patterns of behavior, as well as corroborating witnesses, from coming forward. Abuse dissipates when brought into the light.

“Hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession”

- Proverbs 28:13 – Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.
- Proverbs 30:20 – This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, “I have done no wrong.”
- Genesis 3:12-13 – The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”
- Jeremiah 2:35 – You say, “I am innocent; surely His anger has turned from me.” Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, “I have not sinned.”
- 2 Kings 5:25 – He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant went nowhere.”

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Genesis 4:9 – Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?”

The Scripture passages above articulate unrepentant sin. One who is truly repentant will offer a free and full confession without hedging, hiding, or blaming others. They will confess fully, not simply confessing to those sins for which they have been caught. The *WCF* 15.5 reads, “Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins particularly” (Ps. 19:13; Luke 19:8; 1 Tim. 1:13, 15).

Struggling with lust, a lack of sex, or a problem with substance abuse is not the foundation nor rationale for abuse. These are excuses. Abuse is a grave sin, magnified by many factors seen in the analysis of *WLC* 151 above. Scripture tells us that leaders call sinners to account. They do not conceal the truth by excusing or lessening sin. Scriptures call shepherds to protect sheep, bring evil out from the dark, and hold offenders accountable.

“Raising false rumours, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence”

- Exodus 23:1 – “You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.”

(Additional Scriptures cited: Prov. 29:12; Acts 7:56-57; Job 31:13-14.)

These passages affirm that false reports happen. False reporting is pernicious and evil, as the accompanying Scripture shows. Falsely reporting abuses, however, is rare.⁴⁸ Scripture narrates *one* instance of a woman falsely accusing a man of abuse (Gen. 39:14-15), yet multiple instances of men misusing women.⁴⁹ The Bible also tells us God will not be mocked (Gal. 6:7) and He will reveal this darkness (Job 12:13-25; Dan. 2:22; 1 Cor. 4:5).

“Believe victims” is a common slogan today because of #metoo. To believe those who report abuse does not negate exploration of the claims. For leaders

⁴⁸ The frequency of false reports for cases of physical and sexual abuse is estimated to be between 2% and 10%. See Attachment 7: Myths about Abuse for information on the frequency of false reports.

⁴⁹ Genesis 19:4-5 34; 38; Judges 19:22-25; 2 Samuel 11; 13.

in the church, “believe victims” means taking necessary actions to protect first. After physical safety is ensured, church courts can then discern the truth in the allegations.

Deuteronomy 22:25-27 states:

“But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.”

This passage articulates that a woman should be believed when there are no witnesses or evidence (“out in the country”). Abuse rarely happens in the presence of a witness. In this situation, the man is to die and “you shall do nothing to the young woman.” This passage implies false reports of abuse are rare. As mentioned above, the best way to fulfill the duty to defend against false reports is to engage a qualified third party to investigate.

Conclusion

The purpose of this biblical and confessional introduction has been twofold. First was to demonstrate that since PCA elders are bound by oath to the ethical teachings of the Westminster Standards, it follows that they are bound by oath to whatever the Standards teach concerning abuse. Second was to expound what the Westminster Standards teach concerning abuse.

The *Westminster Larger Catechism’s* exposition of the Ten Commandments is a valuable resource for guiding the ethics of the church. Specifically, the Divines’ thorough biblical study provides a powerful set of tools for understanding abuse from a biblical and confessional perspective. This study grounds our understanding of abuse in the Holy Scriptures and God’s heart for victims. His desire is that we discountenance evil by bringing it into the light of day.

Here are the key takeaways from this biblical and confessional study of abuse:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The existence of power differentials is demonstrated by the Standards, factoring in what is considered abuse and increasing the severity of the damage done;
2. The categories of abuse discussed in this report—physical, sexual, spiritual, and psychological—all have strong biblical support;
3. Church leaders have a duty to educate their people on the issues of abuse and to develop robust protection and prevention policies;
4. Church leaders have a duty to respond well to abuse by protecting victims, undertaking a competent, unbiased investigation, discountenancing evil, and providing patient care for those affected; and
5. Though an explicit duty cannot be located in the Standards, an independent, third party investigation is advisable in order to discover the truth.

The goal of the Introduction was to present the confessional case for responding to abuse. The remainder of this report will describe what a practical response involves. Sections Two through Six may not read like a typical PCA study report. This is because they will begin with the assumption of the biblical and theological understanding of abuse presented in Section One and proceed to a practical development of the biblical and theological content in implementable ways. To put it another way, the introduction has attempted to establish the “why”; the remaining material will answer the “what” and the “how.”

Elders in the Presbyterian Church in America take the vow to “sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures,” (BCO 21-5, 24-6). Therefore, the Larger Catechism’s teachings (hereafter, *WLC*) on the Ten Commandments are the official ethical teachings of the PCA. As such, the *WLC* serves as the basis for how elders are to engage in church discipline.

BCO 27-1 teaches that discipline has two aspects:

1. the one referring to the whole government, inspection, training, guardianship and control which the church maintains over its members, its officers and its courts;
2. the other a restricted and technical sense, signifying judicial process.

Therefore, the Constitution of the PCA requires elders, as a part of the discipline of the church, to train its members in the ethical teachings of the *WLC*, to inspect the members of the church in their adherence to ethical behavior as taught by the *WLC*, and to govern, guard, and control the church according to the ethical teachings of the *WLC*. When correction necessitates judicial process, the subject matter of the *WLC* serves as the basis for adjudication.⁵⁰

For these reasons, this report will ground its understanding of abuse in the ethical teachings of the *WLC* found in its exposition of the Ten Commandments.

While the technical terms describing abuse do not appear in The Westminster Standards, the sinful behaviors that these terms describe do. All forms of abuse described in this report are instances of “misuse,” but more specifically they are misuses of power. This includes power that is (but is not limited to):

- *Physical force* that is used to strike, wound, or force someone to do something to which they do not consent;
- *Authority* that forces someone against their consent and wounds:
 - Formally recognized authority,
 - Familial authority, such as parents have over children,
 - Informal relational authority, such as exhibited by Sunday School teachers or other workers who have charge over children, and/or
 - Relational authority, such as that of respected members of the church.

⁵⁰ *BCO 29-1*, “An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God. *The Confession of Faith* and *The Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly*, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in America as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture.” (emphasis added).

Misuse of power may also be exhibited in differences of age, in those who are developmentally or intellectually more advanced, and/or in numbers or financial influence.⁵¹

The Westminster Larger Catechism

The *WLC* lays out the sins of misuse of authority very clearly: aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others, failure of superiors in their duty towards inferiors, and sins of superiors against inferiors.⁵² These serve as the theological basis for our understanding of abuse.

In the analysis below we will state the catechism question and answer in full and then work through pertinent clauses from the answer with the Scripture verses cited by the Westminster Assembly. While we do not receive and adopt the Scripture references as a part of our Constitution, we should give them due consideration as they are the biblical basis that the Assembly adopted for what they wrote. Some of the more pertinent Scripture citations will be printed in full, but the reader is encouraged to keep Bible in hand in order to read all the references.

WLC 151 on Aggravations That Make Sins More Heinous

The basic principle gleaned from this catechism answer is more heinous sins cause more damage. Because heinous sins cause significant damage, they are to be punished more severely, and victims are to be shown greater care. Many instances are abusive due to the aggravating factors mentioned below. Abuse is not merely one instance by a "hot head," nor is it excusable because of the infrequency of the aggression. Apologizing does not negate abuse. Women do

⁵¹ Please see below under *WLC* 129, 130, and 151 for a fuller theological discussion.

⁵² For those that are unfamiliar with the Westminster Standards, the language of superiors and inferiors may seem jarring. This is because in modern usage, these words imply a value judgment of being of better or poorer in quality or worth. However, in the 17th century the terms "inferior" and "superior" simply referred to a reference of position. For example, the phrase, "the ground is inferior to the sky," means simply that the ground is lower than the sky. In modern American society further questions may be raised by the implication of position or class among peoples. To this we must understand that the Westminster Standards are not advocating for a societal class system. Rather, this language is used to describe relationships of authority and submission, a concept that is thoroughly biblical.

not deserve to be abused because of their actions, wardrobe, or any other factor. Aggravating factors such as power differentials, the presence of covenant relationships, multiform sins, and repeated sins greatly magnify the damage to a victim's soul. Recognizing these factors is key to identifying and responding well.

Q. 151 What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?

A. Sins receive their aggravations, 1. From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others. 2. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace; the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings; against superiors, men of eminency, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them, or any other, and the common good of all or many. 3. From the nature and quality of the offence: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit of no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of consciousness, publick or private admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men: if done deliberately, wilfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, continuance, or relapsing after repentance. 4. From circumstances of time and place: if on the Lord's day, or other times of divine worship; or immediately before or after these, or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages: if in publick, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.

“From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience or grace, eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others.”

(Scriptures cited: Jer. 2:8; Eccl. 4:13; 1 Kings 11:4, 9; 2 Sam. 12:14; 1 Cor. 5:1; James 4:17; Luke 12:47-48; Jer. 5:4-5; 2 Sam. 12:7-9; Ezek. 8:11-12; Rom. 2:17-24; Gal. 2:11-14.)

The WLC and supporting Scripture show that the sins of those in authority are more heinous, causing more damage and deserving of greater punishment because of the position of authority. The confession supports the existence of

a differential of power in certain relationships. In each of the instances mentioned, summarized as leadership status, age, and knowledge of the faith, we find accompanying power over another. Power can be misused in order to control, oppress, and harm others. When the misuse of power occurs, it may be considered an abuse of authority.

Superiors are not necessarily official, ordained leaders of the church. Superiors can be prominent members who are well-respected due to their knowledge or faith practice. They can be Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, committee chairpersons, or ministry team leaders. They can also be someone more advanced in age. These power differentials should be considered in an abusive situation. The harm done by leaders has a greater impact on the ones they harm. A shepherd that takes advantage of his position to pillage his own flock is not a shepherd (Ezek. 34).

“Particularly weak brethren, the souls of them”

(Scriptures cited: 1 Cor. 8:11-12; Rom. 14:13, 15, 21; Ezek. 13:19 Rev. 18:12-13; Matt. 23:15.)

The power differential is especially true of anyone who is weaker, but especially those who are substantially helpless, such as children, those with mental or physical disabilities, or those otherwise vulnerable due to their condition. Peter also notes that women in marriages are the weaker vessel, acknowledging the power dynamic between the sexes in general (1 Peter 3:7). Peter’s declaration is interpreted as a statement about physical strength, the vessel being a metaphor for the human body.⁵³ Therefore husbands, and men in general, are cautioned: men are, in general, physically stronger than women. This power is provided to protect and serve their sisters in Christ, not to harm.

⁵³ So, Matthew Henry, who says that, “she is the weaker vessel by nature and constitution... but in other and higher respects equal to her husband,” in his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1 Peter 3:7. This interpretation is confirmed by other NT uses of the term *σκεῦος* that more clearly refer to the human body (2 Cor. 4:7, Rom. 9:22, 1 Thess. 4:4). John Calvin affirms this in his comments on 1 Thessalonians 4:4, “As for the expression, that every one of you may know to possess his vessel, some explain it as referring to a wife, as though it had been said, ‘Let husbands dwell with their wives in all chastity.’ As, however, he addresses husbands and wives indiscriminately, there can be no doubt that he employs the term vessel to mean body,” John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*.

Some persons are vulnerable due to their position in relation to church power, especially in access to church courts. Because the PCA ordains only men to the office of presbyter, officers in the church must take special care to make sure all laypeople, women in particular, have proper access and representation in ecclesiastical courts. Church officers are instructed to ensure all parties in judicial process have access to the rules of discipline and can obtain good representation (*BCO* 32-3).

In Revelation 18:12-13, souls are equated to precious goods—valuable individuals that ought to be treasured and kept safe. Abuse is a sin that damages the soul. The Pauline passages cited above discuss the destruction of those for whom Christ died. Modern scientific discoveries have shown us that abuse trauma causes lasting damage to the psyche.⁵⁴ The biblical word for psyche is *soul*. This confessional clause, “the souls of them,” with its accompanying Scripture citations, therefore, gives the theological basis for abuse-related trauma and speaks to the evil nature of causing damage to another image-bearer’s soul.⁵⁵

“Break many commandments, contain in it many sins”

(Scriptures cited: Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; Prov. 5:8-12; 6:32-33; Josh. 7:21.)

The damage of abuse is the result when multiple sins are committed. When a person verbally abuses, they are transgressing the sixth and ninth commandments. If it is a husband of a wife, the fifth and seventh commandments are transgressed as well. All abuse involves deception (a violation of the ninth commandment): the abuser’s self-deceit, the deception of the victim, and the deception of the community. The sin of abuse is deemed more heinous because of this multiplicity of transgressions.

“Promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men”

⁵⁴ H. D. Gingrich and F. C. Gingrich. *Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 55-77.

⁵⁵ While the Bible does not use the terms “psychological damage” or “trauma,” it does refer to the damage of souls. The Greek word ψυχή is the word used in the Bible for “soul.” This word also serves as the etymological root for the word “psychology.” Revelation 18:12-13 shows that the soul has great value, the implication being that great care should be taken not to damage souls. Further, Proverbs 14:30 and Habakkuk 3:16 speak of “bone rot” and Psalm 31:10 speaks of “bones wasting away.” These three references seem to be metaphors for harm being done to the soul.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Scriptures cited: Ps. 78:34-37; Jer. 2:20; Jer. 42:5-6, 20-21; Eccl. 5:4-6; Prov. 20:25; Lev. 26:25; Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 17:18-19.)

The *WLC* considers sin that transgresses vows and promises as base. This includes spouses who make vows to one another, parents who make vows to their children, church officers who make vows to the flock, and congregations who make vows to their pastors, elders, and deacons. Whenever these vows and promises are broken, it causes great damage. Thus, when a parent abuses a child, great damage is done due to not only the transgression of so many commandments, but also due to the breach of the covenant bond between them. When a husband abuses his wife, great damage is done. When a pastor or elder, who swore to feed the sheep for whom Christ died, abuses his own sheep, it is grievous. This is why Jesus says it would be better to have a great millstone hung around their necks and be thrown into the depths of the sea (Matt. 18:6, Mark 9:42, Luke 17:2). The implication is that the dread Judge of all will have His vengeance (Rom. 12:19).

“If done . . . frequently, [or] with . . . continuance”

(Scriptures cited: Num. 14:22; Isa. 57:17.)

Non-physical forms of abuse are established by the evidence of a pattern of sinful behavior. The catechism validates this framework with the statement that sins committed frequently or with continuance are more heinous.

“Relapsing after repentance”

(Scriptures cited: Jer. 34:8-11; 2 Peter 2:20-22.)

One of the factors for judging if repentance is genuine, and if restoration of an abuser is warranted, is when they demonstrate fruits in keeping with repentance. Paul writes,

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter (2 Cor. 7:10-11).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ See Attachment 10: Repentance for an extended exegesis of this passage.

Apologizing is certainly expected when a sin is committed against another. However, simply stating “I’m sorry” is inadequate considering the substance found in Paul’s letter. Is the abuser earnest for God to produce a grief in them that is eager to deal with their sin? Are they grieving how they’ve sinned against God (primarily) and their fellow image-bearer (specifically)? Do they recognize the full impact of their sin on the victim? Are they submitting to the process of repentance? What does restitution look like, and do they desire to do whatever it takes to make the wrong right?

Or, conversely, is the abuser experiencing worldly sorrow? Do they regret their actions, but grieve simply the consequences? Are they upset about what they did or that they got caught? Repentance is a work of the Holy Spirit. A person who diligently deals with their sin positions themselves humbly before their Lord and pleads for Him to work restoration—restoration to a right relationship with Him. Discerning repentance is difficult especially when the presenting sin involves manipulation and deception, which are key features of a heart that oppresses.⁵⁷

The WLC on the Ten Commandments

Having discussed the aggravating factors that cause sins to become more heinous, we now move to the Catechism content of the Ten Commandments. While the transgression of any commandment is grievous, the locus of our analysis will be focused on the fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth commandments as they relate particularly to abuse.

The Fifth Commandment

“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Ex. 20:12).

Q. 129 What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

A. It is required of superiors according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors, to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproving, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory

⁵⁷ See Attachment 10 on Repentance. Also see this resource to help you discern if what you are seeing is godly repentance. https://www.ccef.org/jbc_article/how-to-discern-true-repentance-when-serious-sin-has-occurred/

to God, honour to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

Authority, according to the catechism answer, is the power a “superior” receives from God. God gifts that power to benefit those under authority. This includes (but is not limited to) loving, blessing, praying for, instructing, counseling, and admonishing. Those with positions of authority reward and commend those under their care when they do right, as well as discountenance, reprove, and chastise when they do wrong. Superiors are also to protect and provide for all things necessary for soul and body. In accomplishing these goals, those in authority procure glory for God and preserve the authority God gives. Practically, the catechism states this is applied through instruction, counsel, protection, and provision.

As this relates to abuse, it is the duty of the elders to instruct and counsel their congregations according to God’s Word (Deut. 6:6-7), the confessional standards, and common grace informed resources. Superiors thereby provide members with the tools necessary to care for one another. Learning what the Bible teaches regarding abuse and those who abuse, helps create a culture in the church that quickly identifies and thereby prevents sinful abusive behaviors.

It is also the duty of elders to protect and provide. Churches protect their members with policies that take into consideration the most vulnerable in the congregation.⁵⁸ Leaders—to the best of their ability—provide both children and adults, every age group and gender, with the tools necessary for abuse prevention.

Two areas in the catechism answer address response to abuse:

- *The duty to deal with those who sin.* The catechism states church leaders are to “discountenance.” “Discountenance” is defined as to

⁵⁸ Examples might be Presbyteries and Sessions enacting policies to hire qualified independent parties to investigate claims of abuse, policies detailing appropriate workplace interactions to inform and protect against harassment, Presbyteries enacting policies to require background checks and abuse training for all ordinands and transfers, and policies to protect whistleblowers against retribution. The basic idea is that the job of prevention is not completed once a Sunday morning child protection policy has been adopted.

“discourage by evidence of disapproval.”⁵⁹ This evidence is not only exhibited toward the offender, but also witnessed by any victims and the church-at-large. To discountenance is to “call out and thwart” those who do wrong. Calling out the evildoer helps prevent the evil from continuing. It also acts as a deterrent, warning others who might do similarly. Discretion and wisdom are necessary in doing this, as instructed in the *BCO* and in Holy Scripture (*BCO* 32-1, Gal. 6:1). Yet elders should not shy away from the duty of discountenancing the evil of abuse in our midst out of the desire to protect reputations. The catechism directly charges us to discountenance such evil.

- *The charge for elders to “reprove and chastise.”* This speaks directly to the infliction of censures as found in *BCO* 36. Note, according to the *BCO*, censures may be inflicted on those who are repentant (*BCO* 38-1). Indeed, when a great evil has occurred, it is the duty of the courts of the church to inflict censures in order to operate as a means to reclaim the offender, deliver the church from scandal, and inspire fear by example (*BCO* 30-4). Discretion and wisdom are necessary in making censures known. Protecting any victims is the primary concern.

The second duty of superiors is to provide for those under their authority. This instructs parents to provide for their children. To fail to provide for a child’s needs is child neglect. This neglect can also manifest as spousal neglect and/or economic abuse. The standard in the catechism is the duty of familial superiors to provide for the needs of those under their care. Since the catechism notes that provision includes “all things necessary for *soul* and body,” spiritual harm by the misuse of power falls under this clause.

The final duty of superiors is to bless inferiors. As it relates to abuse, lack of properly responding to evil when it happens is a failure to bless the vulnerable. Lack of response, and/or a poor response, may lead to spiritual disillusionment and perhaps the inferior departing from the church.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “discountenance,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discountenance>.

⁶⁰ One example of this is a Pew Research study on the religious “nones” that stated, “One-in-five express an opposition to organized religion in general. This share includes some who do not like the hierarchical nature of religious groups, several people who think religion is too much like a business and others who mention clergy sexual abuse scandals as reasons for their stance.” <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/24/why-americas-nones-left-religion-behind/>. See also this article from The Gospel Coalition, that cites “church hurt” as a reason why many young

Scripture References for WLC 129

The Scripture references of the WLC are a valuable tool to understand the biblical basis of the sin of abuse and further elucidate the thinking of the divines. Below are some of the relevant Scriptures.

The Confessional Definition of Abuse

- Colossians 3:19 – Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.
- Ephesians 6:4 – Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
- 1 Peter 3:7 – Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

These verses describe behaviors of harshness, provocation, and insensitivity through words and/or actions as sinful behaviors in various relationships (husband to wives, parents to children). All relationships struggle with these sins. What makes the sinful behavior abusive is that it is a repeated, persistent pattern of sin over a prolonged period that causes significant and lasting damage. This report understands non-physical forms of abuse in this way. An individual who perpetrates repeated, persistent sins of abuse must not be dismissed as someone who “sometimes loses his cool.” All forms of abuse, whether physical or non-physical, negatively impact both the inner and outer man.

The Requirement To Report Abuse to the Civil Authorities

- 1 Peter 2:14 – or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.
- Romans 13:4 – for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

evangelicals are deconstructing: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-causes-deconstruction/>.

These verses instruct how to deal appropriately with the evil of abuse when it occurs. “Governors” exist in both the state and the church. When it comes to criminal abuse, the governors of the church should submit to the laws and authority of the state (Rom. 13:1-7). When it comes to forms of abuse that the state does not criminalize or does not hold criminally liable, it remains the duty of church governors to discountenance those sins.⁶¹

Oppression as the Biblical Category for Abuse

- Job 29:12-17 – . . . because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him. The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. I broke the fangs of the unrighteous and made him drop his prey from his teeth.
- Isaiah 1:17 – “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.”

These verses speak generally to the duty of leaders to seek justice and correct oppression. They also direct leaders to pay particular attention to those who have less power. We are to plead the widow’s cause because she has no one to help her. In dealing with abuse, the Scriptures call us to carefully attend to those in the situation who have less power.

Protecting the Reputation of Church Leaders

- 1 Timothy 4:12 – Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
- Titus 2:3-5 – Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. (Emphasis added.)

⁶¹ It should also be noted that many times the civil authorities will decline to investigate a matter or prosecute the perpetrator. This is not a statement of innocence by the magistrate and thus does not necessarily remove the responsibility of the church courts to deal with sin.

- 1 Kings 3:28 – And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.
- Titus 2:15 – Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

These verses speak to the duty of superiors to accrue glory to God and preserve their reputations by doing what is right. One of the qualifications for an elder is to be thought well of by outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7). If outsiders lack respect for the church due to its failures in both preventing and adequately responding to abuse, leaders are those primarily responsible to seek the ways in which the church has failed to obey God (Amos 3:2; 1 Peter 4:17).

The Sins Forbidden in the Fifth Commandment

Q. 130 What are the sins of superiors?

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure, commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counselling, encouraging, or favouring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonouring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour.

In this question and answer, one instance of these sins may not constitute abuse. It is the repeated persistent pattern of sin over a prolonged period that causes significant and lasting harm.

“An inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure.”

- Ezekiel 34:2-4 – “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.”

- Philippians 2:21 – For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

The sin of “seeking of themselves,” as mentioned in this first phrase, may lead to an incessant pattern of demand, minimization, humiliation, blame-shifting, coercion, denial, threats, and/or treating a person like a servant. Sometimes, this may also include stringent limits on access to financial resources. If the self-centeredness of a husband, parent, or caregiver leads to the harm of the family due to its severity and prolonged persistence, then it could be abuse. This is especially true when it leads to the family’s physical or spiritual neglect.

“Commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counselling [or] encouraging them in that which is evil.”⁶²

(Scriptures cited: Dan. 3:4-6; Acts 4:17; Ex. 5:10-18; Matt. 23:4; Matt 14:8; 2 Sam. 13:28.)

This phrase speaks of when an authority figure asks or commands those under their charge to do something illegal or immoral. Church leaders are responsible to know what constitutes illegal behavior in their community, when, how, and to whom to report a crime, and public resources available to both victims and abusers. This is in addition to wise shepherding care, which has a broad, biblical understanding of what constitutes immorality in the body of Christ. Doctrines of suffering, submission, headship, gossip, slander, and intimacy in marriage, are all relevant to helping congregants respond well to the sins of abuse. It is a grievous sin when an authority figure uses his or her authority (by force or coercion) to secure participation in sinful acts. Related to this, there is an erroneous teaching that submission owed to the husband/father is such that wives and children must submit even if he commands something sinful. It has also been taught that a wife or a child cannot report the husband/father’s (or mother’s if applicable) moral failures to the authorities (church or civil). These are false teachings that must be suppressed.

Further, when a superior “ties up heavy burdens, hard to bear,” through impossible demands and exacting punishments, great soul damage can be done, and thus can be a factor in spiritual abuse or leadership abuse.⁶³

⁶² “Favoring” is removed from this section in order to deal with it separately below.

⁶³ See Attachment 1: Definitions for meanings of these terms and Section Six: Misuse of Spiritual Authority in this report.

“Favouring them in that which is evil”

- 1 Samuel 3:13 – “And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.”

The Scripture reference for “favoring them in that which is evil,” is Eli’s inaction in disciplining his sons. Passive forbearance with his sons’ great evil is what led to Israel’s downfall. We must not forebear with abusers in the church. This is a sinful favoring of evil. Leaders should instead restrain evil by thoroughly educating themselves and their congregations regarding the dynamics of abuse, carefully constructing robust policies to prevent abuse, and responding adequately when it occurs.

“Dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly”

(Scriptures cited: John 7:46-49; Col. 3:21; Ex. 5:17; 1 Peter 2:18-20; Heb. 12:10; Deut. 25:3.)

When leaders, either in the home, workplace, or church, berate or belittle those under their care, it diminishes the image of God in man. The body and the mind, heart, will, and emotions are all a reflection of God’s image.

Diminishing others is how abusive people manipulate to control. It is an insidious tactic that causes significant (psychological) damage to the inner man. Similarly, an act of discipline or correction that is not reciprocal to the wrong committed can also be weaponized by an abuser. Patterns of devaluing God’s image in another over a prolonged period of time results in a victim’s inability to reason appropriately, make wise personal decisions, and/or mediate reality. Ultimately, it diminishes their capacity to steward their God-given gifts and glorify their Creator.

“Careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger”

- Genesis 38:11 – Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up” for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house.

- Genesis 38:26 – Then Judah identified them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not know her again.
- Acts 18:17 – And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

Exposing children to danger is undeniably abuse and neglect. One instance is sufficient for identifying exposure as abuse, especially when physical harm is involved. Even when there is no physical harm, exposure is sinful. Exposure disrupts the bond of trust between children and their parents and causes lasting damage. “Adverse Child Experiences” or the ACE study, meticulously identified multiple and long-lasting effects of not only physical harm and exposure, but also of the more overt forms of physical and sexual abuse.⁶⁴ Exposure occurs also when children live in a home where substance abuse or other dangerous and sinful behavior occur. ACEs demonstrated lasting damage to a child’s developing brain, especially in how that person responds to certain stimuli and social interactions. These experiences can lead to PTSD similar to the severity soldiers experience on a battlefield.

Included in these sins of exposure is when authorities, whether civil or ecclesiastical, require abuse victims to stay in abusive relationships. Requiring an abused wife to reconcile with her unrepentant abuser, return to the marriage home and bed, is careless exposing to danger. The abuser’s genuine repentance must be observed, confirmed, and proven through the test of time [see Attachment 10: Repentance]. It involves more than (but is not limited to) admitting to being caught, saying “I’m sorry,” and/or pledging to work with the Session.

Similarly, forcing children to reconcile relationally with abusive parents may cause great harm. Care, discernment, and wisdom must be taken in these situations.

The rules of discipline are inappropriate tools for forcing compliance of abuse victims.

⁶⁴ For a helpful description of adverse child experiences, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>

Careless exposure to wrong and danger also occurs when authorities in the church fail to properly educate the congregation on issues of abuse and institute appropriate policies for abuse prevention.

As pointed out above in the discussion of Question 129, many people are leaving the church due, in part, to the way the church has responded to abuse. When anyone abandons the bride of Christ for an unbiblical reason, it is sinful. However, if authorities expose “them to temptation,” the greater sin lies with leaders. Judah said in Genesis 38:26, “She is more righteous than I.” Jesus likewise said, “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6).

“Provoking them to wrath”

- Ephesians 6:4 – Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Superiors in the family may provoke those under their care by many of the aforementioned *WLC* prohibitions. They might apply exacting punishments, diminish and belittle, have unrealistic expectations, favor their own desires to the exclusion of everyone else in the family, and/or expose them to dangerous situations. When little ones under the authority of others have been caused to sin, far greater sin has been done by those that have provoked them by their abuse. Shepherds care for victims with kindness while simultaneously (justly) punishing abusers.

This principle applies to other “superior-inferior” type relationships as well. Abuse victims are not without sin. However, there is a significant inequality between their sin issues and the evil of abuse. Wrath is an appropriate response to evil. Victims must not sin in their response to the abuse, yet it is within reason that they are very angry about the sins committed against them. This doesn’t excuse sin. It does mean church leaders and members should patiently shepherd the victim with care and understanding, and to never equate their anger with the sins of their abusers.

“Or any way dishonouring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour”

- Genesis 9:21 – He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.

- 1 Kings 12:13-16 – And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, “What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.” So Israel went to their tents.
- 1 Kings 1:6 – His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, “Why have you done thus and so?” He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.
- 1 Samuel 2:29-31 – “Why then do you scorn My sacrifices and My offerings that I commanded for My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?” Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: “I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before Me forever,” but now the LORD declares: “Far be it from Me, for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.”

When leaders, whether in the home, workplace, church, or civil government, dishonor themselves through sinful behavior, harsh discipline, or lax discipline, they bring dishonor on themselves and to God. Leaders in the church should not be surprised when sheep chafe under such authority. When those under authority are provoked to wrath, or otherwise begin to reject authority because of the leader's sin, the greater fault lies with the leader. The charge from the people of Israel is poignant, “Look now to your own house, David!” Church leaders must first see to their own duties before bemoaning and laying blame on those who are leaving the church and speaking derisively of her. The examples of Eli and his sons, David and his sons, and Solomon in his later reign are poignant. As the Lord promised Samuel, He will judge church leaders for such behavior (1 Peter 4:17). The duty of those in authority is to right the ship.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not murder (Ex. 20:13).

The locus of many sinful behaviors falling under the heading of abuse is found in the sixth commandment. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expands the scope of the commandment from the unjust taking of life, to the inner working of our hearts and to the realm of speech.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, you fool! will be liable to the hell of fire (Matt. 5:21-22).

The Divines follow in this vein to expound upon the sixth commandment in all its facets:

Q. 135 What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavours, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defence thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physick, sleep, labour, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behaviour; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succouring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

There is some repetition between *WLC* 135 and 136, thus the overt actions that are related to abuse will be covered below. However, there are several relevant matters in the answer, especially as it relates to the positive duty to preserve life and protect those under threat.

“To preserve the life of ourselves and others . . . by just defense thereof against violence”

- 1 Kings 18:4 – And when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.

APPENDIX V

- Psalm 82:4 – Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
- Proverbs 24:11-12 – Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,” does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will He not repay man according to his work?

(Additional Scriptures cited: Eph. 5:28-29; 1 Sam. 14:45; Jer. 38:7-13.)

Scripture is clear that preserving life includes defending victims of abuse. The first duty is to preserve our own lives. This speaks to the obligation victims have to protect themselves from an abuser. This may include removing herself and her children from an abusive home, resisting living with a spouse that a church court acknowledged has been abusive, and separating as a matter of protection, even as others urge reconciliation with the abuser. This is the duty to preserve life.

The second duty falls under preserving the life of others. This type of preservation removes the victim, and any other potential victims, from the immediate vicinity of the abuser. Any avenue that the abuser uses to further abuse must be removed. The sixth commandment duty also includes fulfilling the Romans 13 obligation to inform the civil authorities when the situation requires mandated reporting (See Section Five: Child Abuse).

“Patient bearing of the hand of God”

(Scriptures cited: James 5:7-11; Heb. 12:9.)

This duty speaks to the nature of repentance. Genuine repentance patiently bears with the consequences of one’s sin. A truly repentant abuser will recognize the gravity of his or her sin and not force the process of reconciliation. Rather, those truly repentant will wait patiently until the abused are ready for relational restoration.⁶⁵

Abusive church leaders should patiently bear under the hand of God and not rush to be restored to a position of leadership. Damage done by abuse can be severe and long lasting. Protecting survivors means continuous safeguarding throughout the recovery process.

⁶⁵ See Attachment 9: Forgiveness and Attachment 10: Repentance.

“Forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil”

(Scriptures cited: Matt. 5:24; Eph. 4:2; Eph. 4:32; Rom. 12:17; Rom. 12:20; Rom. 12:21.)

Because preserving life implies patience with victims, impartiality requires a careful examination of this seemingly opposite clause. In order to understand how these duties work together, a biblical understanding of reconciliation and forbearance is needed. Forgiveness is not reconciliation, and forbearance is not antithetical to preservation.

Forgiveness

These passages show that believers must forgive one another. Forgiveness is required by the gospel. However, the duty to preserve life requires protecting victims from their abuser. It also requires protecting those who choose to remain with their abuser. Protection includes trying to persuade a victim to move to safety.

Forgiveness does not always involve relational restoration.⁶⁶ When it comes to reconciliation and forgiveness, this must be also measured against the duty to protect. The duty that follows below states, “comfort and succor the distressed.” If the abused person is distressed, leaders are called to continue protecting them while they seek healing.

The catechism answer requires, “requiting good for evil.” Insisting on accountability, justice, and rehabilitation may be the cause of an abuser truly repenting of his or her sins and receiving eternal reward. What greater good can be requited than salvation?

Forbearance

The duty of forbearance does not negate the duty to preserve one’s life from violence. The duty to preserve is primary and supersedes the duty of forbearance. The Scripture reference for forbearance is Ephesians 4:2, “bearing with one another in love,” and the Greek word is ἀνέχω. This word is defined as “endurance.” The context of Ephesians 4 is not intimate relationships but the unity of the church body. Paul is asking believers to be

⁶⁶ See Attachment 9: Forgiveness.

patient with one another's shortcomings in order to preserve unity and peace in the church. He is not asking abuse victims to endure further abuse. "One another" is plural, implying not an endurance between two persons but an endurance between one person and the larger community. Paul is clear in his writings that patient endurance does not mean allowing grave sins to persist, saying, "purge the evil person from among you,"⁶⁷ and, "I have handed [them] over to Satan."⁶⁸ Moreover, the citation for Romans 12 states "repay no one evil for evil." Moving victims out of abusive situations is not repaying evil for evil but protecting from further harm. Abuse is a grave sin against the image-bearer of God. Biblical forbearance does not include remaining in abusive situations.

Nevertheless, adults should not be moved into protective situations against their will unless there is a grave threat of the loss of life.

"Comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent."

- Matthew 25:35-36 – "For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me."
- Proverbs 31:8-9 – Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

(Additional Scriptures cited: 1 Thess. 5:14; Job 31:19-20; Isa. 58:7.)

To give comfort and succor to those distressed by abuse is to protect. This includes the provision of qualified medical care for both the wounds of the body and the wounds of the mind. According to our own Reformed distinctives, man consists of two parts: a body and a soul.⁶⁹ Though delineated into two, the inner and outer "designate the one spiritual substance of man . . . (Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:5)."⁷⁰ Both body and soul constitute the whole man, therefore when someone experiences abuse, the whole man is in need of care. The human mind is a mysterious example of this.

⁶⁷ 1 Corinthians 5:5.

⁶⁸ 1 Timothy 1:20.

⁶⁹ See WLC Q. 29 and Q. 37 and Matt. 6:25; 10:28; Eccl. 12:7; and 1 Cor 5:3, 5.

⁷⁰ L. Berkhof. *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1933), 121-123.

What we call the mind can in some ways be attributed to the soul. However, we also know that the mind has a physical component.⁷¹

For many forms of abuse, including child abuse, sexual abuse, physical assault, sexual assault, and any other abuse that causes severe psychological distress, damage to the brain and central nervous system is significant.⁷² This damage can manifest itself as PTSD, OCD, depression, anxiety, and a variety of other disorders. Shepherds are called to care for the soul; however, wisdom directs church leaders to partner with trained individuals with experience working with these conditions for the purpose of comprehensive caregiving.⁷³

Financial provision for counseling and medical treatment is considered an appropriate restitution from the abuser to the abused (see Exodus 22). It can also be an act of mercy for the church to assist victims with the cost of their care. Due to privacy issues as it relates to medical and mental healthcare, consider hiring a third-party administrator to handle reimbursements. Due to the intimate nature of the care, the choice of a counselor belongs to the victim. Stipulations should not be placed on the usage of funds by those granting.

The Sins Forbidden in the Sixth Commandment

The sixth commandment contains overtly sinful behaviors that can be abusive.

Q. 136 What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of publick justice, lawful war, or necessary defence; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions, distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labour, and recreations; provoking words, oppression, quarrelling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

⁷¹ See Matthew 22:37 where Jesus substitutes mind for might, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with your soul and with your mind.”

⁷² H. D. Gingrich and F. C. Gingrich. *Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 67.

⁷³ Does a psychologist need to be a Reformed Christian in order to partner in providing care for victims? While the issue is complex, the short answer is no. Certainly, treatment providers who are not antagonistic to Reformed beliefs, or seek to undermine them, can be engaged. A non-Christian provider can work with a patient’s religious beliefs and still care for them well. The key factor in identifying a treatment provider is that the person is qualified to treat disorders related to abuse trauma.

“All taking away the life of ourselves, or of others”

- Acts 16:28 – But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”
- Genesis 9:6 – “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image.”

The foundational principle found in this commandment is that all abuse is a taking away of life. This is why abuse is so damaging. Genesis 9:6 states that the severity of the sin is due to the fact that great damage has been done to an image-bearer of God. Since all human beings are made in God’s image, any attempt to take away life is a grave sin with grave consequences.

“Withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life”

- Matthew 25:42-43 – “For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”
- James 2:15-16 – If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

As seen in the duties of the fifth commandment, the sin of neglect is a form of abuse. Here, in the sixth commandment, the sin of neglect is the taking away of the necessary means for life. The sin of neglect applies to those in authority, but it also applies generally to all human beings. However, only those who have immediate responsibility for the one who is suffering are accountable.

Churches have the duty to care and provide for those who have need due to abuse. If such persons need food, clothing, and shelter because they have fled for their own safety, the church should attempt to provide. This seems to be the very least that the Scriptures cited above require.

“Sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions”

- Matthew 5:22 – “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 1 John 3:15 – Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
- Leviticus 19:17 – You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.
- Proverbs 14:30 – A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.
- Romans 12:19 – Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.
- Ephesians 4:31 – Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

The sins covered under the sixth commandment do not all lead to the literal loss of life. The catechism does not begin with the sin of physical wounding with an intent to kill and then move to sins of lesser severity. Instead, as in the Sermon on the Mount, the Divines begin with the sins of the heart and move outward. Special note is taken of the citation of Matthew 5:22 and 1 John 3:15. Matthew 5:22 moves from the sin of the heart to verbal abuse. Jesus says that the one who insults his brother should be subject to church discipline. Verbal abuse is evidence of the status of the heart. John writes that the one who hates his brother in his heart is a murderer and will not inherit eternal life. The sins of the tongue reveal the heart. Scripture considers verbal abuse a very serious sin. The church is called to respond to the same extent.

These sins, along with some of those that follow, serve as the confessional basis for the existence of non-physical forms of abuse. Many people struggle to define verbal, emotional, and/or psychological abuse because they are difficult to prove. Indeed, victims of these forms of abuse recognize the difficulty, often wishing their abusers would wound them physically so that there would be evidence. Yet, because of what is shown in this catechism answer, non-physical forms of abuse should be taken as seriously as if there were visible bruises. These sins are a form of the taking away of life. By them the life of an image-bearer is devalued, and great damage is done to the mind and the soul.

Proverbs 14:30, cited here for envy, states that these non-physical sins have an effect on the body, “rotting the bones.” This metaphorical language by Solomon seems to acknowledge that non-physical forms of abuse can be manifested physically in the nervous and immune systems. Our Reformed distinctives affirm that a human being is not in essence only a soul, but a soul-

body union, so it should not be surprising that scientists have discovered that damage to the soul affects the body.

Finally, the reference for “sinful passions” in Ephesians 4:31 demonstrates that passions are not only sexual in nature. They include bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice. “Sinful passions,” biblically, include verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse.

“Distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labour, and recreations”

- Matthew 6:31, 34 – “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’. . . Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”
- Isaiah 5:12 – They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of His hands.

(Additional Scriptures cited: Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13; Eccl. 2:22-23; 12:12)

The primary relationship of the sins mentioned in these passages is of the sinner to himself. These sins can be classified as either contributing factors to abuse, or tools the abuser implements. Self-harm, or the threat of self-harm, is the ultimate form of controlling behavior. It is used to manipulate others to speak or act a certain way. This causes grave damage to those under their authority. Children in particular suffer severe trauma when a parent self-harms, having no categories for how to mediate what happened, how (if) they contributed, and/or what they could have done to prevent the circumstances.

The catechism begins with anxiety as a root cause. Anxiety is often a reason why an abuser does what he does. Many abusers were abused themselves. Abuse can lead to disordered desires which cause people to sin and subjugate others. Not all abusers are evil psychopaths. Many of them abuse others out of a need to regulate their own fears, anxieties, and other negative feelings. There may not even be a strong volitional intent to harm others, but they continue to do harm in pursuit of their own self regardless of the harm that this self-pursuit does to others. Addictive behaviors such as substance abuse, workaholicism, and an immoderate lifestyle, can be factors that compound the effects of abuse.

“Provoking words”

- Proverbs 15:1 – A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- Proverbs 12:18 – There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Another confessional basis for verbal abuse is causing a person to sin by using provoking words. In the first reference from Proverbs 15, harsh words stir up anger in the one sinned against, moving them to wrath. Under the fifth commandment, causing someone to sin is a sin. In *WLC* 151, the multiplication of sins makes a sin more heinous. Thus, when sinful speech causes another person to sin, the sin is compounded. Also in *WLC* 151, power differentials cause a sin to be even more heinous as when a superior uses provoking words with an inferior. In Proverbs 12, verbal abuse is likened to stabbing with a sword, a deadly weapon. Deadly weapons do grave damage. This is why Jesus warns repeatedly: woe to those who cause “little ones” to sin (Matt. 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2).

“Oppression”

- Ezekiel 18:18 – “As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.”
- Exodus 1:14 – And made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

Oppression is the biblical word for abuse, cited here by the Divines and appearing 116 times in the English Standard Version. The Divines cite Exodus 1:14, which states that the Egyptians made the lives of the Israelites bitter. Verse 12 tells us that this bitterness is due to the oppression of the Israelites by the Egyptians. The word used for oppression in verse 12 is אָנָה (*‘anah*), which means “affliction.”⁷⁴ When used in the Hebrew Piel, the word often means to afflict by mistreating, as it does here. Examples of this usage are when Sarah mistreats Hagar, Laban charges Jacob not to oppress his daughters, and the command in Exodus 22:21-23 not to oppress orphans and widows. In studying these usages of the verb, we can define oppression as it is used in the Bible as

⁷⁴ This is the standard Hebrew word used for oppression in the Old Testament, appearing some 57 times in the Piel. (Piel is a verbal form in Hebrew that indicates intensiveness.)

“to afflict by mistreatment.” *Anah* (אָנָה) literally means, “to humble.” To oppress is to cause someone to be humbled by ill-treatment. Humiliation in this sense speaks to lasting damage: a person is brought low by mistreatment.

“Quarrelling”

- Galatians 5:15 – But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
- Proverbs 23:29 – Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

Abusive relationships can be difficult to discern. Often, church leaders feel trapped between the “he said, she said” dilemma and are unsure whom to believe. This catechism question, along with the two verses cited, might even be used as confessional evidence for that claim. Although victims of abuse can be provoked to sinful responses to the oppressive behaviors against them, the greater responsibility rests with the abuser. In the vast majority of cases, one party has greater responsibility and has committed a more heinous sin. This is especially true when the abuser is in authority over the abused. For increased clarity regarding the nature of quarrels, Proverbs 23:29 suggests that asking questions regarding the environment of the home (church, institution) can be helpful.

“Striking, wounding, whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any”

(Scriptures cited: Num. 35:16-18, 21; Ex. 21:18-36.)

The Divines demonstrate in these verses that striking, even when it does not result in death, is sin. Exodus 21:18-19, cited here, sheds light on this:

When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and the man *does not die* but takes to his bed, then if the man rises again and walks outdoors with his staff, he who struck him shall be clear; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall have him thoroughly healed.

This passage describes physical assault that results in the incapacitation of the victim (he “takes to his bed”). The assault described also results in long-term damage (walks with a cane). This passage distinguishes between manslaughter and assault. However, the one who assaults remains liable for his sin even if he escapes the death penalty. Other penalties that remain include restitution.

The assailant is required to pay restitution to the victim for the loss of his time, as well as pay for whatever care required to make the man whole. Presumably, if the victim is permanently disabled, the assailant would be required to pay more restitution. Physical abuse and assault that causes lasting damage is a grievous sin necessitating disciplinary process. Protecting victims and requiring restitution are appropriate responses by the church to cases of physical assault. The same principle applies to nonphysical forms of abuse that cause lasting damage.

The Divines conclude this answer with a catchall phrase lest implying that the taking away of life is not limited to the examples provided. As biblical evidence they cite an extended passage from Exodus 21. In studying this passage, other forms of sin beyond physical abuse and assault require a weighty response to all abuse. The text says, “But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (v. 24).

Consistent application of the principles gleaned from a study of the fifth and sixth commandments exemplifies nonphysical forms of abuse as an unjust taking away of life and is biblically and confessionally warranted.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14).

The Divines’ exposition of the seventh commandment includes assault, abuse, and harassment of a sexual nature.

Q. 139 What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company, lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

“adultery, fornication, . . . lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others”

(Scriptures cited: Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:4; Ezek. 23:14-16; Isa. 23:15-17; Isa. 3:16; Mark 6:22; Rom. 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40.)

The Westminster Standards clearly prohibit sexual activity outside of marriage and participating in and viewing pornography. Illicit sexual behavior is a tactic abusers use. When an abuser coerces a victim to participate in illicit activities, their shame is overwhelming. Shame is then a powerful weapon used to perpetuate abuse and discourage the victim from reporting to authorities. Coercion, or forcing victims to participate in sexual activities, can also fall under the category of sexual assault. These sins are not simply sexual immorality but may be considered forms of abuse.

“rape”

- 2 Samuel 13:14 – But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he forced [oppressed] her and lay with her.

The goal of the biblical and theological introduction has been to ground an understanding of abuse in the teachings of the Westminster Standards, the adopted interpretation of Scripture by the Presbyterian Church in America.⁷⁵ The Westminster Standards do not have a separate category for sexual abuse outside the sin of rape.⁷⁶ Rape has a technical, legal definition that excludes many additional forms of sexual abuse. In addition, some victims of sexual abuse may not describe what happened to them as rape. However, in terms of our Confessional Standards and the judicial basis for prosecution of ecclesiastical cases of sexual abuse in the PCA, other forms of sexual abuse fall under the prohibition of rape. In other words, the Standards’ prohibition of rape is broader than what we would commonly call rape. Without the inclusion of sexual abuse under the confessional category for rape, there is no other clear prohibition of sexual abuse in our confessional standards. Therefore, it is necessary to include all forms of sexual assault and abuse under the confessional umbrella of rape.

⁷⁵ See Introduction: The Structure of the Ad Interim Committee Report on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault.

⁷⁶ There are some sins forbidden in *WLC* 139 that may contribute to sexual abuse, but they do not constitute an overarching category.

The Scripture reference for rape given by the Divines is the story of Amnon's and his half-sister Tamar.⁷⁷ The story is very clear. Amnon propositioned his sister. She refused his proposition. Amnon forced Tamar to comply, and he raped her. The use of force and vaginal penetration make this story a clear instance of rape.

By analyzing the features of this story, we find that not only is rape described, but sexual abuse in general, since many aspects of sexual abuse are present. Amnon and Tamar were close acquaintances. He had a power dynamic over her. He stalked her, groomed her, sexually harassed her, propositioned her, and when she refused, he used force to initiate illicit sexual contact.⁷⁸ After the abuse occurred, he shunned her. The word used for rape here is the same Hebrew word mentioned above for "oppression," which is the general biblical word for abuse. In fact, some older translations say that he "forced" her or "humbled" her. The point is, while this is rape, it is not only rape. If there was any other form of sexual contact in this story it would still be considered sexual abuse.

Consent is a major part of the story of Amnon and Tamar. In verse 12, Tamar pleads with her brother, "Do not oppress me, for such a thing is not done in

⁷⁷ While this biblical story contains many of the aspects of sexual abuse, there is one feature that may not occur in every instance: Tamar's argument with and implied struggle against Amnon. It is not a requirement for abuse to be considered abuse that a victim must argue with and physically struggle against their abuser. Of note here is that the passage does not explicitly record her crying out. The Mosaic Law required betrothed virgins to cry out if they are being raped; however, Tamar was not betrothed, so the same stipulations did not strictly apply. Nevertheless, she was in the city and in a house where servants were located, so if she had cried out, someone may have come to her aid. Despite the fact that she did not cry out, the Scriptures do not place any blame on her, laying the fault solely on the evil actions of Amnon. Note also that the Scriptures do not explicitly say that she struggled against him. It implies a struggle when it says, "being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her" (2 Sam. 13:14). The fact that it does not explicitly record a struggle, then makes it a feature of the story but not a factor in consideration of whether or not something is sexual abuse.

⁷⁸ The Hebrew word *chazaq* ("to be strong") can be used in the Scriptures in a nonphysical way. In Exodus 12:33, the Egyptians "urge" the Israelites to leave in haste. In 2 Kings 4:8, the Shunammite "urges" Elisha to stay with her. This semantic range opens up our understanding of Deuteronomy 22:25 and 2 Samuel 13:14 to include forceful urging or coercion. See Katie McCoy, "God Is Not Silent: What the Bible Teaches about Sexual Assault," *The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention* (2017), <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/god-is-not-silent-what-the-bible-teaches-about-sexual-assault/>.

Israel.” The verb is in the Piel, thus a forceful affliction by mistreatment is signified. In both the 1611 King James Version and the 1599 Geneva Bible, the translations the Divines used, this verb is translated “to force.” In those translations Tamar says, “Do not *force* me” (v. 12). Consent is key. If she had consented to be a willing participant, it would have been the sin of incest, not rape.⁷⁹

Since consent is a key factor in the confessional definition of rape, it follows that any sexual activity where consent is not given, can’t be given, or consent is impaired, falls under the umbrella of the confessional prohibition of rape.⁸⁰ Impairment of consent exists in a differential of power (boss with subordinates, pastor with parishioners), age, or state of consciousness (including a person impaired by a substance). If two peers attend a party and one of them becomes intoxicated, it is considered sexual assault if the other takes advantage of the impaired person. The requirement for consent also extends to the marriage bed. If an intimate partner does not consent and the other persists and engages in sexual relations, it is considered sexual assault.

With regard to child sexual abuse, whenever an adult sexually abuses a minor, it falls under the confessional umbrella of rape because children are unable to consent to sexual activity with adults.

Often, abuse in the church involves young adults and/or teenagers. Young adult or youth leaders possess a power dynamic with younger teens that impairs the ability to consent. This raises the heinousness of the sin beyond sexual immorality to abuse.

The sins *WLC* 139 includes in rape are recognized as crimes in many legal jurisdictions. Presbyteries and Sessions must understand mandatory reporting laws applicable to their locale. When a crime has been committed, Romans 13 takes precedence over Matthew 18. Adult victims must be consulted before reporting their abuse to authorities. No report should be made against an adult victim’s consent.⁸¹ However, if the civil authorities decline to investigate or prosecute, the church is responsible to pursue the matter within the

⁷⁹ Note here that we use the phrase, “consenting to be a willing participant.” A person may be berated and coerced into giving in, but that may not be the same as willing consent. Wisdom is required in discerning the difference.

⁸⁰ This is not to say that all sexual abuse is the same in degree of severity. *WLC* 151 still applies here.

⁸¹ The exception to this is if the adult was a minor when the abuse occurred and there is reason to suspect that ongoing abuse may be occurring involving other minors.

ecclesiastical court. The duties outlined for responding to abuse remain in effect. (See “Reporting” in each section of this report for further information on reporting different forms of abuse.)

“All corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks”

(Scriptures cited: Eph. 5:3-4; Prov. 7:5, 21-22; Isa. 3:16; 2 Peter 2:14.)

Scripture forbids all crude or lascivious speech and behavior. This type of speech and/or behavior toward others sinfully diminishes image-bearers. If there is any form of power differential in the relationship, it is classified as sexual harassment. It is also considered harassment in the absence of a power differential if the comments are unwanted and are severe or repeated. If a pattern of such harassment persists over a prolonged period, it can be classified as abusive. All forms of sexual harassment are subject to the discipline of the church. (See considerations of WLC 151 above for further discussion on power differentials.)

“Impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel . . . gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company, lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others”

(Scriptures cited: Prov. 7:10, 13; Ezek. 16:49; Prov. 23:30-33; Gen. 39:10; Eph. 5:4; Ezek. 23:14-16; Isa. 23:15-17; Isa. 3:16; Mark 6:22; Rom. 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40.)

Do these passages indicate victims contribute to their abuse?

First, no person is without sin. But does sin contribute or lead to abuse or assault? Abuse or assault is never stipulated as a form of punishment in the Scriptures, speaking to the fact that no one deserves abuse or assault. Attributing a victim’s sin, appearance, friends, and/or recreations to an assault minimizes the sin of the abuser. Scripture is clear: we cannot make someone sin; people choose to sin (James 1:14). Predators have been known to intentionally pursue these vulnerabilities because the target is easier prey and society will attribute at least part of the blame on them. In the church, we must judge justly with clear eyes. All sin is not equal. God deals with sin proportionate to the evil that has been committed and directly with the heart that commits it. A victim’s sin can be addressed outside of the abusive situation, giving adequate time and resources to heal from the effects of the

more heinous crime committed against them. However, care must be taken to express that the abuse is not their fault.

Second, these verses regarding the seductress, along with many similar passages, characterize the danger of idolatry in general, or of the people of Israel, the bride of Yahweh. This can be seen in many of the Proverbs, the Prophets (especially Ezekiel), and Revelation. Throughout the Prophets, enemy cities are also personified as women. The use of this analogy is not necessarily meant to emphasize the danger women pose to men. In reality, the majority of instances of sinful seduction recorded in the Bible are of men taking advantage of women (Gen. 19:4-5; Gen. 34, 38; Judg. 19:22-25; 2 Sam. 11; 2 Sam. 13).

Blaming the victim is one of the main reasons wounded people don't come forward. Shepherds help victims report by listening, hearing them, and reserving judgment.

“Unjust divorce, or desertion”

- Malachi 2:16 – “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “covers his garment with violence,” says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.
- Matthew 5:32 – But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
- 1 Corinthians 7:12-13 – To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

The 20th General Assembly of the PCA produced a study Report on Divorce and Remarriage.⁸² The committee concluded that grounds for divorce is *porneia*.⁸³ It also acknowledged the possibility of a believer divorcing an unbelieving spouse because of desertion.⁸⁴ The report states that in a case when

⁸² This report is found in the *Minutes of the 20th General Assembly* (1992), 513-636.

⁸³ *Minutes of the 20th General Assembly* (Atlanta: Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, 1992), 633-635.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 634-635.

“words and actions on the part of one spouse that threatens the life of the other spouse and/or children, that the one(s) threatened should be counseled by the Session, or representative thereof, to remove themselves from the threatening situation.”⁸⁵ After those threatened are protected and moved to safety, “the Session should investigate, whether these words and actions are in effect breaking the one-flesh relationship by ‘hating’ the abused spouse and not ‘nourishing and cherishing’ this one (Eph. 5:28-29). . . .When it is determined by the Session that the abuser does not appear to them to be Christian and the abuse continues,”⁸⁶ the church court should excommunicate the abuser. After this, the believing spouse may seek a divorce in the civil courts.⁸⁷ In response to this report, the 20th General Assembly adopted the following recommendations (see *Minutes of the 20th General Assembly*, pp. 59-60.):

- When an unbeliever separates from the marriage relationship with a believer, the believer is free from that marriage and free to remarry but only in the Lord (1 Cor. 7:15, 39) [Recommendation 2.f].
- The believer in the aforementioned case is free to make the biblical divorce legal in the eyes of the state [Recommendation 2.h].
- Under extreme circumstances, a Session following the *BCO* may properly judge that such desertion (separation) has occurred, even though the deserting spouse is still physically present in the home (“desertion” being viewed in the sense understood in the study report on divorce, Chapter 2, Section II.E.4.) [Recommendation 2.g].

Section II.E.4 of the report begins by saying:

“. . . We must be careful not to open the floodgate of excuses. On the other hand, we need to recognize the reality of the ‘separation.’ We should allow sessions the liberty to discern with much prayer what would be the proper response in particular circumstance.

Several considerations incline us to agree with those of our authorities who have maintained that desertion can occur as well by the imposition of intolerable conditions as by departure itself. We are struck by the fact that, taking

Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7 together, it appears that the Lord concedes the necessity of the abolition of marriage in certain cases precisely so as to protect a blameless spouse from intolerable conditions. Further, taking into account

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

both the general principles of biblical ethics and the Scripture's characteristic manner of ethical instruction, viz. the statement of commandments in a general form to which is added case law sufficient to indicate the manner of application, it seems to us that those Reformed authorities are correct who have argued that sins which are tantamount in extremity and consequence to actual desertion should be understood to produce similar eventualities (cf. *Larger Catechism*, Q. 99, A. 6).

What is more, a husband's violence, particularly to the degree that it endangers his wife's safety, if unremedied, seems to us, by any application of Biblical norms, to be as much a ruination of the marriage in fact as adultery or actual departure. This is so precisely because his violence separates them, either by her forced withdrawal from the home or by the profound cleavage between them which the violence produces, as surely as would his own departure, and is thus an expression of his unwillingness—to consent to live with her in marriage (1 Cor. 7:12-13; Eph. 5:28-29). Further, insofar as the “passivity” of the blameless spouse is an important prerequisite in Paul’s permission of the dissolution of marriage on account of desertion, it seems right to note that in the case of physical abuse, for example, the blameless spouse is similarly victimized.”⁸⁸

In Appendix 1 of the report, an ad hoc committee of Philadelphia Presbytery formed and was chaired by Rev. Dr. William S. Barker.⁸⁹ Dr. Barker is the former Dean of Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, President of Covenant Seminary, St. Louis, and the Moderator of the 22nd General Assembly of the PCA. In the *ad hoc* committee analysis of the Westminster Divines’ allowance for divorce due to abuse, the report concluded:

. . . When physical abuse is occurring in a marriage, the church must deal with a situation which, as the Puritans saw, is contrary to God’s purpose for marriage. A temporary separation may be necessary for safety, which the church may need to facilitate, and the abusing partner should be disciplined,

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 562-563.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 607-621. In this analysis the committee leaned heavily upon the work of Dr. David C. Jones, erstwhile professor of ethics at Covenant Seminary, and member of several PCA GA study committees. See also David C. Jones, “The Westminster Confession on Divorce and Remarriage,” *Presbyterion* XVI, 1 (Spring 1990), 17-40.

The complete report as well as other PCA documents on divorce and remarriage can be found in *What God Has Joined Together: The PCA Papers on Divorce and Remarriage* (Lawrenceville, GA: PCA Administrative Committee and Committee on Discipleship Ministries, 2021).

with helpful counsel but eventually to the point of excommunication if there is no repentance in deed as well as in word. The situation is complicated in our cultural setting when the marriage partner is not a member of a church, or is a member of some other church; nevertheless, discipline must be attempted. Only after a suitable length of time and a sufficient process of church discipline should a divorce be granted for such a desertion of one's marriage partner and the marriage covenant. (This is essentially the conclusion reached by David D. Prescott in *The Problem of Wife Abuse: Wife Abuse and Pastoral Counseling*, Westminster Theological Seminary D.Min. project, 1991; cf. pp. 212-221 on "Divorce: Is It a Possibility?")

In its understanding of the Bible's teaching on divorce as "nothing but adultery or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage,"⁹⁰ the Westminster Assembly was seeking to steer the Scriptural path between two demonstrable extremes⁹¹ and in the process uphold God's high ideal for marriage. On the one hand, this ruled out the Roman Catholic concept of no divorce, allowing divorce for adultery and under certain circumstances desertion. On the other hand, it ruled out divorce for incompatibility as some such as Milton were advocating. Physical abuse of a spouse was seen as contrary to the biblical purpose for marriage and would thus be grounds for church discipline and could, if it led to prolonged separation without remedy, become a cause for dissolution of a marriage. Such circumstantial details can be handled only by a body of elders cognizant of and close to the situation. Whereas proven adultery would be readily acknowledged as grounds for a divorce, desertion on the basis of physical abuse as a cause for dissolution of a marriage should be determined from the circumstances by the local session or in the case of a minister by the presbytery.⁹²

To summarize, the *Westminster Confession* (24:6) allows for divorce in the case of willful desertion, and the 20th General Assembly study committee report on divorce and remarriage allowed divorce in certain circumstances of abuse when a spouse is living under intolerable conditions. Intolerable conditions consist of more than physical violence on the part of the abuser. An abuser can create intolerable living conditions without ever laying a hand on

⁹⁰ *WCF* 24:6.

⁹¹ These extremes were the Roman Catholic position of no divorce and the Zwinglian position that had six allowable grounds for divorce, "adultery, impotence, willful desertion, grave incompatibility, sexually incapacitating illness, and deception," *M20GA*, 609-610.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 620-621. Emphasis added.

his spouse or children. The Domestic Abuse section of this report will cover nonphysical tactics the abuser might use to create intolerable living conditions.

Secondly, the Divines' citation of Malachi 2:16 included the phrase, "God hates divorce." While this was the former understanding, many scholars understand this to be a mistranslation. Thus, the ESV translates the verse, "When a man hates his wife and divorces . . ." This translation is supported by both the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate.⁹³ Excommunication should be avoided as a penalty for a wife who has fled her abuser. Even if it is eventually determined she was erroneous for pursuing divorce, the primary duty of a shepherd is a careful and prayerful approach to best address the difficulty of a wife living in a situation that threatens her (and/or her children's) well-being.

This report will deal with the issue of divorce in more depth in Attachment 11: "Divorce and Abuse." The topic of divorce in cases of domestic abuse constitutes more study on desertion and how one should think and adjudicate covenant breaking behavior. It must be asked, at what point is nonphysical abuse intolerable and dangerous?

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (Ex. 20:16).

The sins of the ninth commandment that contribute to abuse have been covered above (under the sixth commandment). This section will address three additional items in the exposition of the ninth commandment that relate to the investigation of abuse allegations, the response of the church to abuse, proper repentance of an abuser, and the issue of false reports.

⁹³ Please see the following essay by Covenant Seminary Old Testament Professor C. John Collins. It is quite thorough: https://www.academia.edu/5304267/Malachi_2_16_again_. Collins argues that the translation, "God hates divorce," relies on changing the vowel "pointings" of the Masoretic Text. Collins further states that the LXX and Vulgate both testify against the KJV rendering and that Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the 1560 Geneva Bible agree with the Vulgate in their own translations. Therefore, the King James Version's translation of Micah 2:16 as "God hates divorce," was an innovation. The influence of the KJV is evident in many of our modern translations, including the NASB and NKJV, translations used by many PCA elders. Interestingly, as Collins points out, *The Westminster Annotations and Commentary on the Whole Bible* list both translations ("God hates divorce" and "if a man hates his wife and divorces") as potential options and favors neither one. See also the PCA GA AIC on Marriage and Divorce which agrees, in essence, with our exegesis: *M20GA*, 207.

Q. 144 What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?

A. The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbour, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbours; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging tale-bearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practising of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

“preserving and promoting of truth . . . appearing and standing for the truth . . . in matters of judgment and justice”

- Zechariah 8:16 – These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace;
- Proverbs 31:8-9 – Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.
- Joshua 7:19 – Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to Him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.”
- Leviticus 19:15 – “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.”
- Proverbs 14:5, 25 – A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies. A truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.

The positive duty under the ninth commandment is to preserve and promote truth. Application of this principle results in the duty of church courts, to the best of their ability, to discover the truth in allegations of abuse. This translates to a duty to undertake a thorough, competent, and unbiased investigation as demonstrated in the Scriptures cited above. Zechariah 8:16 (NAS 1995) says, “Judge with truth.” Proverbs 31:9 (NAS 1995) instructs, “. . . judge

righteously, and defend the rights of the poor and afflicted.” Leviticus 19:15 (NAS 1995) implores, “do no injustice in judgment.” The key to judging righteously, as Scripture commands, is to discover the truth.

Joshua 7:19 depicts an investigation. Even after Achan was discovered by lot to be the source of God’s judgment in the defeat at Ai, Joshua calls Achan forward and questions him. Joshua follows up in order to fully discover the truth. It was not enough to know Achan was guilty; the truth needed to be discovered and disclosed.

The perniciousness of false reports is included in the discussion of *WLC* 145 below. While false reports are rare, the best way to protect against them is to undertake an investigation to discover the truth.⁹⁴ The question (Q. 145) below also warns against prejudicing the truth. The best way to avoid prejudging a matter is to engage a competent third party to perform an unbiased investigation. The question below further warns against passing unjust sentence. The best way to avoid passing unjust sentence is to perform a competent and thorough investigation.

The duty to investigate is codified in the *Book of Church Order* (emphasis added):

31-2. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character. This duty is more imperative when those who deem themselves aggrieved by injurious reports shall ask an investigation.

If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the guilt of the party involved, the court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case. This prosecutor shall be a member of the court, except that in a case before the Session, he may be any communing member of the same congregation with the accused.

The *BCO* clearly states the court’s duty when someone reports abuse: it is to perform a thorough investigation and demand explanations concerning the

⁹⁴ See Attachment 7: Myths about Abuse for information on the frequency of false reports.

report. If the investigation raises a strong presumption of guilt, the court must institute process by appointing a prosecutor and preparing an indictment. The BCO does not prohibit a Session from enlisting the help of a third party in performing an investigation.

Therefore, the duty of a church court is to perform thorough, competent, and unbiased investigations in order to preserve and promote the truth and to judge righteously. While a direct and explicit duty to engage a competent third party is not found here, it is advised by this committee in order to best fulfill the duties required and sins forbidden in the ninth commandment.

Q. 145 What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbours, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, out-facing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale-bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstructing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vain-glorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumours, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavouring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practising, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name. (WLC 1:145 WCS)

“Concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others”

- Leviticus 5:1 – “If anyone sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify, and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity;”
- 1 Kings 1:6 – His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, “Why have you done thus and so?” He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

(Additional Scriptures cited: Deut. 13:8; Acts 5:3, 8-9; 2 Tim. 4:6; Lev. 19:17; Isa. 59:4.)

This clause furthers the duties covered under the fifth commandment. Abusers thrive on silence. Evil loves darkness. Thus, leaders should speak generally about the issue of abuse and specifically when abuse occurs in the community. The church or institution’s reputation is secondary to reproving and discountenancing evil. When church leaders are not open about abuse, they discourage members who notice problematic patterns of behavior, as well as corroborating witnesses, from coming forward. Abuse dissipates when brought into the light.

“Hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession”

- Proverbs 28:13 – Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.
- Proverbs 30:20 – This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, “I have done no wrong.”
- Genesis 3:12-13 – The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”
- Jeremiah 2:35 – You say, “I am innocent; surely His anger has turned from me.” Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, “I have not sinned.”
- 2 Kings 5:25 – He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant went nowhere.”
- Genesis 4:9 – Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”

The Scripture passages above articulate unrepentant sin. One who is truly repentant will offer a free and full confession without hedging, hiding, or blaming others. They will confess fully, not simply confessing to those sins

for which they have been caught. The *WCF* 15.5 reads, “Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man’s duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins particularly” (Ps. 19:13; Luke 19:8; 1 Tim. 1:13, 15).

Struggling with lust, a lack of sex, or a problem with substance abuse is not the foundation nor rationale for abuse. These are excuses. Abuse is a grave sin, magnified by many factors seen in the analysis of *WLC* 151 above. Scripture tells us that leaders call sinners to account. They do not conceal the truth by excusing or lessening sin. Scriptures call shepherds to protect sheep, bring evil out from the dark, and hold offenders accountable.

“Raising false rumours, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence”

- Exodus 23:1 – “You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.”

(Additional Scriptures cited: Prov. 29:12; Acts 7:56-57; Job 31:13-14.)

These passages affirm that false reports happen. False reporting is pernicious and evil, as the accompanying Scripture shows. Falsely reporting abuses, however, is rare.⁹⁵ Scripture narrates *one* instance of a woman falsely accusing a man of abuse (Gen. 39:14-15), yet multiple instances of men misusing women.⁹⁶ The Bible also tells us God will not be mocked (Gal. 6:7) and He will reveal this darkness (Job 12:13-25; Dan. 2:22; 1 Cor. 4:5).

“Believe victims” is a common slogan today because of #metoo. To believe those who report abuse does not negate exploration of the claims. For leaders in the church, “believe victims” means taking necessary actions to protect first. After physical safety is ensured, church courts can then discern the truth in the allegations.

Deuteronomy 22:25-27 states:

“But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall

⁹⁵ The frequency of false reports for cases of physical and sexual abuse is estimated to be between 2% and 10%. See Attachment 7: Myths about Abuse for information on the frequency of false reports.

⁹⁶ Genesis 19:4-5 34; 38; Judges 19:22-25; 2 Samuel 11; 13.

die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.”

This passage articulates that a woman should be believed when there are no witnesses or evidence (“out in the country”). Abuse rarely happens in the presence of a witness. In this situation, the man is to die and “you shall do nothing to the young woman.” This passage implies false reports of abuse are rare. As mentioned above, the best way to fulfill the duty to defend against false reports is to engage a qualified third party to investigate.

Conclusion

The purpose of this biblical and confessional introduction has been twofold. First was to demonstrate that since PCA elders are bound by oath to the ethical teachings of the Westminster Standards, it follows that they are bound by oath to whatever the Standards teach concerning abuse. Second was to expound what the Westminster Standards teach concerning abuse.

The *Westminster Larger Catechism’s* exposition of the Ten Commandments is a valuable resource for guiding the ethics of the church. Specifically, the Divines’ thorough biblical study provides a powerful set of tools for understanding abuse from a biblical and confessional perspective. This study grounds our understanding of abuse in the Holy Scriptures and God’s heart for victims. His desire is that we discountenance evil by bringing it into the light of day.

Here are the key takeaways from this biblical and confessional study of abuse:

1. The existence of power differentials is demonstrated by the Standards, factoring in what is considered abuse and increasing the severity of the damage done;
2. The categories of abuse discussed in this report—physical, sexual, spiritual, and psychological—all have strong biblical support;
3. Church leaders have a duty to educate their people on the issues of abuse and to develop robust protection and prevention policies;
4. Church leaders have a duty to respond well to abuse by protecting victims, undertaking a competent, unbiased investigation, discountenancing evil, and providing patient care for those affected; and

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5. Though an explicit duty cannot be located in the Standards, an independent, third party investigation is advisable in order to discover the truth.

The goal of the Introduction was to present the confessional case for responding to abuse. The remainder of this report will describe what a practical response involves. Sections Two through Six may not read like a typical PCA study report. This is because they will begin with the assumption of the biblical and theological understanding of abuse presented in Section One and proceed to a practical development of the biblical and theological content in implementable ways. To put it another way, the introduction has attempted to establish the “why”; the remaining material will answer the “what” and the “how.”

SECTION TWO: DOMESTIC ABUSE

1. Summary Description of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse⁹⁷ can be defined as a form of oppression in which one spouse controls and dominates the other through a pattern of coercive, controlling, and punishing behaviors.⁹⁸ In domestic abuse,⁹⁹ power, authority, and strength are used selfishly against another rather than for their flourishing. Abuse comes from a deceitful and desperately wicked heart. Domestic abuse is a violation of the marital covenant that destroys the safety and stability of every member of the family and corrupts the body of Christ.

⁹⁷ “First, we must remember that none of our English words are biblical words. That is, none appear in the inspired, original Greek text. We use the words we use because of editorial decisions. "Oppression" is used, "abuse" is not. Why? Because that's what's been chosen. Second, we have to remember that being "biblical" is not restricted to word choice. In other words, we want to look on the conceptual level. The definitions of abuse offered by Langberg, Moles, Pierre, Wilson, and Strickland all describe evils mentioned within the Bible. Third, we are very comfortable with extra biblical language being used to describe specific biblical concepts. Trinity as opposed to saying "God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit" each time. Or "covenant of redemption" or "evangelism" or "church membership." Fourth, extrabiblical words help us by being specific. Many of the actions and attitudes that comprise abuse can also be done in non-abusive ways. There's a difference between an argument that gets out of hand once and a pattern of marital violence. Using words like "abuse" gives us the ability to distinguish between systemic evil in a marriage or other relationship where there is the exploitation of a spouse versus just the common experience of two sinners living together. The label "biblical" is a powerful label. Biblical wording isn't just wording found in the Bible. It's wording that captures the teaching is [of] the Bible. And for that, extra biblical words are often tremendously helpful as we nuance the ways human beings sin against one another.” Dr. Nathanael Brooks, Assistant Professor of Christian Counseling, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina. Co-Author, *Help! Our Sex Life Is Troubled by Past Abuse*. <https://twitter.com/natejbrooks/status/1438835573268041729> (Accessed September 2021).

⁹⁸ Darby A. Strickland, *Is It Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 24.

⁹⁹ In this section, terms such as domestic abuse, violence, intimate partner violence, IVP, and oppression may be used interchangeably. Please refer to Attachment 1: Definitions for specific definitions.

At least ten million men and women suffer from domestic abuse each year.¹⁰⁰ As many as twenty people are assaulted by their partners every minute.¹⁰¹ Up to 85% of the victims of domestic abuse are women and/or young girls, while 2% are men.¹⁰² One hundred thirty-seven women are killed each day by acts of familial violence.¹⁰³ Statistically, there is no difference between the general and Christian populations.¹⁰⁴ Abusers exist in pulpits, pews, seminaries, and on the boards and committees of every denomination, including the Presbyterian Church in America.

Although men and women experience domestic abuse differently, every abuser misuses their power and control. Because most victims are women, this section will speak of abusers as men. [See Section Three of this report, “Women Who Abuse,” for characteristics of women who abuse.]

2. Expressing God’s Heart

The biblical category for understanding all types of abuse is oppression. The Hebrew word most often translated “oppress” (רָדַף) means to squeeze, press, or crush.¹⁰⁵ The English word “oppress” means “to crush or burden by the abuse of power or authority.”¹⁰⁶ This is the essence of abuse. An abuser uses superior size, strength, and/or authority to crush a victim. A power imbalance exists in all forms of oppression. One person or group dominates and controls the other. Ecclesiastes 4:1 captures this so well: “Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed,

¹⁰⁰ “20 Alarming Domestic Violence Statistics for 2018,” Social Solutions, <https://www.socialsolutions.com/blog/domestic-violence-statistics-2018/>.

¹⁰¹ Rachel L. Snyder, *No Visible Bruises: What We Don’t Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 6.

¹⁰² Ibid, and Deanna Pan, “BC Suicide Case Puts Focus on Controversial Issue: Intimate Partner Abuse by Women,” *Boston Globe*, 21 November, 2019, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2019/11/21/suicide-case-puts-focus-on-controversial-issue-intimate-partner-abuse-women/MJG83GJOZCgWslHmn7xIYK/story.html>.

¹⁰³ This number does not include men or children. Ibid, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Diane Langberg, *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores*. 1st edition. (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2015), 254.

¹⁰⁵ Francis Brown, et al., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 267; Ignatius Swart, “רָדַף,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 2:792-793.

¹⁰⁶ “Oppress,” Merriam-Webster.com, <https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/oppress>.

and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them.”

In an oppressive marriage, the husband twists his authority as the head. Instead of serving his wife and promoting her well-being, he uses authority to crush and oppress. In Psalm 55:20, David writes, “My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant.” Domestic abuse, like the relationship David speaks of, occurs in the context of a covenant—the marriage covenant. This type of abuse is particularly insidious because the victim is oppressed by a partner in life who is supposed to love, cherish, and protect. Psalm 55:12-13 captures this sense of betrayal: *For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend.*

God responds decisively to abuse, “The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Ps. 9:9). He provides protection for victims and prioritizes their safety. In surveying the totality of God’s response to oppression, an important pattern emerges. In the Bible, God is always on the side of the oppressed.¹⁰⁷ He defends the weak against the strong. God hears the cries of the oppressed and acknowledges the terrible evil.

God’s response to oppression is seen most clearly in His two great acts of redemption: the exodus and the life and death of Jesus Christ. In the exodus, the Lord redeemed His people from oppression with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm (Deut. 26:6-8). In Christ’s condescension, He redeemed the entire created order from the effects of the Fall, including oppression. God entered into human suffering and sacrificed Himself to redeem it.

3. Recognition

Women in the church tend to consult other Christian women and/or their pastors when they experience difficulty in the home. Therefore, church members and leaders, especially teaching and ruling elders, are wise to educate themselves regarding the dynamics of domestic abuse, the damage it causes, and the necessary interventions.

¹⁰⁷ Brenda Branson and Paula J. Silva, *Violence Among Us: Ministry to Families in Crisis* (Valley Forge, PA, Judson Press, 2007), 106.

Abuse is primarily idolatry. Scripture teaches that all behavior flows from the desires of the heart. Jesus says in Mark 7:21-23, “For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” To understand the actions of an abusive person we must understand the idolatry which fuels the abuse.

There are three idols which fuel domestic abuse.

1. The desire for power and control,
2. The abuser’s sense of entitlement, and
3. The desire to be God.

The Desire for Power and Control

To sinfully dominate another human being is antithetical to God’s original design. In Genesis 1, Adam and Eve are tasked with ruling and subduing the earth and its creatures. They are called to be His representatives on earth and to rule creation as His viceroys.¹⁰⁸ God did not direct them to rule and subdue each other.

God’s original design for marriage was for ruling and subduing to be accomplished by both the man and woman working together as a team. The power God gave Adam and Eve to carry out the creation mandate was designed to bless each other as they enjoyed the fruit of a subdued and nurtured earth. Adam and Eve ignored God and His governance and, instead, put themselves in the place of power. Marriages characterized by power, control, and domination are therefore a clear manifestation of disobedience to God and His ways.

An abuser views the family as a pyramid of power. At the top of the pyramid is the abuser. There is no room for anyone else. His sinful behaviors are intended to control the spouse and to maintain his position. An abusive episode occurs when the abuser perceives a threat to that position. Abuse is a form of conditioning. The abuser maintains power over the victim by punishing behaviors when the victim acts outside his control. Over time victims live in fear, and this is central to the abuser’s dominance.

¹⁰⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15, Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 31, 33.

The Abuser's Sense of Entitlement

Jesus prescribes the ideal mindset for a leader in Mark 10:43-45: “But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” God calls husbands to follow Jesus’s pattern of servant leadership by sacrificing their own desires for their wives (cf. Eph. 5:25). All husbands fall short of this standard, but an abuser does the exact opposite and leads from a posture of entitled superiority.

Entitlement can be described as “Selfishness at its most extreme. It is blind, self-focused, utterly wicked at its core, and horribly destructive.”¹⁰⁹ Abusers believe they have a special status which provides them with exclusive rights and privileges that do not apply to their wives.¹¹⁰ An abusive person feels entitled to be the center of his spouse’s universe. If the household was a solar system, the abuser would be the sun. Abusers expect the victim’s world to revolve around meeting their needs. If the spouse veers off orbit, the abuser feels entitled to exact punishing behaviors.

The Desire To Be God

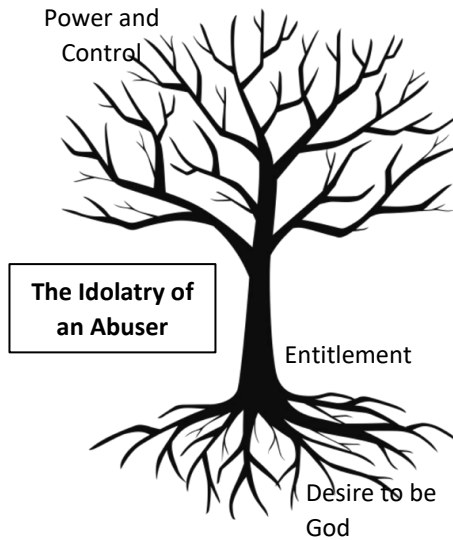
An abuser’s desire is to replace God as the Lord of his home. This root desire fuels both the idol of power and a sense of entitlement. Regarding power, an abuser desires sovereign control over their spouse, a level of control that is only appropriate for God. Concerning entitlement, an abuser feels entitled to be served in a manner that only befits God. Jesus Christ should be the center of our lives. Instead, the abuser tries to usurp Christ’s central position in the life of his victim.

A tree analogy helps our understanding of the idolatry that leads to domestic abuse.¹¹¹ The roots are a desire to be God, which fuels everything else. The trunk functions as the base of a tree, which is entitlement. The abuser behaves as one who is entitled to always get what he wants. Control forms the branches of the tree as control spreads out into multiple areas of the victim’s life.

¹⁰⁹ Strickland, *Is It Abuse?*, 66.

¹¹⁰ Lundy Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2002), 54.

¹¹¹ Adapted from Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That?*, 75.



Categories of Recognition

Spousal abuse occurs in concrete behavioral patterns that can be named and defined. Like a doctor who listens to a patient's symptoms can correctly diagnose disease, church leaders, counselors, and advocates who listen for abuse patterns (symptoms) can accurately diagnose the evil of abuse. There are five tactics employed in domestic abuse, each of which is comprised of several behavior patterns:

- Emotional,
- Spiritual,
- Economic,
- Sexual Abuse, and
- Physical.¹¹²

¹¹² Christiane Sanderson, *Counseling Survivors of Domestic Abuse* (Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008), 22-26.

A. Emotional Abuse: Any non-physical behavior designed to control someone through degradation, humiliation, and/or fear¹¹³

Emotional abuse includes more patterns than any other tactic. Powerful and pervasive, emotional abuse underlies every other form of abuse. It is comprised of, but not limited to, the following patterns of behavior:

Verbal abuse involves, but is not limited to, the use of words to manipulate, discourage, humiliate, deceive, frighten, and threaten. It includes constant and unrelenting criticism. This is the most well-known pattern of emotional abuse.

*Intimidation involves, but is not limited to, controlling another person through the threat of physical harm.*¹¹⁴ This includes raising the voice or using the body in a threatening manner. An abuser might block a victim from exiting the room or raise his hand as if intending to strike. One significant red flag for intimidation is when an abuser throws objects, punches holes in the wall, or damages personal property. The intended message is, “This could be you.” The most terrifying form of intimidation is brandishing a weapon, such as a firearm. During a marriage counseling session, if a pastor hears these behaviors, he should consider it an indication a spouse is emotionally abusive.

*Emotional blackmail involves, but is not limited to, attempts to control a person by playing on their guilt, fear, or compassion.*¹¹⁵ This includes exploiting the victim’s compassion by the abuser threatening to kill himself. Threatening suicide is a tactic which misuses a victim’s love to keep them under control. The most insidious form of emotional blackmail is when the abuser threatens to hurt the children. Abusers may threaten to hurt or kill the victim’s pets. Another tactic of emotional blackmail includes shifting the blame for the demise of the family to the victim if she acts decisively for her and the children’s safety.

Isolation involves, but is not limited to, when an abuser attempts to control his wife’s relationships, movements, and/or even goals in

¹¹³ Beverly Engel, *The Emotionally Abusive Relationship* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 10-11.

¹¹⁴ Lundy Bancroft, *When Dad Hurts Mom: Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004), 34.

¹¹⁵ Engel, *The Emotionally Abusive Relationship*, 31-32.

*life.*¹¹⁶ This includes preventing a spouse from working, involvement in church, or other activities. Many abusers strongly discourage outside relationships with family and/or friends. An abusive husband may monitor his wife's phone calls, texts, and/or emails. Smartphones with tracking devices are a powerful tool used to isolate and/or monitor a victim's time and activities away from the home. An abuser will often interrogate the victim when she returns.

*Gaslighting involves, but is not limited to, causing a victim to doubt their perception of reality.*¹¹⁷ The term, "gaslighting" originated in a 1940s film by the same name. It includes using many subtle but powerful tactics to communicate to the victim that she is crazy. This is accomplished as the abuser repeatedly claims the victim is misinterpreting events or constantly correcting their perception. The abuser generally insists on an alternate interpretation (or "narrative"). It may also involve insinuating the victim is exaggerating or lying. The power of gaslighting resides in its sustained use over time, and its use in concert with other tactics. The cumulative effect is that the victim doubts their mental health and perception of reality. This diminishes confidence in their own agency and creates a vulnerability to be more easily manipulated and/or controlled. The impact of gaslighting cannot be underestimated. It is terrifying to question your sanity.

*Using children as pawns involves but is not limited to the abuser's misuse of their children to manipulate and control a victim.*¹¹⁸ This includes manipulating the children into taking the abuser's side and/or triangulate them between the parents during a conflict. An abuser may force the children to watch arguments and then appeal to them for support. Some abusers require the children to monitor and report on the victim's behavior in their absence. A particularly vicious tactic is psychological cruelty to or physical abuse of the children for the purpose of upsetting the spouse. Abusers may purposely upset the children and then prevent their spouse from comforting them when they cry. They may shift blame or gaslight and accuse the victim of upsetting the children. Abusers often threaten to take the children from the victim either through legal means or by kidnapping. Abusers can and do kidnap their children.

¹¹⁶ Branson and Silva, *Violence Among Us*, 22.

¹¹⁷ Engel, *The Emotionally Abusive Relationship*, 36-37.

¹¹⁸ Bancroft, *When Dad Hurts Mom*, 140.

A marriage is emotionally abusive when one spouse uses multiple behavior patterns on a consistent basis. Regular use of these tactics creates an oppressive environment in the home. The victim and family are trapped in bondage to the abuser's moods and emotions. Although emotional abuse leaves no visible bruises, it is difficult to understate the impact.

B. Spiritual Abuse: Using a person's faith as a tactic for manipulation and control¹¹⁹

Spiritual abuse occurs when Scripture is used to belittle, threaten, or justify unreasonable expectations. An abusive spouse may quote passages such as Proverbs 5:19 to justify sex on demand. First Corinthians 7:1-5 may be used to justify ungodly behavior such as physical or sexual assault or dehumanizing control. Ephesians 5:25-26 may be used to establish an entitled sense of superiority and/or weaponized into a tool of domination. In the hands of an abuser, the Word of God may be a tool to tear down a victim rather than build her up (Rom. 14:19). Abusers may take good and pure truths and twist them into a perverse shadow of what God intended.

Spiritual abuse occurs when an abuser demands submission. In an abusive relationship, there is very little that is open to discussion and compromise. Submission is frequently played as a trump card to get what the abuser wants. Abusers conflate their personal will with the will of God and use the doctrine of submission to maintain a position of control. For more discussion on submission, see the chapter on shepherding the abuser.

C. Economic Abuse: Behavior that dominates a person financially¹²⁰

There are two tactics in economic abuse:

1. The first, related to the abuser's desire for power, results in maintaining tight control over the finances.
 - An abuser may prohibit their spouse from working outside the home to maintain dominance over the victim through financial dependence.
 - A common tactic is to unilaterally impose a highly restrictive allowance on the victim.

¹¹⁹ Branson and Silva, *Violence Among Us*, 25-27.

¹²⁰ Sanderson, *Counseling Survivors of Domestic Abuse*, 26.

- At times, the victim's allowance includes the requirement of purchasing the household necessities.
 - An abuser may keep most of the family budget and/or spend as desired.
 - An abuser may demand an account of every cent spent and interrogate the victim regarding their purchases.
 - An abuser usually does not hold himself to the same careful standard as the victim.
 - An abuser may use guilt or accuse of irresponsibility even if the victim purchases only household necessities.
 - An abuser may hide information about finances or threaten to leave the family and withdraw financial support.
2. The second is related to an abuser's sense of entitlement, and it results in financial recklessness.
- An abuser may feel entitled to spend money without regard for how it impacts the victim or children.
 - An abuser will likely have irresponsible debts.
 - An abuser may force the victim to work and provide for him and/or the family.
 - An abuser may use the victim to finance dreams or pay debts.
 - An abuser may ruin his own credit.
 - An abuser may ruin his victim's credit.
 - An abuser may ruin his young adult children's credit.

D. Sexual Abuse: Any unwanted contact or interaction that occurs for the sexual stimulation of the abuser¹²¹

Sexual abuse is the most difficult category of abuse to discuss. Sexual assault in the home is well-hidden, and the related shame and confusion often prevents victims from disclosing.

It may take much time, carefulness, and wisdom for a counselor or helper to build the trust necessary for a victim to share the horrifying details. Victims may never feel comfortable enough to discuss such personal trauma with their male pastors and elders. This is not a personal insult. From the perspective of victims, sexual abuse is the most degrading and damaging form of abuse.

¹²¹ Dan Allender, *The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2008), 47.

Sexual abuse encompasses multiple behaviors. The following is not meant to be an all-inclusive list.

- An abuser may manipulate or relentlessly pressure his spouse for sex.
- An abuser may make sexual advances in public that make the victim very uncomfortable.
- An abuser may force the victim to watch pornography.
- An abuser may force the victim to perform sexual acts that she finds unpleasant, painful, and/or humiliating.
- An abuser may force sodomy.
- An abuser may force the victim to take prescription sleep aids.
- An abuser may force the victim to drink too much alcohol.
- An abuser may violently rape the victim.
- An abuser may force their victims to perform sexual acts with other people under the threat of violence.

E. Physical Abuse: Any behavior that dominates a person through physical force or violence¹²²

Physical abuse encompasses multiple behaviors. The following is not meant to be an all-inclusive list.

- Hitting with hands or objects
- Kicking
- Punching
- Choking or placing hands around her neck
- Scratching
- Cutting
- Pinning to the ground or any other surface
- Biting
- Pinching
- Squeezing with intent to subdue
- Snapping with fingers or any other object
- Grabbing in anger
- Throwing objects at or in the direction of (despite whether the abuser is successful at hitting the intended target)
- Pushing

¹²² Branson and Silva, *Violence Among Us*, 24.

- Pulling hair
- Strangulation
- Slapping
- Spanking an adult
- Torture
- Sleep deprivation
- Sexual assault
- Rape
- Assault with a weapon
- Attempted or committed homicide
- Chasing for the purpose of any of the above (despite whether the abuser is successful at catching the intended target)

The impact of physical abuse is multiplied exponentially when combined with emotional abuse. The feeling of terror and helplessness engendered by a previous physical assault might be reproduced in the victim by “the look,” a clearing of the throat, or slamming shut a book for example, even if no future physical assault occurs. (See “Definitions – Trigger and/or PTSD.”)

The Spectrum of Abuse



The five forms of domestic abuse exist on a spectrum that builds in intensity. Emotional abuse may be the first tactic to appear in a relationship. As the abuse escalates, the abuser adds other tactics. It is very common for abusers to utilize three or four tactics. However, due to the consequences for visible injuries, many refrain from harming their wives physically.¹²³

Abuse escalates. The tactics of abuse between emotional and physical might be added in any order, which is signified by the double-sided arrows on the above diagram. Some tactics may never be utilized by an abuser. For example, a particular abuser may not care much about money, and therefore not control by the misuse of their finances. But the same abuser might engage in sexual abuse. The tactics and severity of abuse will differ from person to person.

¹²³ Not including instances of sexual assault, as this type of physical abuse is easily kept secretive.

Emotional abuse tends to be the starting point, moving toward the most serious form of physical.¹²⁴

As the abuse builds in intensity, the victim's experience is very confusing. The intensity tends to rise gradually. If the abuser is not abusing physically, the victim will often not detect the escalation. The physical abuse may be the unmistakable red flag that leads the victim to confide in a friend, family member, and/or pastor. In these situations, the physically abusive episode may appear to be an isolated incident. However, physical abuse was simply the latest tactic in the patterns of abuse building over time. If a man is abusing his wife physically, he is also abusing her emotionally. He is probably abusive in other ways as well. The victim may not be familiar with the definitions and patterns of abuse, and therefore unable to clearly articulate what is happening. But physical abuse is just the tip of the iceberg.

Difficulty in Disclosure

When someone discloses characteristics of abuse, it is important to listen and act in a way that supports the person and keeps them protected. God's desire is that we support those who have been abused (Matt. 19:13-15; Luke 17:2). In the moment of disclosure or discovery, the church must also provide care.

Disclosing domestic abuse is very difficult. Primarily, the victim's safety is the greatest concern. Only a victim has the information necessary to decide if, when, and how to report what is happening in the home. The victim lives with the consequences for reporting; therefore, it is wise to let her set the pace in the process. See *Shepherding the Victim to Safety* below.

The power differential in the abusive relationship also makes reporting abuse risky. Consider potential outcomes of disclosing when the abuser has employed tactics of . . .

- **Gaslighting.** The victim risks not being believed, as the abuser has often told her would be the case.
- **Spiritual abuse.** Unfortunately, many leaders misunderstand domestic abuse, so they might instruct a wife she should be more submissive and/or more sexual. Hearing this from a spiritual leader perpetuates the misuse of Scripture by an authoritative figure.

¹²⁴ Physical abuse is not limited to hitting and kicking. Suicide is also an ultimate form of physical abuse as the abuser "punishes" their victim. She will ask what she did wrong/could have done differently to prevent his demise for the rest of her life.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **Economic abuse.** An abuser who controls the family finances might hire an aggressive lawyer. Abusers are known to use the court system to perpetuate their power and control.
- **Emotional blackmail.** Threatening to take or hurt the children.
- **Children as pawns.** An abuser may continue to or begin threatening the children and/or mistreating and abusing them.
- **Isolation.** An abuser may increasingly isolate the victim from friends and family.
- **Verbal abuse.** After many years of verbal onslaught, the victim may believe the abuser's narrative. If he has repeatedly treated her harshly and called her stupid, worthless, ugly, fat, or told her no one would want her or that she couldn't make it without him, she may feel silenced. She may blame herself and even defend him because, as he said, she's "disobedient and stupid."

In the absence of disclosure, a clear sign of abuse is the presence of bruises, black eyes, and/or broken bones. Often this evidence is hidden behind sunglasses, high necklines, and long sleeves even during warm weather. The evidence can also be explained away by vague stories of clumsiness. When questioned, a victim will become obviously uncomfortable and brush it off or change the subject.

Evidence of abuse might be determined by a careful observation of a victim's demeanor. This is not to say these characteristics are determinative for abuse. The following descriptions of behavior are also not all-inclusive. However, these questions might be helpful for clarification.

- Is she especially timid and/or fearful?
- Is she overly self-effacing?
- Is she subdued, even fearful, around her husband?
- Does she scurry to do what he says?
- Is he arrogant, rigid, critical, controlling?
- Does he speak and act disrespectfully towards her or about her?
- Does he appear to control her, keep her under his thumb?
- Does he refuse to sacrificially support the use of her gifts in the Body?
- Does she have difficulty making eye contact with the pastor or elders?
- Is she "not allowed" to attend church meetings or Bible study unless accompanied by her husband?
- Is she anxious about getting home "on time"?

The imbalance of power in an abusive relationship causes a greater disadvantage when a victim reports the abuse. Research shows that the abuser's power within the relationship usually corresponds to a higher level of social and relational power in the community.¹²⁵ Abusers have fewer social restraints and more resources. The abuser's higher social standing tempts many to believe his narrative rather than hers. When domestic abuse is alleged, church leaders may dismiss accusations because they think they know the abuser and, "He wouldn't do anything like that." Such a response ignores Scriptures such as John 2:23-25 and Jeremiah 17:9, which teach that every human being is capable of deceitfulness and can hide private sins from the public eye. The abuser is often left unscathed during an investigation while the victim is told to be quiet and/or cease speaking about her experiences.

Conversely, victims experience great social restraint. They have been conditioned to keep their thoughts to themselves, yield to the emotions of the person with greater power, and be more cautious in their behavior. For a victim, the abuser seems more powerful than the systems meant to protect.¹²⁶ In disclosing, the victim may risk accusations of gossip, slander, and/or ruining the abuser's reputation. A victim may also be silenced for the sake of the church's reputation. Church leaders should not put the image of the church above the safety of its congregants. When we wear His name, we should also bear His likeness.

4. Responding

Disclosure of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is an equal opportunity destroyer impacting generations of men, women, and children. Jesus calls us to proclaim the gospel through evangelism, but He also calls us to minister to those who are oppressed (Isa. 58:6-7). The church must have an unflinching commitment to be governed by what God says about justice, mercy, and defending the vulnerable. Silence does not protect the church or Christ's name.¹²⁷ When we stay silent, we tell the world, victims, and abusers we are okay with violence in the home. We tell children that violence is normal and the church does not care whether they or

¹²⁵ Gerben Van Kleef et al., "Power, Distress and Compassion," *Psychological Science* 19:12 (2008): 1315-1322, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02241.x>.

¹²⁶ Snyder, *No Visible Bruises*, 71.

¹²⁷ Diane Langberg, "How To have a Culture of Child Protection," presentation, Grace Baptist Church, CA, 2016.

their family is hurting. Over against this posture, the God of refuge calls His church to be a safe haven for victims of abuse.

Intervention by godly response helps break the chain of perpetual abuse. Intervening is quite costly in terms of time and energy. It requires wisdom, patience, and courage to battle evil and deception. Responding well includes naming the evil of abuse for what it is. We must not ignore, minimize, or passively condone abuse or else the church becomes, “whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:27).

What To Do Regarding Disclosure of Domestic Abuse

A godly response to the disclosure or discovery of abusive behaviors in Christian homes includes, but is not limited to, the following.

- Prior to disclosure or discovery, church leadership sets the pace for the congregation in the treatment of women. Leaders honor their wives and speak to and about their wives with respect. Leaders encourage and facilitate the development and use of their spouses’ gifts as God directs. Leaders encourage staff and church members to do the same.
- Label abuse as such. To prescribe the appropriate response, abuse must be called by its rightful name. To label otherwise is to minimize sin and treat the things that God hates lightly. Minimizing abuse fails to keep the flock safe and fails to direct the abuser to a path of repentance, redemption, and perhaps reconciliation. If at first you are unsure what you are encountering rises to the level of abuse, start by using the words which describe the behavior that is uncovered: harsh, cruel, manipulative, deceptive, etc. Abuse is comprised of many sins, and a good start is to accurately label sin. Eventually a determination needs to be made if the constellations of sin that are uncovered rise to the level of abuse, but that may take time.
- Protect sheep. Resist sending the woman back into a dangerous situation with instructions to pray and/or submit more. Abuse occurs because there is an abuser, not because a victim has not prayed or submitted enough. Specific steps that a shepherd can take to ensure the safety of victims will be discussed in the next section.

- Provide at least one trained, respected, godly woman to accompany the victim to Session meetings, team meetings, court, and other situations when she may be frightened and/or overwhelmed.
- Form and train a team of men and women to function with knowledge and authority in situations involving domestic abuse, as they come alongside the victim, children, and abuser.
- Read widely from both pastoral and clinical sources to become familiar with the dynamics of domestic abuse, its typical effects on the victim and her children, and the characteristics and dynamics of the person who abuses. Mere “conventional wisdom” has been costly in many domestic abuse situations.
- Familiarize yourself with training and resources provided by local domestic abuse organizations. Consider training elders and/or church leaders so they are familiar with the dynamics and process in domestic abuse.
- Establish ongoing oversight of the educational and training measures addressed in “Prevention and Deterrence” (p. 1085 of this report).
- Familiarize yourself with state and local laws that might impact the situation and available, accessible resources.
- Familiarize yourself with the names and contact information of emergency departments, shelters, attorneys, advocates, employment-training facilities, food banks, etc.
- Establish connection with specific individuals in the public sector who assist with their skills and resources.
- Host seminars utilizing professionals to educate the staff and perhaps the congregation about domestic abuse and best practices.
- Provide other resources and books on domestic abuse in the church library.

What Not To Do Regarding Disclosure of Domestic Abuse

It is not wise to conduct marriage counseling with both spouses together in cases of alleged, suspected, or disclosed abuse. Marriage counseling can be dangerous in cases of domestic abuse and may even result in further harm to the victim. Marriage counseling should not occur until individual counseling with an informed counselor has resulted in long-term evidence of the abuser’s repentance, empathy, and genuine godly sorrow for their abusive behavior.

An unbalanced focus on “keeping the marriage together” at any cost may prevent confrontation of the private sin of abuse that happens behind the closed doors of a Christian home. Christian marriages are to reflect Christ and His church; therefore, leaders must “take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret” (Eph. 5:11-12). Addressing abuse in the home is for the sake of the gospel as much as, or even more so, than preserving the marriage. An abusive marriage is a blemish on Christ’s body. The church must protect Christ’s reputation and eradicate the evil of abuse in Christian marriages.

5. Reporting

Be familiar with the reporting requirements in your state. Typically, these laws are less stringent for adult abuse than they are for child abuse. In the case of domestic abuse, reporting is *not* recommended unless mandated by state law. It violates the victim’s freedom, and it may unintentionally jeopardize her safety. It is important to allow the victim to direct adult abuse reporting unless mandated by state law.

It is recommended the following be appointed to respond to the survivor and accused:

1. Church Advocacy Group
2. Session Crisis Intervention Team

Church Advocacy Group

Those who have experienced any form of abuse and/or assault should have an easily accessible, empathetic, reliable, and formal means of reporting. Persons with like experience may help in decreasing the fear of reporting. Appointed and highly visible advocates in the local church might include a small group of well-trained members. The advocacy group should document the concern or complaint in sufficient detail to categorize it as reportable to public authorities (such as physical abuse, rape, sexual assault, physical assault, battery, kidnapping, etc.) or non-reportable (spiritual, verbal, emotional, financial abuse, doctrinal error, abusive leadership, sexual harassment, adultery, deceit, etc.).

Crisis Intervention Team¹²⁸

The Crisis Intervention Team should consist of effective, wise, and disciplined elders (other than those assigned to advocacy group) able to intervene promptly, efficiently, and effectively to the complaint.

Major tasks will be to . . .

1. Investigate the matter,
2. Relieve any allegedly abusive leaders from duty, and
3. Provide shepherding counsel and support to victims, abusers, and their families.

In the case that the accused is a pastor, the Crisis Intervention Team is also responsible as a liaison with the Presbytery and as communication to and with the congregation and general public regarding the matter. Truth, honesty, and accountability should be the hallmarks of the team's interactions with the accused, congregation, presbytery, and with the public.

If the alleged abuser is in leadership, the Crisis Intervention Team (or appointed elder) should inform the accused of the charge and initiate process to relieve him from duty immediately. They should conduct their investigation in such a way as to carefully shepherd the victim and preserve her safety (see "Redemptive Shepherding" below), anonymity, privacy, and welfare.

Reportable complaints should be given to police. The Advocacy Group and/or Crisis Intervention Team should inform the pastor and/or Session (the latter only if the pastor is implicated) immediately after submission to authorities and give them their written report. This is to avoid cover-up for serious crimes and offenses at the beginning, the most crucial phase of the process.

¹²⁸ In a PCA church, the pastor, who had read widely about domestic abuse, commissioned a ruling elder to form a team who could walk alongside a woman who had escaped from a heavily armed, abusive husband and was living in the home of a person outside the congregation for safety's sake. The team consisted of two elders, a trained woman, and a deacon who could address the financial concerns. The team met with the displaced woman every two to three weeks to encourage her, pray with her, provide for her needs, and serve as a go-between for the woman and her husband so she did not have to endure his abusive, threatening emails and phone calls. The team leader updated the pastor weekly. Additional care can come in the form of appropriate topical Bible studies and support with parenting issues. Youth leaders can come alongside the children to offer a listening ear and encouragement.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Non-reportable complaints should be written in sufficient detail and presented to the Session. It is wise to shield a victim's identity unless given permission to disclose. If the complaint is warranted, the Session might plan a strategy to confront the accused. A complaint considered unwarranted should be documented and provided to the accuser with the reasons for the determination.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should meet with the accused after the complaint is lodged, as soon as possible if reported to authorities. Prior to this meeting, they should engage in prayer for wisdom, discernment, and the preservation of the honor of Christ and His church, as well as for grace in approach to both parties.

A written complaint should be presented to the accused. The accused's response will be documented verbatim by the advocates, including the responses to appropriate, further clarifying questions. Such questions should provide details of . . .

- Factual occurrence,
- Motives,
- Emotions,
- Prior events pertinent to the investigation as seen fit by the investigators and accused,
- Specific disagreement,
- Regret,
- Remorse, or
- Repentance expressed by the accused.

Each answer should be recorded in as much detail as possible, using direct quotes rather than paraphrases. These questions and statements should be recorded and documented until the meeting has reached a conclusion. Questions refused should also be so recorded.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should meet following a confrontation for prayer and to deliberate upon, analyze, and formulate their findings and conclusion of the preliminary investigation. They should document their findings and recommendations for further pursuit of the complaint in writing and submit them to the accused. At the presentation to the accused, the team should record any rebuttal, clarification, or other response of the accused.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should prayerfully deliberate on the written complaint, response, and rebuttal, and amend or sustain the original findings and recommendation in a final report. This report should be given to both accuser and accused. The following are possible courses of action that may be recommended to the Session:

1. **The issue be resolved with follow-up** by the Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder to both parties separately.
2. **The issue requires further investigation** by Session and/or outside investigators or counsel before actions can be recommended.
3. **The abuse report requires immediate action** such as contacting the police or Presbytery [if a pastor] if not already contacted, suspension from duty, or medical/psychiatric intervention.
4. **Action requires a formal program** of biblical counseling, spiritual discipline, mentoring, and accountability of progress in conformity to Christ by one or both parties.
5. **Formal charges or dissolution of pastoral relationship if warranted** [if a pastor].

When the Abuser Is a Teaching Elder

Besides prayer, confrontation, deliberation, and investigation, it is important that PCA churches avail themselves of the formal system for accountability if a teaching elder is exhibiting signs of abuse and refusing to repent.

The *PCA Book of Church Order (BCO)* Chapter 34 is titled “Special Rules Pertaining to Process Against a Minister.” A church minister (teaching elder) is a “member” of a Presbytery, not the local church. Therefore, when his sin is repetitive following the attempt of members to confront him, it is necessary to pursue accountability through members of the Presbytery (34-4).

There are three possible ways to proceed by the Session or church members:

1. Discuss the matter with another elder in the Presbytery, of which the teaching elder is a member, seeking their personal aid in further confrontation;
2. Bring clear, documented proof of unrepentant leadership failure to the committee that handles charges brought against member pastors for their consultation; or

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3. Bring charges against the minister before this committee. Two witnesses must bring testimony (*BCO 34-5*) or there must be clear “corroborative evidence.”

Although the first and second options may be less intimidating to church members, bringing an abusive leader to trial may be necessary to provide safety to the greater church. A teaching elder who has been found unrepentant will be publicly disallowed from ministry in the PCA as long as evidence of unrepentance remains.

However, it must be understood that pastoral failure which does not involve “heretical” teaching must clearly evidence damage to Christ’s church for judicial action to be taken against a pastor.

Heresy and schism may be of such a nature as to warrant deposition; but errors ought to be carefully considered, whether they strike at the vitals of religion and are industriously spread, or whether they arise from the weakness of the human understanding and are not likely to do much injury (BCO 34-5).

Should the congregation wish to remove a teaching elder due to his abuse, they are required to follow these steps:

1. “. . . there shall always be a meeting of the congregation called and conducted in the same manner as the call of the Pastor (*BCO 23-1*).”
2. The meeting must be presided over by a ruling or teaching elder of the PCA.
3. The will of the congregation (as voted upon) is presented to the Presbytery for approval for the “dissolution of the pastoral relation.”

Independent Assessments or Investigations

After the Session has received the preliminary investigation report of the Advocacy Group/elder, they may wish to investigate further or engage expert outside counsel. Outside independent counsel should be sought for potential felony or any complaint that was reported to police or public agencies. Examples of such outside counsel include legal, certified public accountants,

trained counselors, trained advocates, psychological and/or medical personnel, and/or seminary faculty with expertise in the field.

The safety of the victim(s), responsibility of the church, and accountability are foremost in the work of an independent counsel.

6. Redemptive Shepherding

Shepherding the Victim to Safety

*The priority is the victim's safety.*¹²⁹

- **Confrontation.** When a victim confides abusive behavior, it's tempting to confront the alleged abuser for his perspective of the allegations. If accusations are founded, and the spouse is abusive, he may exact punishing behavior on the victim for reporting. Confronting the accused puts the victim in jeopardy. Before any confrontation can take place, the victim's safety must be assured.
- **Separation.** Safety may include separating the victim and any children from the abuser. Caution is strongly encouraged. The most dangerous time in an abusive relationship happens when a victim tries to leave.¹³⁰ Abusers often escalate behaviors in order to strengthen control and force the victim to stay.
- **Team.** Most pastors do not have the bandwidth to shepherd a victim alone. It is recommended the pastor create a team of people to come alongside the victim and her children, as well as the abuser.
- **Agency.** Prioritize the victim's freedom.¹³¹ Throughout the process, the victim should set the pace. An abuser controls every facet of a victim's world. Her recovery will benefit from relearning how to make wise decisions. Provide the victim with the necessary options (see below) and resources and then come alongside to help her navigate solutions. Victims are conditioned to depend on their abuser's control, so they may look to others to make decisions. Resist this temptation. Some victims will make choices with which you disagree. For instance, they may not take

¹²⁹ Sanderson, *Counseling Survivors of Domestic Abuse*, 110.

¹³⁰ Brenda Branson and Paula J. Silva, "Options for Victims of Domestic Violence," Focus Ministries, <https://www.focusministries1.org/resources/domestic-violence-articles>.

¹³¹ Branson and Silva, *Violence Among Us*, 76.

steps necessary for protection or may stay in or return to the abusive situation. The victim must live with her decision, so resist taking control.

- **Network.** Enlist the help of other institutions that can help achieve safety. The church may not have the resources to meet all the victim's needs. Law enforcement, an attorney, a professional counselor, a victim's advocate, or a battered women's shelter will be very helpful.¹³² Have the victim be the primary liaison between these organizations. Victim ownership over their situation will promote responsibility, decisiveness, and self-sufficiency.
- **Evaluate.** All options have the potential for greater risk. Calling law enforcement is an excellent way to provide immediate protection, but afterwards the abuser may respond violently. An order of protection is somewhat helpful; however, it is only a piece of paper. Abusers often choose to violate restraining and protection orders. The wisest course of action will be to work slowly and patiently. The potential danger to the victim is another reason that she must set the pace for all decisions. She has the best knowledge of the abuser and situation. Err on the side of safety.

Options for Safety

The following are intended to be thorough, but not exhaustive. All situations are unique and may require more creative solutions.

Call the Police: If a victim feels unsafe, their first call is 911. This option can provide a victim with swift protection when threatened or when an abuser becomes violent. But abusers may be adept at manipulating the situation and casting doubt on the victim's story. If the police leave without making an arrest, the abuser may commit further offences as punishment.

Victim's Advocate: An advocate can provide professional assistance with safety planning, perform a lethality assessment that helps determine the threat level of an abuser, and guide victims in securing an order of protection. Network with the victim advocates in your area and have up to date contact information available to victims in need.

Order of Protection: An order of protection may be wise if the victim leaves the home. In many states, a protection order can also be written to force the

¹³² Ibid.

abuser to leave the home. A victim should plan ahead and secure the order without the abuser's knowledge. Contact a victim's advocate for assistance securing an order.

Find Alternate Housing: It may be necessary for the victim to leave the home, at least for a season. It is wise for the victim to leave without the abuser's knowledge. This takes careful planning.¹³³ Arrange to leave at a precise day and time when the husband will be out of the house. Preschedule an appointment with a victim advocate to procure a protection order within hours of departure from the home.

Any children should remain with the victim. Those advising or assisting victims who leave should be familiar with local law. In some states, if the victim takes her children for more than five days, she can be charged with kidnapping. Victims may also have legal trouble if they prohibit child visitation. In addition, the state may require that victims with children remain within a certain proximity to the home. Contact the local victim's advocate for the most up-to-date laws governing your specific area.

Keep living arrangements private when a victim leaves. Use discernment when placing a victim in a "known" location such as with family, friends, or church members. If no suitable options are available, contact a local women's shelter. Network with the victim advocates in your area and have up-to-date contact information available to victims in need. At times, victims are safer staying in the home. This enables them to monitor the abuser's moods and anger level and take the appropriate measures to keep safe. The living arrangement decision belongs to the victim.

Prepare To Live Independently: A victim will need to prepare before leaving the home by saving money in a private account or keeping funds in an undisclosed location. If this option is not possible, the victim might consider withdrawing funds from accounts immediately after leaving. Timing will be important; the transaction will need to be completed before the abuser is aware of her absence. It is also wise to open a new cell phone account and get a different number prior to or soon after leaving. Make sure to have the victim turn off tracking on their devices ("Find My Friends"). Advise that she create a new email address, change passwords on accounts, and apply for credit cards in her own name. Consult a victim advocate and create a safety plan to identify additional strategies.

¹³³ Sanderson, *Counseling Survivors of Domestic Abuse*, 121.

Provide for Basic Needs: If the victim does not have the means to support herself and the children, she may need to seek public assistance (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), etc.). Familiarize yourself with the resources available in your community to refer to the proper organizations. The church may also be able to offer financial assistance from its deacon's fund.

Find Employment: For victims who do not work outside the home, assist in finding resources in the community for gaining employment. Potential sources to consider are social media referrals,¹³⁴ job fairs or platforms, staffing or recruitment agencies, searching in industry publications, browsing the internet, and subscribing to job search emails. Neighborhood apps may also list employment opportunities close to home. Church members with businesses may be willing to hire (perhaps even short term) or help network. Assist victims who require further education in finding scholarships and/or resources for returning to school. Connect with members in the congregation for childcare.

Secure Permanent Housing: Shelters and hospitable friends and family are options for the short term. However, if the victim is separated from her husband long term, she will need to find more permanent housing. Church members with real estate credentials and/or deacons may be helpful in securing a suitable location.

*Structured Separation:*¹³⁵ A structured separation is an alternative to divorce for victims of domestic abuse who want to save their marriages. To ensure the victim's safety and wellbeing, she lives apart from her partner for a specific period of time. A document is created that outlines living arrangements, creates boundaries, and lays out a process of change and healing for the couple. It is recommended that the abusive partner demonstrate changed behavior for six to twelve months before cohabitation resumes. It is not wise to create a structured agreement until the victim is safely located away from the abuser.

*Divorce:*¹³⁶ This is the most serious option for securing the victim's safety, but it may be necessary. In most cases of marriage conflict, we define success as the restoration of the marriage. But domestic abuse requires us to redefine what constitutes success. In an abuse case, success is defined as seeing God set the victim free from oppression. This could occur through the restoration of her

¹³⁴ If the victim needs anonymity, help by searching social media for her.

¹³⁵ Branson and Silva, *Violence Among Us*, 79-80.

¹³⁶ See The Seventh Commandment, Section One, p. 985, as well as the Attachment 11: Divorce and Domestic Abuse, p. 1232.

marriage or the ending of her marriage. The form freedom takes will depend on the abuser's repentance, the victim's decisions, and the providence of God.

Many victims who pursue a divorce do not have the financial means to hire an attorney. If this is the case, they can request that an attorney take their case for reduced fee or pro bono. Your community may also have a self-help law center that victims can utilize.

Sometimes attorneys will recommend that the couple pursue a mediation to resolve the divorce, instead of litigation. In mediation, a mediator facilitates the couple coming to a mutually agreed upon settlement regarding the division of assets, child custody, and other issues involved in a divorce. While the victim makes the final decision, mediation is not recommended. The vast majority of mediators are not trained to handle cases of domestic abuse. They do not understand the power imbalance inherent in an abusive marriage and how that power imbalance impacts the mediation process.

Shepherding the Victim Spiritually

Life with an abusive husband is incredibly stressful and confusing. The person a victim loves the most is hurting them, and they don't necessarily have categories for how to think about what's happening, how to respond, how to get help, and/or what the children may need. They juggle these questions, concerns, and emotions all while trying to navigate the moods and behaviors of the abuser. Often, a victim will say they walk on eggshells. Victims live in a state of hyper-vigilance, constantly on high alert. Even if, or when, a victim separates physically from an abuser, they may continue to live under the threat of harm.

Counseling and Support Groups

Practically, pastors help victims process anger, shame, and fear. The victim needs to hear God's Word validate that the abuse committed is heinous sin, and that He grieves with and for them. Pastors and the church family who empathize with victims minister God's comfort (2 Cor. 1:4). As the victim experiences the love of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the Word, they begin to find healing. Throughout this process, trust is built, and care expressed. This provides relational capital and an ability to speak into the difficulty effectively.

The result of abuse, whether it be acute or chronic, is often trauma. Trauma is an event that overwhelms and inspires helplessness and terror.¹³⁷ Most pastors are not equipped to counsel trauma, nor do they have the time. In addition to the trauma of the abusive marriage, the victim needs to explore how past trauma and family of origin feeds into the experience of domestic abuse. Nevertheless, the following are spiritual issues a pastor can help explore.

Shame and Honor:¹³⁸ Virtually all victims of abuse wrestle with shame, which can be defined as a sense of worthlessness and rejection. A more popular term is low self-esteem, but the biblical terminology of shame contains far more depth. Low self-esteem is one-dimensional, whereas the biblical concept of shame has three dimensions:

1. **The Personal Dimension:** An individual has a low view of their own self-worth. This dimension of shame overlaps with the secular concept of low self-esteem.
2. **The Social Dimension:** People in society reject the individual and ascribe them with little worth. The person wrestling with shame often feels like an outcast.
3. **The Spiritual Dimension:** Apart from the work of Christ, we are all contaminated by sin and therefore separated from God, who is perfectly holy and cannot be in the presence of sin.

These three dimensions describe *the victim's experience* of shame and the facets it contains. In addition, we may delineate three *sources* of shame:

1. **The sins we commit:** Our own sin defiles and renders us unholy and unacceptable in God's sight.
2. **Something that happens to us:** The sins that other people commit against us are especially shame inducing. While every human being's shame is caused by sin, victims experience a much higher degree than the average person because of the sins of their abusers. Victims have been told they are worthless through countless words and actions. After years of being criticized, belittled, demeaned, treated like an object—hearing questions about their sanity—victims eventually believe that narrative.

¹³⁷ Judith L. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997), 33-34.

¹³⁸ This entire section is indebted to Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness & Rejection* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012). This book is an excellent resource for pastors and victims.

3. **The people we are associated with:** Like a disease, shame can spread from person to person, especially within a family.

Scripture provides pastors with tremendous resources for ministering to victims by counteracting shame. There are approximately ten times more references to shame than guilt in the Bible.¹³⁹ In Scripture, the opposite of shame is honor. Through His incarnation Jesus entered our fallen world. At His baptism, He identified with sinful humanity in need of cleansing from shame (Luke 3:21–4:13). On the cross, Christ took our shame upon Himself and received the condemnation that we deserve (Heb. 12:2). All of Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to us, and therefore we have a place of honor in God’s kingdom (2 Cor. 5:21). When Jesus returns, the curtain will be pulled back and our true identity will be revealed (Isa. 61).

Victims experience tremendous healing when they encounter the position of honor that God has provided in His kingdom. The following passages of Scripture can be ministered to victims because of the work Christ has done to make them part of His covenant people.

Zephaniah 3:14-20 speaks to all three dimensions of a victim’s shame.

1. **Personal Dimension:** The condemnation that survivors feel will be taken away (v. 15), and their shame will be changed into praise and renown in all the earth. Feelings of worthlessness will be drowned out by the voice of God as He rejoices over them with singing.
2. **Social Dimension:** God promises to gather survivors who feel like outcasts to experience the love and acceptance of His kingdom.
3. **Spiritual Dimension:** Victims learn God has bestowed the greatest honor imaginable: He has made them His children. Because they are sons and daughters of the King, victims have the status of royalty in the kingdom. Their value and dignity flows from their relationship to the King.

Isaiah 62:1-5 speaks to a core component of identity.

In this passage, God communicates identity as determined by what He thinks of His people. By giving victims a new name, He removes their previous identity as “forsaken” and replaces it with “delight.”

¹³⁹ Ibid, 11.

Therefore, the accusations and criticisms that ring in a victim's ears are lies replaced with the truth of what God says. In verses 1-2, God promises to proclaim this identity for all the world to hear. The shame that an abuser communicates will be drowned out by the voice of God. As God's crown and diadem, His people are truly priceless. Like the jewels on the crown of a king, we are a visible sign of God's glory. In many ways, Christ's treatment of victims is the exact opposite of what they have experienced. They will receive honor instead of shame, and praise instead of criticism. Whereas earthly husbands reject them, Jesus rejoices over them.

Mark 5:24-34 brings victims riddled with shame face to face with their beloved Redeemer.

The woman Mark describes here was unclean. She had suffered from a discharge of blood for over twelve years. Anyone who touched her, or even touched something she had come in contact with, would have been unclean. As a result, people avoided her. When they saw her walking toward them, they fled. Like shame, uncleanness spreads from person to person. Uncleanness significantly impacted her worship as well because she was unable to go to the temple to have her sins atoned. She was effectively separated from people and from God (Lev. 15:25-31).

When this woman encountered Jesus, all the shame she knew was reversed. Instead of her making Jesus unclean, He cleansed her. He removed her social shame and restored her to the Jewish community. Even more importantly, His cleansing reunited her with God. As in the language of Zephaniah 3, Jesus addressed her as "daughter." God incarnate accepted her unconditionally as a father accepts his child. His acceptance transformed her from an outcast into royalty. Victims of abuse will immediately resonate with these truths. They, too, experience shame caused by something that has happened outside their control.

On the cross, Jesus entered into suffering and shame; therefore, He is intimately aware of the human experience. Jesus, likewise, encountered oppression, abuse, and rejection. He was falsely accused, betrayed by companions, mocked, rejected, humiliated, spit on, beaten, and crucified. His perfect righteousness is imputed to us, which means all victims share in His

honor now and throughout eternity. There is incredible healing for victims as they meditate on the reality of this gospel truth.

Fear and Love: In domestic abuse, relationships are governed by the fear of man.¹⁴⁰ Natural fear is an appropriate response to the dynamics of an abusive marriage.¹⁴¹ The abuser uses intimidation and creates a fearful environment to dominate and control. For protection, the victim must pour all her energy into preventing abusive outbursts. Her attention is entirely focused on reading emotions, navigating anger, and giving in to an abuser’s desires. In the context of an abusive relationship, self-protection is a must. As human beings made in the image of God, victims have value and dignity. Victims are worthy of protection.

For the victim, fear of man is not confined to marriage. The abusive relationship becomes the lens through which they see all other relationships. Fear of man becomes the dominant mode of relating to others. Victims tend to avoid tension in relationships by deferring to other people’s desires. They avoid conflict at all costs, appear to be “people pleasers,” and have difficulty saying “no.” This was not God’s good design for relationships. When victims relate to non-abusive people out of fear, they are robbing themselves and others of the blessings that come from relationships of love, trust, and mutuality.

To heal from the relational damage caused by domestic abuse, victims need a paradigm shift. The victim’s relationship with God must become the new lens through which they see other relationships. Foundational for this paradigm shift is 1 John 4:18: *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.*

Our relationship with God is governed by love. In love, God became a man and sacrificed Himself on the cross for our sins. The Redeemer loves us and casts out fear by taking our punishment on Himself. He took away our greatest fear, eternal punishment. The contrast between the victim’s abuser and the

¹⁴⁰ Allender, *The Wounded Heart*, 157; Langberg, *On the Threshold of Hope*, 171.

¹⁴¹ John Flavel, in *Triumphing Over Sinful Fear*, articulates “Natural fear” as “the agitation of mind that arises when we perceive approaching evil or impeding danger” (8). “Sinful fear” arises from unbelief (a distrust of God), fearing disproportionately or excessively, fear that causes us to be unfit for duty, and/or fear that inclines escape or brings a snare. John Flavel, *Triumphing Over Sinful Fear*, Ed. J. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Books, 2011), 8-20.

Redeemer could not be greater. Abusers control through the fear of punishment.

A new paradigm frees us to relate to others out of God's love. Interactions with others can be based on what is best for those involved, rather than seeking to avoid conflict or people please. The person driven by love will be willing to risk tension in the relationship or do something the other person finds unpleasant (such as giving a rebuke), if that is what is best for them. A loving person is willing to say no. Being loving is not simply to give people what they want. People can want wrong things. People may want what is beyond another's capacity to give. Rather than being ruled by the desires of others, victims shift the paradigm as they align with God's desires.

Additionally, 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

Abusers dominate and take away personal power. In contrast, . . .

- **God gives power.** In the context of 2 Timothy, this means that He gives boldness to do His will in difficult situations. When seen through the lens of relationships, such boldness is the antithesis of fear of man.
- **God gives love.** His sacrificial love liberates us from the fear of punishment. This frees us to love Him and love others.
- **God gives a spirit of self-control.** Some survivors attempt to stop relating to others out of fear which results in anger and ungodliness. But God empowers us to control our behavior and obey Him in how we relate to others, even if emotions tempt them to do otherwise.

Romans 8:15-16: "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

Rebellion against God leads to fear of condemnation and wrath. But the Father removed this fear through the sacrifice of His Son. He adopted us as His children. A relationship with an abusive spouse is a stark contrast to this relationship with the Father. Abusers intentionally instill fear in their victims to control them. On the cross

God removed all reason to fear. Because of His work, we relate to Him as His children and call Him “Abba,” a term of great tenderness and intimacy. Our relationship with God is the paradigm for all other relationships, characterized by freedom rather than slavery. By ordering their world under this paradigm, victims have the freedom to say no, to make their own decisions, and the freedom to be fully human.

Forgiveness: [See also Attachment 9: Forgiveness] Scripture commands loving and forgiving enemies as God in Christ forgave us (Luke 6:27-28; Col. 3:13). Forgiveness is defined as a decision to release someone from suffering punishment or penalty for sin (Matt. 6:12; 18:21-35).¹⁴² Forgiveness is incredibly difficult for those who have been oppressed and traumatized by the person who was supposed to care, love, and protect. Forgiveness is both an event and a process.¹⁴³ In devastating circumstances, this will likely take much time, consistent reminders, and patience with the process (1 Thess. 5:14, “Be patient with them all”). The timing of forgiveness will vary from person to person. A wise pastor will recognize this difficulty and gently guide a victim beyond the damage done.

When forgiveness occurs, the abuser is released from suffering punishment for sin. However, there is a distinction between punishment and consequences. Punishment seeks to make the offender pay and even suffer for their actions. Consequence is the result of the offender’s actions, but it is not motivated by a desire to punish. For example, a lender may forgive a person’s debt, but wisdom dictates that he never lends to that person again. Similarly, a victim may genuinely forgive an abusive spouse, but that same wisdom may dictate particular consequences. This may include, but not be limited to the following,

- **A Loss of Trust:** Domestic abuse is an act of betrayal. A spouse who has broken the marriage covenant by an abuse of power, degradation of another image-bearer, and repeated questioning regarding their reality, loses trust. Lack of trust is not unforgiveness. Forgiveness is a gift; trust earned is a long and difficult process of rebuilding.
- **Legal Consequences:** Physical abuse is a crime. Any legal consequences the abuser experiences are a result of their actions.

¹⁴² Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 207.

¹⁴³ Tim Lane, “Pursuing and Granting Forgiveness,” *CCEF The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, Spring 2005.

Personal forgiveness does not include sheltering a criminal from the consequences of crimes committed. The experience of these consequences may even help lead to repentance.

- **Separation:** A victim may need to separate from the abuser to ensure safety and the safety of any children. Although it is counterintuitive, separation can be a useful tool for restoring an abusive marriage. It keeps the victim safe while giving the abuser an opportunity to receive help, demonstrate changed behavior, and rebuild trust.
- **Divorce:** Divorce and forgiveness may seem mutually exclusive, but they are not. Despite genuine forgiveness, it may not be safe for the victim or their children to remain with the abuser.
- **Restricted Time with Children:** Due to the atmosphere of an oppressive home, it will often be healthier for the children to spend less time with their abusive parent. Abusers will also use a separation and/or divorce as an opportunity to interrogate the children about the other parent. Often they will work toward encouraging the children to take sides. Restricted time lessens the children's exposure to this type of behavior.

Shepherding the Abuser

God designed the spiritual leadership of husbands to reflect the image of Christ. Therefore, Jesus's use of power should be the model husbands follow in their marriages. Jesus could have used His influence and status as God's Son to do whatever He wanted. But He did not. He laid aside His position and privilege, humbling Himself by becoming man, submitting to the Father's will and dying on the cross. He used His power to bless His people.

When thinking of the characteristics of a godly husband, who by virtue of his position has relational power in the home, Jesus is the model to be emulated. In those chosen of God, holy and beloved, natural tendencies must be put off diligently as part of the old nature, and a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love must be cultivated. The word of Christ must dwell richly within. A husband is to love his wife and not be harsh and resentful towards her. He needs to learn to use his power sacrificially, like Jesus did, on behalf of his wife (and family) and not diminish and control her. It will take quite some time for these new patterns of behavior to develop, and it will take the prayerful, encouraging support of other godly men to walk the journey with him.

The discussion below addresses how to approach many of the problems Sessions encounter when shepherding abusers. The assumption at this point of the process is that the victim is safe from harm. The following are intended to be thorough, but not exhaustive. All situations are unique and may require more specific solutions.

*Godly or Worldly Repentance:*¹⁴⁴ Primary to effective shepherding care of an abuser is to recognize the difficulty. Unfortunately, recidivism in cases of domestic abuse is very high. The type of change which often occurs is simply that the abuser modifies his tactics. Instead of using more overt types of abuse (physical abuse), he employs those tactics which are more difficult to observe (verbal or emotional abuse). A strong emotional outburst of sorrow and regret in the pastor's office does not always result in change in the home. Domestic Abuse is a particularly heinous besetting sin (*WCF* 150).¹⁴⁵ Shepherding care may be a long and slow journey of resistance without substantial change. Pray for these men on a regular and consistent basis. [See also Attachment 10: Repentance]

Church Discipline: Church discipline is meant to be restorative, reconciling the sinner to his heavenly Father. The process involved will help to hold the abuser accountable to the Session. Sessions should be trained in understanding patterns of abuse to navigate the inevitable, "he said, she said." When there are discrepancies between the accounts, look for the patterns. As a physician investigates the correct symptoms for achieving a diagnosis, Sessions must probe beyond what is said. Diagnosis is observable via patterns of behaviors. Years of abusive behavior severely impacts a victim's ability to effectively communicate. Abusers do not experience this disadvantage and may seem far

¹⁴⁴ See Attachment 10: Repentance for a discussion of godly and worldly repentance.

¹⁴⁵ *The Westminster Larger Catechism* lists four. Included here are the companion behaviors endemic in domestic abuse *italicized* (1) the persons offending; *a husband commanded to love his wife* (Eph. 5:28) (2) the parties offended; *the wife of his youth who he has covenanted to love, cherish, and protect* (Gen. 2:22-24) (3) the nature and quality of the offense; *deliberate and intentional negative behaviors with the goal to harm whether or not he succeeds* (1 Sam. 19:9-10) and (4) the circumstances of time and place; *the home, the place where all—men, women, and children—are to be nurtured, loved, and protected* (Jer. 29:7).

more believable and articulate. Additionally, experts recognize that deception is extremely hard to detect.¹⁴⁶

Female Advocacy: Sitting with a Session and speaking of abuse is a frightening and intimidating experience. The acts committed against victims are shameful and private. For women, revealing these acts to male pastors or elders, no matter how kind they are, is still a difficult and often traumatic event. Sessions might consider reducing the number of people present in a meeting. It would be beneficial to have female advocates as part of this process.

Community Resources: Research local community groups trained in working with perpetrators of domestic abuse. Secular organizations may use the Duluth Model, Emerge, or similar training. Many court-mandated programs, referred to as Batterer Intervention Programs (BIPs), follow these models. Most states require convicted offenders of partner abuse to attend a BIP course. These secular models may be helpful; however, they will be deficient in their biblical anthropology and their model for how people change. Churches can augment these classes with their own counseling oversight of the abuser. Group classes are typically more helpful than individual meetings. Other men in the group can help point out patterns as well as challenge beliefs and behaviors for one another.

**Christian Resources:* There are several Christian resources available. Chris Moles (chrismoles.org) offers an online class for abusive men (Men of Peace) along with other resources for domestic abuse prevention and intervention. Refuge Ministries, established by a PCA church, (refugeministries.com), offers material and some support group locations. “Turning Point” is their men’s program. Called to Peace (calledtopeace.org) provides a compassionate, comprehensive, and Christ-centered response to those impacted by domestic abuse. Their men’s intervention group is “g5.” Help[H]er is a nonprofit founded by a PCA member that offers training and resources for structuring a women-to-women in crisis advocacy ministry in the local church (helpherresources.com). An advocate can listen to a victim’s story, accompany her to associated ecclesiastical proceedings, meet, and pray with her.

***[Editor’s Note:** These resources were current at the time of publication.]

¹⁴⁶ See Gladwell’s extensive treatment of the research done by Psychologist Tim Levine in “Default to Truth,” Malcolm Gladwell, *Talking to Strangers* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2019), 57.

Involve the Victim: It is important to get feedback from the victim while shepherding the abuser. Overstating improvements while minimizing poor gains is common for an abuser. The victim can help inform the Session of persistent behaviors in the home and help direct counsel toward unrepentant and/or unchanged abusive patterns. Our proclivity to prefer good news necessitates consistent communication with the victim to monitor real change.

Separation: Often, the abuser must be separated from the family. He will need encouragement and accountability during this time. He must also recognize his need for help as he will not fully understand his own heart. He will want the process to go much faster. Enlist the care of the deacons for practical needs.

Minister to the Congregation: An abuser may be well-respected and have many good relationships with other members in the church. The accusations against him may be very confusing to these people. It is hard to fathom that a man who may also be a golfing or fishing buddy could be abusive in the home. We want to think well of one another. Be prepared to neutralize an abuser's PR campaign to undermine the church's process. Include any of these relationships when possible by enlisting their help to walk alongside the abuser for his encouragement and benefit.

*DARVO*¹⁴⁷: As an abuser begins to understand “the what” and “the why” of his abuse, it is very common for him to use this information against his spouse. Many victims are accused of abuse by their abusers. Abusers can take the phrases and concepts they learn and turn them onto the victim. Educate church leaders regarding the difference between patterns of abuse, or the inconsistent characteristics of a victim who is responding to the weighty injustices of abuse.

Question Very Specifically: Abusers minimize behaviors. Victims also minimize their abuser's behaviors. Follow up on responses to questions and ask for more detail. Become skilled in asking multiple questions from many angles to comprehend a fuller picture. An abuser may tell you that he got “a little angry” but not that he choked the victim until she passed out. The victim may also say “he got a little angry.” Good questions will help the victim provide a more accurate picture of what is happening in the home. Ask questions like, “Describe what happened when he got angry” rather than simple yes or no questions. It is unsafe for the victim's abuser to be present when asking these questions. It is also recommended to have a female advocate present.

¹⁴⁷ “Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender.”

Boundaries: Strictly adhere to any boundaries you set, including meeting times. Abusers push boundaries (just as they do when coercively controlling in the home) and they always have a good reason for why. “I’m so sorry I ran late, traffic was heavy.” “I know you said I wasn’t to text her, but her aunt really needed to contact her.” This is a continuation of the power play used by an abuser to gain a perceived loss of their control. Control is the issue in the relationship. Control will be the issue in shepherding as well. Limit when he can call those who are helping him. The shepherding team and Session are not at his disposal.

Put On (Duties): Create an action list for the abuser to complete in coordination with the victim. Deeds are far more important than words when shepherding an abuser. Actions might include . . .

- put off all abusive behaviors,
- attend a BIP,
- meet weekly with an elder for accountability,
- continue financial support of his family,
- adhere to communication restrictions.

Spiritual Abuse: Recognize that abusers will use Scripture as a means for justifying their abuse. Teach a biblical view of marriage and family. Help the abuser see how his sin has affected others. Encourage “particular” repentance for “particular” sins (*WCF XV. 5*) and for sinful thinking he has chosen to believe.

Genuine Forgiveness: Abusers may use their apology to block further conversation. “I said I was sorry. You have to forgive me and not bring it up again.” True repentance is seen in a willingness to accept the consequences and to change actions.

Beyond the Basics

- Encourage effort; however, abusers will want to be rewarded for good behavior. Remind them we do not deserve special privileges for simply doing the right thing (Luke 17:10).
- Clearly point out when the abuser has minimized, denied, or justified his actions.
- Clearly point out when the abuser shifts blame for his actions to the victim or others.

APPENDIX V

- Discourage self-pity. He may feel like the victim, especially if his feelings are hurt as a consequence of what he has done.
- Encourage the abuser to cease his sinful actions immediately and repent.
- Hold the abuser responsible. People choose to abuse; they are not compelled.
- Encourage the abuser to take responsibility for his sinful actions.

What Not To Do

- A classic mistake in shepherding of any kind is to focus on behavior alone, which only addresses the surface of the problem. To address the problem at its root, focus on the heart. This is no less true for abusers than for any other human being.
- Anger management courses are not very effective for domestic abuse. Anger is a tool the abuser uses, not an underlying cause. Anger is a means to get what he wants.
- Treating abuse as a marriage problem falsely assumes that one of the reasons he is abusive is because of her behavior.
- Marriage counseling is dangerous for the victim. The pastor or counselor does not know what happens once the couple leaves the office. The victim will be afraid to disclose what is happening behind closed doors in the home for fear of further abuse.
- Be very cautious in choosing to support the abuser in court.

Prevention and Deterrence

The most effective way to prevent and deter domestic abuse is to create a church culture that names the abuse from the Scriptures and condemns it as evil. Addressing the topic of domestic violence and oppression openly normalizes the discussion and abnormalizes the behavior.

The following are meant to be thorough, however, are not exhaustive.

Preach from the pulpit about domestic abuse and oppression.

- Galatians 5:20 – “outbursts of anger” in the marriage relationship
- Ephesians 4:29 – on verbal and emotional abuse
- The “one another” and “each other” passages (Acts 1:14; 2:44)
- The heart of abuse (Matt. 12:34-36; Luke 6:43-46)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The passages that articulate a culture of grace in relationships (Phil. 2:4-5; Eph. 4:1-16)
- A biblical perspective of power, sacrifice, and servant leadership (Matt. 26:53-54; Prov. 18:12; Eph. 4:1-3)

Periodically study the topic of domestic abuse in small groups:

- Descriptions of what it looks, sounds, and feels like;
- The emotional, physical, and spiritual impact on the spouse, children, and the abuse;
- Study books on marriage and on domestic abuse.

Other Ideas:

- Provide opportunities to hear the testimonies of men and women who have been involved in domestic abuse situations.
- Offer instruction on how to handle conflict and build relationship skills.
- Connect deacons and/or specific small groups with domestic violence organizations in the community for training and for resources for victims and their children.
- Beginning in middle school, teach respectful ways to treat others in relationship from a biblical framework.
- Train youth leaders to recognize red flags in high school dating relationships. Teach the youth biblical principles for marriage.
- Teach men and women in small groups, men's and women's ministries, and/or discipleship relationships biblical principles for parenting sons and daughters with the goal of respecting how God created them as individual image-bearers.
- Develop a diverse multi-voice church position paper on domestic abuse and oppression supported by the elders and distributed to the congregation, every successive membership class, and staff hires. Clearly state the definitions of the tactics of abuse, the dynamic of such abuse (power and control), and the steps the Session will take in the event of an occurrence of domestic abuse, no matter who the abuser is.

- Develop companion position papers on topics such as separation and divorce and the sanctity¹⁴⁸ of human life.

7. Case Study

Liz

Liz heard an alarm clock going off somewhere, “WA, WA, WA,” why didn’t anyone else hear it? The bride at the front of the church (her daughter) must not have heard it because she didn’t skip a beat in repeating her vows or exclaiming, “I do!” Her daughter’s obvious enthusiasm created a murmur of laughter throughout the sanctuary. The couple at the altar were obviously in love and in a hurry to be married. Every person in the church sensed their excitement. No one in the church heard the alarm.

Liz was so distracted. She felt her heart race, and her palms were wet. For the life of her she couldn’t figure out why no one else was bothered by the sound of the annoying alarm clock, “WA, WA, WA.” She strained her neck forward in order to hear where the sound was coming from. Suddenly, Liz found it difficult to swallow. She heard the pastor read, “Love is patient, love is kind . . .”

The last thing she remembers was the look on her daughter’s face as Liz bolted toward the nearest exit, crying hysterically.

The church Liz attends is a small PCA congregation in the southernmost tip of the Bible belt. She’s been there for over five years and is a member in good standing. Liz obviously struggles with depression; her physician also diagnosed PTSD. Liz flinches any time a man raises his voice or appears agitated. Her pastor, a compassionate man with a shepherd’s heart, tries to help, but he doesn’t know how. Liz’s “issues” are well-known by fellow church members. No one really knows how to help.

What the little body of believers doesn’t know is that one morning ten years ago, Liz’s husband threatened to kill her while yelling “GET OUT of *my* house before I hurt you!” He had shoved her out the front door into the cold in her nightgown and told her he was going to kill the pets. The congregation has no

¹⁴⁸ Consistency is needed in the church culture between defending the unborn against the hand of the abortionist and women and children against the hand of an abuser in the home.

clue it was the last day Liz endured her husband's assaults; they don't know she got a restraining order. They didn't know he moved his mistress into the house after kicking Liz to the curb. They didn't know Liz is actually who paid for the house.

Liz's brothers and sisters in Christ don't know that years of verbal, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse continue to flood her memories, or that she finds it difficult to forget her husband's accusation on their wedding night that she wasn't a virgin (she was). They don't know about the day he got in her face and bellowed allegations that she refused his sexual advances because she didn't want more children (she did), and then he "took what he wanted" anyway. They didn't hear the cruel words he said after they had sex.

They didn't know how frequently her husband lied about where he was or what he was doing. No one could have comprehended how Liz endured his tickling her mercilessly even when she begged him to stop, or that he regularly threatened suicide.

Her friends didn't know that, for years, Liz questioned reality. Her constant battle was to discern if she really was mistaken like her husband often told her. They didn't realize he called her "a witch, a [x]itch, and a harlot," and told her she was stubborn, rebellious, and disobedient. No one knew her husband engrained in Liz's mind that, "Marriage and slavery are analogous." Her friends didn't realize the translation of that statement meant that—no matter how her husband treated her or her body—her very life was in his hands. The proof was when he shoved her into the wall before she left for work one morning.

What no one would have been able to grasp is that Liz was willing to bear it all for the sake of the vow she made before God, and the idea she might one day save her husband. They couldn't have comprehended that, with that kind of marriage, Liz never wanted a divorce. They may have even asked why she didn't leave.

Brainstorming questions for help developing best practices:

1. How many of the marriages in your church may be struggling due to abuse rather than normal marital conflict?
2. How will you discern the difference?
3. What are you doing to proactively find women like Liz in your church?

4. What structures and/or procedures should your church or ministry already have in place for domestic abuse?
5. Do members know how to report abuse at your church and to whom?
6. Do victims feel like your church is a safe place to report what's happening privately in their home?
7. How can you help victims of abuse or trauma?
8. Who in your church is versed in abuse and trauma and compassionate to care for the victim and/or her family?

SECTION THREE: WOMEN WHO ABUSE

1. Introduction

A dominant person exerts power over those who are vulnerable to their care. Anyone can abuse power and control by subjecting those at risk to threatening circumstances. Both men and women may employ tactics for achieving this goal of personal gain; however, studies confirm that women are disproportionately affected.¹⁴⁹ One in three women either have been in, or are currently in, an abusive relationship.

The goal of the abuser is to use persons as objects for self-indulgence and/or personal gain. Both women and men who abuse share multiple common characteristics. Abusers, male and female, cross the line (self-centered sin to self-worship/me over you¹⁵⁰ sin), when they make another person pay for their entitlements. And while both men and women are victims of abuse—emotional and physical—and both men and women are perpetrators of abuse, it is rare to openly discuss women who abuse.¹⁵¹ Statistics concerning women

¹⁴⁹ National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, *National Data on Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Violence, and Stalking*, (Accessed November 2019),

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs-fact-sheet-2014.pdf>.

¹⁵⁰ Jeremy Pierre, Greg Wilson. *When Home Hurts, A Guide for Responding Wisely to Domestic Abuse in Your Church* (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2021), 70.

¹⁵¹ Kimberly C. Taylor, *Exposing the Abusive Female*. Kindle Edition, (Self-Published, 2014), 17.

who abuse are more likely related to the parent/child relationship rather than abuse between partners.¹⁵²

The difference between male and female domination includes a heightened demonstration of physical/verbal/emotional abuse leading to greater fear. As “complementarians” we acknowledge power differentiation between men and women.¹⁵³ We therefore must (simultaneously) acknowledge women are at a higher risk of harm than men. “Women can be abusive and violent to their male partners, but this is estimated to happen in less than five percent of cases of domestic abuse.”¹⁵⁴ One difficulty in identifying accurate statistics of women who abuse is that male victims tend to have more shame and do not come forward.

Regardless of gender, abuse is a human issue, but more importantly abuse is a spiritual issue. At the core of abuse is the fact that the abuser has lost sight of their love and faithfulness to God. It is from within this void that evil actions find life. In Hosea 7:6 we read, “For with hearts like an oven they approach their intrigue; all night their anger smolders; in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire.” This is “an image of the heat of anger which burns in their hearts, which, being craftily concealed, does not at first make itself manifest, but which grows only the more surely, and at last breaks out in deeds of violence.”¹⁵⁵ The heart of the problem is the heart disposition. It is a heart shaped by evil.

Brad Hambrick, in his book *The Self-Centered Spouse*,¹⁵⁶ writes there are two kinds of abusers: passive and/or aggressive. He gets this idea from Matthew 7:6, “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.” Hambrick writes,

¹⁵² Child Maltreatment, *Facts at a Glance*, (Accessed March 2022), <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/childmaltreatment-facts-at-a-glance.pdf>.

¹⁵³ See also page 959 in the discussion of *WLC 151 on Aggravations That Make Sins More Heinous*.

¹⁵⁴ Joanne Belknap and Heather Melton, *Are Heterosexual Men Also Victims of Intimate Partner Violence?* (Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2005), <https://vawnet.org/material/are-heterosexual-men-also-victims-intimate-partner-abuse>, as quoted in Darby Strickland, *Is it Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 17.

¹⁵⁵ J. P. Lange, P. Schaff, O. Schmoller & J. F. McCurdy, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Hosea* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 68.

¹⁵⁶ Brad Hambrick, *The Self-Centered Spouse, Help for Chronically Broken Marriages* (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 2014), 10.

The distinction between levels of aggression can be seen in the animals chosen—wild dogs are aggressive animals and pigs are almost universally viewed as passive and lazy. Using the verb *trample* for pigs might not seem to have a connotation of passivity until one considers how trampling would be involved in the normal activity of pigs. Pigs trample many things, but not in the wild stampede of a heard of buffalo; rather, they do so by walking over things as part of their daily routine.¹⁵⁷

Aggression isn't the only type of abuse. In order to have a category for female abusers, it must be recognized and acknowledged that passive abuse is abusive. "One reason among many for the absence of consensus on the relative use of violence by men versus women is that measurement of violent acts alone does not adequately characterize violence in intimate partner relationships"¹⁵⁸ (emphasis provided).

Passive abuse as articulated by Hambrick includes but is not limited to . . .

- Avoids interaction until backed into a corner,
- Idiosyncratic (peculiar) interpretations of actions, emotions, or conflict,
- Complains that too much is asked of them,
- Labels spouse as too demanding,
- Makes every request a big deal,
- Sees their own area of neglect as normal,
- Enjoys being cared for,
- Resents feeling parented,
- Immature,
- Apathetic,
- Sense of entitlement,
- "I'm sorry I can't be who you want me to be,"
- Answers questions with questions (providing hope the target might be heard,)
- Returns questions, changes the subject, condemns, blame shifts ("but what about when you . . .?"),

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Mary Ann Dutton and Lisa A. Goodman, "Coercion in Intimate Partner Violence: Toward a New Conceptualization, Sex Roles," *ResearchGate*, Vol. 52, Nos. 11/12, June 2005, 744.

- **Condescension (arrogance)** toward those with whom the abuser disagrees.

Both male and female abusers coercively control their targets by linking a demand (spoken and/or unspoken, a.k.a., “the look”) with a credible threat of negative consequences for non-compliance.¹⁵⁹

Women and men may differ in their ability to convey a credible threat, but they may differ less in their use of verbal insults or statements of humiliation.¹⁶⁰ This is important because, while women may not use physical tactics, they can easily employ power tactics of coercive control.

Abuse of power involves . . .

- **Coercive power** involves the abuser’s ability to impose on the abused things the abused does not desire or to remove or decrease desired things.
- **Reward power** involves the abuser’s ability to give to the abused things the abused desires or take away or decrease things.
 - EX: Give “permission” (to see friends, family members) or spend money.
 - EX: Take away freedom (isolate), or conversation (using silent treatment).
 - EX: Sex
- **Legitimate power** involves the abuser’s ability to impose on the abused feelings of obligation or responsibility.
 - EX: “You don’t love me if . . .” or “If you loved me, you would . . .”
- **Referent power** involves the abuser’s ability to provide feelings of personal acceptance or approval based on the victim’s identification with the agent/ability to influence because of the respect, admiration, and personal identification with the abuser.
 - EX: Wearing hair a certain way, dressing a certain way, socializing, spending free time (all in a way that is desirable to the abuser but not so much to the abused).
- **Expert power** involves the abuser’s ability to provide skill or expertise and arises from the victim’s belief that they have no such expertise.
 - EX: Financial prowess.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 747.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 746.

- **Informational power** involves the abuser’s ability to provide knowledge or information necessary for the victim’s well-being.
 - EX: Physical/illness/taking (the right) pills on time.¹⁶¹

The victim’s response to coercion does involve choice although not *free* choice. The abused has two basic choices:

1. Compliance – the abused can choose to comply and hope to avoid threatened negative consequences. For instance, coercive power is based on the victim’s belief that the victim can and will experience negative consequences for noncompliance.

or

2. Resistance – risk punishment.

Another power tactic is called “setting the stage.”¹⁶² It is a type of coercion that softens the abused by setting a stage where the abuser demonstrates to the abused that he or she has the means to exert coercion and is ready and willing to pay any associated costs.

Setting the stage is meant to . . .

- Create the expectancy of negative consequences,
- Create or exploit the partner’s vulnerabilities,
- Wear down the partner’s resistance, and/or
- Facilitate attachment.

Setting the stage creates the expectancy of negative consequences. It communicates the ability, willingness, and readiness to control one’s partner by punishing and withholding. This can be done by way of explicit statements like, “If you don’t, I will make sure . . .” or it can be done with implicit statements, as in “the look.” These tactics might be utilized in an instant or cumulatively over the course of the relationship. The impact is such, however, that one instance is enough to set the stage and control all future instances.

Creating vulnerability is very important especially for female-on-male abuse. It may include (but not be limited to) . . .

- The economic:
 - The woman makes more money and feels entitled to control the finances.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 745.

¹⁶² Ibid., 745.

- The physical:
 - Controlling the spouse who has an illness
 - If the male spouse is unable to work
 - With an elderly spouse, the abuser withholds meds or neglects physical needs.
 - Wear down the partner's resistance
 - Deplete resources (economic or emotional support)
 - The most effective physical exploitation is sleep deprivation.¹⁶³
- Exploitation of mental health problems:
 - Same type of exploitation as physical illness
 - The victim may have existing vulnerabilities, such as a history of childhood abuse.

2. Biblical Examples

Delilah – Judges 16:5-22

“And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, ‘Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver’” (v. 5). In this story, the greed that benefits self (self-worship) is a characteristic of those who abuse. Scripture itself shows us the type of abuse Delilah employed:

- “Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber. And she said to him, ‘**The Philistines are upon you, Samson!**’” (v. 9).
- “So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, ‘**The Philistines are upon you, Samson!**’” (v. 12).
- “Then Delilah said to Samson, ‘Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me how you might be bound.’” . . . “**The Philistines are upon you, Samson!**” (v. 14).
- “And she said to him, ‘How can you say, “I love you,” when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies.’ And when **she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.** And he told her all his heart” (vv. 15-17).

¹⁶³ Malcolm Gladwell, *Talking with Strangers* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2019), 259.

- “When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, ‘Come up again, for he has told me all his heart.’ Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands. She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. And she said, ‘**The Philistines are upon you, Samson!**’” (vv. 18-20).
- “She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to *torment* him, and his strength left him” (v. 19).

Scripture identifies Delilah abused Samson in verse 19: “torment.”

Michal – 1 Samuel 18:17-26; 25:44; 2 Samuel 3:12-16; 6:16-23

- “It pleased Saul to give David his daughter” (1 Sam. 18:17-26).
- Michal then given by Saul to Paltiel (1 Sam. 25:44).
- David sent for Michal, and Paltiel followed weeping after her (2 Sam. 3:12-16).
- Ark comes back to the city of David (2 Sam. 6:16-23).
 - Michal sees David leaping and dancing before the Lord and she despised him in her heart (v. 18).
 - And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, “How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants’ female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!” (v. 20).

Michal showed disgust, was mocking and belittling. Michal was a hurt woman (though, not an excuse). We can see in this story an example of hurting people hurt people. Often, both abusers and their victims are suffering from traumatic events. Yet, while Michal used abusive words and actions to taunt her husband, David’s power differential ultimately dictated Michal’s demise: “And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death” (2 Sam. 6:23).

Herodias – Matthew 14:1-12

“For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her” (vv. 3-4).

This tells us something about characteristics of an abusive wife.

- Herodias had something she wanted (the king, royal life, all the perks).
- She wasn't willing to give up those things.
- She wasn't going to let anyone tell her what to do (i.e., John the Baptist).
- She diminished John as a person. She was the queen. What did she care about a man in the wilderness who "wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey" (Matt. 3:4)?
- This shows how abusers have no categories for disagreement.

This story tells us something about a husband as well (albeit not justification for abuse).

- For the sake of Herodias (v. 3)
 - Vulnerability—he would do anything for the sake of his wife.
- And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet (v. 5).
 - Vulnerability—the king feared "man."
- But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask (vv. 6-7).
 - Vulnerability—the king had a weakness for women.
- And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given (v. 9).
 - Vulnerability—the king's fear of man.

Modern Examples/Characteristics

The following represent potential exacting behaviors that women may use to abuse. This is not an all-inclusive, comprehensive list, nor are all of the characteristics always indicative of abuse. In detecting whether or not the relationship is abusive, we look for patterns.

- Blame shifting
 - "But don't you see how your actions made me do this?"
 - "As a Christian, I would think that you would assume the best of me."

- “If you would just man up, I wouldn’t have to tell you what to do!”
- Self-pity
 - “I’m just so misunderstood.”
 - “You’re so mean for making me feel bad about myself.”
 - “You have it easy; you have no right to ask that of me.”
 - “Can’t you appreciate me?”
- Allows for no questioning; cries “abuse” when confronted with a question.
- Has double standards:
 - One standard for herself.
 - EX: Does not need to stay on a budget or keep clothes tidy
 - EX: Explodes when his laundry is not put away or he spends money on himself
 - One standard for everybody else
- Views any suggestion that maybe she is in the wrong as an attack on her person.
 - “You have some nerve telling me how to parent. All you ever do is indulge the kids!”
- Has punishing behaviors
 - Silent treatment prolonged
 - Withholding sex
 - Purposely embarrasses
 - Breaks his things
- Re-writes the narrative so that it features her as the victim, no matter what her actions actually were in the scenario
- Is fond of saying, “We’re ALL sinners” —but not in a sense of sorrow or humility, but more of, “Don’t you dare judge me.”
- Only assigns herself the very best motives, no matter the evidence to the contrary.
- Is truly shocked that others don’t also assign the very best motives to her actions.
- Apologizes in a way that actually finds fault with the other person;
 - “I’m sorry if you thought I was doing that; I wasn’t doing that, I was trying to do something nice for you because you are hard to please and I get anxious,”—however, not much evidence of real anxiety on her part.
- Very concerned about how people view her, less concerned about actual consequences of her actions

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Inability to let go of things in the past for which she supposedly already granted forgiveness
- Brings up past sins committed against her, including those for which she offered forgiveness
- Uses past failures against him
- Shames him for his past
- Holds unforgiveness over someone's head and uses it as a bargaining chip for getting what she wants
- Very manipulative—tries to “sell” you on something she wants by attempting to convince you that it is what YOU want, and she's just doing it for you
- Gets angry or sullen when there is pushback
- Does kind things for others but gets very upset when similar things are not done in return
- Often communicates her lifelong disappointment that he isn't in the career she wants him to be in, with the level of financial security she wants
- Very unsupportive of his decisions
- A very discontented person in general
- Tendency toward jealousy
- Very controlling
- Micromanages the details of her children's and husband's plans
- Speaks to the husband in a condescending way as if he is a child
- Truly believes that she is being gracious toward her husband
- Says she wants her husband to lead in the home, but when he tries, unless it is to her specifications, she communicates her deep disappointment in his attempts through body language, indirect comments, etc.
- She places a burden of “make me happy or else” on her husband
- There is a strong undercurrent of unease in their home, centered around her

Many abusive men can make false claims that their wife is the abuser. One helpful way to discern victims from someone simply claiming they are is to consider the effect of their actions. True male victims present in the same way female victims do. They are afraid and feel the weight of wrongly placed guilt; they under-report, and they appear confused and/or uncertain. Abuse is as confusing for men as it is for women.

A second way to interact with claims of abuse is to seek out details of the relationship. This will help determine if this was a global accusation (but the details don't rise to the level of abuse), an incident of resistance (wife protecting herself from abuse), or part of a long-standing pattern of coercive control.

3. Abuse? Or a Response to Abuse?

Women who abuse may, like men, use aggression and or violence as a tactic to abuse. But often female victims use violence to get the abuse to stop. A woman's use of violence largely involves self-defense or fighting back.¹⁶⁴ Often, these women will use weapons in order to overcome the power differential. It is very difficult to discern between a woman who abuses and a woman responding to abuse. It is not uncommon for a male abuser to claim he is the victim in these situations. Enlisting help from those who have spent considerable time working with abuse victims and survivors—victim advocates and/or third party, trained investigators—will help rule out false reports.

Fighting back is a natural response to injustice. Spurgeon writes,

We do well when we are angry with sin, because of the wrong which it commits against our good and gracious God; or with ourselves because we remain so foolish after so much divine instruction; or with others when the sole cause of anger is the evil which they do. He who is not angry at transgression becomes a partaker in it. Sin is a loathsome and hateful thing, and no renewed heart can patiently endure it. God Himself is angry with the wicked every day, and it is written in His Word, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil."¹⁶⁵

What are some symptoms an abused woman will exhibit that can bring a misdiagnosis of her as the abuser? The following list is not exhaustive, and not

¹⁶⁴ Mary Ann Dutton and Lisa A. Goodman, "Coercion in Intimate Partner Violence: Toward a New Conceptualization, Sex Roles," *ResearchGate*, Vol. 52, Nos. 11/12, June 2005.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227252624_Coercion_in_Intimate_Partner_Violence_Toward_a_New_Conceptualization

¹⁶⁵ C. H. Spurgeon. *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896) Morning, July 13.

all characteristics are indicative of abuse. Investigating abuse means looking for patterns.

- Socially isolated/withdrawn
- Poor impulse control (yells, screams, throws things)
- Low self-worth
- Readily takes ownership of her faults
- Depressed or even suicidal
- Angry and fearful at the same time
- Denies the seriousness of problems in marriage; realization may evolve over time.¹⁶⁶
- May be apathetic, low motivation
- May have nervous habits
- May have poor hygiene
- Talks negatively about self or life in general
- Embarrassed about her situation (shame) because it reflects on her worth as a woman/wife
- Overly apologetic
- Victims enter victim relationships. Previous abuse makes them good targets because vulnerability is built in—susceptible to grooming.
- Protects, defends, explains the abuser
- Denies abuse
- Refuses to admit or firmly believes abuse won't continue to happen
- Speaks in terms of “accidents” (“he didn't mean . . . he doesn't . . .”)
- Changes mind frequently
- Extreme privacy
- Effective liars (shaped by evil). They have to lie to protect (home, self, children) and keep peace
 - Withholds information
 - Rationalization

¹⁶⁶ “And Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when He had spit on his eyes and laid His hands on him, he asked him, ‘Do you see anything?’ And he looked up and said, ‘I see people, but they look like trees, walking.’ Then Jesus laid His hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly” (Mark 8:23-25).

APPENDIX V

- Belligerent (especially to other authority figures, i.e., police, church leadership)
- Speaks poorly about, complains, or disrespects her abusive husband
- Or, conversely, submissive
- Considers herself responsible, “over owns”
- High expectations of self/maximizes responsibility
- Minimizes situations
- Guilt
- Untrusting of others
- Feels insane (Asks, “Is this normal?” looks for constant affirmation)
- Difficulty making decisions
- Difficulty articulating
 - Hyper vigilance creates an atmosphere which makes it difficult to concentrate on anything but the abuser and their well being
- Anorexic (or other controlling behaviors)
- Unbalanced (always questioning)
- Nervous/anxious
- May not readily converse with opposite sex
- Protective of home life (Do other kids come over?)
- Fear of “man” and/or fear of men
- Controlling (which makes identifying abuse difficult)
 - Grasping at straws, they feel out of control, so they seek any other way to control.
 - This is most often seen with mothers’ relationships to their children or any other authoritative relationship, i.e., younger siblings, employees for instance.

The traumatic responses of a victim to the effects of abuse are not responses to normal marital issues. Their marriage is not normal. It’s almost impossible to know a victim’s sin issues when her world revolves around protecting herself and her children.

4. Case Study

Natalie

Natalie backed the minivan out of the driveway . . . a little too fast. She had to swerve to miss the mailbox. Natalie and the kids were late for Sunday school, so she was driving erratically.

The kids flinched when the van jerked, but they didn't dare mention it or respond with any show of fear. They knew better. "I'm. SO. Grrrr . . ." the kids heard their mom spew more than speak.

Moments before they left the house, Natalie and Mike had been fighting. Again. Mike worked the late shift Friday and Saturday night after his day job. At 8:30 a.m., he was still asleep, so Natalie had to get the three kids (ages 2, 4, and 6) bathed, fed, and ready for church by herself. She was not happy. "I. DO. NOT. DESERVE. THIS," she murmured, and turned down the street toward the church.

The fighting began that morning like usual. It started with Natalie's silence. She wasn't silent because she didn't want to wake Mike—more so because she was seething inside. She had taken care of the kids by herself all weekend and she was *done!* She needed Mike to get up, act like a man, and participate in the family as a father should. But Mike was still sleeping. The kids were watching cartoons in their pajamas, eating bowls of dry Fruit Loops with marshmallows. Natalie had told the oldest to prepare his siblings' breakfast. The cereal and marshmallows were all he could find. Natalie contemplated her next steps.

When the silent period ended, the kids knew to go to their rooms. Even the two-year-old wanted to be out of hearing distance from the yelling. "YOU JERK!" they heard from the "safety" of their bedrooms. Natalie was standing over Mike as he lay in their bed. She had ripped the sheets and blankets off his body, jerked the shades off the windows to let in the sunlight, and screamed at the top of her lungs. "I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL IN BED WHEN THE KIDS NEED A BATH AND I NEED TO GET TO CHURCH." Natalie was on the nursery schedule; she had told Mike earlier in the week. She never reminded him, but she expected him to remember and be available when called on to help.

Mike had had a total of four hours of sleep between Thursday night and Sunday. He was definitely sleep deprived. He worked two jobs just to keep up with the bills. Mike had gone to seminary but never found a calling. He drove

a UPS truck during the day and cleaned the local middle school building on weekend nights. Natalie constantly complained to Mike she couldn't continue to live with his schedule. She blamed him for not getting the job when he applied for a pastoral position. She told Mike his "humility" (his word—Natalie called it weakness) came off pathetic. Who would hire a man like that for their pastor? She wouldn't forgive him for giving up and settling for random part-time jobs.

Sometimes Mike would fight back. He would tell Natalie he'd fully support her if she wanted to get a job. Natalie would just sneer and say, "Are you kidding? Are YOU going to take care of the kids and get them to school and appointments? I have enough on my plate with Bible study and Life Group and my discipleship relationships! Are you going to tell me that, just because YOU can't get a job in ministry, I have to ignore God's calling for ME? If you loved me, you'd find a better job that would allow you to be the husband and father you were meant to be!"

It didn't seem to matter to Natalie that Mike typically stopped at the grocery store on his way home from work, or that he was the one to start the crockpot with dinner before he left to pick up his UPS load in the morning. Natalie had fallen asleep watching a movie the night before this latest blow up, so she didn't see Mike read the kids a story and tuck them into bed. Nothing Mike did was good enough. The mood in the home was one of general discontent, and the center of that unhappiness evolved around Natalie.

Natalie's demeanor calmed as she pulled into the church parking lot. She put on her "Sunday face" and delivered each of the older kids to their Sunday school class. By the time she got to the nursery with her two-year-old in tow, she was late. "I'm *soooo* sorry," she told the children's director. "I just wanted to make sure my kids' classes didn't need any help because I know how you hate when they're short-handed. I was so anxious to make sure all was right according to your meticulous standards!" A toddler climbed up on the small plastic chair next to Natalie and started to teeter. The director called out to Natalie, "Catch him!" Natalie turned toward the child and stepped back. The boy hit the floor hard, headfirst. Natalie's version of rescue was to pick up the crying child by his ankle and deposit him into the lap of another worker. When confronted, Natalie smiled and said, "I'm sorry! I can't always be perfect! You know, you were right here too! I'm not as strong as you and besides, if that boy's mom had taught him better, it would never have happened."

Brainstorming questions for help developing best practices:

1. What are some of the differences between a woman who is abusive, and a woman responding to abuse?
2. How will you discern the difference?
3. Do your church volunteers know how to report “concerning” situations? Do they know what constitutes something “concerning?”
4. Are your children’s ministry workers trained to identify children at risk? How often does training take place?
5. If a man in your church had an abusive wife, who could he feel safe to talk about it with?
6. If a woman in your church reports another woman with exacting behaviors toward her, what would some action steps look like?

SECTION FOUR: ADULT SEXUAL ABUSE¹⁶⁷

1. Summary Description of Sexual Abuse

There are few more egregious acts of oppressive behavior than abusing another person sexually.

Sexual abuse includes harassment, assault, and/or rape. “Sexual harassment” is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It consists of inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s sense of well-being by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment from the viewpoint of the affected individual.¹⁶⁸ “Assault” is any type of sexual behavior or contact where consent is not freely given or obtained. It is accomplished through force, intimidation, violence,

¹⁶⁷ This section of the report will reference three works (quoted with permission by the publishers).

- Diane Mandt Langberg, *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997).
- Diane Mandt Langberg, *The Spiritual Impact of Sexual Abuse* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2017).
- Andrew J. Schmutzer, ed., *The Long Journey Home: Understanding and Ministering to the Sexually Abused* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

¹⁶⁸ Justin S. Holcomb, “Abuse and the Church: Types of Abuse” (PowerPoint presentation, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2020). Retrieved from RTS Instructure.

coercion, manipulation, threat, deception, or abuse of authority.¹⁶⁹ “Adult rape” is, “The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”¹⁷⁰

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, one out of every six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime (14.8% completed, 2.8% attempted). About 3% of American men—or 1 in 33—have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.¹⁷¹

2. Expressing God’s Heart

Dr. Langberg writes that knowing and understanding God’s response to evil and suffering is necessary to “enter into” the survivor’s deep hurt. “The essence of working with trauma survivors is about bearing witness to their story and suffering, entering into their life, and demonstrating in the flesh the heart of our God toward them and the evil they experienced.”¹⁷²

In humility, as we recognize our own sinfulness and God’s extraordinary grace, we will be

more careful in encouraging those who have experienced the horrific destruction of sexual abuse. Hope is found for sufferers in God’s Word. The Lord desires that His people protect the vulnerable. We will also recognize the depth of depravity of the abuser, so we will form our response carefully to them as well.

Sexual immorality deeply impacts the whole person, spiritually *and* physically.¹⁷³ Sexual abuse destroys both the inner and outer man. Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:18 that it is harmful to engage in consensual sexual immorality; sexual abuse is a violent physical and spiritual act against another person. It is what is described by God as oppression. In Genesis 34:2, we read

¹⁶⁹ Holcomb, “Abuse and the Church.” Retrieved from RTS Instructure.

¹⁷⁰ “An Updated Definition of Rape,” United States Department of Justice Archives, Office of Public Affairs, accessed September 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/blog/updated-definition-rape>.

¹⁷¹ “Statistics,” Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), accessed September 16, 2021, <https://www.rainn.org/statistics>.

¹⁷² Langberg, *Spiritual Impact of Sexual Abuse*, 128.

¹⁷³ 1 Corinthians 6:18 (ESV) “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.”

Shechem raped Dinah. Moses writes, he “seized” (*הִלָּךְ*) Dinah and “humiliated” (*הִצְרִיחַ*) her, otherwise interpreted as “oppressing” her.

The church must respond with God’s heart for those who suffered from sexual abuse. We are called to proclaim to victims that our Lord is the stronghold for the oppressed, and that He will continue to be a stronghold in times of trouble (Ps. 9:9).

3. Recognition and Impacts of Sexual Abuse

Sexual assault is an exceptionally common experience of women (and many men) in all societies. Victims silently populate the pews and sanctuaries of our churches. Suffering from sexual assault and/or abuse generally creates significant life-long behavioral, emotional, and medical problems, often unrecognized and untreated. Surveys in the United States indicate that up to one-fourth of women have been assaulted, some repeatedly, with 50 to 80% of those assaults committed by a person known by the survivor.¹⁷⁴

Sexual assault is stigmatizing, and only one-fourth of cases are reported to authorities. Secrecy and shame create self-loathing, often due to the “rape-myths” of the victims provoking the attack. Rape is the most common cause of PTSD in women, and nearly half of men and women exposed to sexual assault meet criteria for lifetime PTSD.¹⁷⁵

Victims of sexual assault have a high prevalence of serious emotional and physical issues including depression, anxiety, drug and/or alcohol abuse. Victims and survivors may also be diagnosed with bipolar or personality disorders because of impulsive and self-defeating behaviors. These more severe manifestations are related to the severity and frequency of the experience, use of weapons, the victim’s age at the time of the assault, and social and economic resources.¹⁷⁶

Unfortunately, when sexual abuse is disclosed to friends, family, or authorities, revelation of assault may result in negative social consequences such as blaming and/or shunning. Recovery and restoration depend upon prompt,

¹⁷⁴ Helen Luce et al., “Sexual Assault of Women,” *American Family Physician* 81, no. 4 (2010), 489-495.

¹⁷⁵ Emily R. Dworkin et al., “Sexual Assault Victimization and Psychopathology: A Review and Meta-analysis,” *Clinical Psychology Review* 56 (2017), 65-81.

¹⁷⁶ Langberg, *Counseling Survivors*, 61-74.

effective, empathetic, and sustained, multi-level care similar to the process for the other forms of abuse.

Relationship Spheres

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, an American is sexually assaulted every nine minutes.¹⁷⁷ The following are statistics gathered by the Network in 2021 unless otherwise noted.

Marital

“Statistics reveal that sexual assault or forced sex occurs in approximately 40 to 45 percent of marriage relationships that have involved verbal or physical violence. Marital rape occurs in 10 to 14 percent of all marriages. These numbers should alarm us. And they should also cause us to ask why, if marital sexual abuse is this prevalent, we do not hear more about it.”¹⁷⁸

Authority

In an older survey by the Center for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Abuse, nearly thirteen percent of clergy said they had sex with a church member.¹⁷⁹ In another survey, approximately fourteen percent of ministers admitted to engagement in sexual behavior that was considered to be inappropriate for a minister.¹⁸⁰

Acquaintance

Eight out of ten sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim. Thirty-three percent of assaults are committed by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

Caregiver

“People with disabilities are three times as likely to be sexually assaulted as their peers without disabilities.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ “Statistics,” RAINN.

¹⁷⁸ Darby Strickland, *Is It Abuse?: A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 160.

¹⁷⁹ James Franklin, “Sex Abuse by Clergy Called Crisis for Church,” *Boston Globe*, July 17, 1991.

¹⁸⁰ Jeff T. Seat, James T. Trent, and Jwa K. Kim, “The Prevalence and Contributing Factors of Sexual Misconduct among Southern Baptist Pastors in Six Southern States,” *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 47, no. 4 (December 1993).

¹⁸¹ “Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities: What to Know, Why It Matters, and How to Help,” National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV

Stranger

Only nineteen percent of adult sexual assaults are committed by a complete stranger.

Recognizing the Impacts of Sexual Abuse

There are numerous impacts on God's image-bearers from sexual abuse. According to Dr. Langberg, these after-effects are not decisive; however, they may indicate sexual abuse has occurred.¹⁸²

Emotional After-Effects:

- Anxiety attacks
- Phobias
- Depression
- Suicidal ideation
- Despair and hopelessness
- Pervasive dissatisfaction with life
- Emotional paralysis or numbness
- Anger difficulties
- Deep grief
- Self-blame
- Self-loathing
- "They will often use words like worthless, trash, or garbage when referring to themselves."¹⁸³
- Distorted body image
- Though longing for closeness, they may have a deep fear of intimacy or commitment.
- Adult survivors may "find it very difficult to trust others."¹⁸⁴

Physical After-Effects:

- Self-destructive tendencies
- Addictions to alcohol, food, spending, drugs, and sex
- Suicide ideation

blog), March 13, 2018, [https://ncadv.org/blog /posts/domestic-violence-and-people-with-disabilities](https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/domestic-violence-and-people-with-disabilities).

¹⁸² Langberg, *Counseling Survivors*, 69-74.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

- Self-mutilation: “burning, cutting, self-bruising, biting, sticking oneself with pins, scratching, and beating oneself about the head”¹⁸⁵
- Sexual dysfunctions
- Sexual orientation confusion

Spiritual After-Effects:

- Distorted image of God
- “God is often perceived to be punitive, an impossible taskmaster, capricious, impotent, indifferent, or dead.”¹⁸⁶
- A “death of hope”¹⁸⁷

Difficulty in Disclosure

When someone discloses sexual abuse, it is important to listen and act in a way that supports the person and keeps him or her protected. God’s desire is that we support those who have been abused (Matt. 19:13-15, Luke 17:2). While it is the responsibility of law enforcement to investigate, in the moment of disclosure or discovery the church must also provide care for the victim.

Why Victims of Sexual Abuse Do Not Disclose Abuse

- They may be instructed to keep the abuse a secret.
- They may be afraid to tell anyone.
- The abuser may have threatened them or their family.
- They may not know who is safe to tell.
- They might lack the language needed to capture what is happening to them or to share all the complexities involved.
- They may be made to feel responsible for the abuse.
- The person harming them may have established an emotional connection with them and/or the family to lower inhibitions (“grooming,” see definition in Attachment 1).
- The abuser may have convinced them that abuse is normal.
- They may be convinced no one will believe them.
- They may have dissociated from the events. A victim’s mind may have difficulty reconciling what happened. To survive, abuse victims can involuntarily disconnect from their thoughts, feelings,

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 73.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 74.

memories, and surroundings. This makes it even more challenging for victims to accurately remember events, and timelines, or possess an absolute certainty about what occurred.

- They may love their abuser and desire to protect him or her.
- Many victims fear they will not be believed.
- A woman who has been sexually abused by a man may resist speaking with male leadership.
- They may be shocked, frightened, and/or angry.
- They may not know how to approach the problem.
- They may wonder, “Am I right?” “Did that really happen?”
- They may be physically, emotionally, and/or financially dependent on the abuser.
- They may question whether it is the right thing to do or if the abuse is really that bad.
- They may fear for what they will have to go through once the abuse is reported.
- They may be concerned about the cost, particularly if the abuser is another family member or a prominent member of the church or community.

Often victims of abuse encounter doubt regarding their credibility. One of the reasons for this misunderstanding is the lack of a solid, biblical understanding of the nature of evil and suffering. It is common for Christians to believe that sexual abuse does not happen in the church. What we think we know about other people, victims, and their families is inadequate when it comes to identifying abuse.

Because of these multiple barriers, when someone discloses abuse, it might be a gradual revelation. Abuse has many complex layers and the information disclosed must be mediated without bias. It is essential for church leaders, workers, staff, and volunteers to be familiar with the clues that signal abuse.

4. Responding to an Adult Sexual Abuse Disclosure or Discovery

The following are recommended for a careful response to the survivor and accused:

1. Church Advocacy Group
2. Session Crisis Intervention Team

Church Advocacy Group

Those who have experienced any form of sexual abuse, assault, or harassment inside of or outside the church should have an easily accessible, empathetic, reliable, and formal means of reporting. Persons with like experience or situation help somewhat in decreasing fear of reporting. Appointed and highly visible advocates in the local church might include a small group of well-trained members such as:

- Mature youth,
- Women,
- Minorities,
- Aged,
- Persons who have survived various forms of abuse.

The advocacy group should document the concern or complaint in sufficient detail to categorize it as reportable to public authorities (such as physical abuse, rape, sexual assault, physical assault, battery, kidnapping, etc.) or non-reportable (spiritual abuse short of the above, sexual harassment, adultery, etc.).

Crisis Intervention Team

The Crisis Intervention Team consists of effective, wise, and disciplined elders (other than those assigned to advocacy group) able to intervene promptly, efficiently, and effectively to the complaint.

Major tasks will be to . . .

1. Investigate the matter with the accused in a timely manner,
2. Immediately relieve any allegedly abusive leaders from duty, and
3. Provide shepherding counsel and support to the families.

The Crisis Intervention Team is also responsible as a liaison with the Presbytery (if the accused is a TE) and communication to and with the congregation and public regarding the matter. Truth, honesty, and accountability should be the hallmarks of the team's interactions with the accused, congregation, Presbytery, and with the public.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Crisis Intervention Team (or appointed elder) should inform the accused of the charge and relieve him from duty (if a church leader) immediately. They should conduct their investigation in such a way as to carefully shepherd the victim and preserve their safety, anonymity, privacy, and welfare.

Reportable complaints should be given to police with the victim's permission. The Advocacy Group and/or Crisis Intervention Team should inform the pastor and/or Session (the latter only if the pastor is implicated) immediately after report submission to authorities. This is to avoid cover up for serious crimes and offenses at the beginning, the most crucial phase of the process.

Non-reportable complaints should be written in sufficient detail and presented to the Session. It is wise to shield a victim's identity unless given permission to disclose. If the complaint is warranted, the Session might plan a strategy to confront the accused. A complaint considered unwarranted should be documented and provided to the accuser with the reasons for the determination.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should meet with the accused after the complaint, or as soon as possible if reported to authorities. Prior to this meeting, they should engage in prayer for wisdom, discernment, and the preservation of the honor of Christ and His church, as well as for grace in approach to both parties.

The accuser should not be present, nor named to the accused to protect against reprisal and/or retribution. A written complaint should be presented to the accused. The accused's response will be documented verbatim by the advocates, including the responses to appropriate further clarifying questions. Such questions should provide details of

- Factual occurrence,
- Motives,
- Emotions,
- Prior events pertinent to the investigation as seen fit by the investigators and accused,
- Specific disagreement,
- Regret,
- Remorse, and/or
- Repentance expressed by the accused.

Each answer should be recorded in as much detail as possible, using direct quotes rather than paraphrases. These questions and statements should be recorded and documented until the meeting has reached a conclusion. Questions refused should also be so recorded.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should meet following a confrontation for prayer and to deliberate upon, analyze, and formulate their findings and conclusion of the preliminary investigation. They should document their findings and recommendations for further pursuit of the complaint in writing and submit them to the accused. At the presentation to the accused, the team should record any rebuttal, clarification, or other response of the accused.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should prayerfully deliberate on the written complaint, response, and rebuttal, and amend or sustain the original findings and recommendation in a final report. This report should be given to both accuser and accused. The following are possible courses of action that may be recommended to the Session:

1. **The issue be resolved with follow-up** by the Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder to both parties separately.
2. **The issue requires further investigation** by Session and/or outside investigators or counsel before actions can be recommended.
3. **The abuse report requires immediate action** such as contacting the police or Presbytery if not already reported, suspension from duty, or medical/psychiatric intervention.
4. **Action requires a formal program** of biblical counseling, spiritual discipline, mentoring, and accountability of progress in conformity to Christ by one or both parties.
5. **Formal charges or dissolution of pastoral relationship is warranted** if abuser is a teaching elder.

Bringing Charges against a Teaching Elder

Besides prayer, confrontation, deliberation, and investigation, it is important that PCA churches avail themselves of the formal system for accountability if a teaching elder is guilty of sexual abuse.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The *PCA Book of Church Order (BCO)* Chapter 34 is titled “Special Rules Pertaining to Process Against a Minister.” A church minister (teaching elder) is a “member” of a Presbytery, not the local church. Therefore, it is necessary to pursue accountability through members of the Presbytery (34:4).

There are three possible ways to proceed by the Session or church members:

1. Discuss the matter with another elder in the Presbytery, of which the teaching elder is a member, seeking their personal aid in further confrontation.
2. Bring clear, documented proof of sexual abuse to the committee that handles charges brought against member pastors for their consultation.
3. Bring charges against the minister before this committee. Two witnesses must bring testimony (*BCO* 34-5) or there must be clear “corroborative evidence.”

Although the first and second options may be less intimidating to church members, bringing an abusive leader to trial is necessary to provide safety to the broader church. A teaching elder who is guilty of sexual abuse should be publicly disallowed from ministry in the PCA.

Should the congregation wish to remove a teaching elder due to his sexual sin, they are required to follow these steps:

1. “. . . there shall always be a meeting of the congregation called and conducted in the same manner as the call of the pastor (*BCO* 23-1).”
2. The meeting must be presided over by a ruling or teaching elder of the PCA.
3. The will of the congregation (as voted upon) is presented to the Presbytery for approval for the “dissolution of the pastoral relation.”

Independent Assessments or Investigations

In the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, in a discussion of the sufficiency of Scripture, the divines say,

There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence,

according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed. [WCF 1:6]

In circumstances where Scripture does not provide clarity, a society, by common grace, may have come to understand truth that may be observed by the church. The divines carefully note that Scripture is the final authority, but truth may be found in the “common . . . actions and societies” due to God’s common grace and general revelation.

Regarding abuse in the church, there are times when outside counsel from experts in fields of study to which a particular church has limited access, should be sought for the good and care of church members. Agencies and organizations that are equipped to evaluate and make recommendations impartially (unhindered by church politics) can be effectively utilized by church courts.

Scripture is clear that judgments by church courts must be impartial (Lev. 19:15). The relational dynamics found within the church must not influence judgments. Seeking outside counsel may provide this objective assessment.

In addition, there may be an abusive culture in which the church is immersed. There are often blind spots making it difficult to see the abuse. Rather than considering outside counsel as a threat or liability, Scripture makes evident that a humble commitment to seeking truth, holiness, justice, and compassion is at the heart of wise leadership (Prov. 1:2-5, 23:23, Heb. 10:34). Finally, church courts are not bound by outside counsel. In the end, the recommendations of non-church agencies or organizations must be weighed in light of Scripture with wisdom to determine final judgments in each case.

There are three main situations when outside counsel might be invaluable.

1. *When a decision needs to be made*

Rationale: When a specific step¹⁸⁸ is necessary to move the case forward, and certainty is required, an outside expert evaluation of the evidence may provide clarity. Outside investigation also helps confirm initial perceptions in a situation which created any doubt regarding the alleged abuse.

¹⁸⁸ For example, supporting a victim who divorces an abusive spouse, bringing charges against an abuser, firing a staff member, or assisting in removing the ordination of an allegedly abusive pastor.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2. *When the alleged abuser was a volunteer, staff member or pastor, on church grounds, or in the context of a church event*

Rationale: In any of these situations, outside help is critical for providing confidence to move forward with specific action related to an abuser. External, objective analysis is necessary in order to provide a genuine pursuit for truth. This will also provide a safe place for reports from other victims to come forward. Victims must have confidence in the investigation so that they will trust they will be heard and kept safe from further abuse.

3. *When there are allegations or reason to believe that warning signs were missed by leaders in the church, or disclosures mishandled*

Rationale: Establishing outside counsel is an important step for evaluating whether any warning signs were missed that could have prevented the abuse, or in identifying and correcting any weaknesses in church policies, practices, or culture. It is not uncommon for God's people to be "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" and outside counsel can provide the exhortation necessary to see the organization's blind spots and make necessary corrections in the culture.

Abuse allegations may arise in a context when the abuser is no longer in the church or perhaps no longer living and new information indicates that former or current staff members were notified of the abuse or had reason to know the abuse was occurring. Even if the abuse or possible mishandling or failure to report occurred years or decades prior, outside counsel is vital for several reasons.

1. Survivors, deeply wounded by the abuse, deserve to know the truth.
2. When multiple errors occur, repentance is a biblical requirement.
3. A church or ministry that displays God's heart will desire truth and be zealous in righteousness. This includes ensuring any necessary changes to policies, practices, or culture. Often, when abuse is mishandled, there are entrenched beliefs and patterns that contributed. Unless this faulty worldview is clearly identified and corrected, even if it developed unintentionally, abuse will continue.

4. Even if the sin occurred earlier, there is biblical precedent for confessing those sins publicly (2 Chron. 29:3-11).

What To Look for in Seeking Outside Counsel

Individuals and/or firms should meet the following basic criteria.

1. Substantial training, skill, and experience with abuse, trauma, and related dynamics, as well as experience with investigative techniques, evidence handling, and investigative practices
2. A consistent and trusted reputation in the survivor and advocate community: Enlisting those with a positive standing will help a ministry build trust with abuse survivors.
3. Clearly identify and act as assessors, educators, or investigators, not legal representation, even if they are licensed legal professionals: Retaining someone as an attorney immediately creates an adversarial relationship between the ministry and the survivor, even if unintentional. This is because when an attorney/client relationship is formed it creates obligations and privileges between the hiring entity and the attorney.
4. Attorneys owe a fiduciary obligation to the ministry as a corporation or business, not to the church as God's people, and certainly not to the survivors and their families. The attorney/client relationship also creates confidentiality and legal privileges designed to protect and hide information. The creation of these privileges is commonly used to obscure information and protect assets against liability. It demonstrates a focused financial priority rather than that of transparency or seeking justice and truth.

5. Reporting

Churches are not qualified to conduct investigations of sexual abuse. Local authorities are specifically trained; therefore, if a victim desires the abuse be reported, it must be reported immediately. Delay can result in loss of evidence, victim tampering, tainting witness memory, or providing the perpetrator an opportunity to threaten or pressure their victims to remain silent or recant their testimony. Conducting an "in house" investigation prior to reporting not only jeopardizes the victim and the chain of evidence, it may also fail at detecting the actual abuser. Abusers often continue offending; therefore, a church that

conducts an incompetent investigation may be held responsible. The church has a moral and legal obligation to report suspected abuse.

When

Most states do not mandate reporting of adult sexual abuse. The decision to report should be made by the victim. Though reporting to law enforcement can provide the opportunity to provide protection for the victim, gather evidence, investigate, prosecute, and bring accountability to the perpetrator, the victim must also be prepared for the dangers involved (retaliation) and sometimes difficult investigation and prosecution.

Pressuring the victim to report may discourage them from reporting in the future. The victim should be encouraged to have the medical forensic exam conducted no matter her intention to report to law enforcement or not. The church should walk beside the victim along each step of the process to provide encouragement in Christ and safety.

Reason to Believe

Believing the alleged victim is a care-filled response. There will be time later to verify the details of the report. Professionals and the proper authorities are the entities who will determine the veracity of the claims. When a report is made, a victim needs a safe and empathetic ear. Deuteronomy 22:25-27 makes it clear that a victim of sexual assault, though no witnesses were present, should be trusted and action taken to bring accountability to the offending individual. False reports are rare.¹⁸⁹ Identifying a false report is best determined by a qualified investigator.

How

Reports of adult sexual assault and rape should be made to legal authorities only with victim permission. The victim's safety is foremost and a report to authorities may create further damage.

To Whom

¹⁸⁹ See also, Attachment 7: Myths About Abuse for further citations. David Lisak et al., "False Allegations of Sexual Assault: An Analysis of Ten Years of Reported Cases," *Violence Against Women* 16, no. 12 (December 2010), 1318-34, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1077801210387747>.

- *Law Enforcement*

Sexual assault and rape are crimes and are prosecutable in all fifty states. If the victim is willing, churches can report the abuse to the law enforcement officials who will investigate the assault.

- *Local Advocacy Center*

It can be very helpful to victims to make contact with a local advocacy center. These centers, some faith-based, often provide counseling, support groups, basic essential needs like food, clothing, shelter, and protective care.

- *Additional Agencies*

Child-protective services may help aid in providing safety to children who are impacted by witnessing adult sexual abuse.

- *Pastors, Sessions, or Presbyteries*

Leaders in the church should be apprised of the assault or rape *if the victim allows* and the abuser is a church member. When an allegation of abuse is made against someone in the church, recognize the likelihood there may be other victims. Additional people in the congregation may have other details important to the investigation. Leaders have a responsibility to protect the sheep under their care.

- *Congregations*

When an allegation of abuse is made against someone in the church, recognize the likelihood there may be other victims. Additional people in the congregation may have other details important to the investigation. Notification is not a determination of guilt; it is the necessary means for ensuring a proper investigation. Investigations are incomplete without this wide-ranging information. The intent is not to slander a person, rather it is to announce true statements about a report regarding an individual.

What

What if the victim or their family does not want to report? There are times when the abuse is compounded by the unsupportive response of others, whether church members, leaders, or those outside the church. Many victims

have endured unwarranted and aggressive questioning, creating an unsafe atmosphere for reporting. Depending on the length and severity of the abuse, it is common for a victim to lose their confidence in making decisions. They may be paralyzed with fear.

Statistically, 50 out of 310 sexual assaults reported to law enforcement result in criminal charges. Approximately 25 will result in conviction and jail time.¹⁹⁰ One study concluded that only “1.6% of all complaints ended in a trial.”¹⁹¹ Of the many studies, it is clear that statistically a sexual assault case is not likely to make it to trial.

6. Redemptive Shepherding

Working with abused victims presents an incredible opportunity to bring redemption and light to circumstances, and to display the gospel to those who hurt. God shows concern for the broken-hearted (Ps. 34:18). He is not silent in the face of evil (Ps. 34:15-16). His people must also lovingly and carefully shepherd those impacted from the evil of abuse. Protecting the weak and vulnerable is the responsibility of all God’s people (Ezek. 34:4, Acts 20:35).

All caregiving has potential for error. The possibility of causing additional harm exists. When considering a case, it is common for those involved to benefit the accused rather than the victim with “charitable judgment.” People are generally hesitant to violate the “innocent until proven guilty” standard.¹⁹² This is the standard that guides process in the legal system. The burden of proof is then placed on the victim. When caring for the abused, weigh the difficulty of this process carefully. Rarely does abuse happen in public with witnesses, and a “not guilty” verdict is not necessarily a declaration of innocence. It simply means the accuser failed to provide sufficient evidence of the assault.

¹⁹⁰ “The Criminal Justice System: Statistics,” RAINN, <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/criminal-justice-system>.

¹⁹¹ Melissa S. Morabito, Linda M. Williams, and April Pattavina, “Decision Making in Sexual Assault Cases: Replication Research on Sexual Violence Case Attrition in the U.S.,” National Institute of Justice, February 2019, 108, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/252689.pdf>.

¹⁹² Brad Hambrick, “Why Is It So Hard to Have Constructive Conversations about Abuse?,” Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, February 14, 2022, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/why-is-it-so-hard-to-have-constructive-conversations-about-abuse/>.

Shepherding victims well requires God's people to love one another and "believe all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). Err on the side of safety when it comes to protecting the vulnerable. Take necessary steps to restrict the alleged abuser's access, report the allegations (if approved by the victim), and notify the church. Allow the magistrate to investigate and make any legal judgments.

Failure to take these steps of protection leaves people at risk and can potentially suppress evidence. For victims, the failure of those in authority to respond swiftly and concisely implies they are lying. Survivors who sense this resistance will quickly shut down and/or retract allegations out of fear.

Shepherding Adults Who Have Been Sexually Abused

If an adult who had been sexually abused as a child comes forward, see "Child Abuse: Shepherding the Victim and Family" for shepherding and "Child Abuse: Responding to a Child Abuse Disclosure or Discovery" for reporting. Pastoral Care for the Victim and Family

The church should be a sanctuary for victims, a training ground to prevent assault, and a facilitator of emotional, spiritual, and physical healing. All victims and potential victims of sexual assault need the following from the church:

- An empathetic, well-trained and effective person/persons who will confidentially guide the process of recovery and facilitate obtaining appropriate resources both in and outside the church. This includes, but is not limited to, emergency medical care (rape crisis intervention), counseling, primary medical care, psychiatric care, and spiritual counseling.
- A small group of survivors who are in the process of recovery and growth to come alongside the victim and demonstrate they are not alone nor at fault.
- Preaching from the word on the impact of assault, pornography, and other idolatry upon the *Imago Dei* of women, men, and children created by God, as well as His grace, mercy, and ever-present love for victims.

Practical Care for the Victim and Family

There are many practical needs which should be met; however, people involved in the situation are hurting deeply. Grieve with them, ask intelligent questions about how they are, pray with them, and provide a connection. Enlist other members in the church to do the same. While care should be taken not to overpromise, or offer false hope, remind the family that God sees and knows all things and has not left them. Listen to their lead as you follow up, but don't simply wait for them to reach out or identify what they need.

When people are abused, the ability to see and clearly comprehend the situation is dramatically hindered. It often requires substantial time and distance from an abusive situation to fully recognize and articulate what happened. If they experienced grooming and/or have been controlled or criticized for any length of time, it may make simple communication of details very difficult for the survivor.

In addition, an abuse victim will struggle to convey their own desires. Church members and leaders help victims by encouraging them to communicate their thoughts and make their own decisions. This may take time. Patient listening, wisdom, understanding, empathy, and compassion are required (1 Thess. 5:14), together with a commitment to walk alongside for however long as is necessary.

Prior to a crisis, leaders and staff should familiarize themselves with typical problems victims and their families encounter and how the church can help with support and/or practical involvement. It is challenging for families to discern what they need amid so much grief or even how to communicate these needs. They likely will not know what options are available. Church leaders who proactively pursue care and help provide practical guidance through the church or community resources can be an incredible gift.

Survivors of sexual abuse need the following from the church.¹⁹³

- **A significant sense of belonging.** Sexually abused men and women feel isolated and unwanted. Often, they have no sense of what it means to belong to a family group. Not only can the church provide a place where the survivor experiences the love and

¹⁹³ This section is an excerpt from Langberg, *Counseling Survivors*, 272-276.

affirmation of a family, it often is the only family some survivors have. Many survivors have either homes they cannot return to for safety reasons, or families who do not acknowledge the truth of their lives.

- **To be pursued.** God came to us. When others suffer, we often expect *them* to come to *us* and ask for what they need. Connection requires us to take the initiative to pursue suffering people. Lovingly pursue by calling, sending encouraging notes, and offering help with immediate needs.
- **To have physical and/or financial needs met.** Is the survivor safe from their abuser? Are they safe from their own destructive impulses? Are they suicidal? Do they abuse any substances? Do they need financial help? Are they physically able to care for themselves? Are they able to care for their family? Do they need someone to call in the middle of the night? Do they live alone? Are they safe doing so? Where do they spend the holidays?
- **Hope without condemnation.** In the darkest of times, we struggle to have hope and faith, . . . suffering people often need others to have faith and hope for them. Admonitions to hope or trust only result in despair; if the sufferers were able, they would do so. How much better to come alongside and tell survivors that where they are lacking and/or unable, we will stand in the gap and believe God for them.
- **A balance of ministry and fun.** Often when we do reach out to sufferers, we reduce our relationship to one of pure ministry . . . When we bring fun to sufferers' lives, we provide an oasis that will help them feel loved simply for who they are. It is also important for survivors to feel needed by those who care for them. Although an "I can't do . . ." needs to be honored, very few people want simply to be takers. Give them dignity by allowing them to contribute to your life, even if it means just letting them do the dishes after a meal.
- **Others' willingness to witness great pain and believe the "unbelievable."** Many men and women have lived in terrible isolation, thinking their secrets were too horrible to be told. Calling back memories about such things can cause great denial in the listener. Yet we who believe sin is so hideous as to require the death of God Himself should of all people find evil believable.
- **A listener, not a fixer or a blamer.** To attend to the struggle of another by listening is to bestow honor on that person. You cannot "fix" a history of . . . abuse. You can stand with someone while

they courageously face the truth of their life and love them while they struggle to learn to live with it. Learn how to sit and be quiet. When we don't know what to say, it is usually best to say nothing rather than allow our discomfort with silence and pain to drive us to rattle off an answer. One of the ways we cope with horror is by attempting to explain it or find out what made it happen. Searching for such explanations can easily lead to blaming the survivor. Never imply that the survivor is to blame for the abuse. Nothing [anyone] has ever done, no matter how provocative, is justification for abuse (Matt. 7:20-23). The abuser always carries responsibility for the abuse.

- **Resources.** If the survivor needs and wants professional help, assist in finding competent counseling. They may need you to help them know what questions to ask of the counselor. Is the counselor a licensed professional? Does the counselor accept third party payments? Does the counselor have training and experience in the treatment of sexual abuse? What kind of experience and from where? The survivor may need you to go with them to the first few appointments and simply wait in the waiting room.
- **Knowledgeable friends.** If you are going to walk alongside someone who is dealing with the issue of sexual abuse, then you need to be knowledgeable about the subject. It would be wise to read several books on the topic. [See the resources section in this report for help]. If you do not understand the problem, you will more than likely make hurtful mistakes.
- **To resolve spiritual issues.** Understand that the spiritual ramifications of [sexual abuse] are complex and powerful. When a "Christian" father, uncle, grandfather, camp counselor, or pastor sexually abuses a child, beliefs and feelings about who God is, His love, and His protection are all shattered and are not easily reassembled. A few verses will not put it all back together.
- **Time.** Healing from the devastating consequences of childhood sexual abuse takes a long time, usually years. Should you choose to walk alongside someone who is struggling in this area, it is important to recognize that you are facing a long process. Survivors will wrestle with powerful urges to resist facing the truth; they will fight hard and long to rid themselves of lies. They may endure months or years of terrifying nightmares that rob them of much needed sleep. A small network of trustworthy people will often work better than one person alone. If the survivor is married, their spouse will also need a support network who will walk with

them on the long road. . . . Although our God is a God of redemption, He usually works that redemption out through people and over time.

- **Intercession.** Jesus Himself is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. The Spirit prays for us when words will not come. . . . Pain silences and isolates. We who come alongside need to pray for and with those who are silenced and isolated.

As you come alongside survivors of sexual abuse, be aware that several dynamics may prevent you from giving effective help.

- **Slow down.** Suffering slows people down, and if we are going to walk with others in their suffering, then we must slow down too.
- **Shoulder their burdens.** We become a hindrance rather than a help when we greet those who suffer with statements such as: "If you would only . . . attend church, read Scripture more, believe more, stop thinking about yourself, put the past behind you." Rather than say, "Here, let me help you carry that heavy load," we end up putting heavy burdens on already bowed backs. Remember that God our Savior did not greet us with, "If you would only . . ." Instead, He says, "Here, let Me show you how. Let Me shoulder the burden. Let Me be with you."
- **Keep confidences.** How often confidences are betrayed under the guise of sharing a prayer request! If we are to help those who struggle with things that frighten them, humiliate them, and shame them, then we must be trustworthy people. We must learn that there are things we can share with no one but the Father. To work with survivors is to minister to those who know betrayal well. We want them to learn to trust. . . . Unless a life is threatened, confidences should never be broken.
- **Think long-term.** Like managed care, the church seems to think that short-term [care] is right and should always work. The more spiritual among us get better quickly. We tend to believe that those who struggle long term clearly do not love God enough. And yet we say we believe this to be a dark world where sin is rampant and destructive. We believe that God is long-suffering and merciful. Where do we get our quick-fix model? How fortunate we are that God does not adhere to short-term sanctification!
- **Male leadership.** A woman who spent her childhood being sexually abused by a man will have all kinds of reactions to male leadership. One of those responses may be fear. It is possible that

this will prevent her from seeking the help she so desperately needs. Many churches are now training women to work alongside women in crisis so that when a woman is dealing with an issue like abuse, she has some recourse other than male leadership. We need to respond with tenderness and sensitivity to the fear and damage resulting from abuse.

- **Accommodate the suffering.** In many ways, the church seems to be structured to accommodate the whole and the healthy. Often activities are designed for intact couples and families. . . . On one hand there is nothing wrong with that. However, that perspective does not account for sickness, suffering, trauma, dying, terror, and torment. To experience these things is to fail to fit into the structure. When that results in responses of judgment, humiliation, impatience, and denial, we have failed to be the church God has called us to be. According to the apostle Paul, the church should bestow more abundant honor on those members who lack it rather than applaud those who have no need of it (1 Cor. 12:23-24).
- **Human hearts are deceitful.** [Sexual abuse] is kept secret because many fear they will not be believed. Attention to the problem is not a priority, because the problem is believed to be rare. . . . Again, knowing we live in a world ruled by the prince of the power of the air and knowing that human hearts are deceitful above all things, why are we surprised?
- **Venting.** One survivor said that fear of expressions of pain is a hindrance when others cannot distinguish between a “roar of pain” (venting rebellious-sounding verbiage about God)—like a lioness with a thorn in her paw versus genuine rebellion. The Psalms contain much venting (Ps. 22:1, Ps. 35:22-25). Even Jesus said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46).
- **The agony of redemption.** We often do not understand the nature of evil and suffering, the complexities of human development . . . the fact that [sexual abuse] is a criminal act, and that redemption in a life never comes easily. Yes, the God we worship is capable of redeeming the pain beyond words into something that gives life and brings glory to Him. However, the transfiguring of agony into redemption cost Jesus inestimably. Death . . . does not normally transform into life in this dark world. The beauty of redemption in a life never comes easily.
- **Be aware.** Be very aware of your vocabulary, your timing, and your body language. A survivor has been repeatedly abused by another's body and words. They will be afraid of yours. At the

same time, they may be starved for touch and affection. Do not touch without her permission. Never touch in a sexual way. Learn to read and acknowledge body cues. Often it is through body language, rather than words, that people communicate emotions such as fear or anger.

Shepherding the Guilty Party

Repentant

The responsibility of the church in the case of sexual abuse is to report to legal authorities whether there are signs of repentance or not. This is done only at the discretion of the victim.

The gospel of grace must be given to perpetrators of sexual violence as it is for all who have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. However, due to the egregious violence of sexual assault, a repentant perpetrator must be shepherded carefully within the church community.

The guilty party must be disciplined by a church leader or counselor who has been trained in sexual assault. The depth of the sinful psychology of sexual abuse must be carefully and boldly investigated and challenged by the counselor.

It is unwise to allow the guilty party any unsupervised access to those who are vulnerable to the perpetrator's behavior. Though an abusive individual may give a seemingly clear testimony to his repentance, it must be followed with extensive evidence that his words are expressive of a significantly sanctified heart. This may only be confirmed by a counselor trained in this particular sin.

Non-Repentant

If the guilty party does not show clear signs of repentance in words and actions, process should be taken by the Session to remove the offender from fellowship. [See the *PCA Book of Church Order*, Part II, beginning with Chapter 27.]

Church Members

As shepherds of the local body of Christ, church leaders have a responsibility to nurture and protect God's people under their care. It is likely that bystanders

in the congregation have also been affected by the sexual abuse of the guilty party. They will likewise need help in processing the painful experience.

Members of the congregation may feel guilt and shame for having missed warning signs of the abuse. They may carry anger and fear. These hurting members will need special care by church leaders and members. Their deep emotional hurt may create discomfort for leaders, but shepherding them well will mean laying aside the need for comfort to step into their struggles and encourage them with the gospel.

There may be additional victims of sex crimes in the congregation who will need a safe place to share their experience. Shepherds will need to continually, in word and action, make the church a safe place for sharing:

- In word, by expressing trust in those who willingly expose the violence,
- In action, by believing a report and acting quickly to make sure the victim is safe and cared for.

7. Prevention of Sexual Abuse

Shepherds are responsible to protect congregants to the best of their ability. A leader's failure of "protecting and providing for [members] all things necessary for soul and body" by the diligent watchfulness for wolves in the church is a heinous offense.¹⁹⁴ Reasonable measures should be in place for the prevention of abusive behaviors that cause catastrophic harm to those attending places of worship.

How the Church Can Help Prevent Abuse

- **Train staff, leaders, and volunteers to recognize and report abuse.**
If the means for training are unavailable in the church, consider bringing in an outside organization or program.
- **Insist on background checks for staff.**
- **Be known for reporting** suspected abuse or neglect.
- **Communicate to the congregation** which pastoral staff are trained and willing to intervene when abuse is suspected or reported.

¹⁹⁴ *Westminster Larger Catechism* (Lawrenceville, GA: CDM, 2007), Question 129.

- **Clearly articulate abuse as a sin.** Teach that God hates abuse and calls His people to protect the vulnerable.
- **Clarify that abuse is not a private issue.** The church should welcome the exposure of evil and be willing to work with the local government (Rom. 13).
- **Teach your church's theology of abuse.**
- **Require your leaders to model exemplary sexual lives.** Because of their high calling, high visibility, and high influence, pastors and other church leaders should be expected to live godly lives (Titus 1:5-9).¹⁹⁵
- **Address tangential issues** such as pornography and other media which eroticize violence.
- **Extend education to children and teenagers.** Teach how to recognize and report abuse. Children should understand, while the Bible instructs them to obey their parents, the biblical command for obedience to authority is conditional (Eph. 6:1). It is good, godly, and right to expose sin.

8. Case Study

Debby

Debby stared at the light fixture on the hallway ceiling. She remembered doing that same thing forty years prior, stare at a light fixture. “This shouldn’t be so disorienting,” Debby thought to herself. Now, at 58 years old, all the shame, disgust, and fear she had felt that night so long ago came rushing back. The letter she held in her hand prompted those awful feelings. And, although her heart raced, and she felt like it would beat right out of her chest, it was nothing compared to that other time she had stared at a light fixture so intently.

Debby was a senior in high school when her youth director and his wife presented her with the gospel. She was so excited! A Savior? Loved her? The idea of a love like that took her breath away. And the fact that some of the most loving people she’d ever known shared it with her made it even more significant. Debby felt their care and concern. As soon as she heard the gospel and understood, she prayed the sinner’s prayer. Debby was instantly on fire for the Lord. If the church doors were open, she was inside.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

Debby loved everything about youth group. She loved the fellowship with friends, adored the praise and worship time, and treasured her youth director's teachings. Everything he said made sense. He seemed to know the Lord, and his lessons reflected that understanding. She was growing spiritually in leaps and bounds.

While church was going well, school was not. One Wednesday evening the teenagers were all gathered in small groups for prayer, and Debby asked for prayer for her math homework. Everyone laughed aloud, so her youth director came over to find out what was going on. Debby told him about her request, and without hesitation the director offered his help. He bragged that math was his specialty and told Debby to bring her book the next week so they could stay after youth group for lessons.

Debby had no idea what "lessons" her youth director had in mind. She followed him up to the sound booth the following Wednesday after group, but before she knew it, he pinned her on a couch, and she couldn't move. The light fixture in the hallway completely captured Debby's attention. Through tears, she determined not to let it out of her sight. Such an inanimate object of course couldn't bring peace (or safety for that matter), but at least it gave Debby something—*anything*—to focus on rather than the heavy man gyrating on top of her. Her goal was to make it out to that hallway.

When it was over, Debby ran. She was too ashamed to tell anyone what had happened and felt no one would believe her anyway. Everyone loved the youth director. She did everything possible to avoid being in his presence. She quit going to youth group and eventually moved to a relative's home far away. She finished high school remotely and enrolled at a college in another state. A multitude of thoughts constantly tormented Debby. "Was it something I did? Could I have run? Screamed? Would anyone have heard me?"

Debby found another church, stuffed her memories and questions, and focused on getting a degree.

Several years later, Debby received an invitation to a wedding for the daughter of a childhood friend from youth group. She knew it would be difficult entering the old church building again, but she heard the youth director had moved long ago. So, she pulled it together for her friend and responded "yes," she would attend.

Debby entered the building and found her way to a pew near the front of the sanctuary. While she was waiting for the ceremony to begin, she glanced at the pew rack and saw the Sunday bulletin from the week before. Out of curiosity, she picked it up and began to read. To her horror, there was an announcement for the installation services of her old youth director. Upon the upcoming retirement of the church's pastor, her youth director would be ordained as the new Senior Pastor. Debby's insides shook throughout the entire wedding.

The Monday after she returned home, Debby called the retiring pastor. The last thing she wanted to do was reveal that the youth director had sexually abused her when she was a high school student. But she wouldn't have been able to live with herself had she said nothing. The years of grieving and counseling helped embolden her. Unfortunately, the call set her back almost to where she began.

"Mmmm . . . I see . . . thank you for telling me." And that was it. So went the phone call with her beloved childhood pastor. Debby was floored. She could tell he didn't believe her. He mumbled something about it being a "done deal" and "there was nothing he could do." Debby thought she had nowhere else to turn. Once again, she put the awful memories behind her. She went back into counseling and moved on with her life.

Debby looked at the letter again. Her mind went back to that phone call all those years prior. She finally forced herself to stop staring at the hallway light fixture with the burned-out light bulb. The letter she'd been holding fell to the floor. She picked it up and her eyes once again skimmed the contents. "Dear Mrs. . . . First Street Pres has begun an investigation into misconduct . . . Senior Pastor . . . multiple victims . . . if you're willing to participate . . ." Debby shook her head back and forth, as if she could make the memories dissipate like the snow in a snow globe.

She was unsuccessful.

Brainstorming questions for help developing best practices:

1. What structures and/or procedures should your church or ministry already have in place in case a situation like this occurs?
2. What questions would have been helpful for the retiring pastor to ask?

3. What should the retiring pastor have done upon receiving the call from Debby?
4. How does the “reason to believe” standard help with this situation?
5. Upon discovering the circumstances, what will you do first?
6. What will you do next?
7. Who can you call for help navigating all the details?
8. Who in your church is versed in sexual abuse and compassionate to care for a victim and/or family?
9. What action steps will you take against the alleged perpetrator?
10. What will you tell the congregation and how?
11. How will you determine if an outside agency will be helpful for this case?

SECTION FIVE: CHILD ABUSE

1. Summary Description – Child Abuse

Child abuse occurs when an authority figure, whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm, sexual abuse, exploitation, or risk of serious harm to a child. There are many forms of child maltreatment, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, spiritual, and emotional abuse. In this section we will help you recognize, respond to, report, and redemptively shepherd when there is a case of suspected child abuse.

2. Expressing God’s Heart

In Scripture, the care of children is very important. God equates “receiving” children with “receiving” Him (Matt. 18:5-6). God’s Word showcases He has a particular concern for the weak and vulnerable (Mic. 6:8; Isa. 61:1), and children are among the most vulnerable entrusted to our care. Further, Jesus loves the teachable souls of children, and He is not pleased with those who harm them (Prov. 22:6; Matt. 18:6; Luke 18:15-17; Mark 10:13-16, Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). In James 1:27, it tells us that caring for children in need pleases God. Safeguarding the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of young people and other vulnerable individuals is among the most important responsibilities of the local church (*WCF* Q. 138, Q. 139).

3. Recognition of Child Abuse and Neglect

Recognition of the abuse or neglect of a child is one important way to protect vulnerable children under the church's care. According to a study reported by *Christianity Today*, on average there are seventy allegations of child abuse in the United States in churches each week.¹⁹⁶ One in seven children experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year.¹⁹⁷

People tend to view the church as a safe place, especially for children and youth. It is difficult for church members to believe there are those working, volunteering, and attending our churches who abuse children. It is important to acknowledge this potentiality and to properly guard children from abuse in the local church.

Relational Spheres

There is often a false understanding that people who commit child abuse can be easily detected. Often there is also a mistaken belief that abuse is perpetrated by someone the child or community does not know. Statistics point to a different reality and even highlight that many children are abused by other children. Understanding who perpetrates abuse can help the church provide good education and implement wise protection policies.

Authority

Child abuse can be perpetrated by a person in a position of authority, such as the child's teacher, guardian, relative, sports coach, youth pastor, or other prominent figure. Because of the person's position over the child, they will experience intimidation. This is very confusing for the child. Children will fail to report, or delay in reporting, abuse by an authority figure.

- Acquaintance

Approximately 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser. Only 10% of sexually abused children are abused by a stranger. About

¹⁹⁶Ted Olsen. "70 Child Abuse Accusations Against Churches Each Week—and Most Are Protestants." *ChristianityToday.com*, April 1, 2002, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/aprilweb-only/4-1-51.0.html>.

¹⁹⁷Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Preventing Child Abuse* (Atlanta: U.S. Department Health and Human Services, 2020), <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/fastfact.html>.

60% of children who are sexually abused are abused by people the family trusts.¹⁹⁸

- Child on child

Not all perpetrators are adults—an estimated 30-50% of reported cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by individuals under the age of 18.¹⁹⁹ As many as 40% of children sexually abused are abused by older or more powerful children.²⁰⁰ The younger the child victim, the more likely it is that the perpetrator is a juvenile. Juveniles are the offenders in 43% of assaults on children under age six. Of these offenders, 14% are under age 12. Juveniles who commit sex offenses against other children are more likely than adult sex offenders to offend in groups, offend at schools, and have more male and younger victims.²⁰¹ A small number of juvenile offenders—one out of eight—are younger than age 12. Females constitute 7% of juveniles who commit sex offenses.²⁰² Most adolescent sex offenders are not sexual predators and will not become adult offenders. They are more responsive to treatment than offending adults.²⁰³

This type of abuse will likely intensify the shepherding required by the church, especially if children are members of separate families. While the victim and their family will need to have care focused on protection and safety, the offending child's family will also require care as well as shepherding through the process. Because the needs of child-on-child abuse within your church are

¹⁹⁸ D. Finkelhor, "Characteristics of Crimes against Juveniles" (Durham, NH: Crimes against Children Research Center, 2012), 13. and J. Whealin, "Child Sexual Abuse" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, (2007-05-22).

¹⁹⁹ United States Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website, "Questions and Answers About Sexual Assault and Sexual Offending." Accessed April 2022, <https://www.nsopw.gov/en/SafetyAndEducation/QuestionsAndAnswers>.

²⁰⁰ D. Finkelhor, "Characteristics of Crimes against Juveniles" (Durham, NH: Crimes against Children Research Center, 2012).

²⁰¹ L.A. Greenfeld, "Sex Offenses and Offenders: An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault: (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ-163392, 1997).

²⁰² D. Finkelhor, R. Ormrod, M. Chaffin, "Juveniles Who Commit Sex Offenses against Minors," *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2009).

²⁰³ "Adolescents Who Have Engaged in Abusive Sexual Behavior: Effective Polices and Practices," (Oregon: Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA). 2000). Accessed April 2022, www.atsa.com/ppjuvenile.html.

significant, after reporting seek outside counsel for how to care well for all parties involved. It is important that leaders be aware that statistically, a juvenile offender is likely to have been first sexually abused themselves. Therefore, the shepherd is likely to have two victims in his care, and quite possibly the predator of the offended is in the victim's home or possibly in their church.

- Parent/caregiver

Approximately 30% of children who are sexually abused are abused by family members. The younger the victim, the more likely it is that the abuser is a family member. Of those molesting a child under six, 50% were family members. Family members also accounted for 23% of those abusing children ages 12 to 17.²⁰⁴ Approximately 77% percent of perpetrators of child abuse and neglect are the parents of a victim.²⁰⁵ Family members²⁰⁶ make up one-third to one-half of the perpetrators against girls, and 10% to 20% of the perpetrators against boys.²⁰⁷ Men commit 90% of these cases.²⁰⁸

- Stranger

The abuse by a stranger is less common, but its prevalence is still concerning. Children often struggle to know who would be classified as a stranger. Once the stranger tells the child their name, they no longer think of the person as a stranger. Developmentally they do not assign motives to people and do not pick up on someone's evil intentions. This makes children particularly vulnerable to abuse by strangers.

²⁰⁴ D. Finkelhor, "Characteristics of Crimes against Juveniles" (Durham, NH: Crimes against Children Research Center, 2012), 13. and J. Whealin, "Child Sexual Abuse" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, (2007-05-22).

²⁰⁵ "Child Maltreatment 2016," (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, 2018). Child maltreatment 2016. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/child-maltreatment-2016>.

²⁰⁶ United States Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website, "Facts and Statistics." Accessed March 8, 2018, www.nsopw.gov/en-US/Education/FactsStatistics.

²⁰⁷ D. Finkelhor, "Current Information on the Scope and Nature of Child Sexual Abuse," *The Future of Children*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Los Altos, CA: The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, 1994), 31.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Categories of recognition:

- A child **directly discloses** they are being abused or neglected.

Examples:

"My dad touches my privates when mom's not around."

"Our youth pastor is asking me to send him nude pictures."

"My mom does not feed us dinner."

- A child **indirectly discloses** information that might suggest they are a victim of abuse or neglect. This is the most common disclosure of abuse. In these cases, it is likely that the child is hinting at current abuse and hoping you will understand.

Examples of a disguised disclosure: "I have a cousin who is being abused."

Example of a disclosure via hints or gestures: "My friend told me . . ."

- A child **accidentally discloses** abuse or neglect.

Examples:

The child records written details regarding abuse.

You walk in on abuse taking place.

You overhear a teenager talking about their abuse.

A child exhibits physical signs of abuse.

You notice that a child does not have a doctor listed on their form.

- A child's **behavior provides clues** they might be a victim of abuse or neglect. (A parent or caregiver's behavior might also make you alert to the fact that they are abusive.)

Examples:

A teenager consistently lingers after youth group meetings and delays going home.

A toddler flinches when touched.

A child displays sexualized behavior.

A grade schooler is overly physically aggressive with his peers.

A child steals food from others.

Example of parent or caregiver behavior: A parent overtly rejects their child, or another adult makes up excuses to be alone with a child.

- A child **shows physical signs** they may have been abused or neglected.

Examples:

A child has difficulty walking or sitting.

A child shows up in a grungy short-sleeved shirt without a jacket in winter.

A child has bodily injuries, and no plausible explanation is offered.

A child has burn marks or bruises that resemble objects such as a hand, fist, belt buckle, or rope.

To further familiarize with the behavioral and physical indicators of abuse, please see Attachment 4: Signs of Child Abuse. This attachment includes a list of general behavioral clues and physical warning signs of child abuse. It also includes specific details highlighting the unique indicators of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

When behavioral and physical signs are present, it does not always indicate abuse. For example, a child who self-harms or has panic attacks is in distress but not necessarily abused. Nonetheless, any concerning childhood behaviors should heighten curiosity. It does not matter if it is abuse, these children still need attention and care. Ministry leaders and workers must diligently train staff and volunteers to recognize the signs of abuse; however, it is important to note that up to forty percent of abused children will not exhibit any signs.

Difficulty in Disclosing

Often, children are reluctant to disclose. Inherent to this difficulty is that an abuser may be in an intimate relationship with the child and/or someone the child wants to protect. It is likely that the child has a complex connection with the person perpetrating harm against them. Additionally, a child may remain silent because they are afraid of negative reactions from adults, or of “getting into trouble” with their abuser. This results in a variety of confusing circumstances for those involved, including the question of why someone did not report.

Why Children Do Not Disclose Abuse

- The child may be instructed to keep the abuse a secret.
- The child may be afraid to tell anyone.
- The perpetrator may have threatened the child.
- The child may not know who is safe to tell.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- The child may not know how to tell. For instance, they might lack the language needed to capture what is happening to them or to share all the complexities involved.
- The child may be made to feel responsible for the abuse.
- The person harming the child may have established an emotional connection with them and/or the family to lower inhibitions (“grooming,” see Attachment 1: “Definitions”).
- The perpetrator may have convinced the child that abuse is normal.
- The child may be convinced no one will believe them.
- The child may have dissociated from the events. A victim’s mind may have difficulty reconciling what happened. To survive, abuse victims can involuntarily disconnect from their thoughts, feelings, memories, and surroundings. This makes it even more challenging for victims to accurately remember events, and timelines, or possess an absolute certainty about what occurred.
- The child may love their abuser and desire to protect him or her.
- The parents may categorize the abuse as “discipline” and have told the child it is God's command.
- The child may not recognize what they are experiencing is abnormal because it has always been their reality.

Why Parents or Other Adults Neglect to Report Abuse

Adults might be aware of the abuse but also fail to address and/or report. The following constitute common reasons.

- **Overwhelming feelings.** They may be shocked, frightened, and/or angry.
- **Uncertainty.** They may not know how to approach the problem.
- **Confusion.** They may wonder, “Am I right?” “Did I really see/hear that?”
- **Trust.** The abuser may seem trustworthy, so it is difficult to believe that this person they know (love, respect) is capable of child abuse.
- **Manipulation.** They may have confronted the abuser, and he/she offered an alternative logical explanation.
- **Dependency.** They may be physically, emotionally, and/or financially dependent on the child’s abuser.
- **Self-doubt.** They may question whether it is the right thing to do or if the abuse is really that bad.
- **Fear.** They may fear for the child and what they will have to go through once the abuse is reported.

- **Cost.** They may be concerned about the cost, particularly if the abuser is another family member or a prominent member of the church or community.
- **Community Grooming.** The abuser skillfully presents a wholesome, godly outward persona and skillfully handles Scripture and theology, causing other adults to believe it is not possible that the person in question could be an abuser.

Because of these multiple barriers, when a child discloses abuse, it is typically a gradual revelation. Child abuse has many complex layers, and perpetrators are masterful at deceit and manipulation. What we think we know about other people, victims, and their families is inadequate when it comes to identifying the presence of child abuse. The information disclosed must be mediated without bias. It is essential for church leaders, workers, staff, and volunteers to have familiarity with the clues that signal child abuse and neglect. (See Attachment 4: Signs of Child Abuse.)

4. Responding to a Child Abuse Disclosure or Discovery

Complete confidence of abuse or neglect is not necessary for reporting. Nor is it necessary to indicate which type of abuse has been perpetrated against a child. Reasonable suspicion of child abuse is sufficient for engaging expert investigation. Child abuse is both a serious sin and a crime. Ministering to those harmed by sin is the responsibility of the church and exploration of crime is the duty of the magistrate.

Disclosure of Child Abuse

Churches are not qualified to conduct investigations of child abuse. Local authorities are specifically trained; therefore, all suspicion of abuse must be reported immediately. Delay can result in loss of evidence, victim tampering, tainting witness memory, or providing the perpetrator an opportunity to threaten or pressure their victims to remain silent or recant their testimony.²⁰⁹ Conducting an “in-house” investigation prior to reporting not only jeopardizes the child and the chain of evidence, it may also fail at detecting the actual abuser. Abusers often continue offending; therefore, a church that conducts an incompetent investigation may be held responsible. The church has a moral and legal obligation to report suspected abuse.

²⁰⁹ Victor Vieth, “Resist and Report: The Temptation to Investigate,” GRACE, accessed December 2020. <https://www.netgrace.org/resources/resisting-the-temptation-to-investigation>.

When a child discloses abuse, it is important to listen and act in a way that supports the child and keeps him or her protected. God's desire is to keep the child safe (Matt. 19:13-5, Luke 17:2). While it is the responsibility of the magistrate to investigate, in the moment of disclosure or discovery the church must also provide care for the victim.

What to do regarding disclosure of child abuse:

- **Compile a short list** of the appropriate local agencies and their phone numbers before an emergency occurs.
- **Listen to the child.** Let the child explain what happened in his or her own words.
- **Limit questioning** to the following:
 - What happened?
 - When did it happen?
 - Where did it happen?
 - Who did it?
 - How do you know them?
- **Take down as many direct quotes** as possible.
- **Be supportive, compassionate, and affirm the child's bravery.**
 - "You did the right thing. I'm glad you told me."
 - "You were very brave to tell me. I'm proud of you."
 - "This was not your fault. You did nothing wrong."
 - "I will help you."
- **Reassure the child by telling them what you are going to do next and what will happen.** The child will be afraid of the consequences of their disclosure, so let them know you will do your best to support and protect him or her. Explain to the child that, for their safety, you will need to report their experience to someone else and include those who will help. If the child is older, you can mention that you will be calling child protective services and/or the police.
- **Acknowledge limitations** as pastors and church leaders.
- **Expect complexity.** It is often difficult to see the situation clearly.
- **Acknowledge prejudice.** Objectivity regarding allegations may be hard when the accused is someone familiar.
- **Make a report.** Reporting is not an accusation, but rather a **request to investigate.** [See section 5: Reporting.]
- **Pray with and for the child. Pray Scripture.** Psalm 46:1 – God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Zephaniah 3:17 – The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save. 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV) – Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for

you. Isaiah 41:10-11 – Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

What not to do regarding disclosure of child abuse:

- **Refrain from making promises** you cannot keep. Do not tell the child you won't tell anyone.
- **Don't stop the child** in the middle of their story.
- **Don't examine the child with questions**, especially leading questions (any question in which you provide a possible answer). This is tampering with testimony, which will make investigation by authorities more difficult later in the process.
- **Don't ask the child for details.** A child might not be comfortable sharing all the details.
- **Don't fear the mess of reporting.** God promises to help with messes.

A survey of victims of abuse discovered that only 10% had a positive experience when they disclosed their experience. In positive experiences, three key features occurred during the disclosure:

1. The recipient of disclosure believed the young person.
2. The recipient of disclosure took some form of action in response.
3. The young person received some form of emotional support to help them through the process.²¹⁰

Beyond the Basics

The following are additional suggestions for providing comfort and care to a child's disclosure of abuse.

- Meet in a suitable environment free from distractions.
- Posture yourself at the child's eye level and remain in an open position.
- Remain calm and patient—allow for prolonged silence and give the child opportunity to be heard.

²¹⁰ Debbie Allnock and Pam Miller, *No one noticed, no one heard: a study of disclosures of childhood abuse*, 52, <https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/no-one-noticed-no-one-heard-report.pdf>, (accessed April 2022).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Listen supportively. Stay focused on listening to the child rather than on how you will respond.
- Respect that they may reveal only some of the details.
- Reassure them it is OK they have told you.
- Reassure them they are not at fault.
- Reassure them they are not the cause of your distress.
- Respond to urgent needs and notify appropriate authorities if you observe an injury.
- Do not ask to invite someone else into the conversation. They have chosen to trust you.
- Ask if you can pray for God's comfort and help for them. Don't assume they are comfortable with prayer. Keep it short and focused on praying for their immediate needs.
- Ask them how you can help.

In the case of an accidental disclosure of abuse, or the physical and behavioral signs are obvious, make a report based on your observations. If you are not able to follow up with the child, keep notes on what you heard or observed.

If you receive an accusation that child abuse has been committed by someone you know, work with, or is in an authoritative position, resist the temptation to think about your own well-being. Stay present with the child and tend to his or her needs. Focus on their disclosure. After tending to the needs of the victim, consider how you will respond personally to the disclosure.

Independent Assessments or Investigations

Outside perspective is critical because it is so difficult to see clearly when abuse is part of the culture in which we are immersed. Rather than viewing outside help as a threat or liability, seeking wise counsel models the wisdom of Proverbs 1:3, 5 and demonstrates a heart humbly committed to truth, holiness, justice, and compassion. Outside counsel should be welcomed (not feared) as sharpening the church's response.

There are three main situations when outside counsel might be invaluable.

1. *When a decision needs to be made*

Rationale:

When a specific step²¹¹ is necessary to move the case forward, and certainty is required, an outside expert evaluation of the evidence may provide clarity. Outside investigation also helps confirm initial perceptions in a situation which created any doubt regarding the alleged abuse.

2. *When the alleged abuser was a volunteer, staff member or pastor, on church grounds, or in the context of a church event*

Rationale:

In any of these situations, outside help is critical for providing confidence to move forward with specific action related to an abuser. The church needs outside help to guide what steps need to be taken with a volunteer, staff member or pastor. The church cannot keep them on staff, or on hold, waiting for a police investigation that takes two to five years and is not likely to result in charges.

If the abuser is no longer in the church, the disclosure may trigger the question of whether there are things that were missed (or possibly even other victims). See number three below.

3. *When there are allegations or reason to believe that warning signs were missed by leaders in the church, or disclosures mishandled*

Rationale:

Allegations may arise in a context that involve individuals who are no longer at the church, but where there is possibility that there was poor policy that allowed the abuse. Warning signs may have been missed by leaders in the church or allegations that disclosures were mishandled.

Even if the abuse, possible mishandling, or failure to report occurred years or decades prior, outside counsel is vital for several reasons:

²¹¹ For example: supporting a victim who divorces an abusive spouse, bringing charges against an abuser, firing a staff member, or assisting in removing the ordination of an allegedly abusive pastor.

- Survivors, deeply wounded by the abuse, deserve to know the truth.
- When multiple errors occur, repentance is a biblical requirement.
- A church or ministry that displays God's heart will desire truth and be zealous in righteousness. This includes ensuring any necessary changes to policies, practices, or culture. Often, when abuse is mishandled, there are entrenched beliefs and patterns that contribute. Unless this faulty worldview or breakdown in policies or practices is clearly identified and corrected, and even if it developed unintentionally, abuse will continue. Where the church has failed, even under past leadership, public confession and repentance is in order as exemplified by the nation of Israel (2 Chron. 29:3-11).

What To Look for in Seeking Outside Counsel

Individuals and/or firms should meet the following basic criteria:

- Substantial training, skill, and experience with abuse, trauma, and related dynamics, as well as experience with investigative techniques and handling evidence. A consistent and trusted reputation in the survivor and advocate community. Enlisting those with a positive standing will help a ministry build trust with abuse survivors.
- Clearly identify and act as assessors, educators, or investigators, not legal representation, even if they are licensed legal professionals. Retaining someone as an attorney immediately creates an adversarial relationship between the ministry and the survivor, even if unintentional. This is because when an attorney/client relationship is formed, it creates obligations and privileges between the hiring entity and the attorney. Attorneys owe a fiduciary obligation to the ministry as a corporation or business, not to the church as God's people, and certainly not to the survivors and their families. The attorney/client relationship also creates confidentiality and legal privileges designed to protect and hide information. The creation of these privileges is commonly used to obscure information and protect assets against liability. It demonstrates a focused financial priority rather than that of transparency or seeking justice and truth.

5. Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Knowing when and to whom to file a report, and what to include may be overwhelming during a crisis. This section will address these questions as well as what to do if victims and/or families hesitate to report.

When Does a Report Need To Be Filed?

Each state's laws vary and should be consulted prior to a crisis. In general, law and best practices indicate a policy of reporting whenever there is reason to suspect child abuse or neglect. Note the standard is not *knowledge* of abuse or neglect but rather reason to believe. This includes cases with warning signs, indirect disclosures, reason to believe, red flags, and common behaviors of trauma. (See Attachment 4: Signs of Child Abuse for a detailed list of possible warning signs.)

Disclosures are often incomplete or concealed. The likelihood that signs of abuse will be missed also happens. Likewise, misconceptions about abuse and neglect can lead to improperly categorizing behaviors and patterns into benign habits or "struggles." Pastoral counsel, handled inappropriately, can inadvertently become complicit. It is critical for church leaders, staff, and volunteers to be well-versed in the warning signs, indirect disclosures, reason to believe, red flags, and common behaviors of trauma.

While best policy is that a report be made "immediately," or within 24 hours of the events initiating the need to report, risk of danger may also be a concern. If there is any reason to fear the safety of the victims, it is unwise they be in close proximity to their abuser before or after a report is made. This is particularly true in cases where the alleged abuser is the parent of the victim. This danger frequently extends to the wife as well. Moving a wife and children to a secure location may be wise before or contemporaneously when filing a report with law enforcement and CPS. An emergency plan should be established in the church prior to the need. Leadership must be aware of locations where a family can be moved safely, how to make such a move, and what will be done to care for their basic needs during this transition.

Reason to Believe

The standard of "reason to believe" child abuse may be occurring is initiated when an adult reports childhood abuse and the alleged abuser continues to have access to children. An example would be when an adult reported abuse by a

previous Sunday school teacher who remains in close proximity to children. Statistics indicate an increased likelihood of ongoing abuse. This is particularly true in cases of sexual abuse. It is counter to research and evidence to assume an abuser ceased abusing, or only abuses in certain contexts.

This mistake is particularly common in situations when an adult survivor discloses childhood sexual abuse by a parent or sibling. The assumption is that abuse within a family will stay in the family and there is little risk if no children remain in the home. Statistically this is not the case. If the alleged abuser has access to children, there is “reason to believe” child abuse may be ongoing.

For example, “Jane” discloses that her father “John” sexually abused her as a child. All of John’s children are grown and no minors remain in the home. However, John volunteers at an after-school program. “Reason to believe” advises child abuse continues because John has access to children and an alleged history of sexually assaulting a child. Notice, even though John’s access to children isn’t within your ministry or church, the need to report remains. Having possession of this information establishes a reasonable belief.

Finally, it is critical to understand that the “reason to believe” standard does not require that organizational or personal investigation should be attempted to determine the merits of the allegations or warning signs before reporting. Rather, a report should be made immediately.

To Whom to Report

First, it is important to know your state law and ensure you follow all legal requirements for reporting suspected child abuse. Under most circumstances, you will be legally required to file a report either with Child Protective Services, or the police department, or both.

In the rare event you encounter a situation where you are not legally required to report, and the survivor, parent, or caregiver prefers to file the report themselves, agency should be given to make that choice. Note however, that if they are willing, it is always helpful for the person who received the disclosure or observed the potential evidence of abuse to also file a report and offer to make a statement to police and, if relevant, Child Protective Services. This helps ensure that all corroborating information is received by the correct authorities.

The following are agencies to whom you should report, or which may provide helpful assistance in reporting.

- *Law Enforcement Agency*

Reports of any potential criminal activity should be made first and foremost to law enforcement. Criminal activity can include (but not be limited to) neglect, threats, and other actions such as imprisonment, which do not involve physical contact.

- *Child Protective Services (CPS)*

Report to CPS in any context where an abuser may be harming a child under his or her care. CPS and police serve two very different functions in our legal system. A call to CPS alone is insufficient and will not likely result in a criminal investigation. CPS's jurisdiction is specifically related to protecting children in the custodial care of the abuser. They do not investigate or evaluate crimes, but rather focus specifically on whether an adult is fit to have custodial care of a child. Immediately report every suspected case of abuse to law enforcement and then immediately report to CPS in the case of minor children in the abuser's custody or care. This includes situations where the reporting victim is not a family member, but there are children in the care of the abuser. For example, a student may report abuse by her teacher, and the teacher is a parent of minor children.

- *Local Child Advocacy Center*

Child Advocacy Centers are often significantly helpful resources as well, and a call to them may provide insight and guidance for reporting as well. Child advocacy centers are staffed with trauma-trained investigators, medical personnel, and counselors, and are designed to feel as safe and non-threatening as possible for a child.²¹² Children's advocates provide guidance and support in the reporting process, investigative help to law enforcement, counseling services to victims and families, and advocacy support through the legal process. Advocates may only take referrals from police departments, but others initiate the investigative process and then refer to law enforcement. When the initial call is made to law enforcement, it is helpful to ask the department if they coordinate with a local children's advocate and, if so, request to connect

²¹² <https://www.nationalcac.org/find-a-cac/>.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the child's family. Work with law enforcement through the advocate as much as possible.

- *Guardian Ad Litem*

If a Guardian Ad Litem is already involved in the child's life, it is helpful to reach out to them, if possible, to also report any suspected abuse, as the Guardian is tasked with representing the child's interests in court.

- *Additional Agencies*

It may also be appropriate to contact licensing agencies, such as medical boards for doctors, Title IX investigators for schools, and human resource departments for businesses while a report is made. These reports should be made with the victim or family's consent and *not* made until after law enforcement has been notified *and* the police have notified the alleged perpetrator of the police report to ensure that any criminal investigation is not jeopardized.

- *Pastors, Sessions, and Presbyteries*

Church and ministry leaders should aid in filing the report. This helps give legal weight to the report, and the individual who heard the disclosure may need to serve as a witness in the proceeding as disclosures can become important pieces of evidence.

Relevant agencies such as the police and CPS (if a custodial relationship is involved) should be contacted with a clear statement that the call is being made to report suspected child abuse. All information that has been obtained should be given to the detectives, and any physical evidence turned over to investigators.

When contacting these agencies, it is wise to ask the following:

- If the department coordinates with a local Child Advocacy Center and, if so, how to connect the child and their family with that center;
- What the process is for bringing the child in to give a statement. (Ideally this will be done through the Child Advocacy Center, but that is not always available.)

This call should not be made in front of the young child, but it is wise to ask the guardian of the child if they would like someone to go with them when they go to file a statement or be interviewed.

Pastors should clearly document the report in writing, noting the date and time they called, who they spoke with, what they reported, and any instructions they received. Documentation of the report should be kept in church files, and any additional measures taken or interaction with law enforcement or CPS should be routinely documented and filed along with notation of the initial report

How and What to Report

Once the need to report has been triggered, a phone call should be made to the relevant police department (and CPS if the child is in the care of the abuser or the abuser has custodial care of minor children), to file a report of suspected child abuse. A preliminary call to the local Child Advocacy Center is also highly recommended as this often yields additional guidance or support when reporting to law enforcement. If the child is a victim of domestic violence or is in the custody of an abuser, a local domestic violence shelter may also provide helpful information on protecting an abused spouse or child, while reporting the abuse.

If you suspect the child or spouse may be in danger if you report, seek expert help from these sources as well as law enforcement by calling them and letting them know that a report of abuse or suspected abuse needs to be made and that there is reason to believe filing a report will put a child or spouse in danger. Law enforcement may provide some assistance, but you are more likely to receive concrete expert help on safety during reporting, from a domestic violence shelter and/or child advocacy center.

When reaching out to law enforcement and CPS (if needed), state that the call is to report child abuse or suspected child abuse. Describe the specific events that caused you to report. Report any questionable or concerning behaviors observed in the victim or with the alleged perpetrator and notify the investigators of any known witnesses. All physical evidence must also be turned over to the investigative team. Retain copies where possible. Provide any information which may help complete the picture for investigators without personally filling in the gaps or using conjecture. Reports should be clear, factual, and complete. Include names and contact information for additional witnesses. Maintain a record of to whom, when, and what was reported.

In the event that a spouse and minor children must be moved to a safe location prior to filing a report, church leadership should seek legal help from a domestic violence shelter or skilled family law attorney who can assist in obtaining the necessary protective orders. If the abused spouse has already retained skilled legal counsel, the church should notify the retained attorney and seek help obtaining protective orders. Emergency removal of an abused spouse and child for their safety can have legal implications in a custody dispute or separation/divorce proceeding. In some cases, the spouse who is protecting the child/children may not be legally allowed to shield them from court-ordered visitations with a parent, even if abuse is alleged and a report made. Violating a court order can result in the protecting parent being in contempt of court or facing criminal charges or allegations of parental alienation. Because these are legally complex issues with potentially significant ramifications, involve an attorney skilled in family law, custody issues, and abuse *prior* to a crisis. Attorneys help guide and advise the process of protecting a spouse and minor children in a way that best protects their legal rights.

Congregations and Others Needing Notification

Families with children outside the church context who may have been in contact with the alleged abuser should also be notified. Also consider the families with children in the alleged abuser's profession or any other voluntary capacity.

When an allegation of *sexual* abuse is made against someone in the church, recognize the likelihood there may be other victims. Additional people in the congregation may have other details important to the investigation. Notification is not a determination of guilt; it is the necessary means for ensuring a proper investigation. Investigations are incomplete without this wide-ranging information. The intent is not to slander a person, rather it is to give true statements about a report regarding an individual. A policy of reporting allegations for the purpose of ensuring a fair and just investigation, helps communicate clearly to your congregation that these routine processes are not determinations of guilt, but rather are standard protective and policy measures that are followed for all individuals.

All families with children who may have been in contact with the abuser must be notified quickly after reporting to law enforcement and CPS. This includes families with children in any church-associated community groups. Notification should occur as quickly as possible but should *not* occur before

the alleged abuser is aware that a report has been filed. Once the abuser is aware of the report, there is no benefit, and significant detriment, to failing to properly notify relevant communities and individuals.

If sexual abuse is alleged and the abuser was ever in leadership, a volunteer in the church, or has a circle of connection within the church that is difficult to very clearly identify or notify on an individual basis, the entire congregation must be notified using multiple formats. This includes, but is not limited to, the church email list and an announcement before services. This is also true for nonsexual criminal child abuse which took place in the alleged offender's role in the church: for example, a childcare worker who allegedly hit a child during Sunday school.

When the report is filed, inform police and CPS you will be notifying anyone whose children were in contact with the alleged abuser. Find out when the alleged abuser will be aware a report has been filed. In some cases, investigators may need to do preliminary work before the abuser is aware that he or she is under investigation. In these instances, investigators may ask you not to notify anyone so as not to compromise the investigation. However, once the alleged abuser is aware of the report, do not postpone or delay notification. There is no benefit from, and indeed great harm in, postponing or delaying notification.

Notifications should:

- Protect the identity of the victim and witnesses. For example, in a case when the victim is the child of the alleged abuser, identify the victim as “a child who has a close relationship with the family.”
- Identify the type(s) of abuse alleged without using minimizing language. For example, use terms such as physical sexual abuse, videotaping, photographing, exposure, showing the child pornography, engaging in sexually explicit conversations or communications, etc. Words do not need to be graphic, but they should identify the range of the alleged abuses. This may also help alert others with information or red flags they may not previously have recognized.
- Identify the general context of the abuse as much as possible while continuing to protect the victim. For example, “the allegations relate to events that took place with a minor where X teaches,” or “these allegations were brought by a family who attends our church, though the alleged abuse took place in a non-church context,” or “these

allegations relate to events that took place during our youth retreat,” etc.

- Provide clear instructions for anyone else with information. Provide contact information for a detective and CPS worker and/or direct those with relevant information to reach out immediately.
- Clearly identify the boundaries for the alleged abuser.

Notify law enforcement and CPS and describe the specific events that caused you to report. Report any questionable or concerning behaviors observed in the victim or with the alleged perpetrator and notify the investigators of any known witnesses. All physical evidence must also be turned over to the investigative team. Retain copies where possible. Provide any information which may help complete the picture for investigators without personally filling in the gaps or using conjecture. Reports should be clear, factual, and complete. Include names and contact information for additional witnesses. Maintain a record of to whom, when, and what was reported.

What If the Victim or Their Family Does Not Want To Report?

The following represent several difficulties in reporting.

- The marriage, close relationship, and/or family will be impacted significantly.
- The non-abusive spouse may fear for their safety.
- The non-abusive spouse may have a desire to protect the abusive spouse from harm.
- The non-abusive spouse may have guilt for “damaging” the abusive spouse.
- There is a risk to children who remain within the abuser’s care or reach.
- Multiple adult victims of childhood abuse come forward while other survivors prefer not to file.

The process of reporting abuse is traumatic. Help victims and their families understand from a positive perspective, carefully explaining why a report needs to be made. Note: *At times law enforcement or CPS will not investigate a report unless the victim is a willing participant. However, a report should nonetheless be made.*

- Assure those involved that reporting prevents further abuse of the child and potentially other children.

- Reassure the victim and their family of your help and support, including a concrete plan or action steps through the process.
- Whenever possible, give the victim and their family choices. Abuse robs a victim of their voice and autonomy. Therefore, provide input that helps them make wise decisions while retaining their agency. The goal is to unite and report quickly, while simultaneously maintaining support of the victims and their families.
- If unity is not possible, a report should still be filed. Notify the victim you will not disclose identifying information. Inform law enforcement and CPS that you remain in contact with the victim and are encouraging them to participate in the investigation. While involving the victim in the process is preferred, an anonymous report provides the authorities with crucial information for additional victims already reporting or who may report in the future.
- Assure those involved you understand their choice and are ready to support and assist if they do choose to speak with investigators.
- In a case when survivors above the age of majority do not wish to report, the report should be made on behalf of the minor children or adults willing to participate. Notify the authorities that there are additional survivors alleging abuse who are not yet prepared to come forward. Do not provide identifying information, simply make law enforcement aware that other survivors are known. Knowledge that the perpetrator has multiple victims may help the investigation be taken seriously and prioritized.
- Support survivors who do report without compromising the choice of an adult survivor who does not want to participate in the process.
- It may be helpful to accompany the survivor and/or parents, but it is not a substitute for actual participation in the reporting process.

6. Redemptive Shepherding

Working with victims and the dynamics of abuse presents an incredible opportunity to bring redemption and light, and to display the gospel to hurting members of the flock. God shows concern for the broken-hearted (Ps. 147:3) and He is not silent in the face of evil (Ps. 94:14-17; 97:10; Eph. 5:11-12). His people must also lovingly and carefully shepherd those impacted from the evil of abuse. Protecting the weak and vulnerable is the responsibility of all God's people (Ps. 82:3-4; Isa. 1:17; Prov. 31:8-9).

All caregiving has potential for error. There is even the possibility of causing additional harm.

One example for how this might happen in shepherding victims suffering from abuse is, when they come forward, it is common for those involved to consider the accused with “charitable judgment.” People are generally hesitant to violate the “innocent until proven guilty” standard. While God’s people are called to love one another and “believe all things” (1 Cor. 13:7), err on the side of safety when it comes to protecting the vulnerable. Research shows children rarely report false abuse, particularly sexual abuse. Therefore, take the steps necessary to restrict the alleged abuser’s access to children, report the allegations, and notify the church. Allow law enforcement to investigate and make any legal judgments.

Be aware however, that it is unlikely that law enforcement investigations will provide useful conclusions in any reasonable time frame. While the rate of false reports is incredibly low (only between 2-8% of alleged sexual abuse reports are false), only approximately five to seven out of every 300 rapes reported to police will result in criminal charges and conviction. Additionally, this process is likely to take two or more years on average. Helpful conclusions from CPS are even less likely to be clear and prompt.

It is likely that church leaders will need to take steps or make decisions long before any helpful results from a police report are obtained. For example,

- will the church assist a spouse in separating from an allegedly abusive spouse prior to conviction for abuse?
- will ecclesiastical charges be raised against an abusive elder absent criminal conviction?

Redemptive shepherding may at times require a level of care or support that entails reaching determinations about the parties involved before law enforcement concludes the investigation. Law enforcement should always be notified and supported in the investigative process, but shepherding is not dependent on the result. In these cases, seeking help from outside agencies (child advocacy centers, domestic violence shelters, independent investigative agencies where appropriate) may be helpful.

Failure to take these steps of protection leaves children at risk during the investigation and potentially suppresses evidence. The failure of those in authority to respond swiftly and concisely may suggest to the victim that the authority thinks the victim is lying. Survivors who sense this resistance will quickly shut down or may retract allegations out of fear.

Shepherding the Victim and Family

There are multiple practical needs which need to be met; however, people involved in the situation are hurting deeply and need connection. Grieve with them, ask intelligent questions about how they are, pray with them, or visit. Enlist other members in the church to do the same. While care should be taken not to overpromise or offer false hope, remind the family that God sees and knows all things and has not left them alone. Listen to their lead as you follow up, but don't simply wait for them to reach out or identify what they need.

When people are abused, the ability to see and clearly comprehend the situation is dramatically hindered. It often requires substantial time and distance from an abusive situation to fully recognize and articulate what happened. Understand that this means that information is likely to flow out in small increments as the survivor begins to feel safe in disclosing and is given enough time and space from the abuse to begin articulating what they have experienced as abnormal and wrong. This does not mean the survivor's story is "made-up" or "changing." This is a normal reality when coming out of trauma.

Practical Care for the Victim and Family

The families of victims are often overwhelmed simply trying to process the abuse, parent their wounded child, and care for their other children. Their life now consists of making police reports, attending multiple court hearings, and dealing with the interpersonal dynamics of the abuser's community. Added to these, they may be overwhelmed with managing life's normal demands.

Prior to a crisis, leaders and staff should familiarize with typical problems victims and their families encounter and how the church can help with support and/or practical involvement. It is difficult for families to discern what they need amid so much grief, or even how to communicate these needs. They likely will not know what options are available. Church leaders who proactively pursue care and help provide practical guidance through the church or community resources can be an incredible gift.

- In cases involving a custodial parent, determine that parent's financial situation.
- Have a plan for how your church will help those without financial resources and/or other necessities if there is an alleged abusive spouse who cannot or refuses to provide support.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Help with childcare responsibilities so that the children aren't forced into contact with the alleged abusive spouse during school pick-up or drop-off, or if they need transportation to an appointment.
- Care for other children in the home when the victim is required to appear in court, attend investigative meetings, and/or receive counseling.
- Care for the children while the parent/parents/caregivers take time away to regroup or grieve the circumstances.
- Help the children and/or custodial parent find professional counseling if needed.
- Provide a schedule for the delivery of meals.
- Provide emotional support and/or physical support when the victim and/or family is working through judicial process.
- If the abuse occurred on church property or during a church event, or was perpetrated by a staff member or volunteer, insurance funds may be available to help provide counseling for the victim. Assign someone with expertise in insurance dynamics to proactively work with the church insurance representative and obtain the maximum amount available to assist the family.
- Proactively pursue an insurance claim to help meet the need for trauma care. Trauma therapy is almost always needed for extended periods of time and is often out of reach for most families. Do not wait for the family to ask the church to take this step. The family should not be placed in the position of having to work with the insurance company themselves.
- Have a plan for communication and provide a spokesperson for the family to ensure their needs are met and care is provided.
- Determine how the rest of the pastoral staff and deacons will be notified of needs and kept updated.
- Keep very careful records of all communication.
- Communicate regularly.
- Have a prepared list of resources with which you are familiar in the community that can walk alongside the victim and their family. Children's Advocacy Centers, domestic violence shelters, legal aid clinics, and government resources such as Medicaid and SNAP can all be helpful in providing support on multiple practical levels.
- Have a prepared list of professionals in the community with whom you are familiar such as therapists, trauma counselors, family law attorneys, and intervention groups for abusers.

- Ensure that the alleged offender does not have continued access to children in the church environment. If the alleged offender is a church attendee or volunteer, immediately relieve the alleged offender from all church responsibilities and access to children. This includes all leadership roles, including volunteer leadership roles, until the conclusion of the investigation.

In the family context, this means doing what can be done to separate the alleged abusive parent from the rest of the family. It is usually easier and better to move the alleged abuser to a new location if they will agree to leave, and if the remaining spouse and children will be safe in that location. If the offending spouse is able to be moved, consider that this likely involves practical steps such as changing the door locks on the home. Otherwise, the non-offending spouse and child will need to be moved to an undisclosed and secure location.

Resist fear for how the circumstances will impact the reputation of your ministry or Christ. Christ does not need protection; He wants obedience. Protecting a ministry or institution instead of people fails to recognize that our identity is in Christ alone, and the ministry is His.

Failure to demonstrate God's heart for truth, justice, and the vulnerable ultimately destroys our witness and ministry. Jesus laid down His life, and we are called to similarly lay down our lives and reputation for the good of others.

7. Child Abuse Prevention

God's desire is that all children be protected. One of the ways He arranged for their care, nurture, and protection is the family. Parents are the primary caretakers, and they need good resources to help them steward their role well. Leaders should encourage parents who are the primary caretakers of their children in their teaching, protecting discipline, and training (Deut. 6:7; Eph. 6:4). Churches can assist parents by providing resources to teach children about abuse prevention from a Christian worldview.

Since most child abuse occurs inside the victim's home, the church can help parents who may struggle to parent wisely, discipline lovingly, recognize abuse, or provide for their children. The church can play a significant role in addressing potential weaknesses and prevent any abuse and neglect that might happen in the home as part of their Christian discipleship.

How the Church Can Assist Parents in Child Abuse Prevention

- **Teach parents to be present and caring parents.** Children need to know that they are loved and cared for in order to prevent abuse, but also to feel comfortable reporting to their parents.
- **Support the hard work of parenting.** Assist parents when they become overwhelmed. Consider teaching discipline methods and successful parenting strategies. Help parents raise children in a way that reflects Christ's love and care.
- **Help disadvantaged families** make connections with your benevolence and gain access to medical care or community resources. *This can help prevent issues related to neglect, especially when a family lacks resources.*
- **Host seminars for parents** who have not had the benefit of learning godly parenting. *Sanctifying their behaviors with their children bears witness to their faith.*
- **Talk to members about monitoring their child's phone, television, video, and internet viewing/usage.** Inform parents of the risk to their children as they interact online. Teach ways they can shepherd their children as they engage with technology.
- **Develop a recommended reading list** or supply the church library with books that help parents think biblically about parenting and difficult issues that might arise in a child's development.
- **Publish a recommended resource list for abuse prevention materials.** Many parents want to talk to their children about sex abuse prevention but do not know how. Abuse Prevention is most successful when children are taught about body safety and healthy boundaries and are encouraged to openly communicate about sexual matters. Resources are available for parents to read directly with their children. (See Annotated Bibliography.)

How the Church Can Prevent Child Abuse

The protection of children should be a multi-pronged approach that reflects that we cherish and love the children God has gifted us (Ps. 127:3). A church should seek to be a safe environment for children where they can learn about the Lord (Prov. 22:6; Mark 9:42). We want to model for children how Christians are called to love God and one another (Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 11:1) Further, we protect the reputation of Christ when we seek to protect children from abuse as it showcases our desire to live in a manner that is above reproach and in line with our faith (Matt. 18:6; Phil. 4:8-9).

- **Create and implement a child abuse policy.** See section on creating a comprehensive Child Protection Plan.
- **Train staff, leaders, and volunteers to recognize and report child abuse.** If you do not have the means for training, consider bringing in an outside organization or program.
- **Insist on background checks** for staff and members who work with children and teenagers.
- **Be known for reporting** suspected abuse or neglect.
- **Communicate to the congregation** that pastoral staff are trained and willing to intervene when abuse is suspected or reported.
- **Clearly articulate abuse as a sin.** Teach that God hates abuse and calls His people to protect the vulnerable.
- **Clarify that abuse is not a private issue.** The church should welcome the exposure of evil and be willing to work with the local government (Rom. 13).
- **Teach your church's theology of abuse.**
- **Require your leaders to model** exemplary sexual lives. Because of their high calling, high visibility, and high influence among us, pastors and other church leaders should be expected to live godly lives (Titus 1:5-9).
- **Address tangential issues** such as pornography and other media which eroticize violence.
- **Extend education to children and teenagers.** Teach them how to recognize and report abuse. Children should understand that, while the Bible tells children to obey their parents, the biblical command for obedience is conditional (Eph. 6:1) and it is good and godly to expose sin.

8. Case Studies

Amanda

At first, Amanda was flattered. Peter, the high school varsity soccer coach, made a point of cheering specifically for her at soccer games. Peter also volunteered in the youth ministry at her church, so he came to the underclassmen games to “support” the players who attended youth group. Though she was only a sophomore, Peter was interested in everything she did. He would even send her encouraging text messages during the day. Peter always shared solid biblical wisdom with her when she faced any challenges in school. Peter was good-looking, and his attention kind of felt nice.

In her junior year, Peter was one of Amanda's soccer coaches. He continued to text tips for how to improve her game and offered to help by setting up a practice session specifically for her before youth group. When Amanda declined because her mom worked during the day and wouldn't be able to drive that early, Peter offered to pick her up. He even said he would bring her home after youth group.

As time went on, Peter would share personal information with Amanda. During one of their car rides, he told her he was having problems in his marriage. He said his wife just didn't understand him. He told Amanda she was jealous of all his sports and "hobbies." She'd complain about the time he spent volunteering at church. Peter then shared his admiration of Amanda's sports knowledge, finesse, and agility. "You're going to make some guy an amazing wife one day," he encouraged.

Eventually the topic of their conversations turned to Amanda and her interest in boys. Amanda began confiding in Peter. One day, she was crying about some guy she liked and how he had treated her poorly. Peter offered a hug. To Amanda, his hug felt a little too long and way too tight, but she felt bad for being suspicious of Peter's intent. She was confused though; the relationship was beginning to make her uneasy.

Peter's attentiveness toward Amanda increased over time. Hugs became routine and lasted longer. Amanda wasn't sure what to do about it. One day, he asked Amanda if she could keep a secret. He confessed he had developed feelings for her and if he even saw her picture on social media, it would lift him from his depression. Amanda told him she was very uncomfortable with the conversation and did not want to hear any more. But Peter said she treated him like a boyfriend. All the time they spent together and all the secrets she shared made Peter want more. He told her it was only right for him to desire physical affection too. He said all he needed was for her to sit on his lap and give him a hug. A hug would help his depression, he said, and the closeness would help him feel so much better. Amanda timidly complied.

As their relationship grew, Peter assured Amanda she was in the driver's seat. He convinced her *she* had pursued the relationship with *him*. Yet each week, he advanced their contact physically. When Amanda hesitated, he threatened to expose her for manipulating him. He said he would tell everyone she was sexting him. Peter said he really didn't want to do that because he knew her feelings for him were genuine. But he insisted she must continue to keep the

relationship secret so that no one could accuse him of having a favorite player. If people were aware they were a “couple,” it would jeopardize her chances of getting a college soccer scholarship.

Amanda was both confused and frightened. She knew what she did was wrong, but she did not recognize Peter’s manipulation. Amanda didn’t know she was being abused. She believed Peter’s lies that she was responsible for the relationship and feared what would happen if anyone knew. In addition, she was afraid of hurting him since she genuinely cared. On top of it, Amanda knew Peter’s wife. She couldn’t imagine causing her to suffer. Amanda had nowhere to turn.

Brainstorming questions for help developing best practices:

1. What structures and/or procedures should your church or ministry already have in place in case a situation like this occurs?
2. Upon discovering the circumstances, what will you do first?
3. What will you do next?
4. Who can you call for help navigating all the details?
5. Who in your church is versed in abuse and compassionate to care for the victim and/or her family?
6. What action steps will you take against the perpetrator?
7. What will you tell the congregation and how?
8. How will you determine if an outside agency will be helpful for this case?

Jane

Jane is a young mother in your church with three small children. The oldest is 3 years old; there’s an 18-month-old, and the baby was born 6 months ago. Jane is disoriented about some of the things that are happening in her home. She doesn’t think her husband’s behavior is right, but she’s unclear how to explain or if she’s gossiping if she shares.

Mark, Jane’s husband, has always been controlling. Often, he isolates her from friends and family. Sometimes he monitors her whereabouts on “Find My Friends.” If she’s even the slightest bit late in coming home when she said, Jane knows there will be consequences. She’s learned to live with Mark’s unrealistic demands, but when it comes to the children, she’s a bit more concerned. The little ones just don’t quite understand why Daddy is always so frustrated and angry. One of the things that disturbs Jane is that Mark

disconnects the heat if he thinks they are spending too much money warming the house in the winter. Jane often carries the baby in the Ergo just to keep them both warm.

More disturbing, however, are the discipline practices Mark uses. Before they had kids, Jane didn't know what Mark believed was appropriate for disciplining children. For instance, Mark insisted it was about time the baby was sleep trained. So, if she cries at night, he goes into the nursery, picks her up, and squeezes her little body so tight she cannot cry or make a sound. Mark won't release the infant until she stops struggling or trying to cry. Mark says this teaches the baby Mark is in charge and that she ought not cry at night. When Jane becomes distressed at the scene and expresses concern, Mark demands she submit to his authority and leave the room.

Jane is equally concerned about Mark's behavior with the toddlers. The 18-month-old is "spanked" with a leather strap for even the smallest infraction—everything from not coming down a steep flight of stairs by herself when Mark wanted her to learn to climb down on her own, to spilling her sippy cup at dinner time. Sometimes the leather strap leaves visible welts on her small bottom that last for days. Once, Jane photographed the welts and documented fingerprint bruises on the arms of her three-year-old. Her son told Jane that Daddy grabbed him after he disobeyed. Mark has even been known to deprive the two older children of dinner or other meals as a punishment.

Jane is scared, but she doesn't know who to tell. So, she approaches one of the elders at your church and reveals only that there's "a problem" in her home. She doesn't share details but describes the problem as Mark being angry all the time. She asks for the elder's discretion in sharing anything with other church leaders. The elder suggests they begin marriage counseling. In their meetings, Jane ambiguously describes Mark's behaviors with the children, but she doesn't call it "abuse." Mark tells the elder he's training the children and leading the home like a godly husband and father. The elder warns Jane to be cautious with the words she uses, reminding her that parents need to discipline their children and won't always do it perfectly.

Jane doesn't know where to turn. She's afraid for her children's safety, but in their counseling sessions the elder continually minimizes what is happening. He seems to believe Mark's version of the circumstances and calls Jane "oversensitive," so she hesitates to reveal further information or to use strong language like "abuse." In private, Mark accuses her of not living in reality.

Three years pass, and Jane can no longer stomach how Mark disciplines the children. The “counseling” failed long ago, so Jane takes the children and leaves her husband and files a report against her husband for child abuse. The elder who was previously involved tells you and child protection services that Jane “never presented evidence of abuse.”

Brainstorming questions for help developing best practices:

1. What structures and/or procedures should your church or ministry already have in place in case a situation like this occurs?
2. What questions would have been helpful for discerning what was happening in the home?
3. What might have been some red flags?
4. How does the “reason to believe” standard help with this situation?
5. Upon discovering the circumstances, what will you do first?
6. What will you do next?
7. Whom can you call for help navigating all the details?
8. Who in your church is versed in child abuse and compassionate to care for the victim and/or family?
9. What action steps will you take against the father?
10. What will you tell the congregation and how?
11. How will you determine if an outside agency will be helpful for this case?

SECTION SIX: THE MISUSE OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

1. Summary Description of Misuse of Spiritual Authority

The reports of abusive spiritual leadership and/or moral failure by called and ordained shepherds is increasing worldwide. Spiritual abuse and its effects are egregiously demonstrated in the stories of Jim Jones and David Koresh but are no less devastating to God’s name when performed by ministers of the PCA or any other religious body.

Spiritual abuse may be manifested by any or all the following:

- Emotional or psychological manipulation based on Scripture,
- Physical and sexual assault,
- Financial exploitation,

- Haughty, manipulative, demeaning, humiliating, accusatory, belittling, or shaming speech and/or behavior,
- Intimidation, coercion, and demand for conformity to non-biblical standards.

Spiritual abuse is an attempt to exert power and control over someone using religion, faith, or beliefs. The Salvation Army includes “when spiritual authority is misused to manipulate peoples’ emotional responses or loyalty for the benefit of the church, institution, or of another individual.”²¹³

Spiritual abuse aims to solidify the power, prestige, and gratification of the abuser. The means are a misuse of Scripture and of the victim’s desire to please God and their leader. Victims suffer shame, confusion, and spiritual doubt, which have a negative impact on the victim’s perception of God’s character. Congregations and the Body of Christ suffer morally and existentially beyond the purely secular and legal definitions of abuse.

2. Expressing God’s Heart

In his first letter to Timothy (3:1-7) the apostle Paul provides a list of qualifications for leaders in Christ’s church. Paul calls leadership a “noble task.” Each character trait proceeds from a heart transformed by the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. The picture Paul paints for Timothy is of a leader motivated by the servanthood of Jesus Christ. Leaders are temperate, self-controlled, respectable, gentle, and self-aware of their own failing. They humbly struggle to pursue holiness and are motivated by love for Jesus Christ and their neighbor. Leaders “preserve that authority which God had put upon them.”²¹⁴ They are not dominating, harsh, or uncaring. Leaders must express the heart of God and bless those under their God-given authority. Their leadership must truly seek the good of each member of the congregation and community.

God is the perfect model of leadership; “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (John 10:11-18). Jesus’s washing

²¹³ “Spiritual Abuse,” Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa Territory, approved December 2005, <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/positional-statements/spiritual-abuse>.

²¹⁴ *The Westminster Confession of Faith* as adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America (Lawrenceville, GA: PCA CDM, 2007), Q. 129.

of the disciples' feet, even those of His betrayer, teaches us that to lead is to bend down and serve those under our care. The disciples called Jesus "Teacher" and "Lord," and He confirmed those titles. Jesus had enormous, yet restrained strength at His disposal. He laid down His heavenly privilege and, instead, performed the duty of the lowest class in society. Jesus intentionally served those He ruled. He is the opposite of an oppressive leader. The type of leadership Christ intended for His kingdom involves abandoning all self-serving motives and authoritarianism (described as "lording it over" in Matthew 20) for the sake of God's people.

Historically, however, many leaders have been self-serving, motivated by power, authority, and material gain. When confronted, they shift blame. Oppressive leaders wield power and are averse to sacrifice. They are unwilling to relinquish the control that power brings and instead use it to build their own kingdom. God casts the most severe judgment on this abusive type of shepherd. When the Israelite leaders ruled harshly and brutally, Ezekiel told them, "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves!" (Ezek. 34:2-10). He then asks the rhetorical question, "Should not shepherds take care of the flock?" The prophet then says the Lord is against them, and they will be held accountable.

3. Recognition of the Misuse of Spiritual Authority

Scripture provides many examples of abusive leadership. Abusive leaders fail to apply the gospel to how they lead. In 1 Kings 12, we read of the foolishness of Solomon's son, Rehoboam.

And the king answered the people harshly and forsaking the counsel that the old men had given him, he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12:13-14).

Rehoboam was authoritarian in his leadership and Israel paid greatly. In Rehoboam's foolishness, God's people suffered a "split" in the kingdom. Jeroboam led ten of the Israelite tribes away from the center of worship in Jerusalem.

Micah condemns those ". . . who have authority, who abhor justice and make crooked all that is right . . . who build with bloodshed and unrighteousness . .

. your leaders work for money . . . yet they say, ‘Is not the Lord among us?’” (Mic. 3:9-11).

In addition,

- Eli was taken to task by the Lord for honoring his sons, who were false shepherds of God’s people, over Jehovah (1 Sam. 2:27-29).
- King Ahab was an idolater and “did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him” (1 Kings 16:33).
- King Jehoram murdered his brothers when he ascended to the throne of Judah (2 Chron. 21:4-6).
- The Scribes and Pharisees bound “heavy burdens . . . on people’s shoulders but they themselves [were] not willing to move them with their finger. They [did] all their deeds to be seen by others” (Matt. 23:4-5).

The Lord repeatedly calls those who oppress to repentance (Judg. 6:9; 10:12; 1 Sam. 12:8; 2 Kings 13:4; Ps. 9:9; 10:18; 103:6; 146:7). At times, He even consumes them in His wrath (Ezek. 22:29-31). Those who stand against oppressive behavior and on the side of the oppressed reflect the Lord’s heart for His people.

The Westminster Divines provided a fitting exhortation to those who would seek their own selfish ends over the needs of their subordinates:

Q.130. What are the sins of superiors?

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, and inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or anyway dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ *The Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechism*, Q. 130.

There is a difference between lording over and serving the flock. “Driven people think they own everything . . . called people, on the other hand, think everything in life is on loan.”²¹⁶ Godly leaders see authority as God-given for His glory. Just as a father is commanded to care for his children and not provoke them to wrath (Eph. 6:4), so a leader in the church must not dishonor himself by provoking those under his care. Harsh, authoritarian, and abusive leadership is roundly denounced by God and the Westminster Divines. It must likewise be denounced by the modern church.

The Misuse of Spiritual Authority by an Organization

In April of 2018, the *New York Times* reported, “Bishops and other leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Pennsylvania covered up child sexual abuse by more than 300 priests over a period of 70 years, persuading victims not to report the abuse and law enforcement not to investigate it, according to a searing report issued by a grand jury on Tuesday.”²¹⁷

In February of 2019, the *Houston Chronicle* and the *San Antonio Express-News* reported that, over the last twenty years, 380 Southern Baptist church leaders were either convicted of sexual abuse, credibly accused and successfully sued for abuse, or had confessed and resigned due to abuse. *Christianity Today* noted that these church leaders left behind “more than 700 victims.”²¹⁸

Baylor University completed a national “clergy sexual abuse” survey in 2015.²¹⁹ While only evaluating the effectiveness of the church’s response to predatory sexual sins of clergy, it is helpful to us in understanding the need for better ministry regarding the misuse of spiritual authority. Both the impact of

²¹⁶ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, eds., *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 104.

²¹⁷ Laurie Goodstein and Sharon Otterman, “Catholic Priests Abused 1,000 Children in Pennsylvania,” *New York Times*, August 8, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/14/us/catholic-church-sex-abuse-pennsylvania.html>.

²¹⁸ David Roach, “SBC Recalls ‘Year of Waking Up’ Since Abuse Investigation,” News & Reporting, *Christianity Today*, February 10, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/february/sbc-waking-up-houston-chronicle-abuse-investigation.html>.

²¹⁹ “Clergy Sexual Abuse Research,” Diana R. Garland School of Social Work, Baylor University, accessed August 31, 2021, <https://socialwork.web.baylor.edu/research-impact/ongoing-research/clergy-sexual-abuse-research>.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the abuse and mishandling of reports by the church are a grave concern. The results of the survey concluded:

- Only 4% of the perpetrators were prosecuted;
- Only 8% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their church supported them after the abuse occurred;
- Only 8% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that the perpetrator apologized to them;
- 50% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their experience with the church after the abuse negatively affected their relationship with God;
- 80% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their experience with the church after the abuse negatively affected their spiritual life;
- Only 9% Agreed or Strongly Agreed the church was helpful when they reported the abuse;
- Only 15% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their church/denomination thoroughly investigated the report;
- Only 11% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their church openly communicated with them during the investigation.

Abuse occurs in a favorable environment. This is sometimes referred to as “institutional,” “organizational,” or “systemic”²²⁰ abuse, and can be defined as “A system, such as a family, a government entity, a school, a church or religious organization, a political group, or a social service organization, [which] enables the abuse of the people it purports to protect.”²²¹

The primary leader of an abusive organization may be charismatic, charming, and/or particularly gifted at preaching. This type of leader draws others in and drives the system. People are attracted by magnetic personalities and may voluntarily or even involuntarily become participants in authoritarian and/or abusive leadership. Followers may be driven by the vision of the leader and will protect his position for the church and/or organization and for their own sense of power in the system.

²²⁰ “System” comes from Greek words meaning “to stand” and “together.” When standing together to oppress those under their care, church leaders are systemic in their abuse.

²²¹ Diane Langberg, *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2020), 75.

Non-abusive leaders and/or members may also become complicit in the misuse of spiritual authority if they turn away claims or ignore the occurrence. They may protect the leader because they have not themselves experienced the abuse others have. Complicity likewise occurs when people believe that truthfulness damages Christ’s name or the reputation of his church. When leaders practice oppressive behaviors, those who experience the abuse or receive a report have a responsibility to seek healing and justice. Christ’s name and reputation are glorified when the church stands against those who damage others.

Signs of the Misuse of Spiritual Authority

Mary Demuth lists ten signs of a spiritual abuser in ministry.²²² These include but are not limited to the following.

- **Distorted view of respect:** A spiritually abusive leader forgets respect is earned, not granted, and demands it without humble servanthood.
- **Demands personal allegiance as proof of allegiance to Christ:** For a spiritually abusive leader, the only acceptable path for followers is obedience. Absolute submission to the leader gives evidence that the follower is “Christ-like.”
- **“Exclusivity” language:** A spiritually abusive leader’s way is the right and true way; everyone else is wrong or misguided.
- **A culture of fear and shame:** The culture a spiritually abusive leader creates silences critics, searches out failure in others, and humiliates people into compliance.
- **Personality cult:** A spiritually abusive leader encourages a cult of personality consisting of “yes people” isolated from the needs of others in the congregation. Often, a charismatic leader will slip into arrogance, defensiveness, and pride.
- **Dependence:** A spiritually abusive leader will promote himself or a small group of devoted followers for spiritual information. Personal and independent discipleship in this atmosphere is discouraged.

²²² Mary DeMuth, “10 Ways to Spot Spiritual Abuse,” *Mary DeMuth* (blog), September 6, 2016, <https://www.marydemuth.com/spiritual-abuse-10-ways-to-spot-it/>.

- **Demand blind servitude of followers but live privileged lives:** A spiritually abusive leader takes the first seat and justifies his material extravagance as God's favor and blessing on his ministry.
- **Buffered from criticism:** A spiritually abusive leader does this surrounding himself with only those who commit to absolute allegiance. Those with legitimate concerns are considered enemies, banished, or battered into submission, and/or crushed.
- **Outward performance over authentic spirituality:** A spiritually abusive leader often demands strict behavior and adherence to rules from congregants, but practices licentiousness, greed, and uncontrolled addictions behind closed doors.
- **Unswerving allegiance from the inner circle:** Fear of a spiritually abusive leader prevents anyone from confronting with their concerns.

These are additional characteristics of systemic misuse of spiritual authority.

- **Pharisaical teaching:** The church tends to be "pharisaical" in their application of biblical teaching. More emphasis is placed on personal piety than on the gospel of Christ's saving work.
- **Public prestige and undue influence:** The leadership of the church has significant public prestige and has undue influence on their membership. Members have great difficulty disagreeing with their leaders due to the power of spiritual authority they exhibit.
- **Pious image:** Much is made in the church of keeping up an image of piety among members and the church as an organization. The leadership may hide behind passages such as Matthew 18 when members complain openly about the leadership. The leadership may demand Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) from those who leave the employ of the church. Each may be an attempt to maintain a pious image.
- **Denial and damage control:** When responding to criticism, they emphasize denial and damage control. Their first response to criticism is that leadership in the church would "never do such a thing." The leadership tends to first look for ways to lessen the impact on attendance, giving, and reputation. They may look for "scapegoats" to shift the responsibility of leadership failure.
- **Willfully unresponsive:** Humility is lacking. There appears to be little willingness to hear criticism. Therefore, the church fails to change.

An organizational misuse of spiritual authority is particularly difficult for victims to identify and seek to rectify. Abuse typically involves more than one leader, so there may be little support to confront the abusive leadership. Because the organization (group) has exhibited the above abusive attitudes and actions, and any disagreement is seen as disloyal or rebellious, it is problematic for the victim to find others who can confirm abuse is taking place.

4. Responding to Reports of the Misuse of Spiritual Authority

The unfortunate response of many institutions and churches has been to ignore or cover up abuse. For a victim, this feels as if they have been betrayed twice. Often the second betrayal is worse than the first. It results in shame and ostracism, with further emotional, spiritual, and physical harm. Those who suffer under abusive leadership may struggle in their relationship with both the church and with God. Many “deconstruct.” When abuse occurs, churches and institutions must have established processes for comforting and restoring victims.

Victims

Abuse by a “man of God” is confusing, which creates significant difficulty for reporting. Spiritual abuse causes one to doubt their own perceptions. Victims may be paralyzed as they struggle with how to respond. The problem is further exacerbated as details might not materialize all at once. The consistent questioning of reality by a victim may result in convincing oneself the abuse did not occur. Also, it’s not uncommon for a victim to rationalize the abuser’s behavior. Victims will say they gave the abuser the “full benefit of doubt” and chose to respond to the circumstances with “charitable judgment.” In the most twisted scenario, victims may even question whether God ordained the leader’s behavior.

At times, seemingly small blemishes are the first sign of a much deeper problem. These flaws in the fabric of an institution become toxic over time. Therefore, both egregious failings and mundane concerns must be reported.

Lack of a recognizable, trustworthy source for reporting leads to inertia, and further compounds damage to the flock. Delayed reporting impedes the following:

- Confrontation of the abusive leader,
- Cessation of abuse,

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Repair, and/or
- Reconciliation.

In the absence of a means for reporting, the victim and/or family may make the mistake of questioning the abuser directly without adequate preparation and/or protection. Because of the power and status of the abuser relative to the victim, it is rare that a “brother to brother” appeal (as described in Matthew 18:15-19) will result in resolution or repentance. There is also significant risk of causing further consternation and damage to the victim. (See Matthew 7 discussion below under “Shepherding the Abusive Leader.”)

The high incidence of abuse of all forms requires a clearly identified, empathetic, formally established, well-trained, and user-friendly means of reporting. When a report is made, the following should be kept in mind.

- **Confidentiality:** Assure the victim their story is safe, and you will only share what they allow. Encourage them to share as much as they are comfortable sharing, keeping in mind the victim may not want to say everything.
- **Put the victim at ease:** The victim may not trust you completely. If you are a leader in the institution, the victim may naturally question if you may be abusive or complicit. Affirm you will care for them above the institution.
- **Listen attentively:** Try not to interrupt, carefully discern when to ask for more detail.
- **Resist critiquing.** Often those who hear stories of abuse criticize how the story is told. This confuses victims. Allow them to share however they choose.
- **Believe the story:** There will be time to sort out the veracity of the victims’ claims. In the beginning it is important to give them a trusted place to share. It is important to sit with the ambiguities and resist asking questions about the victim’s credibility and motivations.
- **Be patient:** If the abuse has been sexual in nature, the victim may be particularly hesitant to share the full story.
- **Write down as many direct quotes as possible:** It is important to have an accurate account of the report in order to pass along information to those who will bring accountability to the accused.
- **Be supportive, compassionate, and affirm the victim’s bravery in reporting:** Assure the victim this was not their fault. The

responsibility of abusive behavior is always the abuser's. Ensure you will do what you can to help.

- **Give the victim as much information as you can about next steps:** Give the victim options. Let them know that you will do your best to support and protect them and that you are going to talk to people who can help.
- **Follow up.** Let the victim know what steps have been taken or will be taken. This is a very vulnerable time and position, so it is important that they are fully informed.
- **Know your limits.** If you have limited training in abuse, humbly seek expertise. Though you may be well-meaning, be careful to only do what is legal and what provides safety to the victim.

Abuser

Some of the most charming and likeable leaders are also the most adept at hiding evil behavior. Lawyer and psychologist, Dr. Wendy L. Patrick, wrote, “Having spent over two decades prosecuting cases of domestic abuse, I've seen that perpetrators can fly under the radar for years because they are able to disarm with charm—clothing themselves with (misplaced) trustworthiness and credibility.”²²³

Abusive leaders deny accusations, especially in response to people perceived as weak. This is particularly prevalent in any private conversations with the victim. Solo confrontation of the abuser by the victim is likely to result in one or more of the following:

- Gaslighting,
- Verbal attack,
- Threat, and/or
- Blaming the victim.

An abuser will typically try to silence the victim by . . .

- Appealing to the cause of Christ,

²²³ Wendy L. Patrick, “Behind the Façade: The Socially Charming Domestic Abuser” Why Bad Looks Good (blog), *Psychology Today*, April 12, 2018, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/why-bad-looks-good/201804/behind-the-fa-ade-the-socially-charming-domestic-abuser>.

- Appealing to the sanctity and harmony of the church,
- Appealing to the abuser's authority,
- Appealing to biblical exegesis,
- The deployment of friends or other means at his disposal, and/or
- Evoking a non-disclosure agreement and threaten attached penalties.

Without confrontation, abuse continues and escalates. Ending abuse requires challenge by a greater or independent authority. Evidence of this is found in 2 Samuel 12 as Nathan confronts King David. David would not have repented without Nathan's confrontation. Confrontation must be biblical and loving, however powerful enough to produce true repentance. Such greater power comes only from the Holy Spirit.

5. Reporting

Reporting the misuse of spiritual authority depends on the type of abuse committed by a leader in the church.

Be familiar with the reporting requirements in your state. Typically, these laws are less stringent for adult abuse than they are for child abuse. It is recommended the following be appointed to respond to the survivor and accused:

1. Church Advocacy Group and
2. Session Crisis Intervention Team

Church Advocacy Group

Those who have experienced any form of abuse and/or assault should have an easily accessible, empathetic, reliable, and formal means of reporting. Persons with like experience or situation help somewhat in decreasing fear of reporting. Appointed and highly visible advocates in the local church might include a small group of well-trained members.

The advocacy group should document the concern or complaint in sufficient detail to categorize it as reportable to public authorities (such as physical abuse, rape, sexual assault, physical assault, battery, kidnapping, etc.) or non-reportable (spiritual, verbal, emotional, financial abuse short of the above, doctrinal error, abusive leadership, sexual harassment, adultery, deceit, etc.).

Crisis Intervention Team

The Crisis Intervention Team should consist of effective, wise, and disciplined elders (other than those assigned to advocacy group) able to intervene promptly, efficiently, and effectively to the complaint.

Major tasks will be to . . .

1. Investigate the matter,
2. Relieve any allegedly abusive leaders from duty (after confirmed disclosure, family safety, and abused must set the pace), and
3. Provide shepherding counsel and support to victims, abusers, and their families.

The Crisis Intervention Team is also responsible as a liaison with Presbytery and communication to and with the congregation and general public regarding the matter. Truth, honesty, and accountability should be the hallmarks of the team's interactions with the accused, congregation, Presbytery, and with the public.

The Crisis Intervention Team (or appointed elder) should inform the accused leader of the charge and relieve him from duty immediately (after confirmed disclosure, family safety, and the abused must set the pace). They should conduct their investigation in such a way as to carefully shepherd the victim and preserve their safety (see "Redemptive Shepherding" below), anonymity, privacy, and welfare.

Reportable complaints should be given to police. The Advocacy Group and/or Crisis Intervention Team should inform the pastor and/or Session (the latter only if the pastor is implicated) immediately after submission to authorities and give them their written report. This is to avoid cover up for serious crimes and offenses at the beginning, the most crucial phase of the process.

Non-reportable complaints should be written in sufficient detail and presented to the Session. It is wise to shield a victim's identity unless given permission to disclose. If the complaint is warranted, the Session might plan a strategy to confront the accused. A complaint considered unwarranted should be documented and provided to the accuser with the reasons for the determination.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should meet with the accused after the complaint is lodged, as soon as possible if reported to authorities. Prior to this meeting, they should engage in prayer for wisdom, discernment, and the preservation of the honor of Christ and His church, as well as for grace in approach to both parties.

A written complaint should be presented to the accused leader. The accused's response will be documented verbatim by the advocates, including the responses to appropriate further clarifying questions. Such questions should provide details of . . .

- Factual occurrence,
- Motives,
- Emotions,
- Prior events pertinent to the investigation as seen fit by the investigators and accused,
- Specific disagreement,
- Regret,
- Remorse, or
- Repentance expressed by the accused.

Each answer should be recorded in as much detail as possible, using direct quotes rather than paraphrases. These questions and statements should be recorded and documented until the meeting has reached a conclusion. Questions refused should also be so recorded.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should meet following a confrontation for prayer and to deliberate upon, analyze, and formulate their findings and conclusion of the preliminary investigation. They should document their findings and recommendations for further pursuit of the complaint in writing and submit them to the accused. At the presentation to the accused, the team should record any rebuttal, clarification, or other response of the accused.

The Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder should prayerfully deliberate on the written complaint, response, and rebuttal, and amend or sustain the original findings and recommendation in a final report. This report should be given to both accuser and accused. The following are possible courses of action that may be recommended to the Session.

1. **The issue is to be resolved with follow-up** by the Advocacy Group and Crisis Intervention Team or representative elder to both parties separately.
2. **The issue requires further investigation** by Session and/or outside investigators or counsel before actions can be recommended.
3. **The abuse report requires immediate action** such as contacting the police or Presbytery if not already reported, suspension from duty, or medical/psychiatric intervention.
4. **Action requires a formal program** of biblical counseling, spiritual discipline, mentoring, and accountability of progress in conformity to Christ by one or both parties.
5. **Formal charges or dissolution of pastoral relationship is warranted.**

Bringing Charges Against a Teaching Elder

Besides prayer, confrontation, deliberation, and investigation, it is important that PCA churches avail themselves of the formal system for accountability if a teaching elder is exhibiting signs of abuse and refusing to repent.

The *PCA Book of Church Order (BCO)* Chapter 34 is titled “Special Rules Pertaining to Process Against a Minister.” A church minister (teaching elder) is a “member” of a Presbytery, not the local church. Therefore, when his sin is repetitive following the attempt of members to confront him, it is necessary to pursue accountability through members of the Presbytery (34-4).

There are three possible ways to proceed by the Session or church members:

1. Discuss the matter with another elder in the Presbytery, of which the teaching elder is a member, seeking their personal aid in further confrontation;
2. Bring clear, documented proof of unrepentant leadership failure to the committee that handles charges brought against member pastors for their consultation;
3. Bring charges against the minister before this committee. Two witnesses must bring testimony (*BCO* 34-5) or there must be clear “corroborative evidence.”

Although the first and second options may be less intimidating to church members, bringing an abusive leader to trial may be necessary to provide

safety to the greater church. A teaching elder who has been found unrepentant will be publicly disallowed from ministry in the PCA as long as evidence of unrepentance remains.

However, it must be understood that leadership failure that does not involve “heretical” teaching must clearly evidence damage to Christ’s church.

Heresy and schism may be of such a nature as to warrant deposition; but errors ought to be carefully considered, whether they strike at the vitals of religion and are industriously spread, or whether they arise from the weakness of the human understanding and are not likely to do much injury (BCO 34-5).

Should the congregation wish to remove a teaching elder due to his spiritual abuse, they are required to follow these steps.

1. “. . . there shall always be a meeting of the congregation called and conducted in the same manner as the call of the Pastor” (BCO 23-1).
2. The meeting must be presided over by a ruling or teaching elder of the PCA.
3. The will of the congregation (as voted upon) is presented to the Presbytery for approval for the “dissolution of the pastoral relation.”

Independent Investigation and Outside Counsel

After the Session has received the preliminary investigation report of the Advocacy Group/elder, they may wish to investigate further or engage expert outside counsel. Outside independent counsel should be sought for potential felony, sexual harassment complaints, serious breach of biblical doctrine, evidence of toxic leadership, or any complaint that was reported to police or public agencies. Examples of such outside counsel include legal, certified public accountants, trained counselors, trained advocates, psychological and/or medical personnel, and/or seminary faculty with expertise in the field.

Urgency of outside assistance is warranted if the victim exhibits these signs:

- Agitation,

- Depression, and
- Suicidality.

Or if the following are true:

- Victim has insufficient resources available;
- There is complexity to the complaint;
- The complaint is extensive;
- There is great potential for harm if mishandled.

The safety of the victim(s), responsibility of the church, and the accountability of a guilty leader are foremost in the work of an independent counsel. *The church's image does not take precedence over truthfulness and repentance.*

6. Redemptive Shepherding

Shepherding the Victim

The consequences of abusive leadership are significant for a congregation and will require intensive grace and repair by the Holy Spirit. Sessions are called to shepherd the flock by lovingly and effectively bringing God's comfort and restoration to redeem the horrendous sin of the misuse of spiritual authority. Ministering to the victim of abusive leadership is intended to provide opportunity for healing physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Ministry to the victim involves the following:

- A safe place and person (people) with whom to share their story,
- Counseling with a counselor trained in spiritual abuse and trauma,
- Any medical care necessary (physical or mental),
- Spiritual counsel that affirms the victim's experience and patient and gracious teaching on Jesus's steadfast love for His child,
- Help in bringing accountability to those who have misused their spiritual authority.

This shepherding care should be assigned to well-trained elders and counselors. These caregivers should be capable of demonstrating God's grace in order to improve and heal the traumas specific to the victim(s). Victims have different needs, and to effectively minister, elders and counselors must understand these complexities.

Redemptive shepherding will be costly in time, effort, and tears. Shepherding care must be sustained until significant healing has been accomplished. Shepherding should occur as quickly as possible and be assigned to skilled counselors.

Shepherding the Abusive Leader

Matthew 18 speaks of brother-to-brother exhortation, implying confrontation of leaders from a similar position of rank. A church must make every attempt to obtain the sinful leader's repentance through direct and individual confrontation (BCO 34-3). Jesus teaches this process in Matthew 18:15-20. It is a step-by-step means of graciously turning a sinner from his sin. Each step in Jesus's instructions provides a "raising of the stakes" as more people, including those with greater authority, are consulted and involved in the confrontation.

Scripture also provides direction in cases where a subordinate confronting one in authority may be treacherous. "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you (Matt. 7:6)." Throwing the pearls of the truth before abusers may result in further harm to the victim (Prov. 23:9; 26:4). In a case where the oppressor is in authority over the victim and has a history of unrepentance when confronted, he may be considered dangerous. Confrontation can negatively impact the life of the victim(s) causing further emotional or spiritual trauma. Jesus provides freedom for an accuser to liberate themselves from greater harm by confronting their abuser. Those who have God-given leadership authority must take responsibility for bringing Christ's authority to bear on an errant leader. This provides safety for the victim(s), vindication for those who support them, and accountability for the offender.

Jesus calls those who have been sinned against to confront an offending brother with an attitude of humility. The one who challenges a brother in his sin should humbly prepare himself first by recognizing his own sin. He must take care to remember Jesus suffered on behalf of both his sin and that of the offender's.

The following are difficulties in bringing accountability to leaders who perpetrate abuse.

- **Hesitancy to Report.** Victims are aware they may not be believed, even though an overwhelming number of reports are

accurate and true. Reporting is often a great risk for the victim; therefore, many do not come forward.

- **Aggressive Defensiveness:** The abuser, typically a superior in a better, socially integrated position in the institution or organization, becomes aggressively defensive. DARVO articulates three known tactics of this type of defense,
 - **Deny** the abuse ever took place,
 - **Attack** the victim for attempting to hold the abuser accountable, and
 - **Claim** they are the real victim, thus **Reverse Victim and Offender**.

This is considered a specific form of gaslighting and is usually accompanied by emotional, physical, and/or legal threats against the victim. It creates a very difficult situation for victim- to-abuser confrontation.

Those who are accused of misusing their spiritual authority should be immediately removed from positions of authority while an investigation takes place in order to protect the congregation from possible further harm.

Finally, those who are found after investigation to have misused their spiritual authority should be encouraged to seek skilled counseling in abuse. Every effort should be made to bring the offender to repentance and healing.

Mishandling Reports

Mishandling of spiritual abuse by a church and/or Presbytery produces very serious repercussions for the victims, for the congregation, and for the honor of God's name. The emotional, physical, and spiritual harm done to victims of abusive authority is further compounded when those charged with caring for God's people fail to respond adequately to their cries for help.

Mishandling may occur through failure at multiple levels.

- **Friends:** When sharing their experiences, a victim may seek counsel from friends. These friends may not believe the victim and fail to provide empathetic care. In addition, they may gossip and cause greater shame. Friends may also pass information on to others, including the abusive leader, who will then cause further harm to the victim. Abusive leaders will do anything to protect themselves from unwanted scrutiny.

- **Leaders:** Much like friends, leaders may fail to listen well and take steps to rectify the abuse. If the goal is to protect leadership or a church's image, leaders may fail to both provide a safe place for the reporting of the abuse and accountability for the one misusing their spiritual authority. They may try to cover up the abuse. Other leaders may also pressure the victim to forgive and forget. Finally, they may also pass the information on to the abusive leader creating greater danger for the victim.

Unfortunately, it is more common for a church to create further damage to the victim's spiritual and emotional health through the mishandling of reporting than it is to be a safe place to find justice and healing. Church split or splinters are more likely to occur when church leaders fail to hold abusers accountable.

7. Prevention of the Misuse of Spiritual Authority

Institutions have ethical and legal obligations to lessen the risk of abuse and safeguard members by implementing . . .

- Appropriate policies,
- Reoccurring education,
- Careful hiring practices,
- Safe methods for reporting concerns,
- Prompt unbiased preliminary investigations,
- Referral to expert forensic investigator practices,
- Pastoral and psychological support,
- Procedure for submission to legal authorities, and
- Procedure for removal of suspected perpetrators from the possibility of further harm.

As a denomination, the PCA is committed to scriptural authority and trained, godly leadership. What do we look for in church leaders? Whereas every leader bears the sin of Adam, the shepherding of God's people requires maturity in the progression of sanctification (Titus 1:5-9, *BCO* 8-2). God has revealed in Scripture the standards for leadership as well as instruction in what it means to be a leader of God's people.

In the *Book of Church Order* (21-5) a candidate for ordination is asked eight questions, two of which are:

6. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace and unity of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?
7. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?

A minister of the gospel in the PCA is expected to strive for purity of doctrine and the unity and peace of his congregation. He is to “adorn the profession of the gospel” in his relationships and teaching. Timothy Witmer writes, “In leading the flock, shepherds must be motivated by love for the Lord and for the well-being of the sheep. It must be evident to the congregation that the leadership of the elders is exercised for the good of the people and not for the benefit of the leaders.”²²⁴

Leaders who practice domestic and sexual violence believe they are “entitled.” Leaders who abuse their place of leadership likewise believe they are entitled to their position of authority and control of the congregation. Leaders who neglect to recognize that their authority is *from* Jesus Christ and *under* His ultimate authority fail to lead in Christ-honoring ways.

The Ordination Process

Candidates for the gospel ministry and others employed for spiritual oversight (Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, etc.) should be examined carefully to determine their godly character. Presbyteries and Sessions are encouraged to carefully investigate a candidate for leadership roles including, but not limited to, the candidate’s knowledge of theology. Background checks, social media checks, and careful reference checks should be used to screen for abusive leadership.

As men apply to come under care by Presbyteries, it is imperative these steps be taken to confirm the calling of a man to the gospel ministry.

²²⁴ Timothy Z. Witmer, *Shepherd Leader* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), 156, Kindle.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The recommending Session must carefully evaluate the applicant's family, finances, and leadership philosophy and skills before recommending him to come under care of the Presbytery.
2. The Presbytery committee responsible for taking a man "under care" should confirm, through interviews of the applicant and his wife (if applicable), application, and recommendation forms, that the man satisfies the requirements found in Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Careful attention should be given to how the applicant performed in past and present positions of leadership in the workplace and home. Questions should be asked to determine the following:

- Candidate's interactions with his wife,
- Candidate's interactions with and discipline of his children,
- The candidate's work in team settings,
- The candidate's leadership philosophy in the workplace or other settings where he has authority over others,
- The candidate's willingness to acknowledge wrongdoing and repent,
- The candidate's childhood and spiritual development: Persons with significant childhood adversity, including abuse or neglect, or excessively privileged upbringing have much higher risk of being abusive.

Pastoral Ministry

Once employed, many in spiritual leadership lack consistent mentorship, accountability, and external discipleship. In the rush of daily ministry and stress of crisis intervention, it is easy to neglect prayer, Bible meditation, and re-creation in the Lord and His people. A formal accountability program and mentor should be established at the Presbytery level for each leader in ministry. This mentor will assist in recognizing early deviations from God's instructions for His leaders in the church.

Finally, success and power, especially in the world's eyes, can easily corrupt. These were the temptations offered to Christ in the desert by Satan. Should success and power be given, it must be used judiciously only for God's glory, not one's own.

8. Case Studies

Jacob

Jacob was still in college when he and his wife joined a new PCA church plant in their town. It was in an affluent area with many wealthy families. These families were the backbone of this small, dedicated congregation. The pastor was an excellent speaker, effective in ministering to the members from the pulpit. He was the founding pastor of the church plant that was administered by elders. Within six short months, Jacob and the pastor formed a close bond. His pastor asked Jacob to join the staff in an administrative position and to serve as a ruling elder on the Session.

In time, Jacob began to observe that his pastor was overly focused on gathering people to hear him preach. Jacob said it felt like his pastor had an unhealthy infatuation with the praise and applause of his followers. Jacob believed the purpose of church leadership was to model Christlikeness and train the “saints” for the works of ministry, not simply to gather them to hear one uniquely gifted teacher. Jacob brought the issue to his pastor in the most non-judgmental way he could. Because of his childhood abuse experience, Jacob was also particularly sensitive to “being wrong.” This insecurity made him make sure to take the log out of his own eye before confronting anyone in their sin.

Jacob was unprepared for the response. The pastor immediately shifted the blame to Jacob. He walked away from that confrontation with the nagging feeling his pastor was sinfully proud. He noticed that when a young, recently married couple began to have serious marital conflict and asked for an appointment with the pastor, the pastor scheduled them two weeks out. However, when a wealthy, attractive woman, the good friend of an influential pastor in the PCA, asked for an appointment to discuss the pastor’s teaching, she was immediately given a hearing at her home.

The pastor’s self-centeredness also became apparent in his handling of the church’s money. He hired a personal assistant, gave himself a significant raise, and signed himself up for a medical plan without Session approval. When the church purchased office space, the pastor spent a large sum on the remodeling—again, without Session approval.

Jim

Jim, a former college ministry leader, was a dynamic individual who most folks thought of as a people-magnet. Daniel was recruited by Jim, his former college leader, to work for him as an assistant with his church-planting work. Jim, as the church planting pastor, gave Daniel extensive duties, all which Daniel considered helpful for his growth as a young pastor. However, as Jim laid task after task at Daniel's feet, he would not help him prioritize. So, Daniel carefully considered the needs and prioritized the duties himself.

One Sunday morning, Daniel and Jim had a disagreement over the observance of the Lord's Supper, and Jim put Daniel on suspension. The intent was to have the Session discuss his case a week later. Daniel's church had mostly borrowed elders, friends of Jim, who did not live locally but out of state. As Jim's friends, the Session did his bidding and did not provide the type of oversight a Session is called to perform.

Jim did not seek to understand Daniel, nor did he provide an opportunity to discuss any options that might help them both move forward. Daniel said Jim displayed a shocking change of attitude that took him by surprise. Although Daniel was reinstated the next week, he and his wife felt they were walking on eggshells.

Some months later Daniel was told he needed to maintain a chart of 30-minute increments and record all he did both personally and at work. He was also instructed to report with whom he met during the day. The men in charge of Daniel's oversight were tasked with discussing the reports with Jim.

Eventually, the elders voted to dissolve Daniel's call to the church and ask for his resignation. It was explained to Daniel that if he chose to go to the Presbytery to challenge the decision, he would give up his severance package as a conditional response to a previously signed non-disclosure agreement.

During several months of transition Daniel was given strict instructions not to meet with certain individuals at the church, and he was required to tell Jim what was said if he did meet with anyone. Daniel said, "If I did talk with people at all, my narrative was to be that 'I fired myself' by my actions . . . that I was the only party that acted wrongly. One of Jim's friends on the Session continued to call and threaten Daniel.

Since Daniel's departure, the church has particularized. The Session continues to witness conflicts between Jim, his assistants, and members of the congregation.

Mark

Mark, a church planter in the PCA, lived and ministered in a major U.S. city and, over the course of several years, successfully established a thriving church. Mark and his wife were hospitable, regularly welcomed a variety of people into their home, and eagerly shared the love of Christ. Mark had a charismatic personality and extensive business experience. As the church grew and organized, a group of men surrounded him, becoming part of the early leadership structure. These men were fiercely loyal to their pastor and valued his insight and direction.

Mark's marriage, however, was deeply broken. This came to the attention of those closest to him, so they enfolded the couple in an effort to help. What became obvious to these men throughout the process, however, was Mark's severe ill-treatment of his wife and patterns of abusive behavior. The team graciously entered into the situation and provided a safe place for Mark and his wife to get counsel and pursue restoration. But what should have been a path toward repentance, forgiveness, and healing instead became a battle for control.

Mark responded to his leaders' efforts by discrediting each one of them, questioning their motives and actions. Mark's unrelenting accusations and criticisms wore them down. In the end, two of the four leaders moved on to other churches. One particularly discouraged leader left the PCA altogether.

The pastor's abusive behavior continued to wreak havoc on his marriage and in the church. When they particularized, the Session of the church, similar to the early leadership team, witnessed the brokenness of Mark's marriage. Like the leadership team, they pursued him in order to encourage his marriage relationship.

Again, Mark rejected his fellow leaders. This time, the Presbytery was asked by the Session to step in and help. After countless hours of counsel and investigation with little response from Mark, the Presbytery Committee recommended his removal. Rather than respond humbly, receiving the loving

counsel of his brothers, Mark wrote a scathing letter to the Presbytery and asked that they remove his name from the rolls.

As one of the original leadership team members confessed, it was difficult to pursue what appeared to be the censure of a leader when that leader was manipulative and had great relational capital in the church. However, Mark's response to their confrontation should have raised red flags immediately, and accountability should have been achieved by the Presbytery.

Ethan

Ethan was hired as an assistant pastor in a medium-sized PCA church. He and his wife, Amelia, enjoyed and were challenged by the grace-filled messages the pastor preached. Having left his former pastorate under a cloud of suspicion, Pastor Fredrick told the search committee and his new congregation when he was interviewed that he was the "victim" of the elders of the church he had served prior to coming. They "felt bad for the guy." The pastor mentioned Ethan as a reason he wanted to serve in that particular church. Ethan was encouraged by the ego-gratifying comments.

Soon after moving into his new office at the church, Fredrick put black paper over his office window. A few staff members thought it odd, but no action was recommended. Despite the nagging feeling Ethan had about Fredrick's strange behaviors, he worked hard to get along with his pastor. He remembered Fredrick saying that the assistant pastor in his previous church "hacked" him. Ethan did not want to be like Fredrick's former assistant: suspicious or distrusting. He believed Christians are called to grace, so he was determined to show Fredrick the grace the pastor did not receive in his previous church situation.

It was within a year of being installed that pornographic videos from Netflix showed up in the church mail. A couple years later, several of Fredrick's hidden moral failures also became apparent. It turned out he was plagiarizing his sermons and Bible studies. However, in response, Fredrick preached that love gives the benefit of the doubt. So, the congregation chose to overlook the offenses.

It is difficult for Christians to accept that a leader in the church can be so evil as to lie and manipulate with little or no sign of remorse. It is common for a congregation to stand behind the leader. During his years of ministry, it became clear that Fredrick's leadership was deeply flawed. The way he led the

church did not reflect a servant and sacrificial leadership that God's shepherds are called to. The elders became convinced that it was important for the witness of Christ to stand at the center of their church leadership and that they, as the gatekeepers, must hold their leader accountable. The Session asked for Fredrick's resignation and the Presbytery voted to depose him from ministry.

There were many attempts by the congregation and Presbytery to shepherd and help Fredrick. Rather than submit to their oversight and authority, he resigned. He went on to start another church in a different denomination. Looking back, Ethan said there were several red flags he should have seen. To this day, he lives with the guilt that he failed his congregation by not identifying the abusive leadership sooner and taking the steps necessary to bring him to accountability.

Brainstorming questions for help developing best practices:

1. What are some "red flags" in each of these stories that warrant further investigation?
2. What structures might have helped eliminate any of these mistreatments?
3. How would you respond to a report of a leader who misuses his power or authority?
4. What systems do you have in place to identify oppressive leadership?
5. What is the process for reporting in your church?
6. How have you helped your staff and/or congregation identify unhealthy types of leadership?

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Definitions

The following terminology is often used by those who work with abusers and victims. The inclusion of this list is neither an endorsement nor rejection of the terms or authors. The viewpoints included do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or official position of the PCA. This list is included for information and further study.

Abuse

Abuse is the treatment of any person that is callous, often cruel, for selfish reasons, and that has deeply detrimental effects on the person physically and/or sexually, emotionally, and spiritually. The image of God in the victim of such treatment is completely denied.

Accommodation Syndrome

Lacking insight to recognize, describe, and solve the problem of abuse, the victim establishes a habitual pattern of adjustment to the perpetrator characterized by loyalty and support of the perpetrator. The *Stockholm, Battered Women's*, and *Patty Hearst Syndromes* are similar.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

A pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others.²²⁵

Authoritarianism

The enforcement or advocacy of strict adherence to authority at the expense of personal freedom.

Battered Women's Syndrome

Behaviors and emotions of a woman who has been abused, similar to PTSD.²²⁶

Bullying

Targeted intimidation or humiliation by a person of greater physical or social power against a person of perceived lesser status.

²²⁵ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: APA Publishing, 2013), 645.

²²⁶ Lenore Walker, *The Battered Woman* (New York: William Morrow Paperbacks, 1980).

Child Advocacy Centers

One of 800 centers worldwide providing standardized, comprehensive, and coordinated multi-disciplinary management for victims and families.

Child (and Adult) Protective Services

Local government service bureau charged with responsibility of protecting those reported to be at risk or suspected of abuse victimization.

Childhood Sexual Abuse

Involves the traumatic use of a minor child for sexual gratification by a person in a position of power or authority and expected trustworthiness. The sexual abuse has components of emotional, verbal, and spiritual abuse. The status difference between the child and the abuser makes it impossible for the child to give free, informed consent or to say “no” meaningfully.

Clergy Abuse

Clergy abuse is when a pastor uses his position of spiritual trust to harm. Clergy abuse is always a form of spiritual abuse, but it often also takes the form of emotional, financial, or sexual abuse. The impact of abuse by a pastor who is ministering in the name of Jesus the Good Shepherd is devastating. Clergy sexual abuse is not an “affair” or a “relationship” but a predatory sin against a vulnerable sheep. When a pastor crosses any sexual boundary with a congregant, whether a child or an adult, it is clergy sexual abuse.²²⁷

Clergy-Perpetuated Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurring within the context of activities, setting, or relationships endorsed or fostered by official or unofficial policies and procedures of a religious institution. Such abuse typically employs spiritually persuasive power exerted by the abuser and produces an enhanced sense of emotional and existential betrayal in the victim.

Coercive Control

An attempt by one individual in a relationship to dominate the other for the purpose of controlling their autonomy, freedom, and individuality as a person. This includes both violent and nonviolent tactics. “Coercive control is used to

²²⁷ J. Holcomb, (2020) *Abuse and the Church: Types of Abuse* [PowerPoint presentation]. Retrieved from RTS Instructure. See also the Biblical and Theological section of this report for a fuller discussion.

instill fear and compliance in a partner. This type of mistreatment follows regular patterns of behavior.”²²⁸

Cognitive

Refers to intellectual function, such as memory, reasoning, and implementing prudent decisions.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Psychotherapy that seeks to address harmful distortions in thinking, emotions, past experiences, habits, and their effects on current behavior.

Complex PTSD

Unofficial designation of the body of effects of severe or early life trauma affecting development and manifested by combinations of flashbacks, dissociation, emotional dysregulation, personality disorder, and self-defeating or harmful behaviors.

Complex Trauma

Involves stressors that are repetitive and chronic, direct harm or neglect by those who should have been caregivers, and interpersonal violence that is usually repeated and chronic over time. Thus, the individual is shaped over time by the trauma.²²⁹

DARVO

An aggressive defense used by abusers consisting of **D**enial that the abuse took place, **A**ttacking the accuser by claiming they are the real victim, thereby **R**eversing the **V**ictim and the **O**ffender.

Domestic Violence or Abuse

Domestic violence (also called intimate partner violence [IPV], domestic abuse or relationship abuse) is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.²³⁰

The term “domestic violence” includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the

²²⁸ Lauren Paige Kennedy, “What Is Coercive Control in a Relationship?,” WebMD, <https://www.webmd.com/women/features/what-is-coercive-control#1>.

²²⁹ Diane Langberg, *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2015), 38.

²³⁰ “Understand Relationship Abuse,” National Domestic Violence Hotline, <https://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/>.

victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.²³¹

Domination²³²

Exerting power over others. This includes both violent and nonviolent tactics.

DSM-5

The current official psychiatric classification and definitions of mental illness.

Elder Abuse

There are several common types of elder abuse:

- **Physical:** Any injury or physical condition that impairs health or welfare. Some signs of physical abuse may include bruises, cuts, wounds, sudden change in behavior, or caregiver's refusal to allow visitors alone with a senior.
- **Emotional:** A pattern of ridiculing or using demeaning remarks or making threats to inflict physical or emotional harm. Some signs of emotional abuse may include intimidating, threatening, humiliating, and the silent treatment.
- **Sexual:** Any type of non-consensual sexual contact with an elderly person. Some signs of sexual abuse may include unexplained depression, fear or paranoia, discomfort or anxiety around certain people, or unexplained injuries.
- **Financial:** The illegal or improper use of a vulnerable adult or his/her financial resources for another's profit or advantage. Some examples of financial abuse may include the taking of money or property; forging a signature; getting a senior to sign a deed, will or power of attorney through deception; coercion or undue influence; or illegally or improperly adding names to bank accounts or safety deposit boxes.
- **Neglect:** Deprivation of food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain

²³¹ “What Is Domestic Violence,” United States Department of Justice <https://www.justice.gov/ovw /domestic-violence#dv>.

²³² See also Section Two: Domestic Abuse in this report.

minimum physical or mental health. Some signs of neglect may include unclean living spaces, lack of hygiene, or no food or water in the house.²³³

Emotional Abuse [See “Psychological Abuse”]

Entitlement

A sense of privilege, an insistence on being served, a patronizing mentality, autonomy in decision making, and defining the roles for each person in the relationship (the king of the castle).

Forgiveness

See Attachment 9: Forgiveness.

Gaslighting

A psychological ploy used by an abuser to confuse and paralyze his victim by refusing to listen to pleas to change, countering the memory of the victim, blocking the discussion of the subject, trivializing the victim’s emotions and needs, denying events and prior promises. The goal, as in the Hitchcock movie of the name, is to cause the victim to question her sanity.

- **Withholding:** the abusive partner pretends not to understand or refuses to listen.
- **Countering:** the abusive partner questions the victim’s memory of events, even when the victim remembers them accurately.
- **Blocking/Diverting:** the abusive partner changes the subject and/or questions the victim’s thoughts.
- **Trivializing:** the abusive partner makes the victim’s needs or feelings seem unimportant.
- **Forgetting/Denial:** the abusive partner pretends to have forgotten what actually occurred or denies things like promises made to the victim.²³⁴

Grooming

“Manipulative behaviors that the abuser uses to gain access to a potential victim, coerce them to agree to the abuse, and reduce the risk of being caught.

²³³ Holcomb, “Abuse and the Church.” Retrieved from RTS Instructure.

²³⁴ “What Is Gaslighting?” National Domestic Violence Hotline, <https://www.thehotline.org/what-is-gaslighting/>.

While these tactics are used most often against younger kids, teens and vulnerable adults are also at risk.

“Grooming can take place online or in-person. It’s usually employed by a family member or someone else in the victim’s circle of trust, such as a coach, teacher, youth group leader or others who naturally have some interaction with the victim.”²³⁵

Idolatry of Abuse

Worshipful thoughts and actions characterized by 1) desire to achieve power or control; 2) strong sense of entitlement, and 3) desire to be as God.

Imago Dei

Recognition that all human beings are created by God in His Image, sharing some of His attributes in lesser amount, always marred by sin, but fully worthy of dignity and human rights because of that Image.

Institutional Abuse (Betrayal)

Wrongdoings perpetuated by an organization upon individuals dependent upon that organization. Includes failure to protect or respond to abuse, neglect, and harassment.

Intimate Partner Violence [see Domestic Abuse]

Intimidate

To make timid or fearful; frighten, especially. To compel or deter by threats.²³⁶

Justice

Distributive, retributive, and restorative activities which promote, preserve, or restore moral health of persons and reconcile relationships.

Male privilege

An attitude of entitlement often based on notions of male hierarchy, manifested by insistence upon complete or unquestioned authority, narrowly defined roles, and insistence upon being served by inferiors.

²³⁵ “Grooming: Know the Warning Signs | RAINN,”
<https://www.rainn.org/news/grooming-know-warning-signs>

²³⁶ *Merriam Webster*, s.v. “frighten (v.),” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/frighten>.

Mandatory Reporting

Laws of most states and countries requiring immediate reporting of known or suspected abuse or neglect of children under 18 or elderly and the mentally or physically infirm by teachers, health care personnel, clergy, and other categories of occupations under good faith amnesty. Failure to report is a felony. Reporting is typically to police, protective services, or child advocacy.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

A pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy.²³⁷

Neglect

An act that deprives a dependent person of basic, physical or psychological needs.²³⁸

Oppression

A biblical category that describes a pattern of coercive, controlling, and punishing behaviors. It occurs in marriage when one spouse seeks to control and dominate the other (Gen. 16:1; Ex. 3:7-9; 1 Sam. 25; Ps. 9:9; 72:4; 103:6; 146:7-9; Isa. 1:17; 14:3-4; 20:12-13; 54:14; Jer. 50:33-34; Zech. 7:10; 9:8; Luke 4:18-19).²³⁹

Pedophilia

A DSM-5 diagnosis affecting up to 5% of males and 50% of child sexual abusers, characterized by sexual urges and fantasies regarding children. It is thought, like homosexuality, to be due in strong measure to biological mechanisms.

Personality Disorder

DSM-5 diagnoses wherein patients exhibit core impairments of self and interpersonal functioning that persist over long periods of time. Specifically, defects are exhibited in self-identity, self-appraisal, self-control, goal implementation, empathy, and intimacy.

²³⁷ APA, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, 645.

²³⁸ Jess Hill, “‘It’s Like You Go To Abuse School’: How Domestic Violence Always Follows the Same Script,” *The Guardian*, June 23, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/24/its-like-you-go-to-abuse-school-how-domestic-violence-always-follows-the-same-script>.

²³⁹ Darby Strickland, *Domestic Abuse: Recognize, Respond, Rescue* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018), 3.

Physical Abuse

Physical, spouse or partner violence are “non-accidental acts of physical force that result . . . in physical harm.”²⁴⁰ This includes all acts that invoke significant fear, such as (however, not limited to) shoving, pushing, and/or restraining.²⁴¹

Power

Having control over one’s own and other’s resources; having the capacity to influence someone else and stay uninfluenced by others.

Power Dynamics

The deleterious exercise of authority of one or more persons in an organization over others to the benefit of the former and the detriment of the latter, typically by limiting the voice or recourse of the latter.

Psychological Abuse

Non-accidental verbal or symbolic act that will result in harm to the well-being of another person’s mental or emotional state.²⁴²

Psychopathic Traits

A non-DSM-5 construct characterized by emotions and behaviors that include lack of empathy, shallow emotions, lack of remorse, grandiosity, glibness, and conning, deceptive behaviors.

PTSD

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] is an anxiety problem that develops in some people after extremely traumatic [shocking, emotionally distressing] events, such as combat, crime [sexual assault, domestic violence, captivity] an accident, or natural disaster [or observing a traumatic event happening to another person]. People with PTSD may relive the event via intrusive memories, flashbacks, and nightmares; avoid anything that reminds them of the trauma; and have anxious feelings they didn't have before that are so intense their lives are disrupted.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ APA, *DSM*, 720.

²⁴¹ Ann Maree Goudzwaard, “Domestic Abuse,” in *Encyclopedia of Biblical Counseling*, ed. Greg Gifford, accessed July 6, 2020, <https://encyclopediaabc.com/2019/12/23/domestic-abuse/>.

²⁴² APA, *DSM*, 720.

²⁴³ “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” <https://www.apa.org>, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.apa.org/topics/ptsd>.

Redemption

Salvation from sin and reconciliation from its effects.

Re-victimization

Repeated and higher frequency of new episodes of trauma and abuse experienced by victims of previous abuse due to psychological and social effects of the initial trauma and failure to heal, learn, and grow from the initial trauma.

Self-Control

A gift of the Holy Spirit given through special and common grace in various measure to overcome temptation, practice the virtue of temperance, delay superficial gratification, and operationalize higher and often longer-term rewards.

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is any type of sexual behavior or contact where consent is not freely given or obtained. It is accomplished through force, intimidation, violence, coercion, manipulation, threat, deception, or abuse of authority.²⁴⁴

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It consists of inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's sense of well-being by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment from the viewpoint of the affected individual.²⁴⁵

Shepherding

To protect selflessly, courageously, and lovingly, lead, mentor, feed, and heal those providentially and authoritatively brought under care, using the Model of Jesus.

Sin

A violation of God and God's laws.

²⁴⁴ Holcomb, *Abuse and the Church*. Retrieved from RTS Instructure.

²⁴⁵ Holcomb, *Abuse and the Church*. Retrieved from RTS Instructure.

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is an attempt to exert power and control over someone using religion, faith, or beliefs. The Salvation Army includes “when spiritual authority is misused to manipulate people’s emotional responses or loyalty for the benefit of the church, institution, or of another individual.”²⁴⁶

Stalking

The act or crime of willfully and repeatedly following or harassing another person in circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to fear injury or death especially because of express or implied threats.

Broadly: a crime of engaging in a course of conduct directed at a person that serves no legitimate purpose and seriously alarms, annoys, or intimidates that person.

NOTE: Stalking is often considered to be aggravated when the conduct involved also violates a restraining order protecting the victim.²⁴⁷

Trauma

Trauma occurs when suffering overwhelms normal human coping capacities and causes feelings of extreme shock, fear, and powerlessness. "Recurrent, tormenting memories of atrocities witnessed or borne."²⁴⁸

Trauma Triggers

Experiencing, without warning or desire, thoughts and memories associated with trauma. These intrusive thoughts and memories can easily trigger strong emotional and behavioral reactions, as if the trauma was recurring in the present. The intrusive thoughts and memories can come rapidly, referred to as flooding, and can be disruptive at the time of their occurrence.

If an individual experiences a trigger, he or she may have an increase in intrusive thoughts and memories for a while. For instance, individuals . . . may

²⁴⁶ “Spiritual Abuse,” Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa Territory, approved December 2005, <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/positional-statements/spiritual-abuse>.

²⁴⁷ *Merriam Webster*, s.v. “stalking (n.),” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/legal/stalking>.

²⁴⁸ Langberg, *Suffering*, 5.

have a surge of intrusive thoughts of past trauma, thus making it difficult for them to discern what is happening now versus what happened then.²⁴⁹

Verbal Abuse

Extremely critical, threatening, or insulting words delivered in oral or written form and intended to demean, belittle, or frighten the recipient²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ National Center for Biotechnology Information, *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 57.* (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US) Rockville, MD, 2014), CH. 3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/>

²⁵⁰ *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, s.v. “verbal abuse,” accessed December 9, 2021, <https://dictionary.apa.org/verbal-abuse>.

Attachment 2: DSM* Definitions****Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition*****1. DSM-5 on Child Neglect**

Child neglect is defined as any confirmed or suspected egregious act of omission by a child's parent or other caregiver that deprives the child of basic age-appropriate needs and thereby results, or has reasonable potential to result, in physical or psychological harm to the child. Child neglect encompasses abandonment, lack of appropriate supervision, failure to attend to necessary emotional or psychological needs, and failure to provide necessary education, medical care, nourishment, shelter, and/or clothing.

2. DSM-5 on Child Physical Abuse

Child physical abuse is nonaccidental physical injury to a child—ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death—occurring as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or another method that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or any other individual who has responsibility for the child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child. Physical discipline, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child.²⁵¹

3. DSM-5 on Childhood Psychological Abuse

Child psychological abuse is nonaccidental verbal or symbolic acts by a child's parent or caregiver that result, or have reasonable potential to result, in significant psychological harm to the child. (Physical and sexual abusive acts are not included in this category.) Examples of psychological abuse of a child include berating, disparaging, humiliating the child, threatening the child, harming/abandoning—or indicating that the alleged offender will harm/abandon—people or things that the child cares about, confining the child (as by tying a child's arms or legs together or binding a child to furniture or another object, or confining a child to a small enclosed area [e.g., a closet]), egregious scapegoating of the child, coercing the child to inflict pain on himself or herself, and disciplining the child excessively (i.e., at an extremely high frequency or duration, even if not at a level of physical abuse) through physical or nonphysical means.²⁵²

²⁵¹ APA, *DSM*, 717.

²⁵² APA, *DSM*, 719.

4. DSM-5 on Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse encompasses any sexual act involving a child that is intended to provide sexual gratification to a parent, caregiver, or other individual who has responsibility for the child. Sexual abuse includes activities such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, and indecent exposure. Sexual abuse also includes noncontact exploitation of a child by a parent or caregiver—for example, forcing, tricking, enticing, threatening, or pressuring a child to participate in acts for the sexual gratification of others, without direct physical contact between child and abuser.²⁵³

5. DSM-5 on Domestic Abuse

The DSM-5 categorizes adult maltreatment into four different manifestations.

Physical, spouse or partner violence are “non-accidental acts of physical force that result . . . in physical harm.”²⁵⁴ This includes any act that invokes significant fear, such as shoving.

Sexual abuse includes any forced or coerced sexual act against a person's will.

Neglect is an act that deprives a dependent person of basic, physical, or psychological needs.

Psychological abuse is non-accidental verbal or symbolic act that will result in harm to the well-being of another person's mental or emotional state.

All of these categories describe abuse between spouses, partners, non-spousal, or non-partner adults (such as the elderly).²⁵⁵

²⁵³ APA, *DSM*, 718.

²⁵⁴ APA, *DSM*, 720.

²⁵⁵ APA, *DSM*, 720.

Attachment 3

Child Abuse Definitions

While the same dynamics of power and control are present when children are the victims of the abuse, the expression can look different—becoming familiar with the specific nature of child abuse is vital as we seek to safeguard children. Child abuse can happen anywhere, and child abusers come from all walks of life.

“Abuse” means to use wrongly; using in a way that violates the original design or intention; using power that comes from size, strength, status, age, development, knowledge, or mobility in such a way that we hurt the vulnerable and exploit their trust.

Children are particularly vulnerable. They are often dependent on others, so we also must consider acts of omission when harm is brought to a child by failure to care or provide for their basic needs. Below you will see definitions and examples of what child abuse looks like.

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that promotes a destructive sense of fear, obligation, shame, or guilt. It may take the form of neglecting, frightening, isolating, belittling, exploiting, blaming, shaming, or threatening a victim, as well as playing mind games or lying. Emotional abuse can also be referred to as verbal and mental abuse.²⁵⁶

Manifestations with children: Emotional abuse is the most common form of child abuse. Emotional abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly made to feel worthless, unloved, alone or scared.

Financial abuse is a way of controlling a person by making them economically dependent or exploiting their resources. Financial abuse may be subtle or overt, and its different forms include concealing financial information, limiting a victim’s access to assets, controlling their ability to acquire money, exploiting their resources, or dictating how funds are spent.²⁵⁷

Manifestations with children: Children can be victims of identity and financial fraud. This type of abuse occurs when someone intentionally uses the child’s Social Security Number to benefit themselves

²⁵⁶ Darby Strickland, *Is it Abuse?: A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020), 289.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

financially. Minors who are working can also be exploited or have their earnings stolen.

Physical abuse is the intentional or reckless use of physical force that may result in bodily injury or physical pain. Physical abuse does not need to cause pain or leave a bruise; it also includes actions that lead to harm such as preventing a victim from sleeping or refusing them medical care. Physically abusive actions range from throwing things all the way to choking or beating.²⁵⁸

Manifestations with children: any non-accidental physical injury to the child and can include striking, kicking, burning, or biting the child, or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child. It can also include acts or circumstances that threaten the child with harm or create a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare. In fifteen States, the crime of human trafficking, including labor trafficking, involuntary servitude, or trafficking of minors, is included in the definition of child abuse.

Spiritual abuse occurs when an oppressor establishes control and domination by using Scripture, doctrine, or their “leadership role” as weapons. Spiritual abuse may mask itself as religious practice and may be used to shame or punish. For example, using Bible verses to shame or control, demanding unconditional obedience, or using biblical texts or beliefs to minimize or rationalize abusive behaviors.²⁵⁹

Manifestations with children: Spiritual abuse in childhood may be tricky to recognize, as the line between abuse and influence can at times be blurry. However, a child should not be shamed. Children are particularly vulnerable when Scripture is used abusively to control them.

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity when consent is not obtained, is coerced, or not freely given. Verbal sexual abuse includes sexual remarks about a person's body or sexual comments. Visual abuse can include being forced to watch pornography, exhibitionism, voyeurism, intrusion on one's privacy, and unwanted photography or sexting. Physical sexual abuse includes touching sexual parts of the body, being forced to touch another, putting objects or body parts in another's orifices. There are also many new ways that the digital medium provides opportunities for sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is exploitive.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

Sometimes the actual act of abuse may seem inconsequential (rubbing of feet), but when a perpetrator's behavior is purposeful and he or she is aroused, the action becomes abusive and predatory in nature.

Manifestations with children: Sexual abuse can be defined by any form of sexual contact between a child and an adult, a child and an older youth, or between two minors when one forces it on the other. This could include showing or talking about sexually explicit material, sexual touching, and non-touching acts like exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornography, possession of child pornography, photography of a child for sexual gratification, or the solicitation of a child for prostitution.

Neglect, while equally harmful to an individual, differs from abuse in that it is typically caused by a lack of action. Neglect is the failure of a parent or caregiver to provide proper care for a child or dependent (elderly or disabled person). Proper care includes providing adequate shelter, clothing, food, medical care, supervision, and education. Neglect is often a result of ongoing mistreatment but can also occur from one unattended instance. Neglect that is caused by poverty can be remediated by providing concrete services for families to protect and provide for their children.

Manifestations with children: Inadequate supervision—leaving children who are unable to care for themselves home alone, failing to protect children from safety hazards, or leaving them with inadequate caregivers. Emotional neglect—exposing a child to domestic abuse or substance abuse, failing to provide affection or parental care. Educational neglect—failing to provide a child with an education, allowing a child to repeatedly skip school, or ignoring a child's special education needs.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ For more information see <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/focus/acts/>

Attachment 4

Signs of Child Abuse

Children who have been abused *may* display a range of behavioral cues and physical manifestations. These signs do not mean that abuse has occurred, but they give reason to inquire what is happening with the child. Whether or not it is abuse, these distress signals are important to tend to.

The following are examples from six categories: General Behavioral Clues, General Physical Symptoms, Behavioral Cues of Parent or Caregiver, Specific Symptoms for Physical Abuse, Specific Symptoms for Sexual Abuse, and the Signs of Neglect.

1. General behavioral clues that might signal abuse

- Infants excessive crying or developmental delay
- Fear, anxiety, clinging
- Phobias
- Nightmares, sleeping problems (regressive)
- Bedwetting (regressive) or defecating in one's pants
- Social withdrawal
- Hyperactivity
- Poor concentration/distractibility
- Decreased school performance
- Speech disorders
- Regressive behavior for age
- Fear of parent
- Exhibits extremes in behavior, such as being overly compliant or demanding, extremely passive, or aggressive
- Is either inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., frequently rocking or head-banging)
- An inability to develop emotional bonds with others
- Constant worry about doing something wrong
- Showing little interest in friends and activities
- Eating issues
- Doesn't get medical, dental, or mental health care
- Missing school often
- Poor weight gain and growth
- Depression, passivity

- Increased verbal abuse or physically aggressive behavior with others
- Being the target of bullying
- Destroys or injures objects or pets
- Substance abuse
- Self-harm such as cutting
- Angry outbursts
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Not wanting to be left alone or return to a particular individual(s)
- Fear of going home
- Always on high alert
- Avoiding a certain person for no clear reason
- Symptoms of PTSD
- OCD-like behaviors
- Avoidance of undressing
- Withdrawal to touch
- Overly compliant

2. General physical symptoms that might signal abuse

- Headaches
- Abdominal pain, chronic
- Abdominal pain, acute—blunt trauma may not show external marks—look for distention, tenderness, absent bowel sounds
- Vague somatic complaints, often chronic
- Worsening medical problems, such as asthma
- Frequent, unexplained sore throat
- Abnormal weight gain or loss
- Reluctance to use an extremity
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Genital discomfort or painful urination or defecation
- Unexplained symptoms—vomiting, irritability, or abnormal respiration may represent head trauma²⁶¹

²⁶¹ This list was compiled from multiple sources:

M. B. Rizvi, (2022, January 19). *Pennsylvania Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting*. StatPearls [Internet]. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK565852/>

“Signs and Symptoms of Abuse/Neglect,” Child Abuse, Stanford Medicine (website), <http://childabuse.stanford.edu/screening/signs.html>.

3. Behavioral clues of a parent or caregiver who might be perpetrating abuse

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child’s injury or provides an explanation that is not consistent with the injury
- Shows little concern for the child or appears indifferent towards them
- Sees the child as entirely bad, burdensome, or worthless
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs*
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Tries to be the child’s friend rather than assume an adult role
- Makes up excuses to be alone with a child who is not their own
- Talks with the child about the adult’s personal problems or relationships
- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- Describes the child negatively
- Overtly rejects the child
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of the parent’s emotional needs
- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child’s problems in school or at home
- Asks other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves

***Substance abuse by parents:** Keep in mind parental substance use is included in the definition of child abuse or neglect in many states.

- Exposing a child to harm prenatally due to the parent’s use of legal or illegal drugs or other substances
- Manufacturing methamphetamine in the presence of a child
- Selling, distributing, or giving illegal drugs or serving alcohol illegally to a child

“What Is Child Abuse and Neglect?: Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms,”
Child Welfare Information Gateway,
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf>.

- Using a controlled substance that impairs the caregiver’s ability to adequately care for the child

4. Signs of Physical Abuse

If symptoms and/or signs of physical injury require immediate medical care, call 911 or take the child to a hospital. Doctors will investigate for signs of abuse and provide necessary care. This is a very important first step. Some states have laws mandating reporting when there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. It is important to know your state laws.

Some of the signs of physical abuse are as follows:

- Has unexplained injuries, such as burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, dislocations, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other noticeable marks after an absence from school or church
 - Bite marks – human bites are more superficial than animal, and show up better 2-3 days later
 - Burn marks – cigarette, rope, immersion, or shape of hot object; stun gun burns in pairs and immersion burns with sharp line of demarcation
 - Marks left from restraints on axilla or extremities
- Defensive injuries on forearms
- Trauma to ear
- Lacerations
- Hair loss
- Facial injuries without reasonable explanation
- Oral/dental injuries, such as torn or bruised frenulum, lips, teeth, palate, tongue, or oral mucosa
- Head injury, retinal hemorrhage, hematoma
- Vomiting, irritability, or abnormal respiration may represent head trauma²⁶²

²⁶² This list was compiled from multiple sources:

M. B. Rizvi, (2022, January 19). *Pennsylvania Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting*. StatPearls [Internet]. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK565852/>

“Signs and Symptoms of Abuse/Neglect,” Child Abuse, Stanford Medicine (website), <http://childabuse.stanford.edu/screening/signs.html>.

“What Is Child Abuse and Neglect?: Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms,” Child Welfare Information Gateway, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf>.

- Intra-abdominal trauma
- Seems scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, or aggressive
- Seems frightened of his or her parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
 - Assumes protective posture (hands/arms up over face and head, turning away, curling up in a ball) with any aggressive approach
 - Shows changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Directly discloses injury by a parent or another adult caregiver
- The child abuses animals or pets
- The child directly reports the abuse

5. Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Experiences bleeding, bruising, or swelling in their private parts
- Suddenly refuses to go to school, activity, or church
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Pregnancy or STDs, especially for boys and girls under 14 years old
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Sexual knowledge, language, and/or behaviors that are inappropriate for the child's age
- Bloody, torn, or stained underwear
- Bruising, tearing, bleeding, discharge from genital or rectal area
- Avoidance of undressing
- Withdrawal to touch
- Overly compliant

6. Signs of Neglect

- Is frequently absent from school
-

APPENDIX V

- Beggars or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical care (including immunizations), dental care, glasses, wound care, or medication
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heat
- Left alone for extended periods of time
- Taking on the role of caregiver for other family members
- Poor language or social skills
- Regular illness or infections
- Repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision
- Skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies, or ringworm
- Thin or swollen tummy
- Tiredness
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- Reports there is no one at home to provide care
- Fails to thrive, poor weight gain, malnutrition

Attachment 5

Consequences of Child Abuse

Since the 1990s, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has conducted studies of Adverse Childhood Experiences which include physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and witnessing trauma or experiencing neglect in the home. The conclusions of these studies are startling in their demonstration of the prevalence of childhood abuse and its powerful impact on the lives of children and adults.

Consequences of child abuse of any type are serious, pervasive, and multi-dimensional. Types of abuse and particulars of the age of victim and relationship to the perpetrator(s) do affect the health, social, and spiritual outcomes, but there are more similarities than differences.

In general, abuse of children between ages of four and twelve is particularly serious because they lack the intellectual and developmental tools not only to defend themselves, but also process the experience in a way that avoids severe disruption of brain/mind emotional, reward, pain, and cognitive pathways. Abused and neglected children of any age have emotional scars that affect current and future perceptions of self, God, the world, and their bodies. These scars are displayed often through maladaptive behaviors, chronic pain, “acting out” with emotional, physical, or sexual control problems. These often lead to academic, interpersonal, social, and occupational stress and failure. Childhood abuse often occurs to the children who are most vulnerable:

- Those with physical or mental challenges,
- Those with atypical interests or behaviors,
- Those in families undergoing stress or whose caregivers have suffered abuse themselves,
- Families with rigid and authoritarian fathers and/or overwhelmed mothers,
- Where there is alcohol or drug abuse, and
- When and where there is social, economic, and/or moral breakdown.

Unrecognized and untreated, childhood abuse causes demonstrable changes in brain architecture and function associated with the frontal lobes (executive and self-representative thinking), amygdala (emotions of fear and anxiety), hippocampus (memory processing), and various networks dealing with

emotional regulation, self-control, theory of mind (knowledge of self and others), and especially reward and pain.

Victims often try to treat their emotional distress with food, alcohol, drugs, sex, and other addictive behaviors, or may be attracted to or fall prey to groups of individuals who have had similar experiences. Unfortunately, many childhood victims become repeatedly victimized as adults by placing themselves in risky situations with risky people.

Abuse very frequently has a multi-generational legacy. Abused children become parents more likely to abuse their children and raise them in challenging environments and circumstances, perpetuating suffering.

Abused children are much more likely to be unhealthy and obese as adults, have HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, misuse tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, have severe anxiety, depression, cut themselves, and attempt suicide, have academic and work performance problems, and have chronic stress-related diseases involving the cardiac, gastrointestinal, endocrine, and nervous systems.

Maladaptive behaviors not only produce poor health and physical suffering, but also frequently isolate victims from family, social, and spiritual nourishment needed for an abundant life. They are often “difficult” and spiritually injured, held in the shackles of victimhood, self-defeating, ethically and morally challenged, and “hard to love.”

Nothing is impossible, however, for victims to retain the image of God. Through the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit can redeem anyone, and the church is called to come alongside to offer the hope of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ.

Attachment 6

Comprehensive Child Protection Policy

Every church should have a Comprehensive Child Protection Policy. This policy should foster the safety of children and youth and be suited specifically to the church's context. It should also cover prevention and how to respond. While the church's primary concern is spiritual, it must not neglect legal responsibilities (Rom. 13). A good policy will also help when allegations of child abuse are unclear, however a violation of the policy has occurred.

1. A child protection policy should include (but not be limited to) . . .

- Definitions of abuse that align with your state (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/defining/>).
- Who the church will train and how often the church will repeat the training
- The content of the church's training (recognition, response, reporting)
- The church's standards for a staff hire (background check, references, compliance with church's policy, abuse training)
- Protocols established prior to engaging volunteers (length of attendance prior to volunteering with children and youth, written application, background check, compliance with church's policy, interview, abuse training)
- How children and youth will be supervised
 - Consider all contexts including but not limited to nursery, Sunday school, youth group (including all overnight activity), VBS, children's church, other sponsored events.
 - Protocols required: for example, glass doors, two adult systems, bathroom usage, guidelines for appropriate touch
- Guidelines for staff and volunteers engaging with youth on social media, texting/messaging, and other communications
- Transportation to and from events and how the church will inform parents of arrangements
- Commitment to make the church buildings safe
 - Consider general safety issues and first aid needs as well as how the church might better monitor the building and those who use it.
- Determination of before the need arises how to respond to an allegation of abuse

APPENDIX V

- Determination of how, when, and where the church will make a report
 - Inclusion of your state's requirements for mandatory reporting and your church's desire to cooperate with the law
- Creation of a plan to notify the parents of a victim (assuming they are not the offender)
- Plan for how and when to notify the congregation of the allegation.
 - Determination of how to prevent future harm
 - Investigation into the legal risks involved in publicly disclosing a situation
 - Investigation into the legal risks of not disclosing
 - Determination of who might be harmed if the information is or is not shared
 - Determination of confidentiality for a victim if the victim is a minor
 - Consideration of creating a prepared statement²⁶³
 - Creation of a response team or identify persons who can field questions and facilitate other potential victims who come forward
- Determination of how the leaders will engage accused members who attend your church and what will be required of the alleged offender during the investigation
- Instruction to alleged offenders to have no contact with victims or witnesses
 - Determination of how to implement the above
- Determination of how the church will interact with the insurance carrier
 - Consideration as to if the church will initiate and oversee the victim care, shepherding, and protection, or will the church's carrier set the pace? Keep in mind, insurance companies tend toward focusing on the institution's protection. These two approaches are often at odds. Be aware and plan before a crisis.
- Determination of how a victim will receive pastoral care

²⁶³ A carefully prepared statement is often best, one that affirms that the church is aware of the situation and is cooperating fully with any investigation. It is much easier to navigate difficult questions when a response team is already in place and is accustomed to working together.

- Determination of which trained staff member will take the lead in coordination of care²⁶⁴
- Creation of a shepherding plan

2. If a known offender seeks to be involved with your congregation, consider the following:

- Church leadership should understand the consequences of having an offender in the congregation.
 - Resource: Victor Vieth, “Ministering to Adult Sex Offenders: Ten Lessons from Henry Gerecke,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 112, No. 3 (Summer 2015). <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b0a335c45776ee022efd309/t/5bb46d2453450a1e7e6ff954/1538551076662/Ministering%2Bto%2Bsex%2BOffenders%2B%28Vieth%29.pdf>.
- If you are willing to receive known offenders into your congregation:
 - Develop a comprehensive plan to protect church members.
 - Determine how to monitor the individual.
 - Obtain a detailed history of the individual and the accusations.
 - Determine the type of treatment needed for the offender’s ongoing care.
 - Determine the type of ongoing care for the vulnerable in your church.
 - Set boundaries and terms for the offender.
 - Require the offender’s cooperation.
 - Determine if the offender will be monitored.
 - Require they sign an agreement.

²⁶⁴ Examples:

Child Protection Policy, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, revised April 2019, https://c52d388b85e6c47bef5d-9ff91644b80b1213b3e9d43ad0f0e963.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/c/0e4009729_1583507111_chbc-cpp.pdf.

and

Child Protection Policy, Lititz Church of the Brethren, updated May 2017, <https://lititzcob.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Child-Protection-Policy.update.2017-1.pdf>.

APPENDIX V

- Communicate to the congregation that a known offender is in their presence and the church's plan.
- Determine support for the other victims in your community as they navigate engaging an offender in their congregation.
- Determine the offender's access to children.
- Determine how to support a known offender's spiritual growth.
- Provide additional options for them such as attending an adult-only small group.
- Determine if an outside agency will . . .
 - help,
 - create a plan,
 - train,
 - commit to reviewing the policy with your church, and
 - screen employees and volunteers.
- Determine when any policy will be adopted and enforced.
- Determine how any policy will be shared or posted and how often it needs to be reviewed.

Attachment 7

Myths About Abuse

Child and adult abuse, rape, and assault, being clandestine and typically unspeakable or unstudied by most, are subject among both lay people and professionals to incorrect beliefs, biases, and stereotypical assumptions. The “myths” of abuse significantly traumatize victims, subvert justice, and impede prevention. Myths of abuse are not congruent to the reality of a fallen, sinful world and thus provide a psychological defense as well as endorsement of status quo.²⁶⁵ While some myths are specific to various types of abuse, they generally fall into four categories:²⁶⁶

1. Minimization of the prevalence of the problem,
2. Minimization of the extent of the harm,
3. Diffusion of offender responsibility and blaming the victim, and
4. Stereotyping offenders.

1. *Abuse is rare.*

Abuse is not rare. Over half of murdered women were killed by a current or former partner. Approximately one in four women and one in seven men have been victims of intimate partner abuse.²⁶⁷ In 2019, the Department for Health and Human Services reported that 656,000 children were confirmed by state agencies as victims of abuse, a national rate of 8.9 per 1,000 children.²⁶⁸ Another study estimates that 37% of children will have a visit from local child protective services by the time they turn 18.²⁶⁹ By extrapolating these data, we

²⁶⁵ Jay Peters, “Measuring Myths about Domestic Violence: Development and Initial Validation of the Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale,” *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 16, no. 1 (2008), 1-23.

²⁶⁶ Lisa DeMarni Cromer, Rachel E. Goldsmith, “Child Sexual Abuse Myths: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Individual Differences,” *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 19, no. 6 (2010), 618-47.

²⁶⁷ “National Statistics,” NCADV (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence), accessed December 24, 2021, <https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS>.

²⁶⁸ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children’s Bureau, *Child Maltreatment 2019* (January 14, 2021), 20, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

²⁶⁹ Hyunil Kim et al., “Lifetime Prevalence of Investigating Child Maltreatment Among US Children,” *American Journal of Public Health* 107, no. 2 (February 1, 2017), 274-280.

estimate that between 6% and 10% of children will be state-confirmed victims of child abuse by the time they turn 18. Since many instances of abuse go unreported, the actual rate of child abuse is likely far higher.²⁷⁰

2. *Domestic violence is only physical abuse.*

Abuse is the maltreatment of another person that is callous, cruel, for selfish reasons, and that has deeply detrimental effects on the person physically and/or sexually, emotionally, and spiritually. Physical violence is only one tactic of abuse. Domestic violence may also include emotional, sexual, spiritual, and economic abuse. Each of these deeply wound the victim's inner and outer person in ways which are not always clearly evident to others.

3. *Abuse is a private matter and has little social effect.*

The harms of abuse are immediate, pervasive, longstanding, and multigenerational. Abuse destroys a person's personality, joy, physical, mental, and spiritual health. In so doing, it corrupts the expression of the image of God in the victim. Abuse is not simply a private, personal matter, rather it is a public health disaster.

4. *The victim is somehow responsible for the abuse.*

The sin of sexual assault is not primarily sexual in nature. What a woman wears or does will not cause sexual assault. Scripture categorizes sexual abuse as an act of violence, not sexual immorality. In Deuteronomy 22:26, the assault is likened to murder, an act of violence. In addition, the passage shows that the victim has no responsibility for the attack and the perpetrator alone must be held accountable (Deut. 22:25). Also, "Abusive behavior is intentional—it is not about anger management and is never the victim's fault. Nothing anyone says or does gives anyone the right to hurt someone."²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ One study noted that prevalence of childhood sexual abuse alone may be as high as 7%, which is about seven times that of instances substantiated by state authorities. Another noted that the percentage of victims who did not report their abuse in a study survey was approximately 50%. Both these figures suggest that actual instances of abuse far exceed official numbers. See Glen A. Kercher and Marilyn McShane, "The Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse Victimization in an Adult Sample of Texas Residents," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 8, no. 4 (1984), 495-501; and David M. Fergusson, L. J. Horwood, and L. J. Woodward, "The Stability of Child Abuse Reports: A Longitudinal Study of the Reporting Behaviour of Young Adults," *Psychological Medicine* 30, no. 3 (May 2000), 529-44.

²⁷¹ "Myths About Abuse - Hope's Door New Beginning Center," n.d., <https://hdnbc.org/get-educated/learn-about-abuse/myths>.

5. *Victims have a type of personality that seeks and encourages abuse.*

The abuser is responsible for the abuse. There is no research that conclusively suggests there are people with specific personalities that are abused more than others.

6. *It's his word against hers.*

False reports of abuse are rare.²⁷² Most abuse happens in secret. Witnesses are also rare. It is not unreasonable to believe one party over the other. In Deuteronomy 22:25-27, the case law explains that a victim of rape (where there are no witnesses) should be believed and the accused held accountable. Educating leaders and congregations, training people to recognize abuse, and utilizing advocates is the solution for avoiding false reports.²⁷³

²⁷² “In contrast, when more methodologically rigorous research has been conducted, estimates for the percentage of false reports begin to converge around 2-8%.” Kimberly A. Lonsway, Joanne Archambault, and David Lisak, “False Reports: Moving Beyond the Issue to Successfully Investigate and Prosecute Non-Stranger Sexual Assault,” *National Sexual Violence Resource Center*, 2009, accessed March 2022, <https://www.nsvrc.org/publications/articles/false-reports-moving-beyond-issue-successfully-investigate-and-prosecute-non-s>.

“The prevalence of false allegations is between 2% and 10%.” David Lisak et al., “False Allegations of Sexual Assault: An Analysis of Ten Years of Reported Cases,” *Violence Against Women* 16, no. 12 (December 2010): 1318-34, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1077801210387747>.

“Reputable studies on this indicate that only between 2-7% of abuse claims are false.” Brad Hambrick, “Why Is It So Hard to Have Constructive Conversations about Abuse?,” Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, February 14, 2022, <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/why-is-it-so-hard-to-have-constructive-conversations-about-abuse/>.

We must also distinguish between the report of a victim and the report of another person who may suspect abuse. Approximately 80% of reports of child abuse to child protective services end up being unsubstantiated. But this is because many states require mandated reporting based on a reasonable suspicion that abuse is or may occur. False reporting of physical or sexual abuse by victims is rare. One study of college women reporting sexual assault found that the incidence of false reporting was between 2% and 10%; see David Lisak et al., “False Allegations.”

²⁷³ Christine Herrman, “Decreasing the Number of Incorrectly ‘Unfounded’ Sexual Assault Reports” (PowerPoint presentation), April 2012, *Battered Women’s Justice Project* (website), <https://www.bwjp.org/resource-center/resource-results/decreasing-the-number-of-incorrectly-unfounded-sexual-assault-reports.html>.

7. *I know him, and he couldn't be an abuser!*

Even specially trained individuals suggest it can be very difficult to identify an abuser in public settings. Image management is “used every day by abusers throughout the world.”²⁷⁴ Abusive people are very manipulative in their relationships. Deception is how they maintain power;²⁷⁵ therefore, they are well-versed at how to convince others of their innocence.

8. *In fact, she seems crazy!*

On the other hand, a victim of abuse will have suffered emotional trauma, have difficulty telling her story, downplay and/or rationalize the abuse, and be overwhelmed in talking about it. Power dynamics foster exculpable explanations for the abuser and negative perspectives of the victim's character and behavior. This reinforces inertia for just and remedial action, stigmatizes victims, and perpetuates recurrence of sin in an atmosphere of silence.

9. *Abusers have an anger problem.*

Abusers decide to abuse. Their self-idolatry is deeply ingrained. Anger is only one tool the abuser uses to enforce control through fear.

10. *If the abuse is infrequent, it is not that serious.*

To maintain control of the victim, an abuser will use various threats. These threats may be physical, verbal, economic, or spiritual in nature. Threats need not be ongoing; one instance of expressing the potential for harm is enough to control victims from risking future harm. For example, hurting a beloved pet is an example of what an abuser can and may do to the victim. Though there is no physical violence to the victim, they are made aware of what *might* happen if they step out of line. Once that control is established, the victim will remain constantly vigilant to future threats and bow to the abuser's unbiblical domination.

11. *Abusers are from a particular economic class, religion, ethnicity, etc.*

Abusers are from every socio-economic class, religion, nationality, profession, age, political affiliation, and culture. Recent history demonstrates that well-educated, wealthy, and charismatic abusers are often “respected” members of society and the church.

Though some societies (or environments) provide an environment for the flourishing of abuse, all groups of people experience abuse due to the ravages of sin in the world.

²⁷⁴ Wade Mullen, *Something's Not Right: Decoding the Hidden Tactics of Abuse and Freeing Yourself from Its Power* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2020), 3.

²⁷⁵ Mullen, *Something's Not Right*, 15.

12. Substance abuse creates abusers.

Abuse is caused by a person's desire for control and power over another person. *Alcohol or drug addictions do not create abusers.* However, "when someone is inebriated from drugs or alcohol, they are likely to lose control of their inhibitions. Being under the influence of any substance greatly increases the chances of abusive behavior."²⁷⁶

13. Reporting abuse is a way to get attention.

Reporting abuse comes with great cost. The rarity of reporting is evidence that there is significant difficulty in bringing an abusive person's behavior into the light. Victims must take into consideration the likely disbelief of their story, unfounded shame, and the unlikelihood of restitution from authorities both in the church or government. Prosecution of abuse is rare. If a victim reports abuse, they are likely desperate to stop the oppressor from further harming them and/or other victims.

14. The victim can always get out of the relationship.

Often, victims do not believe they have a safe place to go. In addition, there may be financial difficulty in leaving the relationship. In order to leave the abuser, most victims will need an advocate or advocacy group to navigate the procurement of safe lodging, meals, a job, childcare, and the court system.

15. The persistence of abuse myths.

Why do myths persist? Because abuser peer groups foster them, buffering shame.²⁷⁷ Victims explain they suffer because of a perceived need to keep quiet²⁷⁸ and because those to whom they might report are insufficiently educated to adequately believe and act on the truth.²⁷⁹ Building a church more likely to be free of abuse is to dispel these myths that perpetuate the evil.

²⁷⁶ "Addiction and Domestic Violence," Addiction Center, edited February 1, 2022, <https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/domestic-violence/>.

²⁷⁷ Charlene Collibee et al. "The Influence of Peer Support and Peer Acceptance of Rape Myths on Multiple Forms of Interpersonal Violence among Youth," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36, no. 15-16 (August 2021): 7185-7201.

²⁷⁸ Eric M. Cooke et al., "Examining the Relationship between Victimization, Psychopathy, and the Acceptance of Rape Myths," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (October 18, 2020), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0886260520966669>.

²⁷⁹ Marta Ferragut et al., "What Do We Know about Child Sexual Abuse?: Myths and Truths in Spain," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37, no. 1-2 (May 12, 2020), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0886260520918579>.

Attachment 8

Shepherding the Whistleblower

Unfortunately, organizations in need of a whistleblower are those most likely to suppress, reject, banish, or destroy messengers. Loyalty to an organization tends to supersede truth. Whistleblowers, like prophets, call their audience to recognize evil and purge it. Reliable, confidential, and anonymous reporting systems capable of instituting intervention are critical.

The recognition of the need for safe reporting prompted the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. This provides legal protection to whistleblowers in any organization, including churches. According to the ECFA,²⁸⁰ punishing a whistleblower in any way is a criminal offense. Even if claims are unfounded, the informant cannot be reprimanded. A reasonable belief or suspicion that a violation of federal law exists is sufficient to report.

The ECFA suggests the following for leaders in order to protect and appropriately respond to whistleblowers:

- Provide confidential and anonymous, well-known, and easy means of reporting,
- Facilitate reporting of all types of suspected wrongdoing, not just the most serious,
- Focus on getting the full set of facts from the informant,
- Have a systematic process of tracking information and follow up to the informant,
- Put the information into the hands of those who can act,
- Have external and independent options for investigation, and
- Protect the whistleblower by maintaining confidentiality and preventing retaliation of any kind.

Whistleblowers may ultimately be identified either by friends of the accused, or through mismanagement of the investigatory process. Leadership must anticipate this possibility and arrange for and ensure appropriate spiritual and emotional encouragement. Protecting the informant and their family will be necessary. Public statements of endorsement help support the informant.

²⁸⁰ “Fraud and Whistleblower Protection for Churches,” Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, accessed August 22, 2021, <https://www.ecfa.church/Content/Fraud-and-Whistleblower-Protection-CHURCH>.

Attachment 9

Forgiveness

1. Introduction

“Forgiveness is one of the foundational acts of Christian practice and theology.”²⁸¹ Jesus taught that those unwilling to forgive would face the same fate as the “unforgiving servant” (Matt. 18:21-35). Jesus repeated the same idea when He taught the disciples to pray, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. 6:14-15). John Calvin wrote, “Those who refuse to forget the injuries which have been done to them, devote themselves willingly and deliberately to destruction, and knowingly prevent God from forgiving them.”²⁸²

Forgiveness is clearly important to God. However, forgiveness is not necessarily easily offered. Whether due to a misunderstanding of the Bible’s teaching, or sinful rebellion, forgiveness can be elusive. In addition, when the offense is particularly destructive to a person’s physical, emotional, and spiritual health, the wickedness compounds this difficulty.

Abuse may have traumatic consequences, resulting in a long and difficult process of healing. The abuser may be responsible for injuries that continue to plague the survivor. The emotional trauma caused by verbal abuse may have long-term physical effects. Those who suffer from spiritual abuse may struggle to disassociate the emotional and physical abuse from their understanding of the nature of God.

These effects of abuse must not be minimized. The survivor need not be held responsible, nor rushed to simply forgive and “get over it.” The effects are normal, emotional, physical, and spiritual consequences of abuse. When counseling victims and survivors, an accurate understanding of the meaning, means, and goal of forgiveness is necessary to prevent further harm to the hurting member of the flock. Helping guide victims of evil atrocities committed against their soul and body (inner and outer man) toward biblical forgiveness is a necessary, yet sensitive, *process*.

²⁸¹ Bridget Illian, “Church Discipline and Forgiveness in Matthew 18:15-35,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 37, no. 6 (December 2010): 444–50.

²⁸² John Calvin, *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke*, vol. 1, Christian Classics Ethereal Library (website), <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom31.ix.lv.html>.

2. What Does It Mean To Forgive?

A definition of forgiveness is, “A decision to release someone from suffering punishment or penalty for his sin.”²⁸³ Diane Langberg says forgiveness is, “to lay aside, let go, put away, yield up, pardon.” She writes the reason there is a need to forgive is that “something awful has been done” to one of God’s image-bearers.²⁸⁴ The abusive actions are sin, and sin isolates man from God and from his neighbor. Sin is punishable by death in the heavenly courts (Rom. 6:23). Sin is not something to be minimized or denied, rather brought into the light and confessed before God and the offended party.

Dr. Robert Burns discusses forgiveness in two ways, legal and relational.²⁸⁵ Regarding the legal aspect, Burns explains that law breaking deserves a penalty. Jesus, the only holy and righteous Son of God, willingly paid that penalty by His death on the cross. His sacrifice made forgiveness possible (Luke 24:47). The process of forgiving includes the lawbreaker confessing, repenting, and receiving God’s forgiveness.

Forgiveness precedes reconciliation and/or restoration (Acts 2:22-41); however, *forgiveness does not always indicate reconciliation and/or restoration*. By forgiving an abuser, a survivor lays aside bitterness, anger, and malice and they depend on the Lord for justice according to His righteousness (Eph. 4:31-32; Ps. 72:2). Yet the consequences of an abuser’s sin remain. When a survivor forgives their oppressor, they do not release the abuser from accountability in the courts of God or man.

3. How Can a Survivor Forgive Their Abuser?

Burns explains, “We cannot be ready to deal with the ‘relational’ side of forgiveness until we have come before God and worked through the legal side.”²⁸⁶ Survivors may struggle to forgive. A great evil has been perpetrated, and the counselor must acknowledge the horrendous damage. Langberg writes, “When you push others to ‘just forgive,’ as if somehow it was something that

²⁸³ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 207.

²⁸⁴ Diane M. Langberg, *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997) 173.

²⁸⁵ Bob Burns and Michael J. Brissett, Jr., *The Adult Child of Divorce* (Nashville, TN: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1991) 139-140.

²⁸⁶ Burns and Brissett, *The Adult Child of Divorce*, 139-144.

could be done quickly or easily, without a consideration of the consequences of that sin, we have adopted a superficial view of sin.”²⁸⁷ The fact that forgiveness is necessary is due to the great wickedness that took place. Recognition of the difficulty is required.

The cross is where survivors taste and see God’s goodness and kindness in His forgiving work. In the *Westminster Larger Catechism* discussion of the Lord’s Prayer, Question 194 asks, “What do we pray for in the fifth petition?” In answer, the *WLC* says,

In the fifth petition, (which is, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,) acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt: we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved; continue his favor and grace to us; pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offenses.

The Holy Spirit works in the heart of a survivor to apply God’s forgiving work in their own life. As the *WLC* emphasizes, the ability to forgive others grows out of an appreciation of God pardoning personal sin. The parable of the “unforgiving servant” (Matt. 18:32) teaches, in part, that recognizing God’s forgiveness is an important first step toward forgiving. When a survivor accepts God’s forgiveness, they position themselves to begin the process of forgiving.

4. What Is the Goal of Forgiveness?

In a non-abusive relationship, it is right to “rebuke” the offender. Luke 17:3 says, “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” Confrontation is meant to bring the offender to

²⁸⁷ Langberg, *Counseling Survivors*, 172.

repentance and to restore a damaged relationship with both the Lord and those offended. Matthew 18:15-20 provides the steps for this process. Greater pastoral care is required for helping survivors forgive those who have abused them. Confrontation of an abuser must be understood in the context of Jesus's teaching in other passages.²⁸⁸

If genuine repentance has not occurred, it may be unwise to encourage a survivor to go to their abuser. It may also be unwise to ever encourage a victim to go to an abuser one-on-one. In Matthew, Jesus teaches that confronting the unrepentant is like throwing pearls before swine.

“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you” (Matt. 7:6).

Confronting the unrepentant is worthless and may even be dangerous (they will “trample them underfoot”). Jesus also says the offender may “turn to attack you,” so the survivor may suffer further trauma at the hands of the abuser.

Beach writes, “It is sometimes argued that forgiveness coupled with repentance clears the way for all or most of the debris caused by the sin or sins in question and full reconciliation (most of the time) is the requisite step to follow. . . .”²⁸⁹ Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same. This simplistic view of the destruction caused by abuse will often result in further abuse and manipulation.

Scripture is clear: the offending party, *not* the offended, is responsible for repentance (Luke 17:3). The abuser is responsible to turn from their abuse. Repentance and a renewed relationship with the Lord are the goal. Scripture is also clear regarding reconciliation; it is “conditional” on true repentance (Luke 17:3, Col. 1:21-23). Repentance that is obvious, genuine, and demonstrable over time is necessary for restoration.

²⁸⁸ See also Section Six: The Misuse of Spiritual Authority in this report.

²⁸⁹ J. Mark Beach, “Forgiving like God?: Some Reflections on the Idea of Conditional Forgiveness,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 26 (2015): 151-96.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

When counseling a survivor of abuse, the process of forgiveness must be handled pastorally. Recognizing the extensive damage done to the target of abuse will encourage the counselor to patiently prepare the survivor to forgive.

Because of the damage the abuser caused in the relationship, repentance must be evident and long-lasting for trust to be re-established. Counselors should allow survivors to set the pace for reconciliation, having multiple witnesses to significant evidence of a changed heart that has not only put off sinful behavior, but has also been renewed in the mind and put on the opposite, God-glorifying behaviors (Eph. 4:28).

Attachment 10

Repentance

For restored trust and/or the possibility of reconciliation in any broken relationship, an abuser must clearly exhibit genuine repentance over an extended period of time. The following is a summary list of the signs of repentance. This list is not guaranteed. Abusers, by their very nature, manipulate and control in order to manage their image. Abusers are skillful and adept at what they do. Discernment is advised.

1. Ownership of sin without minimization

The victim is not responsible for the abuse [see Myths of Abuse in Attachment 7]. The abuser must fully own their sinful actions and choices.

2. Willingness to fully accept the consequences for sin

Many abusers will be quick to confess sin (minimally) in order to appear repentant. If more is required of them, they tend to protest. Worldly repentance is resistant to accepting consequences. A changed heart will exhibit a willingness to take full responsibility.

3. Patient endurance with the victim's healing

Genuinely repentant persons allow their victims the necessary time to process what happened and heal.

4. Godly repentance recognizes the difference between being forgiven, being trusted, and/or being restored.

The repentant person will not expect to be rewarded with a victim's forgiveness, trust, or reconciliation for doing as God commands. Godly behavior is expected and not necessarily rewarded. (See Attachment 9: Forgiveness for further discussion on trust and reconciliation.)

5. Commitment to stop the abuse and recognize the damage it has caused for the family

A full confession of sin, including specificity regarding the abuse, along with accountability is required. A third party is recommended.

*Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 7 on the nature of repentance*²⁹⁰

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter (2 Cor. 7:10-11).

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance . . .

1. *Without regret, leading to salvation,*
 - a. Does the abuser regret losing control?
 - b. Does the abuser regret the consequences he faces for his sin?
 - c. Does the abuser regret the loss of prestige, respect, influence, etc.?

2. *For behold what earnestness this very thing,*
 - a. Is the abuser working diligently to see a change?
 - b. Does he faithfully complete all homework?
 - c. Is his attitude serious toward changing his life?

3. *This godly sorrow,*
 - a. Does he consistently express sadness for the harm he has done to others?
 - b. When reminded of his sin, does the abuser apologize or complain about his sin being “brought up” again?
 - c. Is his sorrow focused on the harm his actions did to others or on the hardship they brought to him?

4. *What vindication of yourselves,*
 - a. Does the abuser so repent as to promote restitution for his actions?
 - b. Does the abuser now oppose control within himself and others with zeal and passion?

²⁹⁰ Rev. Vincent Wood, Providence Presbyterian Church (PCA), York, Pennsylvania.

APPENDIX V

- c. Are the actions of the abuser establishing a new life pattern in which an accusation of abuse would seem impossible? (For restoration of a minister, *BCO* 34-8 requires that it only be done when the sentiment of the church “demands it.”)
5. *What indignation,*
 - a. Does the abuser hate what they have done?
 - b. Is the abuser “beating himself up” for the sins he committed? This indignation will fuel earnest repentance.
6. *What fear,*
 - a. Is the abuser terrified that they will abuse again? An alcoholic once told me, “I know that I have another drunk in me. I am terrified that I might not have another sober.” This “fear” kept him sober.
7. *What longing,*
 - a. Does the abuser look to the future with hope?
 - b. Does the abuser imagine what it will be like to be trustworthy and safe?
8. *What zeal,*
 - a. Is repentance the driving factor in the abuser’s life?
 - b. Is the abuser ever aware of his propensity to control and is he committed to “take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ?”
9. *What avenging of wrong!*
 - a. Is the abuser willing to make up for his wrongs to the very people he hurt?
 - b. Does the abuser recognize why his victims do not want to be around him? Does he willingly honor this desire?

Attachment 11

Divorce and Domestic Abuse

1. Introduction

For Christians, perhaps the most controversial topic involving domestic abuse is the subject of divorce. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* states that adultery and desertion are the only biblical grounds for the dissolution of a marriage.²⁹¹ Yet some argue that desertion functions as an umbrella category encompassing several ways that a person can abandon his/her spouse. Carl Trueman succinctly summarizes this position when he says that the essence of desertion is a dereliction of duty, rather than an abandonment of space.²⁹² In other words, desertion is about more than geography. This view is shared by the Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage from the 20th General Assembly of the PCA. It argues that domestic abuse is a form of desertion because the abuser's violence creates a forced separation between spouses that is equivalent to abandonment.²⁹³ Our report affirms this position and defends it with biblical and practical arguments.

2. The Biblical Argument

As we examine Scripture, it is important to also examine our own assumptions. In theological inquiry, the answer we produce can be greatly influenced by the way we frame the question. Therefore, this section not only studies Scripture, but also identifies and challenges one of the key assumptions we bring to the interpretive task, especially concerning biblical grounds for divorce.

That assumption has to do with what we expect the Bible to say. Some pastors limit the grounds for divorce to the specific situations mentioned in Scripture, which are sexual immorality and an unbeliever deserting a believer. Doubtless this position is motivated by sincere desires to protect the covenant of marriage and faithfully obey God's Word. But it contains an assumption that usually

²⁹¹ *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Suwanee, GA: Great Commission Publications, 1978–2005), 24.6.

²⁹² Carl Trueman and Todd Pruitt, "What Is the Church to Do?" Mortification of Sin Podcast, <https://www.reformation21.org/mos/podcast/21100>.

²⁹³ *Minutes 20th General Assembly*, 519-520, 562-563. Also see the section on "unjust divorce, or desertion" in the Biblical and Confessional Foundations for Understanding Abuse section in our report.

goes unidentified and unchallenged: why would we expect the Bible to list all of the situations in which divorce is permissible? The answer is because we are interpreting Scripture through the lens of modern law, instead of ancient law.

In determining biblical grounds for divorce, we are operating in the theological category of the law of God. That is, we are asking what the law of God allows and does not allow in regard to ending a marriage. But if we interpret Scripture through the lens of modern law, we will most likely arrive at a very different answer than if we read it as law from the Ancient Near East.²⁹⁴ Most modern societies use exhaustive law codes. Every practice a society wishes to regulate must be listed in a separate law. As a result, when we investigate the issue of divorce, we assume the Bible will explicitly mention every situation in which the practice is allowed. But ancient law did not work this way. The Ancient Near East used case law, which gives rules that govern a specific situation. From that specific case, we are expected to deduce a general principle that we can apply to other situations. In keeping with its Ancient Near Eastern context, the Pentateuch is filled with case law. Old Testament scholar Douglas Stuart writes, “. . . the Israelites had to learn to see the underlying principles in any law and not let the specifics of the individual [situation] mislead them into applying the law too narrowly.”²⁹⁵ This is why it is best to view desertion as an umbrella category that encompasses multiple ways that a person can abandon their spouse. The Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage states:

Further, taking into account both the general principles of Biblical ethics and the Scripture’s characteristic manner of ethical instruction, viz. the statement of commandments in a general form to which is added case law sufficient to indicate the manner of application, it seems to us that those Reformed authorities are correct who have argued that sins which are tantamount in extremity and consequence to actual desertion should be understood to produce similar eventualities.²⁹⁶

With the proper understanding of how biblical law functions, it is important to apply this framework to the apostle Paul’s teaching on desertion and divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:15. Paul writes, “But if the unbelieving partner separates,

²⁹⁴ The difference is explained in Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, *New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 442-445.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 443.

²⁹⁶ *M20GA*, 562-563.

let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.” In this verse, Paul permits a believer to divorce his/her unbelieving spouse if the unbeliever abandons the marriage. An accurate interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:15 depends on its literary context and the entire chapter’s flow of thought. In v. 1 Paul writes, “Now concerning the matters about which you wrote . . .” Everything Paul says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage in 1 Corinthians 7 is in response to specific questions posed by the Corinthians in a previous letter. He spends the entire chapter answering questions about marriage regarding different groups of people within the Corinthian church. The following is a brief outline of the questions Paul addresses:

- vv. 1-7 – To those considering a renunciation of marriage: remain married with full conjugal rights.
- vv. 8-9 – To the unmarried and widows: it is good to remain unmarried, but those who cannot exercise self-control should marry.
- vv. 10-11 – To the married (both partners are believers): remain married, but if you divorce you must remain single or be reconciled to your spouse.
- vv. 12-16 – To the married (one partner is an unbeliever): remain married unless the unbelieving partner separates.
- vv. 17-24 – The general principle: remain as you are.
- vv. 25-38 – To the betrothed: it is good to remain unmarried, but if you marry you have not sinned.
- vv. 39-40 – General precepts for the married and widowed.²⁹⁷

In a New Testament epistle, the subjects an author addresses are largely determined by the situation in the receiving church. This means that Paul did not write a treatise on divorce and list all of the biblical grounds. Rather, Paul received a letter from the Corinthians asking about several situations in their church. He answers those questions in 1 Corinthians 7. The reason Paul addresses an unbeliever deserting a believer is because the Corinthians had asked him about mixed marriages. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate to ask, “Why did Paul allow divorce in this specific situation? And using that same reasoning, might there be other situations in which divorce is permitted?”

²⁹⁷ Adapted from Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 268.

Another reason we should ask these questions is because of the nature of ancient case law. As a former Pharisee, Paul was steeped in the Pentateuch. When he thought of ethical issues, case law was in the front of his mind. This means that when Paul gives a command governing a specific situation, such as a Christian being deserted by an unbelieving spouse, we should try to discern the universal principle behind his command.

The principle behind 1 Corinthians 7:15 is that believers are not allowed to actively seek a divorce from their spouses, but if one spouse effectively deserts his/her marriage responsibilities, the other spouse is not obligated to remain married. Based on the Greek grammar, the key element in Paul's line of reasoning is the passivity of the believing spouse in the action that instigates divorce. In this verse Paul makes a pronounced switch from the active voice to the passive. In the original Greek, verse 15a literally reads, "But if the unbeliever separates, be separated."²⁹⁸ Paul uses a middle indicative form of χωρίζω (separates), immediately followed by a passive imperative form of the same verb (be separated). He uses the same verb twice in a row, but the second time the verb is passive. Paul's point is that a believer is not allowed to actively instigate divorce. But when one spouse effectively abandons the marriage, the other spouse can let the separation take place.

This interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:15 is strengthened by research from Wayne Grudem, who recently changed his position on this issue. Grudem focuses on the phrase "in such cases" (Greek: ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις). This phrase is not used anywhere else in the New Testament or the Septuagint. But Grudem studies the use of this phrase in extra-biblical Greek literature, including Philo, Lysias, and Euripedes. He concludes that the phrase "in such cases" refers to a broader category of situations other than the example given. According to Grudem, the use of the phrase in 1 Corinthians 7:15 means, "*in this and other similarly destructive situations* (that is, situations that destroy a marriage as much as adultery or desertion)."²⁹⁹ Such a definition fits perfectly within the framework of case law discussed above.

Some pastors and elders maintain that desertion is only grounds for divorce if the deserting spouse is an unbeliever. However, while a mixed marriage is a

²⁹⁸ To avoid redundancy, the ESV translates v. 15a, "But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so."

²⁹⁹ Wayne Grudem, "Grounds for Divorce: Why I Now Believe There Are More Than Two," The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, <https://cbmw.org/2020/06/10/grounds-for-divorce-why-i-now-believe-there-are-more-than-two/>.

circumstance of the case, it is not the determining factor in Paul's permission to dissolve the marriage. The determining factor is the act of abandonment. In the above discussion of case law, Douglas Stuart warned against allowing the specifics of the individual case to lead us into applying the law too narrowly. We fall into this trap if we require an abandoned person to be married to an unbeliever in order to qualify for divorce.

In view of these considerations, domestic abuse clearly qualifies as an act of desertion. It creates an oppressive environment in the home that often forces the victim to leave for her own safety and well-being. A man who abuses his wife or children has abandoned his role as a husband and father and has therefore broken the marriage covenant. The Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage shares this position:

This is so precisely because his violence separates them, either by her forced withdrawal from the home or by the profound cleavage between them which the violence produces, as surely as would his own departure, and is thus an expression of his unwillingness "to consent" to live with her in marriage (1 Cor. 7:12-13; Eph. 5:28-29).³⁰⁰

When a victim of abuse must leave her home to protect herself and her children, it is the perpetrator's abusive actions that have caused the separation, not the victim's decision to leave. The same can be said of a victim's choice to file for divorce. Taking such a step does not violate Paul's prohibition against actively instigating the dissolution of a marriage. Her spouse is the one who has broken the marriage covenant through his abuse, and she is merely seeking the formal recognition of a state of brokenness that already exists. A victim's decision to divorce does not kill the marriage. Abuse kills the marriage, and divorce is merely seeking the death certificate.

3. The Practical Argument

The purpose of this section is to build on the biblical argument that abuse breaks the marriage covenant. By bringing to light the oppressive effects of abuse on the victim and her children, this section will strengthen the case that domestic abuse creates a forced separation in the marriage that is tantamount to desertion. An abusive marriage damages the physical and psychological health of the victim and forces her to leave the abuser to pursue healing and

³⁰⁰ *M20GA*, 563.

safety. The following are just some of the ways that domestic abuse can impact the victim:

- Severe anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Questioning her own sanity
- Intense nightmares
- Insomnia
- Digestion problems
- Depression
- PTSD
- Suicidal ideation
- Physical injuries
- Life threatened (in the most severe cases).³⁰¹

It is common to think that only physical abuse would be an adequate reason to leave. It is possible to infer this from the above quote from the Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage, due to its repeated use of the word “violence.” Yet such a position severely underestimates the effects of all types of abuse on the victim. All abuse results in the physical symptoms listed above. Emotional, verbal, and spiritual abuse often cause the victim to experience panic attacks, depression, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts, all concurrently. Even in physically abusive relationships, the greatest damage the victim suffers is almost always psychological. Physical damage can heal in a matter of days or weeks, but psychological wounds take years to overcome. In fact, it is common for victims who have experienced both psychological and physical abuse to say that psychological abuse is worse. All types of abuse are absolutely devastating to a victim’s health and well-being. All types of abuse create a forced separation in the marriage, just like physical abuse. And therefore, all types of abuse qualify as a form of desertion.

It is also important to consider the sexual dimension of marriage. In many cases, abuse does not stop when the couple enters the bedroom. There are many abusive men who have never hit their wives but have sexually violated them in ways that are degrading and inhumane. Examples include:

- Forcing her to watch pornography under the threat of violence
- Rape

³⁰¹ For a more complete list see Christiane Sanderson, *Counseling Survivors of Domestic Abuse* (Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008), 54-55.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Forced sodomy
- Requiring her to engage in sexual acts with other men, also under the threat of violence.

Victims of sexual abuse are on high alert the moment their husbands climb into bed and suffer from intense nightmares and insomnia as a result. Yet the sexual dimension of an abusive marriage is so humiliating that many victims will not disclose it even if they are asked, especially to male pastors and elders. Limiting biblical grounds for divorce to physical abuse fails to account for this destructive yet secretive aspect of the marriage.

Another factor is the impact of domestic abuse on children. Living in an abusive home scars children, even if the abuse is not perpetrated directly against them. Children who grow up in a family where dad abuses mom experience many of the following effects:

- Failure to thrive in infants
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Insecurity
- Self-blame
- Defiance
- Poor grades
- Bed-wetting in children over four
- Intense nightmares
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse
- Teen pregnancy
- Cutting
- Suicidal thoughts
- Boys are more likely to become abusive
- Girls are more likely to marry abusive men.³⁰²

It is common for pastors and elders to pressure victims of abuse to remain in their marriages, and one of the primary motives is the impact of divorce on children. This is a mistake. While divorce is always unfortunate, and the effect

³⁰² For a more complete list see Lundy Bancroft, *When Dad Hurts Mom: Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2004), 72-74.

on children is undeniable, the impact of domestic abuse on children is worse than the impact of divorce.³⁰³

Another reality we have to grapple with is that abusers rarely change.³⁰⁴ Unless you are a victim of domestic abuse or an expert in the field, you do not fully appreciate the depth of blindness and self-deception that plagues abusive men. It is something you have to experience to fully grasp. This blindness and self-deception make the change process much more challenging than other types of sanctification. We can trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the human heart, but that should not cause us to ignore the fact that counseling programs for abusive men have low success rates. One rigorous study of batterer intervention programs found only a five percent improvement rate in

³⁰³ Brenda Branson and Paula J. Silva, *Violence Among Us: Ministering to Families in Crisis* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2007), 44.

³⁰⁴ “Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed” (Isaiah 6:9–10). G.K. Beale writes, “Whenever the organs of spiritual perception were seen to be not functioning, a certain kind of language was used. We might call this sensory-organ-malfunction language. When this language is used in the Old Testament, almost without exception, it refers not just to sinners in general but to only one particular kind of sin—the sin of idol worship” (G.K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship, A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 41). Isaiah is speaking to this specific type of sin. He later tells us God Himself “smearing over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend” (Isa. 44:8, emphasis mine). At its root, abuse in marriage is the sin of self-worship. “An abusive person uses his God-like faculties to overpower those same faculties in someone else to get what he wants. Instead of using his powers to arrange the world to God’s glory, he uses his powers to arrange the world for his own” (Jeremy Pierre, Greg Wilson, *When Home Hurts, A Guide for Responding Wisely to Domestic Abuse in Your Church* (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2021), 24). God does not share His glory with another, and the judgment for such sin, for those who worship any other, is to be “made spiritually insensitive like the idols they worship.” Beale, *Worship*, 47. Beale continues, “the reversal of spiritual blindness and deafness into spiritual ‘seeing and hearing’ is the gift of God and cannot occur by any independent human determination” (Ibid, 270). Only God can reverse this condition. While those contributing to this report believe God can and will change anyone, these passages emphasize both the difficulty and the utter dependence on God that pastors, leaders, and counselors must acknowledge when shepherding those who abuse.

perpetrators ceasing physical abuse.³⁰⁵ Couples counseling and anger management fared even worse.³⁰⁶ Therefore, asking a victim to remain married could be tantamount to asking her to endure a lifetime of abuse. If Scripture permits victims of abuse to divorce, as this report argues, then pastors and sessions should not deny what Scripture allows. They should humbly and compassionately shepherd a victim towards an abuse-free life, be it through the abuser's repentance and the restoration of her marriage or the ending of her marriage.

Protecting the marriage covenant is a biblical desire, but so is protecting a human being. As people created in the image of God, victims of abuse and their children have inherent value and dignity that should be protected. Pastors and elders who pressure victims to remain in abusive marriages usually do not fully comprehend the damage abuse inflicts on a human being. When ministering to families impacted by domestic abuse, the physical and psychological safety of the victim and her children should take priority over keeping the marriage together.

4. The Question of Remarriage

If a victim of domestic abuse divorces her husband, is she allowed to remarry? Deuteronomy 24:1-4 assumes that divorced people can remarry, and Jesus permits remarriage if the divorce was for sexual immorality (Matt. 19:9). Some strengthen the case for remarriage after desertion by appealing to the second half of 1 Corinthians 7:15, which reads, "But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace." When Paul writes that "the brother or sister is not enslaved," many understand him to be saying that the believer is not enslaved to the previous marriage and is therefore free to remarry.³⁰⁷ This interpretation is often referred to as the "Pauline privilege." We agree that Paul is saying that a deserted spouse is not enslaved to the previous marriage, but it is doubtful that Paul addresses remarriage. He goes on to write, "God has called you to peace. For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?" Paul's point is that the deserting spouse's lack of salvation does not obligate the believer to

³⁰⁵ National Institute of Justice, *Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research: For Law Enforcement, Prosecutors and Judges* (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2009), 65.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁰⁷ For example, see *M20GA*, 561-562, and John Murray, *Divorce* (Philadelphia, PA: P&R, 1961), 74-75.

stay in the marriage for the sake of evangelism. Doing so produces a state of perpetual marital conflict, which is the antithesis of the peace and reconciliation that characterizes the gospel. The believing spouse is not enslaved in that they are free to divorce. However, the freedom to remarry is simply not addressed.³⁰⁸

Nevertheless, the language of not being “enslaved” should hold special significance for victims of abuse. As unfortunate as divorce is, the Lord does not require them to remain in the oppression that they have suffered. The God who led His people out of slavery in Egypt (Ex. 20:2), and the Savior who came to liberate the oppressed (Luke 4:18), now tells victims of abuse that they are no longer enslaved (1 Cor. 7:15). Throughout Scripture, the Redeemer of the oppressed bids His people to run free.

Although 1 Corinthians 7:15 does not speak to remarriage, there is another passage in the same chapter that does address the issue. We read in vv. 10-11, “To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.” Some theologians think these verses prohibit remarriage after divorce in all circumstances.³⁰⁹ They argue that Paul is issuing a strict, over-arching command which applies to all Christians in all situations. There are two factors which make this interpretation unlikely.

First, we must understand the cultural context of first century Corinth, which had a view of marriage and divorce that fell far short of the biblical standard. Anthony Thiselton writes, “In the Roman world of the first century divorce was undertaken both frequently and often for selfish, trivial reasons.”³¹⁰ We face a similar situation in our culture today. The difference is that in ancient Corinth, the Christian view of marriage would not have been seen as traditionalist dogma, but as a strange and unrealistic novelty. In light of the audience Paul is addressing, it is best to view vv. 10-11 as a general statement against the prevailing cultural attitude toward divorce. In general, Christians may not divorce their spouses at will. Those who do so are not allowed to remarry.

³⁰⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 303.

³⁰⁹ Gordon J. Wenham and William E. Heth, *Jesus and Divorce*, Updated Edition (Carlisle, CA: Paternoster Press, 1984), 144 and Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 296.

³¹⁰ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 540.

Second, the Greek construction ἐὰν δὲ καὶ (translated “but if”) introduces a general condition that qualifies the preceding prohibition.³¹¹ Despite the fact that Paul has prohibited divorce, he acknowledges the practice will nevertheless continue, and so he regulates it. Paul has given a general command not to divorce your spouse. If someone disobeys this command, that person is not allowed to remarry. But if the divorce is for biblical grounds, that person has not disobeyed God, as v. 15 clearly shows. In other words, Paul only prohibits remarriage for people who have divorced their spouses on unbiblical grounds. In light of the fact that remarriage is assumed in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and allowed in Matthew 19:9, it is safe to conclude that people who divorce on biblical grounds are free to remarry. This includes victims of abuse.

Some pastors and Sessions are in the practice of advising victims to remain permanently separated from the abuser, but to refrain from divorce. Such an option may seem like the best of both worlds: the marriage covenant is preserved, and the victim is safe. However, this course of action is not recommended. If the victim has no intention of ever living with the abuser as husband and wife, one should question if they are truly married. They may be married on paper, but they are functionally divorced. This is certainly how the apostle Paul would view such a situation, as there was no category of legal separation in the first century. A couple was either married or divorced; there was no middle ground. Furthermore, without a divorce the victim is not able to remarry. Many victims are in their 20s or 30s when they leave their abusive spouses. It is tragic to rob them of the freedom to remarry when Scripture allows it, especially at such a young age.

Those who argue against remarriage usually believe that the marriage bond is indissoluble, except by death. As appealing as such a view may be, it is hard to square with Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and Matthew 19:9. Scripture teaches that marriage is a covenant (Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14). This means that it is a binding relationship that should ideally never be broken. But despite this ideal, it *can* be broken. Geerhardus Vos illustrates:

We may have on our parlor table a beautiful and costly vase. It ought to be handled carefully. It ought not to be broken. It was not made to be smashed; it was made to exist as a thing of beauty and grace. But it

³¹¹ Walter Bauer, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 267 and Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 295.

is not impossible to break it. And if a member of the family breaks it through carelessness, or in a fit of temper smashes it deliberately, there is nothing to do but sweep up the broken fragments and dispose of them. We will not say, “This vase was not intended to be broken; therefore it is impossible to break it; the vase is unbreakable; therefore in spite of the fact that it lies in shattered fragments on the floor, we will not throw it away; we will keep it forever.” No one would say that about a broken vase; yet that is substantially the argument of those who say that the marriage bond is “indissoluble” and “unbreakable.”³¹²

5. Conclusion

In the experience of the authors of this report, most Christian victims of abuse are deeply committed to their marriages. In fact, it would be difficult to find a group of people who have paid a higher price for their commitment to the marriage covenant. Many victims have courageously stayed with their spouses for years and continued exposing themselves to abuse in hopes that their marriages would be saved. They do not want to smash the beautiful and costly vase that Geerhardus Vos describes. Rather, they are sitting on the floor surrounded by shattered fragments, desperately trying to put the pieces back together, hopeless and confused as to why nothing they try seems to work. Sometimes God will perform a miracle and bring healing and restoration to the marriage. But many times, He does not, and in such cases, victims should not be forced to endure a lifetime of abuse. God has declared that they are no longer enslaved. He declares this because of who He is: the God of the exodus; the God of redemption. If we in the PCA want to respond to oppression the way God does, we will support victims of domestic abuse on their difficult journey to freedom.

³¹² Quoted in Loraine Boettner, *Divorce* (Nutley, NJ: P&R, 1960), 13.

Attachment 12

Committee Bios

Committee Members

REV. DR. TIMOTHY R. LECROY [Chairman] is a teaching elder in Missouri Presbytery. He is a visiting instructor of historical theology at Covenant Theological Seminary and has served the General Assembly on various committees. Dr. LeCroy brings the perspective of an abuse survivor to the committee.

DR. KELLY DEHNERT [Secretary] is a ruling elder in Rocky Mountain Presbytery and Assistant to the Pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Lander, WY. He researches and teaches on abusive leadership in Christian organizations and is on the national board of Refuge Ministries.

REV. CAL BOROUGHS is a retired teaching elder in Tennessee Valley Presbytery, formerly pastor of St. Elmo Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga, TN. He has served as moderator for his Presbytery and was part of the working group that brought to the Assembly the overture for a study committee on domestic abuse and sexual assault.

MR. BOB GOUDZWAARD is a ruling elder in Central Carolina Presbytery and helped develop a domestic abuse online training video for the Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship. He serves as director of Care Ministries at Christ Covenant Church in Charlotte, NC.

DR. DAVID HABURCHAK is a ruling elder in Metro Atlanta Presbytery and a doctor of internal medicine with extensive experience in the effects of childhood abuse on adults. Dr. Haburchak is Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University. He recently authored “Kingdom Work: Redeeming Child Sexual Abuse.”

REV. DR. LLOYD PIERSON is a teaching elder in Rocky Mountain Presbytery and works with abuse survivors and perpetrators through Refuge Ministries, a national domestic abuse ministry founded in Kalispell, MT. He is the senior pastor of Faith Covenant PCA in Kalispell.

REV. SHANE WALDRON is a teaching elder in Rocky Mountain Presbytery and the lead pastor of Rocky Mountain PCA in Westminster, CO. He founded and serves on the national board of Refuge Ministries. He also developed the curriculum the ministry uses.

Advisory Members

RACHAEL DENHOLLANDER became known internationally in 2016 as the first woman to pursue criminal charges and speak publicly against USA Gymnastics' team doctor Larry Nassar, one of the most prolific sexual abusers in recorded history. She is an attorney, author, advocate, and educator. Rachael is a member of the Reformed Baptist Church of Louisville, KY.

ANN MAREE GOUDZWAARD is a member of Christ Covenant PCA in Matthews, NC and the Executive Director of Help[H]er. In addition, she trains counselors at RTS Charlotte, Eternity Bible College, and PeaceWorks University. Ann Maree is a biblical counselor with an M.Div. with a counseling emphasis and a D.Min. candidate.

DR. DIANE LANGBERG is a member of Calvary PCA in Willow Grove, PA and is a psychologist with over 50 years of experience helping abuse victims. She is a well-known speaker and author of multiple books about abuse and trauma.

DR. BARBARA SHAFFER is a member of Faith PCA in Wilmington, DE and a psychologist with nearly 40 years of experience, much of which involved working with survivors of sexual and domestic abuse.

DARBY STRICKLAND is a member of Cornerstone PCA in Center Valley, PA and on the faculty of Christian Counseling Educational Foundation. She teaches "Counseling Abusive Marriages" at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. She is the author of the book, *Is It Abuse?*, and two booklets for churches and survivors of abuse.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Editor's Note: These resources were current at the time of publication.)

This bibliography is not intended as an exhaustive list but representative of quality resources from both Christian and non-Christian experts on abuse recommended by the committee. The following are the reference categories.

1. Adult Sexual Assault / Abuse
2. Batterers / Abusers
3. Childhood Sexual Abuse
4. Childhood Adversity
5. Domestic Violence
6. Healing and Recovery: General
7. Healing and Recovery: Sexual Abuse / Assault
8. Spiritual Abuse / Misuse of Spiritual Authority
9. Websites

1. ADULT SEXUAL ASSAULT / ABUSE

Courtright, John and Sid Rogers. *What To Do When You Find Out Your Wife Was Sexually Abused*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.

Written for husbands whose wives are going through therapy for sexual abuse. Also helpful for couples to read in that situation. Explains emotional reactions and offers suggestions about how to talk to each other constructively.

Hundley, Shelley. *A Cry for Justice: Overcome Anger, Reject Bitterness, and Trust in Jesus Who Will Fight for You*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2011.

Hundley was sexually molested (by pastors) as a child of missionaries in Columbia. This is a wonderful book, though some will struggle with her Charismatic doctrine. Her understanding of justice and forgiveness is very helpful to those who seek healing from sexual abuse.

Langberg, Diane. *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse*. Camarillo, CA: Xulon Press; 1st Edition, 2003.

A pioneering and timeless guide to counseling survivors of sexual abuse based on the premise that such therapy must be both incarnational and redemptive. Essential reading for anyone who wants to know how to counsel a survivor in healing ways that reflect the person of Christ.

2. *BATTERERS / ABUSERS*

Arbinger Institute. *Leadership and Self-Deception, Getting Out of the Box*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2000, 2010, 2018.

Leadership and Self-Deception is not a Christian book, nor even a conventional secular book. It is written as a hypothetical narrative, a pretend story about a leader in an imaginary organization. What makes this book helpful in shepherding abusers is how it accurately, and often biblically, describes the mind of someone who feels entitled.

Throughout the descriptions of living inside “the box,” the reader will hear echoes of Paul’s challenge in Philippians 2:3-8:

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Leadership and Self-Deception shows us that, when we act contrary to what we are called to do for others, we betray our true self. Living in that self-betrayal, our view of the world is distorted. Self-betrayal is how we get ourselves into the box.

Inside the box, we are self-deceived. We inflate others’ faults while justifying our own. In the box, other people do not have the same privilege of thinking, feeling, acting, or wanting as we do. Our thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions take primacy.

The authors suggest that to get out of the box, our perspective must change. Inside the box, the problem is that others need to change. Outside the box, we cease self-justification, honor other people as people (fellow image-bearers), and see them as those who have valid thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Interestingly, the authors also stumble across another biblical principle as seen below in Chalmers’s resource. That is, simply changing behavior is not how to get out of the box. Changing behavior while inside the box is simply a means for more sophisticated ways to blame. “Since the box itself is deeper than behavior, the way out of the box has to be deeper than behavior too” (142).

When we experience others as people rather than objects for our own satisfaction we live outside the box.

Chalmers, Thomas, D.D. *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*. Minneapolis, MN: Curiosmith, 2012.

Puritan Thomas Chalmers's little, but powerful sermon challenges both the counselor and the believer to understand that "pulling up our bootstraps," determining to be better, or even regulating behavior will not succeed in the Christian life. "It is almost never done by the mere force of mental determination" (11). The only possible remedy for love (and therefore obedience) of God is that He replace what is in the seat of our affections. In abuse, the abuser's affection is self. Only by "substituting another desire, and another line of habit of exertion in its place . . ." (11) can the love of "the world" (a.k.a., "self") be expunged and "supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself" (17).

Counselors and Christians will find Chalmers's wisdom a helpful perspective for how to approach caregiving when working with an abuser. See also Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2021.

Owen, John. *Spiritual-Mindedness*. Edited by R.J.K. Law. Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009, 2016.

Owen wants believers to be drawn to the awe-inspiring, life-giving, eternally blessed Father. In fact, in *Spiritual-Mindedness*, Owens wants our minds drawn to our Savior and spiritual things every moment. Romans 8:6-8 says, "For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Owens writes, "All actions, good or bad, come from our thoughts" (7) and "That which you set your heart on is that which you will think about most (238). Owen devotes his entire book to walking us through how to purposely and helpfully focus—daily and regularly—our thoughts upon God.

Similar to Chalmers's claim in *The Expulsive Power*, Owen suggests to think God's thoughts is to grow to know and love Him more. To think God's thoughts, therefore, is to eradicate the sin of self-worship. Counselors and pastors can help abusive individuals redirect their thoughts toward the only Source worthy of our praise.

Paymar, Michael, and Anne Ganley. *Violent No More: Helping Men End Domestic Abuse*, 3rd Ed. Nashville, TN: Hunter House, 2015.

This book is very helpful for counseling batterers. Despite the lack of hopefulness for batterers to change, this book challenges the reader to trust that God can indeed change anyone. It provides many helpful stories of success. Though not a Christian text, it seeks to get to the heart of the abuser for real change to happen.

Tozer, A.W. *The Knowledge of the Holy*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1961.

If knowing who God is and thinking His thoughts after Him is one way to replace thoughts of self and entitlement, the attributes of God are the place to begin. Tozer's classic, *The Knowledge of the Holy* is a grace that introduces us (or reminds us) who God is and why who He is matters in our everyday world. In keeping with spiritual-mindedness, thinking about who God is on a daily basis is refreshment for the soul: the type of deep soul-refreshment that shapes our affections. "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us" (1). Rather than our wants, our needs, our desires, our passions defining who and what we are (abusive or not), thoughts about God make us who He intended us to be.

Welch, Edward T. *When People Are Big and God Is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997.

"Fear of man is such a part of our human fabric that we should check for a pulse if someone denies it" (17). Everyone, it seems, struggles to fear God more than we fear fellow man. Fear of man keeps a victim of abuse paralyzed; everything they do revolves around pleasing their abuser. Fear of man keeps abusers relentlessly pursuing, obtaining, and keeping the image they've created intact.

Fear of man is a significant characteristic of abuse, both of the victims and the abusers. At the heart of this fear is unbelief of a good God. Fear of man fills the vacuum when a holy fear of God is lacking. Only God provides all things necessary for life and godliness. Only God's love is the answer to the human struggle. All attempts to find satisfaction, or approval, or recognition outside of pursuing God's love, forgiveness and acceptance will fail. Only a radical fear of God will replace the fear of man. See also Flavel, John. *Triumphing over Sinful Fear*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011 and Fox, Christina. *A Holy Fear, Trading Lesser Fears for the Fear of the Lord*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020.

3. *CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE*

Allender, Dan. *The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse.* Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2008.

For those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and those who love and care for them, *The Wounded Heart* offers a tender, compassionate window into the psychological effects of abuse and the theological foundations for healing.

Denhollander, Rachel. *What Is a Girl Worth?* Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2019.

A compelling personal account of sexual abuse at the hands of a trusted physician and the courageous path the author took to expose a powerful figure and a powerful organization in the face of disbelief and efforts to silence her. Saturated with deep faith, biblical support, forgiveness, and a relentless desire to protect other children.

Haburchak, MD, David R. *Kingdom Work: Redeeming Childhood Sexual Abuse.* Research Triangle, NC: Lulu Publishing, 2019.

Intended as a comprehensive primer on all aspects of the subject from both theological and medical points of view, it is specifically designed for churches to use in small group study with prayer, discussion points, and applications. Recommendation for a child safety policy is in Attachment 6, and it outlines current self-help as well as church-based treatment programs by Mary Demuth and the BECOMERS ministry to both victims and perpetrators by Lynn Heitritter and Jeanette Vought. Haburchak is a Ruling Elder in the PCA.

Langberg, Diane. *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse.* Camarillo, CA: Xulon Press; 1st Edition, 2003.

A pioneering and timeless guide to counseling survivors of sexual abuse based on the premise that such therapy must be both incarnational and redemptive. Essential reading for anyone who wants to know how to counsel a survivor in healing ways that reflect the person of Christ.

Langberg, Diane. *On the Threshold of Hope: Opening the Door to Healing for Survivors of Sexual Abuse.* Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1999.

A companion to *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse* that will lead survivors along the path of understanding and healing.

McConnell, Mez. *The Creaking on the Stairs*. Fearn, Ross-shire. UK: Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 2019.

This book was written for those who have suffered from childhood sexual abuse; however, Mez McConnell maps the truths and promises of God over all the circumstances of horrific pain and suffering. This book is a helpful perspective for someone who has endured any kind of abuse. The story in the book is raw. Please recommend reading with caution.

4. CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY

Jung, J.H. “Childhood Adversity, Religion, and Change in Mental Health.” *Research on Aging* no. 40 (2018): 155-79.

Author contends that “religious practice and spirituality buffer the noxious effects of abuse on positive affect (“calm, peaceful, cheerful, happy, satisfied, good spirits”) but do not help the downward spiral of negative affect, especially in later times of stress (“hopeless, nervous, restless, sadness, worthlessness, nothing could cheer you up”).” He seems to suggest that church and spirituality provide existential hope to maintain some degree of optimism, but reluctance to talk to others, especially in the congregation about their experiences leads to the persistence of strong negative cognition, especially under times of stress. This would fit with the BECOMERS group’s strategy noted above and has implications for how churches handle the past trauma of members.

5. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Bancroft, Lundy. *When Dad Hurts Mom: Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse*. New York, NY: Hudson, 2004.

Written for mothers who are struggling with how to protect their children from the emotional trauma they experience after witnessing physical and/or emotional abuse in their homes and from the manipulation of the abusive parent. Contains many helpful and practical suggestions.

Bancroft, Lundy. *Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*. New York, NY: Berkley Books, 2002.

Bancroft is extremely helpful in understanding the minds of abusers. He was an early batterers’ intervention support group leader. His current focus is on helping the justice system work together to battle domestic violence and give targets safety. This book has helped countless women over the years. He provides a thorough approach to increasing understanding why some men

abuse women, including early warning signs, ten abusive personality types, the process of change, and more.

For a comprehensive understanding of an abusive man, Bancroft's book is essential. While insight from his sociology is important, the reader should know he has no biblical understanding of anthropology or sin, nor does he recommend any biblical solutions. Caution is advised due to foul language and utter lack of hope found throughout the book.

Branson, Brenda and Paula Silva. *Violence Among Us: Ministry to Families in Crisis*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2007.

This book offers practical help in identifying abusive situations. It has strategic counseling tips, case studies and models of effective ministry to both the victim and the perpetrator. There are resource lists which include domestic violence hotlines and shelters, faith-based organizations, abuser treatment programs, and information on legal and safety issues.

Evans, Patricia. *The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize It and How to Respond*, 3rd ed. Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2010.

Very helpful in identifying verbal abuse and emphasizes specific themes that are helpful for those in abusive relationships. Excellent advice on how to respond to verbal abuse. Not written by a Christian.

Hambrick, Brad. *Church Cares / Becoming a Church That Cares Well for the Abused*. <https://churchcares.com/>.

This is an exceptional resource for churches who desire to care "Well for the Abused." Hambrick has put together notable experts in the Christian community to speak from various disciplines. From counseling to law enforcement to advocacy, *Becoming a Church That Cares Well* provides video training and a free e-book from the website for use by Sessions for the instruction of their congregations.

Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997.

An insightful, groundbreaking book for those who want to understand the impact of trauma and the prerequisites for recovery.

Holcomb, Lindsey A., Justin S. Holcomb, and Elyse M. Fitzpatrick. *Is It My Fault?: Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence*, New edition. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Written tenderly to victims, this book speaks the gospel of grace into their hearts and situations while helping them to consider steps they can take towards healing.

Miles, Al. *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011.

Miles provides many helpful insights to caring for survivors of domestic violence within the church. Written to church leaders. (Some pastors will struggle with his quoting of women church leaders.)

Millage, Sydney. *Sanctuary: Hope and Help for Victims of Domestic Abuse*. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2018.

Sydney Millage suggests that the way to effectively minister to abuse victims is an understanding of domestic abuse and how to apply the good news of Jesus, His Word, and character to what has remained unseen, unknown, and misunderstood. The author “provides comprehensive hope and help for victims of domestic abuse, counselors and friends who come alongside them, and churches striving to shepherd members righteously and compassionately.”

Moles, Chris. *The Heart of Domestic Abuse: Gospel Solutions for Men Who Use Control and Violence in the Home*. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2015.

A brilliant book by a pastor, biblical counselor, and batterer intervention specialist on how to bring oppressors in the church to repentance.

Pierre, Jeremy and Greg Wilson. *When Home Hurts, A Guide for Responding Wisely to Domestic Abuse in Your Church*. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2021.

Pierre, the Professor of the Biblical Counseling & Department Chair at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Wilson, a licensed professional counselor, have written *the* manual for pastors and church leaders who want to carefully, wisely, and theologically shepherd victims and domestic abusers well. The first part of the book addresses the biblical, theological framework for thinking about this issue, while the second part proposes the wisest practices for helping those involved.

The authors acknowledge that the Bible was not written to be a textbook for abuse. However, Scripture does provide a framework for thinking through this kind of oppression. The doctrines of Image of God, Sin, Love, Oppression, Marriage, and the Church all provide an interpretive grid for helping us understand and respond well in cases of domestic abuse. The

authors also helpfully articulate what constitutes normal sin in the marital relationship versus what constitutes abuse (“me before you” rather than “me OVER you” p. 70). Every church leader would benefit from this book.

Simon, PhD, George K. *Character Disturbance: The Phenomenon of Our Age*, 1st Edition. Little Rock, AR: Parkhurst Brothers Publishers Inc., 2011.

Dr. George Simon, a Christian psychologist, describes individuals with “disturbed characters” as shameless and guiltless. His analysis of abusive individuals involves various DSM defined disorders but concludes that abuse is different from suffering from a personality disorder.

Snyder, Rachel Louise. *No Visible Bruises: What We Don’t Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us*. Bloomsbury Publishing; 1st Edition, 2019.

A comprehensive, well-researched report on domestic abuse in America. Snyder’s book has been called a “tour de force” for understanding domestic violence in American culture. One of the things she helps the reader understand is that we need to be asking better questions. It’s not enough to ask, “Why doesn’t she just leave?” At the same time, we must examine why men feel they have permission to resort to violence as a solution to their (perceived) problems. “The Danger Assessment” is a particularly helpful tool.

Strickland, Darby A. *Domestic Abuse: For the Sufferer*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018.

This mini-book, written to the survivor of abuse, provides clarity and encouragement. It aims to help victims see that God speaks into their situation, and it offers them steps they can take to begin to get help.

Strickland, Darby A. *Domestic Abuse: Recognize, Respond, Rescue*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018.

This mini-book summarizes how to detect abuse, explains the heart of an oppressor, and describes first steps to take to help oppressors and the oppressed. It is a short read and is written with church leadership in mind.

Strickland, Darby A. *Is it Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020.

From beginning to end, a treasure chest of information about the dynamics and kinds of abuse, their effects on women and children, and practical steps to take to offer apt help. Strickland teaches how to identify the toxic entitlement that drives abusive behavior and to better understand its impact on victims—including children who are raised in a home with domestic

abuse. Scripture references and appendices about safety plans, red flags during dating, pre-marital abuse inventory, ten ways to educate the church, and more.

It will equip you to provide wise and Christ-centered counsel, empower, and advocate for victims while navigating the complex dynamics of oppression in a marriage. The book has detailed inventory questions to screen for different kinds of abuse—physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, and financial—as well as case studies, exercises, and comprehensive worksheets. Included is a safety action plan that can be used to train helpers and assist victims.

Tucker, Ruth. *Black and White Bible, Black and Blue Wife: My Story of Finding Hope After Domestic Abuse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

A story of abuse from her pastor-husband, as well as other women's experiences, and, refreshingly, accounts of husbands who loved their wives as Christ loved the church. Suggests a biblical approach for challenging abuse and presses the church to consider thoughtfully the potential danger in doctrinaire male headship.

Vernick, Leslie. *The Emotionally Destructive Marriage: How to Find Your Voice and Reclaim Your Hope*, 2013 Edition. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2013.

Based on decades of counseling experience, Vernick's intensely practical, biblical advice helps show victims of abuse how to establish boundaries and break free from emotional abuse. Distinguishes between a disappointing marriage and a destructive marriage and shines a bright light on subtle and blatant emotional abuses and their damage. Biblically-based throughout. Outlines a process that begins within the victim to develop inner spiritual and relational strengths, moves to trying to initiate change in the situation, and then moves to dealing constructively when there is no change. Vernick has helpful online resources and support groups for survivors as well.

6. HEALING / RECOVERY: GENERAL

Card, Michael. *A Sacred Sorrow: Reaching Out to God in the Lost Language of Lament (Quiet Times for the Heart)*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005.

Not written specifically for abuse survivors but helpful for recovery. God desires for us to pour out our hearts to Him, whether in joy or pain. But many of us don't feel right expressing our anger, frustration, and sadness in prayer. From Job to David to Christ, men and women of the Bible understood the importance of pouring one's heart out to the Father. Examine their stories

and expand your definition of worship. See also Vroegop, Mark, and Joni Eareckson Tada. *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2019.

Chalmers, DD, Thomas. *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*. Minneapolis, MN: Curiosmith, 2012.

Puritan Thomas Chalmers's little but powerful sermon challenges both the counselor and the believer to understand that simply "pulling up our bootstraps," determining to be better, or even regulating behavior will not succeed in the Christian life. "It is almost never done by the mere force of mental determination" (11). The only possible remedy is love (and therefore obedience) of God in that He replaces what is in the seat of our affections. In abuse, the abuser's affection is self. Only by "substituting another desire, and another line of habit of exertion in its place . . ." (11) can the love of "the world" (a.k.a., "self") be expunged and "supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself" (17).

The power of this new affection is a "mighty instrument of obedience" (19). The man (or woman) who has been told to "shut out the world from his heart," (26) will find it an impossible task unless they find God as his or her "sure and satisfying portion" (26).

Counselors and Christians will find Chalmers's wisdom a helpful perspective for how to approach caregiving when working with an abuser. See also, Ortlund, Dane C. *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2020 and Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2021.

Currid, John. *Why Do I Suffer?: Suffering & the Sovereignty of God*. Fearn, Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2014.

Why does God allow suffering? John Currid helpfully explains how God works in suffering, not as "a worried observer unwilling or unable to intervene," but rather with a purpose.

Fitzpatrick, Elyse M. *Because He Loves Me: How Christ Transforms Our Daily Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Abuse diminishes the image of God in the victim. Abuse muddies the waters of identity, and instead of living as children of God, victims forget who they are as individuals, hyper focus on their weaknesses, and lose who they are in relationship to their heavenly Father.

Fitzpatrick expands on these thoughts, calling what many of us experience as "spiritual amnesia." For a victim, to restore a God-given identity, similar to what is mentioned by Chalmers in his resource above, is to turn their

eyes fully onto the gift and grace of God’s love. Gospel-shaped living means the truth of God’s love informs everyday life; it means the believer is *transformed* by applying that truth to all the circumstances of life. For a victim of abuse, this kind of love is foreign. Elyse’s book challenges the reader to be who they are. If a victim heard (frequently) the love of their Father, how might that change their everyday world?

Fitzpatrick, Elyse and Eric Schumacher. *Worthy: Celebrating the Value of Women*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2020.

Women who have suffered from abuse may not recognize that women were always very important to God. Women have always been important as God works out His redemptive goals. Fitzpatrick and Schumacher take the reader on a walk through the Bible and demonstrate the many ways God used women in His plans, encouraged them, and promoted them as valuable human image-bearers.

For those who have been diminished simply because of their gender, *Worthy* encourages them to see through God’s eyes, to know God’s acceptance, and to hear God’s call for their life. One of the most important characteristics of hope a victim can rely on is that God will use *everything for good*. The Christian hope in suffering is that God never wastes the difficult circumstances of our lives. Schumacher and Fitzpatrick illustrate this beautifully from the Scriptures, encouraging women to persevere, encouraging them to believe that their story *will be redeemed*.

Forrest, Joy. *Called to Peace: A Survivor’s Guide to Finding Peace and Healing After Domestic Abuse*. Raleigh, NC: Blue Ink Press, LLC, 2018.

This book is both an autobiography and also a guide for victims of domestic abuse. With knowledge and compassion, Joy points her readers to Christ—the ultimate source of true wholeness and healing. Her story is one of physical abuse and will resonate with victims.

See also, Forrest, Joy. *Called to Peace: Companion Workbook*. Raleigh, NC: Blue Ink Press, LLC, 2019.

Gingrich, H.D. and F.C. Gingrich. *Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.

Heather Gingrich, one of the authors, teaches a course on trauma at RTS Jackson. The third chapter, “The Neurobiology of Stress and Trauma,” is worth the price of the book. The authors meticulously walk the reader through the central nervous system as it relates to the devastating impacts of trauma. On a positive note, the authors tell us that the brain *can* change. It isn’t easy,

but God has designed it perfectly and it is possible to improve what has been devastated by trauma.

Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, New York: Basic Books, 1997.

An insightful, groundbreaking book for those who want to understand the impact of trauma and the prerequisites for recovery.

Holcomb, Lindsey. *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

Scripturally- and theologically-based view of sexual assault and restoration by a counselor of sexual assault survivors. Discusses the psychological, emotional, and spiritual impact of sexual assault. Clearly offers the hope found in Christ and His redemptive suffering.

Kellemen, Bob. *God's Healing for Life's Losses, How to Find Hope When You're Hurting*. Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2010.

One of the most helpful things pastors and counselors can do to help victims heal is to encourage them to grieve their losses. All suffering is loss. "Suffering is so dreadful because suffering is death. All suffering is the dying, separating, and severing of relationships" (11). Naming those losses, feeling the pain of losing relationship, identity, and position due to trauma and/or abuse, is a step toward wholeness. Those who suffer great loss do not necessarily stop grieving with the passage of time, rather they remember what's been lost—feel the feels of the loss—and use those emotions to lead them to God. Kellemen's process (albeit not a formula) is so much more helpful than the five steps developed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross.

Langberg, Diane. *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores*. 1st edition. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2015.

Langberg says the church's greatest mission field in the 21st century is trauma. Trauma is extraordinary, she says, "not because it rarely happens, but because it swallows up and destroys normal human ways of living." We, the church, Langberg says, must become representatives of God to suffering people.

Chapters on the psychology of suffering, shame and trauma, domestic violence, sexual abuse and more call the church to view these evils as part of the sufferings of Christ and to face them in fellowship with Him, bringing His restorative power to those who suffer.

Owen, John. *Spiritual-Mindedness*. Edited by R.J.K. Law. Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009, 2016.

Owen, similar to Chalmers, wants believers to be drawn to the awe-inspiring, life-giving, eternally blessed Father. In fact, in *Spiritual-Mindedness*, Owens wants our minds drawn to our Savior and spiritual things every moment. Romans 8:6-8 says, “For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Owens writes, “All actions, good or bad, come from our thoughts” (7) and “That which you set your heart on is that which you will think about most (238). Owen’s devotes his entire book to walking us through how to purposely and helpfully focus—daily and regularly—our thoughts upon God.

Like Chalmers’s claim in *The Explosive Power*, to think God’s thoughts is to grow to know and love Him more. To think God’s thoughts, therefore, is to eradicate the sin of self-worship. Counselors and pastors can help abusive individuals redirect their thoughts toward the only Source worthy of our praise.

Schmutzer, Andrew. *Naming Our Abuse: God’s Pathway to Healing for Male Sexual Abuse Survivors*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2016.

Extraordinary among books related to childhood sexual abuse (CSA), this book is written by three men who are survivors of CSA. Using the analogy of an auto accident and its after-effects, the author unfolds a 4-stage process of moving carefully towards healing.

Tozer, A.W. *The Knowledge of the Holy*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1961.

If knowing who God is and thinking His thoughts after Him is one way to replace thoughts of self and entitlement, the attributes of God are the place to begin. Tozer’s classic, *The Knowledge of the Holy* is a grace that introduces us (or reminds us) who God is and why who He is matters in our everyday world. In keeping with spiritual-mindedness, thinking about who God is on a daily basis is refreshment for the soul; the type of deep soul refreshment that shapes our affections. “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us” (1). Rather than our wants, our needs, our desires, our passions defining who and what we are (abusive or not), thoughts about God make us who He intended us to be.

Van der Kolk, MD, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. 1st ed. New York: Penguin Books, 2014.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, one of the world's foremost experts on trauma, has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he explains how trauma reshapes the body and brain. Many abuse survivors have found this text very helpful though it is somewhat technically written. Van der Kolk gives a variety of treatment possibilities for trauma in the final chapters. Not a Christian text.

Welch, Edward T. *When People Are Big and God Is Small, Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997.

“Fear of man is such a part of our human fabric that we should check for a pulse if someone denies it” (17). Everyone, it seems, struggles to fear God more than we fear fellow man. Fear of man keeps a victim of abuse paralyzed; everything they do revolves around pleasing their abuser. Fear of man keeps abusers relentlessly pursuing, obtaining, and keeping the image they've created intact. Fear of man is a significant characteristic of abuse: both of the victims and the abusers.

At the heart of this fear is unbelief of a good God. Fear of man fills the vacuum when a holy fear of God is lacking. Only God provides all things necessary for life and godliness. Only God's love is the answer to the human struggle. All attempts to find satisfaction, or approval, or recognition outside of pursuing God's love, forgiveness and acceptance will fail. Only a radical fear of God will replace the fear of man. See also Flavel, John. *Triumphing over Sinful Fear*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011 and Fox, Christina. *A Holy Fear: Trading Lesser Fears for the Fear of the Lord*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020.

7. HEALING AND RECOVERY: SEXUAL ASSAULT / ABUSE

Langberg, Diane. *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse*. First Edition. Camarillo, CA: Xulon Press, 2003.

A pioneering and timeless guide to counseling survivors of sexual abuse based on the premise that such therapy must be both incarnational and redemptive. Essential reading for anyone who wants to know how to counsel a survivor in healing ways that reflect the person of Christ.

Schmutzer, Andrew. *The Long Journey Home: Understanding and Ministering to the Sexually Abused.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.

The Long Journey Home is a rich resource for pastors, therapists, educators, survivors. Over 24 psychologists, theologians, and pastoral care professionals (including Dr. Mark Yarhouse and Dr. Diane Langberg) write from a Christian perspective to cover topics like the nature and dynamics of sexual abuse, its pervasive impact, approaches to growth and healing. Pertinent research and resources are noted.

Van der Kolk, MD, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma.* 1st ed. New York: Penguin Books, 2014.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, one of the world's foremost experts on trauma, has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he explains how trauma reshapes the body and brain. Many abuse survivors have found this text very helpful though it is somewhat technically written. Van der Kolk gives a variety of treatment possibilities for trauma in the final chapters. Not a Christian text.

8. SPIRITUAL ABUSE / MISUSE OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

Chapman, Gary, Paul E. White, and Harold Myra. *Rising Above a Toxic Workplace: Taking Care of Yourself in an Unhealthy Environment.* Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2014.

White's book is very readable and practical for those suffering under an abusive leader. From identifying a toxic boss to leaving the organization and seeking healing, White is helpful in providing specific examples and biblical responses to these abusers.

Chrnalogar, Mary Alice. *Twisted Scriptures: Breaking Free from Churches That Abuse, Revised.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Chrnalogar analyzes the various ways spiritual abusers twist the Scriptures to control and manipulate others. Her handling of the nuances of scriptural guidance on authority and submission is enlightening.

DeGroat, Chuck. *When Narcissism Comes to Church, Healing Your Community from Emotional and Spiritual Abuse.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Publishing, 2020.

Since the prevalence of narcissism (think back to Christopher Lasch's 1979 book *The Culture of Narcissism*) would suggest that narcissism is easily acquired but not so easily remedied, pastors who lead and who speak with authority and who wield power in the church should take special note of this

book by Chuck DeGroat. This is a cautionary tale from a professional counselor who has experience with many narcissists in the church. It is a needed warning since narcissists are capable of inflicting great pain in the pulpit and in the congregation.

Enroth, Ronald M. *Churches That Abuse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993.

Ronald M. Enroth is a leading scholar and national resource on cults and cultism. Enroth provides helpful guidance in determining the nuances of Christian teaching that is manipulative and autocratic.

Johnson, David and Jeff VanVonderen, “The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse: Recognizing and Escaping Spiritual Authority within the Church.” *African Ecclesial Review* 35, no. 5, 1993.

Johnson and VanVonderen say, "Victims of spiritual abuse struggle with a distorted image of God, relating to spiritual authority, having a hard time with grace, personal boundaries, personal responsibility, lack of living skills, hard time admitting the abuse, trust." The authors give clear guidance in identifying spiritual abuse and determining whether to stay or leave.

Langberg, Diane. *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2020.

“Power can be a source of blessing, but when it is abused, untold damage to the body and name of Christ, often in the name of Christ, is done.” (3) Langberg is helpful in biblically explaining the dynamics of the use of power both for good and evil. Dr. Langberg speaks with passion and authority, having over 50 years of experience as a psychologist working with trauma victims both in the United States and abroad in war-torn countries.

McKnight, Scot, Laura Barringer, and Tish Harrison Warren. *A Church Called Tov: Forming a Goodness Culture That Resists Abuses of Power and Promotes Healing*. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale Momentum, 2020.

Laura Barringer attended Willow Creek Church under the pastorate of Bill Hybels. She heard of his sexual misconduct from the Chicago Tribune and did not believe it at first until she found out one of her friends was one of Hybel’s victims. *A Church Called Tov* can help pastors and elders understand how a toxic culture can develop and live on in the life of a church community. Barringer joined her father, Scot McKnight, a seminary professor, to write this book to help our churches be safe from becoming harbors of abuse.

Mullen, Wade. *Something's Not Right: Decoding the Hidden Tactics of Abuse and Freeing Yourself from Its Power*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2020.

“God is not a God of confusion but of peace,” and God’s people are called to peace. (1 Cor. 14:33; Col. 3:15). The opposite of godly peace is confusion, disorientation, disillusionment, and paralyzing fear. Author, researcher, and advocate Wade Mullen sums up these feelings as something that doesn’t feel right. God describes the cause of those feelings as “abuse” (2 Tim. 3:1). As with any abusive system, there are patterns. In an institution, the patterns emerge as the organization defaults to image management rather than care-filled shepherding.

Mullen helpfully identifies the patterns of secrecy and a tribal environment, flattery that distracts, isolation, intimidation, denial, excuses, justification, comparison, concessions to lesser sins, minimization, and false demonstrations of repentance. In learning how to recognize abuse tactics, the potential victim is equipped to effectively respond in God-glorifying ways and have nothing to do with the abuser (2 Tim. 3:4; 1 Tim. 6:20; Titus 1:14). In his debut book, Mullen helpfully provides the language necessary for identifying and describing sinful behaviors abusers use as a means to harm.

Oakley, Dr. Lisa and Justin Humphreys. *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse, Creating Healthy Christian Cultures*. London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2019.

The term “spiritual abuse” is widely used across the Christian community. Oakley and Humphreys seek to define the term and help churches guard against it. The authors help elders and congregant members recognize spiritual abuse—to lead in ways that are not controlling and manipulative but rather vulnerable and humble to and create safe church cultures where God’s people may be edified.

Simon, George K. *In Sheep’s Clothing: Understanding and Dealing with Manipulative People*. 2nd ed.. Little Rock, AR: Parkhurst Brothers Publishers Inc, 2010.

Simon writes, “Manipulative people have two goals: to win and to look good doing it. Often those they abuse are only vaguely aware of what is happening to them.” Simon’s book is helpful to empower those who have or may be controlled by abusive people.

9. WEBSITES

(Editor's Note: These websites were correct and current at the time of publication.)

Called to Peace

<https://www.calledtopeace.org/>

Called to Peace Ministries (CTPM) is a nondenominational, nonprofit, 501 (c)(3) ministry dedicated to offering hope and healing to victims of domestic violence, emotionally destructive relationships, and sexual assault. Our twofold mission is: 1) to provide practical assistance and counsel to individuals affected by domestic abuse and 2) to educate organizations and helpers to better respond to these crises through education and mentoring.

Disclaimer: The primary purpose of CTPM is to provide education and resources to survivors of domestic abuse and to educate people who desire to help them.

Called to Peace is a parachurch organization, and in no way seeks to be a substitute for the local church. Rather, its stated goal is to come alongside churches to support them as they seek to support victims of abuse. Although it is an Evangelical Christian ministry, from time to time they call on people from many theological backgrounds and professional disciplines to share their knowledge and experience in working with survivors of domestic abuse, particularly when they offer specific expertise and solutions for survivors.

Clergy Sexual Misconduct Information and Resources

<https://clergysexualmisconduct.com/home>

Adult clergy sexual misconduct (CSM), also known as clergy sexual abuse (CSA), is any sexualized behavior by a church leader/spiritual leader toward someone under his/her spiritual care, who by nature is in a position of less power and authority. CSM is an abuse of power and authority, not an "affair," as it cannot be considered mutual consent due to the unequal power dynamics. When the leader forgoes his ethical obligation to maintain healthy boundaries between himself and those he is ministering to, the leader is misusing his power to violate the sacred trust and safety of the victim, committing a breach of fiduciary duty, and violating professional ethics, often resulting in a traumatic experience for the victim.

This website exists to help adult victims (aged 18+) of CSM/CSA identify the abuse they are experiencing and find appropriate help.

Besides providing help for clergy abuse victims, this website is designed to provide information to church leaders and members to help them better understand CSM/CSA, prevent it from occurring, and deal with it

appropriately by directing them to relevant resources, organizations, and ministries.

Although this website approaches the subject of CSM/CSA from a Christian perspective, the information provided is useful and applicable to individuals of any religion and spiritual practice.

Additionally, leaders and victims can be either men or women. Information contained in this website applies regardless of gender. Since studies show that most victims are women and most clergy are men, this website is written with language reflecting that reality.

Document the Abuse

<https://documenttheabuse.com/>

In October of 2007, Stacey Peterson disappeared. Her body has never been found. Shortly before her disappearance, Stacey told her pastor (Neil Schori) she provided a false alibi for her husband (Drew Peterson) the night his first wife disappeared. Stacey told Neil she was afraid Drew's ex-wife was dead. As a result of this tragedy, Neil—together with nationally known DA advocate Susan Murphy-Milano—developed an Evidentiary Abuse Affidavit which would allow women to document any abuse, orders of protection, and details of abusive circumstances in their homes. Today, Drew Peterson's sister Norma is the Executive Director of documenttheabuse.com. Working together with Neil, they help victims officially document their abuse and bring awareness to the devastation of domestic violence.

GRACE

www.netgrace.org

Empowering Christian communities to recognize, prevent, and respond to abuse.

Help[H]er

<https://www.helpherresources.com/>

The story of Help[H]er began when they asked the question, "How can we help pastors and church leaders shepherd women well?" The answer was to help the local church build a team of competent, seasoned women who would come alongside their pastors to help women in crisis.

At the core of our mission is the desire to assist the local church as they navigate how to carefully shepherd women.

The idea of men and women caregiving partnerships in the local church grew our Help[H]er vision. Not every church has the resources to develop a Help[H]er ministry. At the same time, leaders find themselves swimming in complicated issues.

Help[H]er is a 501C3 that offers training, resources, and a directory of caregivers. Whether the church's goals include structuring their own Help[H]er ministry, providing rich materials tailored to supplement one-another care, or meeting more immediate caregiving needs, our resources help pastors and leaders further their shepherding ministry to women experiencing crisis.

Peaceworks

<http://www.chrismoles.org/>

Chris Moles is a pastor and biblical counselor who helps churches and families confront the evil of domestic violence and promote healthy, God-honoring, relationships. PeaceWorks' primary focus is to educate the Church in domestic abuse prevention and intervention through PeaceWorks University and EQUIP (in cooperation with Leslie Vernick) and to provide periodic coaching and/or educational resources to abusive men through our Men of Peace program.

The Refuge

<https://refugeministries.com/about/>

Helping survivors of domestic abuse find redemption from oppression, Refuge Ministries began in 2013 when Pastor Shane Waldron (PCA) realized that common approaches to marriage conflict were ineffective in cases of domestic abuse. It all started with a support group for survivors of domestic abuse called The Refuge with four women in attendance. Within a year, it expanded into a thriving ministry that now offers a batterer's intervention program called Turning Point, and a structured program for children called Refuge Kids.

Refuge Ministries is one of the only comprehensive programs in the nation that offers ministry to abusers, survivors, and their children. There are chapters in the Rocky Mountain region and the East coast, and it is a 501c3.

APPENDIX W

OVERTURES TO THE FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA June 21-24, 2022

OVERTURES REFERRED BY THE 48th GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE OVERTURES COMMITTEE OF THE 49th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OVERTURE 2021-19 (48th GA) from Pacific Northwest Presbytery
(to 49th OC)

"Amend *BCO* 38-1 & 42-2 to Allow Appealing a
Censure in a Case without Process"

**[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the
48th General Assembly (2021), which referred it to the 49th
GA Overtures Committee.]**

Be it resolved that *BCO* 38-1 be amended as follows, affording a person
the right to appeal a censure after a confession in a case without
process, instead of just filing a complaint.

Be it also resolved that *BCO* 42-2 also be amended to correspond with
the revision of *BCO* 38-1, and to also include a reference to the
right of appeal provided in *BCO* 34-10 regarding divestiture.
(Strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording.)

***BCO* 38-1.**

When any person shall come forward and make his offense
known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be
recorded, and judgment rendered without process. In
handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person
intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment
without process. Statements made by him in the presence
of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment
without process except by his consent. In the event a
confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should
be approved by the accused and by the court, before the
court proceeds to a judgment. ~~The accused has the right of
complaint against the judgment.~~ A censured person has the
right to appeal (*BCO* 42).

BCO 42-2.

Only The only parties entitled to an appeal are those who have submitted to a regular trial ~~are entitled to an appeal,~~ those appealing a censure in a *BCO 38-1* case without process, and those appealing a *BCO 34-10* divestiture without censure

Rationale:

This past year, the SJC received complaints alleging three presbyteries violated *BCO 38-1*. Thus, some clarification is warranted.¹ These Cases have resulted in the expenditure of hundreds of manhours.

In addition to this Overture, our Presbytery has filed three others pertaining to *BCO 38-1*, which seek to:

- clarify procedures for the confession document on which censure is based;
 - clarify when a confession can be handled as a case without process; and
 - explicitly allow the right to counsel in a case without process.
- Each of these four revisions is needed and *BCO 38-1* will be much improved if all four are adopted. They're filed separately so each can be considered individually because (a) each is important in and of itself and (2) none of them affect, or rest on, the adoption of any of the others.

Now, to the explicit rationale for why appeals should be allowed in *BCO 38-1* matters.

1. The *BCO* allows a person convicted at trial to appeal his censure, so it's fair to give the same right to a person who confessed his offense, but seeks higher court review of the censure. An appeal results in much quicker adjudication by the higher court(s) because a complaint must first be filed with the original court. (Ten of our presbyteries only meet twice a year.) And if the complaint is assigned to a

¹ Case 2019-10 *TE Evans v. Arizona*. SJC sustained the Complaint on 7/20/20 by a vote of 18-3.

Case 2019-04 *TE Williams v. Chesapeake*. SJC sustained the Complaint on 8/24/20 by a vote of 13-5.

Cases 2020-07 *TE Wilbourne v. Pacific*; combined with Case 2020-08 *TEs Gendall, Hightower, & Lien v. Pacific*, and Case 2020-09 REs *Ozbolt & Barr v. Pacific*. (Pending)

presbytery commission, it would delay even further the date on which the SJC could render a final decision.

2. There's also an important difference between the remedies available to the higher court when it sustains a complaint vs. when it sustains an appeal. This alone is a compelling reason why *BCO* 38-1 should be revised to allow an appeal in a case without process.

Complaint: *BCO* 43-10. The higher court has power, in its discretion, to annul the whole or any part of the action of a lower court against which complaint has been made, or to send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing. ... (Emphasis added here and below.)

Appeal: *BCO* 42-9. The decision of the higher court may be to affirm in whole or in part; to reverse in whole or in part; to render the decision that should have been rendered; or to remand the case to the lower court for a new trial. In every case a written opinion shall be prepared, and a copy of the opinion and judgment entered will be delivered personally or mailed to the lower court and the appellant, with a written receipt required.

It would be wiser to allow the higher court to render the decision that should have been rendered (as in an appeal) rather than limiting its power to annulling or remanding for new hearing. Here is an example. This year, three cases came to the SJC from different presbyteries, each which essentially alleged that inadmissible evidence or statements were presented when the presbyteries were considering censure (in addition to the agreed-upon “full statement of the facts”). The SJC sustained two, and the third is pending. In such cases, it would be wiser and fairer to allow an appeal, so the higher court could “render the decision that should have been rendered.”

It doesn't seem prudent to “annul” a censure when the person has confessed to an offense warranting censure. And it doesn't seem prudent to “send the matter back” when the lower court has probably jeopardized the fairness of any future hearing by already having received inadmissible evidence. It would be wiser in many instances to allow the higher court to “render the decision that should have been rendered” by having it consider only the confession document, as it was mutually approved by the confessor and the lower court.

3. Some of the grounds for appeal listed in *BCO* 42-3 (below) could also occur in a *BCO* 38-1 case.

BCO 42-3. The grounds of appeal are such as the following: *any irregularity in the proceedings of the lower court*; refusal of reasonable indulgence to a party on trial; receiving improper or declining to receive

proper evidence; hurrying to a decision before all the testimony is taken; manifestation of prejudice in the case; and mistake or injustice in the judgment and censure. (Emphasis added.)

4. Problems with Multiple Complaints - Unless *BCO* 38-1 is revised to allow an appeal, we could continue to have multiple, simultaneous complaints filed against the same censure. It happened twice this year.² This complicates higher court review in several ways. For example, the *BCO* doesn't stipulate whose complaint takes precedence. If this amendment is adopted, a censured person could appeal a *BCO* 38-1 censure and his appeal would ordinarily be considered before any complaint against the same action, per the principle in the final clause of *BCO* 43-1.

BCO 43-1. ...It is the right of any communing member of the Church in good standing to make complaint against any action of a court to whose jurisdiction he is subject, except that *no complaint is allowable in a judicial case in which an appeal is pending*. (Emphasis added.)

5. Suspension of Censure - In appeals, the censure is suspended until the higher courts have rendered a decision. But censure isn't suspended in a complaint. For example, if a person is disciplined after improper procedures in a *BCO* 38-1 case, or if the censure is clearly unjust, he can presently only file a *BCO* 43 complaint. And if it is a minister, that improper or unjust censure would remain in effect throughout the course of presbytery and SJC review of his complaint, which could easily take more than a year for a final decision. And even if the SJC eventually

² Cases 2019-10 *Evans* and 2019-12 *Pitts, et al. v. Arizona*, and Cases 2020-07 *Wilbourne*, 2020-8 *Gendall, Hightower, & Lien*, and 2020-9 *Ozbolt & Barr v. Pacific*.

sustained his complaint, the minister would have been disciplinarily suspended from office for the entire time, and if so, he would probably have lost his job, and his church would probably have needed to call another pastor (or at least an interim).³

Even if the Overture is adopted and an appeal becomes allowable, the original court still has the option of enacting the *non-disciplinary* suspension provided in *BCO* 42-6:

BCO 42-6. Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. *BCO* 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done in the way of censure.

6. History - The first sentence of our *BCO* 38-1 dates back 140 years to the PCUS Book of 1879. The other four sentences were added in 2000 after being proposed the year prior in Overture 11 from Pittsburgh Presbytery. That Overture originally proposed the right of "appeal" but the 30-member Bills & Overtures Committee amended to "complaint." No grounds were offered in the B&O report, or in the *Minutes of the 27th GA*. (*M27GA*, Louisville 1999, p. 163 and *M28GA*, Tampa 2000, p. 59)⁴
7. Regardless of whether *BCO* 38-1 is amended to allow appeals, an additional clause needs to be added to *BCO* 42-2 because it doesn't currently reference *BCO* 34-10, but it should. The second paragraph of *BCO* 34-10 references the right to *appeal* a divestiture, but *BCO* 42-2 unexplainably omits reference to that appeal situation.

BCO 34-10. Whenever a minister of the Gospel shall habitually fail to be engaged in the regular discharge of his official functions, ... In such a case, the clerk shall

³ In SJC Case 2019-04 *Williams v. Chesapeake*, over 17 months elapsed between when the minister filed his complaint to Presbytery against his *BCO* 38-1 censure, and when the SJC finally sustained his Complaint. And he was under suspended from office the entire time.

⁴ It might be significant to note that no SJC members were on the 1999 B&O Committee. (*M27GA*, p. 181)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

under the order of the Presbytery forthwith deliver to the minister concerned a written note that, at the next stated meeting, the question of his being so dealt with is to be considered. This notice shall distinctly state the grounds for this proceeding. The party thus notified shall be heard in his own defense; and if the decision pass against him he may appeal, as if he had been tried after the usual forms. This principle may apply, with any necessary changes, to ruling elders and deacons. (Emphasis added.)

8. If *BCO* 38-1 is not revised to allow appeal, anyone considering a confession — especially a minister — should know that unless he is confident of what censure will be imposed (or at least what censure will be recommended by the investigative committee, prosecutor, or commission), waiving his rights provided in *BCO* 35-1, 35-3, and 42-2 by making a confession could result in a censure that will take effect immediately, and remain in effect throughout a very lengthy complaint process, because he cannot appeal.

Additionally, even if he prevails in a complaint before the SJC, the SJC can presently only afford him the complaint remedies of *BCO* 43-10, which might include “sending the matter back to the court with instructions for a new hearing” – i.e., back to the court which may have already presented or heard inadmissible evidence.⁵

First version adopted and filed by a Commission of Presbytery on April 8, 2020

Revision adopted and refiled by a Commission of Presbytery on March 26, 2021

Attested by TE Nathan Chambers, interim stated clerk

⁵ In Case 2019-10, *Evans v. Arizona*, the SJC ruled: “The Complaints are sustained, the action of AZP is annulled, and the matter is *remanded to AZP for further action* consistent with this Decision. ... Nothing in this Decision, however, affects the underlying matter before AZP with respect to [the minister]. AZP could adjudicate the underlying matter *as a case without process*, a case of process, or a case to be dismissed entirely.” (Emphasis added.) In Case 2019-04, *Williams v. Chesapeake*, the SJC ruled: “The Complaint is sustained and the action of Presbytery approving the [Presbytery Judicial Commission] report is annulled, thereby *returning the matter* to the PJC. The PJC is free to dismiss the case, or to *adjudicate the case with process* according to the principles set forth herein.” (Emphasis added.)

OVERTURE 2021-20 (48th GA) from Pacific Northwest Presbytery
(to 49th OC)

“Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 on Pre-trial Non-Disciplinary Suspensions”

[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the 48th General Assembly (2021), which referred it to the 49th GA Overtures Committee.]

Be it resolved that *BCO* 31-10 and *BCO* 33-4 be amended by addition, as follows (underlining for additional wording):

BCO 31-10. When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court’s discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure, and this requires a three-fourths (3/4) majority.

BCO 33-4. When it is impracticable immediately to commence process against an accused church member, the Session may, if it thinks the edification of the Church requires it, prevent the accused from approaching the Lord’s Table until the charges against him can be examined, but this requires a three-fourths (3/4) majority.

Rationale:

1. Indictment only requires a simple majority, but the bar should be higher for a court to "administratively" suspend someone from office or from the Lord's Table *prior* to the accused even presenting a defense. Granted, the court should retain this option when it is clearly warranted, but when it is warranted it should be clear to a three-fourths majority. To help ensure that a non-disciplinary suspension from office is "*never* done in the way of censure," it should require a three-fourths (3/4) majority.
2. This is particularly important because the *BCO* does not stipulate a deadline for the court to conduct the trial.
3. Furthermore, because it is not possible for a higher/appellate court to promptly review whether such a non-censure suspension is actually "not done in the way of censure," or whether "the edification of the Church requires it," the 3/4 majority will help ensure that a non-disciplinary suspension is clearly warranted.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4. Ministers – While a Presbytery cannot impose a pre-trial suspension from office "in the way of censure," it would certainly *feel* like a censure to a defendant who is a minister, and likely have a similar effect. And unless his church can afford to pay him *and* his temporary replacement, the non-disciplinary suspension would almost certainly impact his salary and his family's finances (unlike church members or elders under similar non-disciplinary suspensions).
5. Below are a few other things for which the *BCO* requires a three-fourths (3/4) Presbytery majority. A pre-trial suspension should also be placed in this super-majority category.
 - 19-16. Where circumstances warrant, a Presbytery may approve previous experience which is equivalent to internship. This equivalency shall be decided by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Presbytery at any of its regular meetings.
 - 21-4. No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths (3/4) approval of Presbytery.
 - 21-4.a. No Presbytery shall omit any of these [ordination] educational requirements except in extraordinary cases, and then only with a three-fourths (3/4) approval of the Presbytery.
 - 21-4.c. [An ordination candidate] shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote.
 - 34-8. ...The removal of deposition requires a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the court inflicting the censure, or a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the court to which the majority of the original court delegates that authority.

Proposed to the Pacific Northwest Presbytery at its stated meeting on January 24, 2020

Final version adopted by an Administrative Commission of Presbytery on April 8, 2020

Attested by /s/ TE Nathan Chambers, interim stated clerk

OVERTURE 2021-21 (48th GA) from Pacific Northwest Presbytery
(to 49th OC)

“Amend *BCO* 42-6 on Vote Required for Maintaining
Censure during an Appeal”

**[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the
48th General Assembly (2021), which referred it to the 49th
GA Overtures Committee.]**

Be it resolved that *BCO* 42-6 be amended by addition, as follows
(underlining for addition):

BCO 42-6. Notice of appeal shall have the effect of
suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has
been finally decided in the higher court. However, the court
of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly
recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord’s
Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or
all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf.
BCO 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done in the way of
censure, and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

Rationale:

1. To ensure that "this shall *never* be done in the way of censure," it
should require a two-thirds majority.
2. If, for example, a minister's disciplinary suspension is maintained during
his Appeal of a Presbytery conviction or censure, the process would
likely take six to nine months to adjudicate through the SJC. And if a
church member was suspended from the Lord's Supper, his Appeal
could take a year to be adjudicated by the Presbytery and the SJC.

*Proposed to the Pacific Northwest Presbytery at its stated meeting on
January 24, 2020*

*Final version adopted by an Administrative Commission of Presbytery on
April 8, 2020*

Attested by /s/ TE Nathan Chambers, interim stated clerk

OVERTURE 2021-34 (48th GA] from Pacific Northwest Presbytery
(to 49th OC)
“Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Confession Timing for Case Without
Process”

**[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the
48th General Assembly (2021), which referred it to the 49th
GA Overtures Committee.]**

Be it resolved that *BCO* 38-1 be amended by adding a second paragraph and moving the last sentence of the first paragraph to a third paragraph, as follows. (Addition underlined. Moved sentence indicated by strike-through and underlining.)

***BCO* 38-1**

When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment. ~~The accused has the right of complaint against the judgment.~~

A person may proffer a confession, and request the matter be handled as a case without process, prior to an investigation, during an investigation, or after process has commenced. If a confession is proffered after the court has instituted process (*BCO* 31-2, second paragraph), the prosecutor shall ascertain whether the accused is pleading guilty to the charge (*BCO* 32-3) or is seeking to proceed via *BCO* 38-1. If the latter, and if the prosecutor accepts the Confession, he shall suspend process and recommend the court approve the Confession. He may also recommend a censure. However, if no agreement is reached on the Confession, and the matter proceeds as a case of process, confession discussions between the prosecutor and the accused are not admissible as evidence.

The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment.

Rationale:

The revision makes it clearer that the court can accept a confession, and handle it as a case without process, at different stages – pre-investigation, during investigation, or even post-indictment. But the court is never required to handle a confession as a case without process. It always remains entirely the court’s discretion.

*Adopted and filed by a Commission of Presbytery on March 20, 2021
Attested by TE Nathan Chambers, Presbytery Interim Stated Clerk*

OVERTURE 2021-35 (48th GA) from Pacific Northwest Presbytery
(to 49th OC)
“Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Counsel for Case Without Process”

[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the 48th General Assembly (2021), which referred it to the 49th GA Overtures Committee.]

Be it resolved that *BCO* 38-1 be amended by the addition of a final sentence. (Addition underlined.)

***BCO* 38-1.**

When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment. The accused person has the right of-complaint against the judgment. The person has the right to be represented by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19.

Rationale: In one of the *BCO* 38-1 Cases this year, a presbytery commission refused to allow the accused to be accompanied by anyone during the investigation phase or during the *BCO* 38-1 discussions. The presbytery commission contended that the *BCO* only allows post-indictment representation (i.e., their interpretation of *BCO* 32-19).

This revision makes it clear that persons in cases without process also have that right.

32-19. No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented before the Session by any communing member of the same particular church, or before any other court, by any member of that court. ...”⁶

Furthermore, proper requests and objections from competent counsel can sometimes help the court avoid mistakes that would otherwise result in an appeal or complaint being sustained by the higher court.

General Note:

If the four separate Overtures on *BCO* 38-1 from Pacific Northwest are adopted (Overtures 19, 33, 34, 35), the *BCO* 38-1 would be revised as follows (Underlining for additions, Strike-through for deletions):

38-1. When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a full statement of the facts should a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person’s specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended

⁶ Case 2020-07 *TE Wilbourne v. Pacific*

to the minutes (regular or executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions. The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment.

A person may proffer a confession, and request the matter be handled as a case without process, prior to an investigation, during an investigation, or after process has commenced. If a confession is proffered after the court has instituted process (BCO 31-2, second paragraph), the prosecutor shall ascertain whether the accused is pleading guilty to the charge (BCO 32-3) or is seeking to proceed via BCO 38-1. If the latter, and if the prosecutor accepts the Confession, he shall suspend process and recommend the court approve the Confession. He may also recommend a censure. However, if no agreement is reached on the Confession, and the matter proceeds as a case of process, confession discussions between the prosecutor and the accused are not admissible as evidence.

The person has the right to be represented by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of BCO 32-19. A censured person has the right to appeal (BCO 42).

So that the revised BCO 38-1 would read:

When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent.

In the event a confession is intended, a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person's specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be recorded in the minutes. No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A person may proffer a confession, and request the matter be handled as a case without process, prior to any investigation, during an investigation, or after process has commenced. If a confession is offered after the court has instituted process (*BCO* 31-2, second paragraph), the prosecutor shall ascertain whether the accused is pleading guilty to the charge (*BCO* 32-3) or is seeking to proceed via *BCO* 38-1. If the latter, and if the prosecutor approves the Confession, he shall suspend process and recommend the court approve the Confession. He may also recommend a censure. However, if no agreement is reached on the Confession, and the matter proceeds as a case of process, confession discussions between the prosecutor and the accused are not admissible as evidence.

The person has the right to be represented by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19. A censured person has the right to appeal (*BCO* 42).

Conclusion: We believe this Overture’s revision to *BCO* 38-1, and the other three proposed by Pacific Northwest Presbytery, will actually *encourage* confessions by providing clearer procedures related to them. And confession is a good thing.⁷ In addition, better procedures can help avoid time-consuming, complicated, and often unnecessary judicial process, along with avoiding many complaints and appeals.^{8 9}

*Adopted and filed by a Commission of Presbytery on March 20, 2021.
Attested by TE Nathan Chambers, Presbytery Interim Stated Clerk*

⁷ e.g., *WCF* 15:6; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13

⁸ For a discussion of the different timings of confessions (i.e., pre-investigation, during investigation, and post-indictment) – and processes for handling them, consider one of the Concurring Opinions in Case 2019-10: *Evans v. Arizona* in the SJC’s 2021 Report, and at the link below.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10Vi_D1HVNmtvMty-t6HMYK-bHfZiD4Qr/view?usp=sharing

⁹ For brief summaries of how criminal courts address confessions, see: *Admissibility of Confessions* - www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/3501
Charge v. Sentence Negotiations - www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/how-plea-bargains-get-made.html
Plea Bargains - www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/plea-bargains?utm_source=nolo-content&utm_medium=nolo&utm_campaign=nolo-related-products

OVERTURE 2021-40 (48th GA) from Tennessee Valley Presbytery
(to 49th OC)
“Amend *BCO* 32-13 and 35-5 to Allow Victim Protection Provisions”

[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the 48th General Assembly (2021), which “committed” it “to the 49th GA OC in Birmingham, and in the interim” referred it “to the Ad Interim Committee on Abuse...for them to give advice to the 49th GA OC.”]

Whereas, when this Overture was filed, it was our understanding these proposals were endorsed by the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault. See the AIC Report for any comments.

Whereas, these changes are needed to protect victims of abuse during judicial process. As the *BCO* sections now stand, a victim of abuse is given the right to be cross-examined by the accused. That means any of the following examples are possible.

- A teenage girl who was raped by a church staff member is cross-examined by the man who raped her.
- Someone who was emotionally and/or physically abused is cross-examined by the abuser.
- A young child who was sexually abused is cross-examined by the predator.

The current provision of cross-examination by the accused in these sorts of cases greatly increases the risk of an abused person being unwilling to participate in a case of process, and also opens the door to further trauma. There is no scriptural mandate for such a right of confrontation. The only situation in which such a right was invoked was the example of Paul asserting that right as a Roman citizen (Acts 25:16).

Whereas, the right afforded the accused to cross-examine his accuser has a long history in the Presbyterian Church, dating back to at least 1858. This right of confrontation reflects civil law embedded in the 6th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791. The 6th amendment grants the accused the right “to be confronted with the witnesses against him.” In 1808, Chief Justice John Marshall famously stated of the Confrontation Clause: “I know of no principle in the preservation of which all are more concerned. I know none, by

undermining which, life, liberty and property, might be more endangered. It is therefore incumbent on courts to be watchful of every inroad on a principle so truly important.” This opinion notwithstanding, it is of note that the Supreme Court has wrestled with the right of confrontation and has been willing to recognize the need for some protection of some accusers, particularly in cases involving minors.

For example, in *Maryland v. Craig* (1990), the Court allowed a state to utilize a one-way closed circuit television procedure for the receipt of testimony by a six-year-old victim in an abuse case.¹⁰

Whereas, our *BCO* has not wrestled with the possibility of reasonable limits to the right of confrontation. Our ecclesiastic law should incorporate reasonable protections for minors and abuse victims, while at the same time protecting the rights of the accused to know

¹⁰ In *Maryland v. Craig*, in a 5-4 decision written by O’Connor, the Court held as follows: “The Confrontation Clause does not guarantee criminal defendants an *absolute* right to a face-to-face meeting with the witnesses against them at trial. The Clause’s central purpose, to ensure the reliability of the evidence against a defendant by subjecting it to rigorous testing in an adversary proceeding before the trier of fact, is served by the combined effects of the elements of confrontation: physical presence, oath, cross-examination, and observation of demeanor by the trier of fact. Although face-to-face confrontation forms the core of the Clause’s values, it is not an indispensable element of the confrontation right. If it were, the Clause would abrogate virtually every hearsay exception, a result long rejected as unintended and too extreme, *Ohio v. Roberts*, 448 U.S. 56, 63. Accordingly, the Clause must be interpreted in a manner sensitive to its purpose and to the necessities of trial and the adversary process. See, e.g., *Kirby v. United States*, 174 U.S. 470. Nonetheless, the right to confront accusatory witnesses may be satisfied absent a physical, face-to-face confrontation at trial only where denial of such confrontation is necessary to further an important public policy and only where the testimony’s reliability is otherwise assured. *Coy, supra*, at 1021. Pp. 5-11.” <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/89-478.ZS.html>

See also Scalia’s Dissenting Opinion, joined by Brennan, Marshall and Stevens. In sum, Scalia contended the 6th Amendment to the Constitution would need to be amended in order for Maryland to do what it did, because the 6th Amendment clearly says, “In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right ... to be confronted with the witnesses against him ...” <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/89-478.ZD.html> Scalia’s objection wasn’t to the fairness issue, but rather, he was sticking to the letter of the law. This Overture seeks to change the law, so, Scalia’s argument would not apply to the proposed revision.

and “confront” his accuser. In fact, we believe that the Church should be more protective of those entrusted to its care than the state.

Whereas, as the *BCO* currently stands, if a church court allowed an alleged child-abuse victim to testify by Zoom, the accused might have grounds for appeal, alleging the court violated his *BCO* 32-13 right to “examine” all witnesses “in his presence” even if defense counsel cross-examined the witness over Zoom.

Whereas, we urge that some accommodation be made for victim testimony in cases alleging child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual assault, to allow the court to make reasonable accommodations to shield accusers from face-to-face contact with the accused.

Therefore, be it resolved that *BCO* 32-13, 35-1 and 35-5 be amended by adding, to each, the four-sentence paragraphs underlined below.

***BCO* 32-13.** In order that the trial may be fair and impartial, the witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the accused, or at least after he shall have received due citation to attend. Witnesses may be cross-examined by both parties, and any questions asked must be pertinent to the issue.

However, throughout the trial in cases involving alleged child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual assault, a court may make reasonable accommodations to shield accusers from face-to-face contact with the accused. This can be done upon request by the accuser or when the court determines that such accommodation is necessary. Such accommodations might include procedures such as written testimony or videoconferencing testimony, in which a reasonable path for cross-examination is provided. The court shall include in the record its reasons for any accommodations and any objection from the accused to such accommodation, and the objection and the court’s response shall be included in the record.

***BCO* 35-1.** All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

and punishments. The accused party may be allowed, but shall not be compelled to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency. It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.

Throughout the trial in cases involving alleged child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual assault, a court may make reasonable accommodations to shield accusers from face-to-face contact with the accused. This can be done upon request by the accuser or when the court determines that such accommodation is necessary. Such accommodations might include procedures such as written testimony or video-conferencing testimony, in which a reasonable path for cross-examination is provided. The court shall include in the record its reasons for any accommodations and any objection from the accused to such accommodation, and the objection and the court's response shall be included in the record.

BCO 35-5. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party introducing them; then cross-examined by the opposite party; after which any member of the court, or either party, may put additional interrogatories. No question shall be put or answered except by permission of the moderator, subject to an appeal to the court. The court shall not permit questions frivolous or irrelevant to the charge at issue.

Throughout the trial in cases involving alleged child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual assault, a court may make reasonable accommodations to shield accusers from face-to-face contact with the accused. This can be done upon request by the accuser or when the court determines that such accommodation is necessary. Such accommodations might include procedures such as written testimony or video-conferencing testimony, in which a reasonable path for cross-examination is provided.
The court shall include in the record its reasons for any

accommodations and any objection from the accused to such accommodation, and the objection and the court's response shall be included in the record.

*Adopted by Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 17, 2021
Attested by /s/ TE Jacob A. Bennett, stated clerk*

OVERTURE 2021-41 from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to 49th OC)
"Amend *BCO* 35-1 to Expand Potential Witness Eligibility"

[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the 48th General Assembly (2021), which "committed" it "to the 49th GA OC in Birmingham, and in the interim" referred it "to the Ad Interim Committee on Abuse...for them to give advice to the 49th GA OC."]

Whereas, the prosecutor and the accused should have the right to seek to call anyone as a witness. Either party may object to any proposed witness and the court would rule on the objection. Even if an objection is overruled, the court would still need to judge the credibility of the witness and his testimony; and

Whereas, to exclude those who do not believe in the existence of God or in a future state of rewards and punishments may, in certain cases, hamper the prosecutor or the accused in presenting necessary evidence, or hamper the interest of justice;

Therefore, be it resolved to strike the first sentence of *BCO* 35-1 to read as follows:

~~All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or in a future state of rewards and punishments.~~ The accused party may be allowed, but shall not be compelled to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. Either party has the right to challenge a witness who he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall decide upon his competency. It belongs to the court to judge the credibility to be attached to all evidence.

*Adopted by Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 17, 2021
Attested by /s/ TE Jacob A. Bennett, stated clerk*

OVERTURES SUBMITTED TO THE 49th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OVERTURE 1 from Palmetto Presbytery (to AC)
“Docket Overtures Committee Report as a GA Order of the Day”

Whereas, the work of the Overtures Committee of the PCA General Assembly is acknowledged by all to be one of the most important works of the entire General Assembly; and

Whereas, because many churches send their TEs and REs primarily, though not exclusively, to vote on overtures brought before the General Assembly by the Overtures Committee; and

Whereas, the schedule of the PCA General Assembly is inefficient and confusing, leaving the most important work of the Assembly until the very end of the Assembly, when commissioners are often tired and worn down; and

Whereas, leaving the most important work of the Assembly until the end of the schedule causes robust debate on both overtures and minority reports to be muted, limited, hampered, and abruptly halted; and

Whereas, the Overtures Committee needs the opportunity to reconvene during the Assembly to reconsider what will be presented to the entire Assembly, and thus should not be too early in the General Assembly schedule;

Therefore, be it resolved that Palmetto Presbytery (PCA) overture the 49th General Assembly to make the report of the Overtures Committee regularly the order of the day at 9:00 a.m. on the Thursday of each General Assembly.

*Adopted by Palmetto Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 11, 2021
Attested by TE Louis Igou Hodges, stated clerk*

OVERTURE 2 from the Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 22-3 to allow Assistant Pastors to file Complaints against Sessions”
[Added sentence underlined.]

Whereas, assistant pastors are called by a Session and serve as ordained elders per *BCO* 22-3; and

Whereas, as ordained elders, assistant pastors are examined and credentialed in the same manner as senior and associate pastors,

and in special circumstances can actively serve a Session by moderating per *BCO* 12-4; and

Whereas, complaints are written representations made against some act or decision of a court of the Church and assistant pastors are theologically trained and credentialed to help Sessions consider errors; and

Whereas, there is no clear recourse for assistant pastors to make known an error or misjudgment by a Session that they serve, except for that Session to be charged by the Presbytery under *BCO* 40-6;

Therefore, be it resolved to amend *BCO* 22-3 to read as follows:

An assistant pastor is called by the Session, by permission and approval of Presbytery, under the provisions of *BCO* 20-1 and 13-2, with Presbytery membership being governed by the same provisions that apply to pastors. He is not a member of the Session, but may be appointed on special occasion to moderate the Session under the provision of *BCO* 12-4. An assistant pastor, being called by a Session, has the right to file a complaint against an act or decision of that Session in accordance with *BCO* 43.

Adopted by Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting on October 19, 2021

Attested by TE Jake Bennett, stated clerk

OVERTURE 3 from Pee Dee Presbytery (to IRC)
“Withdraw from the National Association of Evangelicals”

Whereas the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE); and

Whereas Chapter 31 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* states that “Synods and councils are to handle, or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or, by the way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate;” and

Whereas PCA *BCO* 3-3 states that, “The sole functions of the Church, as a kingdom and government distinct from the civil commonwealth,

are to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures:” and

Whereas the Scriptures clearly teach that Christians should be stewards of God’s creation, care for sojourners and aliens, and promote matters of civil justice, and members of the PCA may have legitimate differences of opinion on the most effective political policies to address these matters; and

Whereas the NAE has stated that it intends not only to advocate for biblical values and ethics in general, but that “we must advocate for political policies:”¹¹ and

Whereas the NAE has frequently intermeddled in civil affairs, by publicly pushing for action on the environment,¹² immigration,¹³ and has changed its original stance on the death penalty;¹⁴ and

Whereas the NAE, in 2018, passed a motion entitled “Fairness for All”¹⁵ which, in advocating for a political compromise regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, and religious freedom, goes beyond Chapter 31 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*; and

Whereas many prominent conservative and evangelical thinkers and leaders have denounced this compromise as not leading to “fairness” for all who uphold biblical teaching on sexuality and marriage, but rather attempts to guarantee religious freedom for some organizations and institutions while potentially undermining

¹¹ National Association of Evangelicals. “For the Health of a Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility.” NAE.net (https://www.nae.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/For-the-Health-of-theNation_spreads.pdf)

¹² NAE Releases Poverty, Creation Care Document” (<https://www.nae.net/nae-releases-poverty-creation-caredocument/>)

¹³ “Evangelicals Push For Immigration Reform At Capitol Hill” (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/29/evangelicals-immigration-reform_n_5235516.html)

¹⁴ “The National Association of Evangelicals has changed its position on the death penalty” (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/10/19/the-national-association-of-evangelicalshas-changed-its-position-on-the-death-penalty/>)

¹⁵ “Boards back SOGI compromise”

(https://world.wng.org/2018/12/boards_back_sogi_compromise/) “Fairness for All Motion” (https://world.wng.org/sites/default/files/assets/NAEBoardResolution_0.pdf)

the pre-political religious freedoms of all Americans codified in the 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution¹⁶, and

Whereas the NAE claims to speak for the entirety of its membership and to be their voice in Washington; and

Whereas these are only a few of many examples of the NAE's continuing practice of intermeddling in civil affairs; and

Whereas our sister denomination, the RPCNA, withdrew from the NAE in 2009, citing a particular document "Loving God and Neighbor Together" that was written and signed by Christians and Muslims with the implied premise that our historic faith and Islam worship the same God, but in different ways;¹⁷

Whereas no other NAPARC denominations are members of the NAE; and

Whereas any individual, local congregation, or presbytery, who feels strongly about remaining in the NAE may join at those appropriate levels; and

Whereas the Presbyterian Church in America, as a denomination, has no need of the benefits of membership in the NAE, especially of having a voice in Washington championing political concerns that would not even be permitted as a subject of discussion before its councils, let alone be adopted as positions;

Therefore, Pee Dee Presbytery requests that the 49th General Assembly take action to withdraw the membership of the PCA from the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) at the soonest possible date.

Adopted by Pee Dee Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 28, 2021

Attested by TE Michael S. Brown, stated clerk

OVERTURE 4 – VACATED

OVERTURE 5 – VACATED

¹⁶ See, for example, <https://www.theaquilareport.com/misguided-proposal-from-christian-leaders-and-lgbt-activists-is-anything-but-fairness-for-all/>, <https://albertmohler.com/2017/01/16/01-16-17/> ("Religious liberty in the balance: Why the Fairness for All campaign is a threat to religious liberty")

¹⁷RPCNA IRC NAE Withdrawal Statement (permission granted to cite by the RPCNA Interchurch Committee)

OVERTURE 6 from Nashville Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 Regarding Suspensions during Process or Delay”

Whereas, it was proposed in Overture 20 to the 48th General Assembly (and referred to the 49th General Assembly) that *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 be amended by requiring a three-fourths (3/4) vote for a court to suspend an officer from his official functions when under process (*BCO* 31-10) and for a Session to suspend a member from approaching the Lord’s Table when it is impracticable immediately to commence process (*BCO* 33-4); and

Whereas, the vote count for passing a motion by a supermajority of three-fourths (3/4) is, for example, 4 votes in the affirmative on a Session with 5 members voting and 23 presbyters voting in the affirmative in a court with 30 members voting; and

Whereas, The *BCO* requires a three-fourths (3/4) supermajority for five types of *exceptional and extraordinary circumstances dissimilar to BCO 31-10 and 33-4*.

- The first two include receiving or joining with other churches (*BCO* 14.6.h; 26-5) and changes to the Westminster Standards (*BCO* 26-3).
- The next two are related to extraordinary exceptions to the internship and ordination requirements (*BCO* 19-6, 21-4) and extraordinary exceptions to the prohibition on assistant or associate pastors succeeding the Pastor (*BCO* 23-1).
- The last instance is the removal of the censure of deposition from a minister or elder (*BCO* 34-8; 37-6).

These situations in our *BCO* all require a supermajority *to protect the church*, and the proposal in Overture 20 would instead serve *to protect an individual*; and

Whereas, the current meaning and effects of *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 have been present within the historical stream of our *Book of Church Order* for 200 years and were included in the 1822 PCUSA *Book of Discipline* and the 1879 PCUS *Rules of Discipline*; and

Whereas, for those under judicial process, the court would have already found “a strong presumption of guilt” (*BCO* 31-2), defined by F. P. Ramsay, as “a belief by the members of the court that evidence as then known to them would indicate that guilt probably exists” (*Exposition of the Book of Church Order*, 1898, p. 187); and

Whereas, the church Session—in the case of a Pastor under process and not suspended from his official functions by the Presbytery—would not be able to restrict the Pastor from preaching and teaching (*BCO* 20-1) or moderating the church Session (*BCO* 10-3; 12-2) except through pastoral dissolution by the congregation (*BCO* 23-1). See Committee of Commissioners on Judicial Business, *MI7GA* (1989), 17-82.III, item 34, p. 167; and Report of the Committee on Constitutional Business, *MI8GA* (1990), Appendix A, Attachment 1, III.B.4, p. 204; and

Whereas, requiring a three-quarters (3/4) supermajority vote for an intermediary step in the judicial process while requiring only a majority vote for the judgement is incongruous with the relative significance of these decisions; and

Whereas, ensuring proper adherence to Presbyterian polity is best achieved by godly presbyters carefully applying church law in its courts; and

Whereas, adding instructive information in our *BCO* to the end that church courts should show “prudence and wisdom” when making decisions under *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4, and adding language to 33-4 that “this shall never be done in the way of censure” are better methods of applying historic Presbyterian judicatory principles than constructing requirements of a supermajority vote for situations in which the requirement of a majority vote has stood the test of time in our church courts for 200 years. The terms “prudence” and “wisdom” used in the proposed revisions come from the use of the words concerning decisions of church courts, presbyters, pastors, and elders in the *Preliminary Principles*, *BCO* 11-2, *BCO* 56-4, and *BCO* 57-2.

Therefore, be it resolved that *Book of Church Order* 31-10 and *BCO* 33-4 be amended as follows (underlining for additions, ~~strike through~~ for deletions):

31-10. When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court’s discretion; The court should show prudence and wisdom in taking this action, and ~~but~~—this shall never be done in the way of censure.

33-4. When it is impracticable immediately to commence process against an accused church member, the Session may, if it thinks the edification of the Church requires it, prevent

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the accused from approaching the Lord's Table until the charges against him can be examined. The Session should show prudence and wisdom in taking this action, and this shall never be done in the way of censure.

So that *BCO* 31-10 and *BCO* 33-4 as amended would read:

31-10. When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court's discretion. The court should show prudence and wisdom in taking this action, and this shall never be done in the way of censure.

33-4. When it is impracticable immediately to commence process against an accused church member, the Session may, if it thinks the edification of the Church requires it, prevent the accused from approaching the Lord's Table until the charges against him can be examined. The Session should show prudence and wisdom in taking this action, and this shall never be done in the way of censure.

Adopted by the Nashville Presbytery at its 109th meeting on February 8, 2022
Attested by R. Neil Spence, Stated Clerk

OVERTURE 7 from Nashville Presbytery (to CCB and OC)
"Amend *BCO* 42-6 Regarding Suspending Judgment during Appeal"

Whereas, it was proposed in Overture 21 to the 48th General Assembly (and referred to the 49th General Assembly) that *BCO* 42-6 be amended by requiring a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the court of original jurisdiction to prevent an appellant from approaching the Lord's Table and, if an officer, to prevent him from exercising some or all of his official functions until the case is decided by the higher court; and

Whereas, the vote count for passing a motion by a supermajority of two-thirds (2/3) is, for example, 4 votes in the affirmative on a Session with 5 members voting and 20 presbyters voting in the affirmative in a court with 30 members voting; and

Whereas, requiring a supermajority two-thirds (2/3) vote would increase

the power of the higher court in the appeals process and downgrade the authority of the lower court which is not in keeping with grass roots Presbyterianism; and

Whereas, the constitutional documents within the historical stream of our denominational polity starting with the 1822 PCUSA *Book of Discipline* required that the judicial sentence of suspension, excommunication, or deposition from office “shall be considered as in force until the appeal shall be issued” or decided; and similarly, the 1879 PCUS *Rules of Discipline* required that the judicial sentence of suspension, excommunication, or deposition “shall nevertheless be considered as in force until the appeal shall be issued” or decided; and

Whereas, the 19th century minister and *BCO* scholar, F. P. Ramsay wrote in his *Exposition of the Book of Church Order* (1898, pp. 251-252) about appeals in the case of suspension, excommunication, or deposition and how the judgment was considered in force during appeal:

“That is, one on whom such sentence has been passed, and who has arrested the pronouncing of it by his appeal, is bound to abstain from the sacraments or from the exercise of his office until the superior court passes upon his appeal; and not to submit himself by thus abstaining would itself be an offence worthy of the highest censure, if wittingly committed. *If one could arrest the force of a judgment, as well as the pronouncing of sentence, by appeal, the grossest offender could not be reached until after most hurtful delay*” [emphasis added]; and

Whereas, it was not until the 1925 PCUS *BCO* that constitutional language was introduced giving the court the option to suspend the force of the judicial sentence of suspension, excommunication, or deposition from office until the case was finally decided; and

Whereas, the 24th General Assembly changed *BCO* 42-6 significantly by removing the language identifying the censures of suspension, excommunication, and deposition as the more serious censures under which the judicial sentence may be kept in force during appeal while adding the explanation that keeping the judgment in force “shall never be done by way of censure;” and

Whereas, F. P. Ramsay wrote, “the Rules of Discipline assume that, while a court may err, it will more probably be right than the party that objects to its action” (*Exposition of the Book of Church Order*, 1898, p. 247); and

Whereas, the church Session—in the case of a Pastor inflicted with the censure of suspension, excommunication, or deposition who appealed the censure, if not prevented by their Presbytery—would not be able to restrict the Pastor from preaching and teaching (*BCO* 20-1) or moderating the church Session (*BCO* 10-3; 12-2) except by pastoral dissolution (*BCO* 23-1). See Committee of Commissioners on Judicial Business, *M17GA* (1989), 17-82.III, item 34, p. 167; and Report of the Committee on Constitutional Business, *M18GA* (1990), Appendix A, Attachment 1, III.B.4, p. 204; and

Whereas, requiring a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote for an intermediary step in the judicial process while requiring only a majority vote for the judgement is incongruous with the relative significance of these decisions; and

Whereas, ensuring proper adherence to Presbyterian polity is best achieved by godly presbyters carefully applying church law in its courts; and

Whereas, when a court considers preventing an appellant from approaching the Lord’s Table and/or from exercising his official functions it may be most appropriate when the censure inflicted was suspension from the sacraments and/or office, excommunication, or deposition from office; and

Whereas, adding instructive information in our *BCO* to the end that church courts should show “prudence and wisdom” when making decisions under *BCO* 42-6 is a better method of applying historic Presbyterian judicatory principles than constructing requirements of a supermajority vote for situations in which the requirement of a majority vote has stood the test of time in our church courts for 200 years. The terms “prudence” and “wisdom” used in the proposed revisions come from the use of the words concerning decisions of church courts, presbyters, pastors, and elders in the *Preliminary Principles*, *BCO* 11-2, *BCO* 56-4, and *BCO* 57-2.

Therefore, be it resolved that *Book of Church Order* 42-6 be amended as follows (underlining for additions, ~~strike through~~ for deletions):

42-6. Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been

APPENDIX W

finally decided in the higher court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. *BCO* 31-10; 33-4). Preventing the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table and/or from exercising his official functions may be most appropriate when the censure is suspension from the sacraments and/or office, excommunication, or deposition from office. The court of original jurisdiction should show prudence and wisdom in taking this action, and this shall never be done in the way of censure.

So that *BCO* 42-6 as amended would read:

42-6. Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. *BCO* 31-10; 33-4). Preventing the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table and/or from exercising his official functions may be most appropriate when the censure is suspension from the sacraments and/or office, excommunication, or deposition from office. The court of original jurisdiction should show prudence and wisdom in taking this action, and this shall never be done in the way of censure.

*Adopted by the Nashville Presbytery at its 109th meeting on February 8, 2022
Attested by R. Neil Spence, stated clerk*

OVERTURE 8 from Houston Metro Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 33-1 and *BCO* 34-1 Establishing Percentage
Threshold for Original Jurisdiction Requests”

Be it resolved that *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 be amended as follows (~~strike-through~~ for deletions, underlining for new wording):

33-1. Process against ~~all a~~ church members, ~~other than ministers of the Gospel,~~ shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such members belongs, ~~except in cases of appeal.~~ However, if the ~~Session refuses to act in doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and two other~~ Sessions of at least ten percent (10%) of churches in the same Presbytery request the Presbytery of which the church is a member to ~~initiate proper or appropriate action in a case of process and thus~~ assume original jurisdiction for a case of process (to first receive and initially hear and determine) and authority, the Presbytery shall do so.

34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if ~~the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal and two other~~ at least ten percent (10%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process (to first receive and initially hear and determine), the General Assembly shall do so.

So that *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1, as amended, would read:

33-1. Process against a church member shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such member belongs. However, if the Sessions of at least ten percent (10%) of churches in the same Presbytery request the Presbytery of which the church is a member to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process, the Presbytery shall do so.

34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if at least ten percent (10%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process, the General Assembly shall do so.

RATIONALE:

BCO 34-1 is a provision that first appears in the PCA *BCO* and has no exact precedent in historical Presbyterian Books of Order. In the few instances in which it has been invoked, there has been great confusion concerning how to apply it. There is no clear standard for “refuses to act” nor is there a clear definition of “doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal,” leading to uncertainty and conflict in applying the provision. The amendment removes these provisions to bring about greater clarity and more precise application.

In our denomination of 88 Presbyteries, a case that requires the assumption of original jurisdiction by the General Assembly should require greater threshold than the current standard of only two Presbyteries (2% of all Presbyteries). The amendment also allows for a flexible standard as the number of Presbyteries increases in the future.

BCO 33-1 is essentially the same provision as 34-1 at the lower court level, with Sessions requesting a Presbytery to assume original jurisdiction. It has been an anomaly that the language of 33-1 has been different from that of 34-1. The amendment makes changes to bring them into conformity with each other.

Adopted by Houston Metro Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 21, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE Luis Veiga, stated clerk

OVERTURE 9 from Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 34-1 Establishing Percentage Threshold for Original Jurisdiction Requests”

Be it resolved that *BCO* 34-1 be amended as follows (~~strike-through~~ for deletions, underlining for new wording):

BCO 34 - *Special Rules Pertaining to Process Against a Minister (Teaching Elder)*

34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, ~~if the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal, if two other~~ 10% of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction (to first receive and initially hear and determine), the General Assembly shall do so.

So that *BCO* 34-1 reads:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

34-1. Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal, if 10% of Presbyteries request the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction (to first receive and initially hear and determine), the General Assembly shall do so.

Rationale:

BCO 34-1 as currently written has long existed within the PCA as a constitutional variant. The meaning of the phrase “if the Presbytery refuses to act” has no clear definition and has made application of its usage ineffective.

This overture seeks to do two things simultaneously: first it clearly defines the terms of General Assembly original jurisdiction of a presbytery while secondly making it the process more difficult to do so than the current threshold of 2 presbyteries. The standard of request will increase from 2 presbyteries to 10% of presbyteries.

Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 28, 2021
Attested by /s/ Melton L. Duncan, stated clerk

OVERTURE 10 from Southwest Florida Presbytery (to MNA)
“Restructure Boundary of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida”

Whereas, a presbytery confined to a smaller geographic region can lead to more efficient oversight, cooperation, and connection between particular congregations in the presbytery; and

Whereas, fostering a sense of connectionalism and cooperation of churches, teaching elders, and ruling elders beyond the local congregation is a hallmark of historic Presbyterianism; and

Whereas, a presbytery that has greater concentration within a specific geographic region may and should lead to a greater emphasis on church planting within that region; and

Whereas, a presbytery that encompasses a smaller geographic region should permit shorter meetings and shorter driving distances for presbyters to such meetings; and

Whereas, shorter distances should lead to greater participation in presbytery by ruling elders, thus allowing ruling elders to better fulfill their established calling to “govern the church well;” and

Whereas, the Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries, as adopted by the 26th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, include “regional cohesiveness,” “member churches hav[ing] a potential for shared ministries,” and “member churches hav[ing] a common commitment to the region;” and

Whereas the boundaries of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida currently divide the Tampa Bay metropolitan area unnecessarily; and

Whereas, the Presbytery of Southwest Florida has interest in planting churches in the northern suburbs of Tampa, specifically Pasco County; and

Whereas, the Presbytery of Southwest Florida and Central Florida Presbytery are in accord to move Pasco County into the bounds of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida from Central Florida Presbytery;

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Presbytery of Southwest Florida overtures the 49th General Assembly to restructure the boundary of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida so that Pasco County will be included in its bounds, effective July 1, 2022, and that all existing PCA churches and church plants in Pasco County will come into the Presbytery of Southwest Florida, and that all teaching elders and churches be received following a successful examination, effective July 1, 2022.

Approved by the Presbytery of Southwest Florida at its stated meeting, February 12, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE Freddy Fritz, stated clerk

OVERTURE 11 from Korean Capital Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 25-2.e and Add a New Item *BCO* 25-2.f, New Percentage Threshold for Calling Large Church Congregational Meetings”

Whereas, based on the 2018 GA report, there are 1,912 churches comprising of 374,736 members, i.e. the average member for each church is 196; and

Whereas, the current threshold of communing members requesting the Session to call congregational meeting seems adequate for most of churches in the PCA especially for the church having less than 700 communing member wherein the range of variance of

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

percentage proportion is from 14% to 25% of the whole congregation; and

Whereas, to the contrary, if a church has more than 5,000 communing members as an example, requiring mere 100 communing members according to the current threshold standard would be very disproportionate and unreasonable to the rest of the 4,900 congregation members since 100 members out of 5,000 members represents only 2% of the whole congregation; and

Whereas, the opinions of 2% of the minority group of the whole congregation is not to be belittled, but not up to the point where a congregational meeting has to be called, it would create unhealthy church culture where a church would be swayed by a very small fraction of the congregation; and

Whereas, it is also noted that coming to a consensus by 100 members out of 5,000 members could be easily feasible, which may lead to frequent and often unnecessary congregational meeting calls, and

Whereas, the frequent congregational meetings would undermine a harmonious and cooperative governing body of church by disrupting the regular worship services, and also it may endanger the stability and peace of a church by disparaging opinions and wills of majority congregation, and

Whereas, the proposed amendment would provide a fair, appropriate and reasonable representation of minority church members for a congregation having more than 700 communing members; and

Therefore, Korean Capital Presbytery overtures to amend *BCO 25-2* (e) and to add an additional clause (f) as follows (underlining for new wording):

BCO 25-2

e. by one hundred (100) of the communing members of a church of more than seven hundred (700) such members-
but not more than one thousand (1,000) such members.

f. by one-tenth (1/10) of the communing members of a church of more than one thousand (1,000) such members.

Adopted by Korean Capital Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 8, 2019
Attested by /s/ TE Dong Woo Kim, stated clerk

OVERTURE 12 from Hills and Plains Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding a New Paragraph *BCO* 16-4 with
Wording from the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on
Human Sexuality”

Whereas, the Sacred Scriptures instruct us how to walk and to please God, abstaining from sexual immorality and controlling our bodies with holiness and honor (1 Thess. 4:1–5); and

Whereas, the Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to fight the good fight of faith and to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness (1 Tim. 6:11–12); and

Whereas, overseers must be above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6, 7) and holy (Titus 1:8), and well thought of by outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7); and

Whereas, deacons must be dignified (1 Tim. 3:8) and serve if they prove themselves blameless (1 Tim. 3:10); and

Whereas, the *Book of Church Order* declares that everyone “whom God calls to bear office in His Church . . . should be sound in the faith, and his life be according to godliness” (*BCO* 16-3); and

Whereas the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality of TE Dr. Bryan Chapell, TE Dr. Kevin DeYoung, TE Dr. Tim Keller, TE Dr. Jim Weidenaar, RE Dr. Derek Halvorson, RE Mr. Kyle Keating, and RE Mr. Jim Pocta, studied issues assigned to it by the 47th General Assembly in 2019; and

Whereas, the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality released the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality in 2020; and

Whereas, Overture 38 [to the 48th General Assembly] to “Commend the Human Sexuality Report,” unanimously adopted by Calvary Presbytery, was answered in the affirmative by a show of hands at the 48th General Assembly in 2021; and

Whereas, the AIC Report says, “Christians are well-served when they can be honest about both their present fallen realities and their hope for sanctification” (p. 28); and

Whereas, the AIC Report says, “The goal is not just consistent fleeing from, and regular resistance to, temptation, but the diminishment and even the end of the occurrences of sinful desires through the reordering of the loves of one’s heart toward Christ” (p. 10); and

Whereas, the AIC Report says, “Desires that are inconsistent with God’s design are to be resisted and mortified, not celebrated or accommodated” (p. 28); and

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Whereas, the AIC Report says, “To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the term ‘Christian’ is inconsistent with Biblical language and undermines the spiritual reality that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)” (p. 11); and

Whereas, the AIC Report says, “Sometimes there are disagreements about language even when the underlying doctrinal commitments seem to be the same. . . . For these reasons, how persons express themselves is not finally determinative of their identity” (p. 29);

Therefore, be it resolved that Hills and Plains Presbytery (PCA) overture the 49th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Church Order* chapter 16 by the addition of the following paragraph:

BCO 16-4. Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America, though sound in the faith and living lives according to godliness, “are well served when they can be honest about both their present fallen realities and their hope for sanctification.” Their “goal is not just consistent fleeing from, and regular resistance to, temptation, but the diminishment and even the end of the occurrences of sinful desires.” “Desires that are inconsistent with God’s design are to be resisted and mortified, not celebrated or accommodated.” “To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the term ‘Christian’ is inconsistent with biblical language and undermines the spiritual reality that we are new creations in Christ.” “Sometimes there are disagreements about language even when the underlying doctrinal commitments seem to be the same,” and “how persons express themselves is not finally determinative of their identity.”

Approved by Hills and Plains Presbytery at a Called Meeting on March 5, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE Wesley D. Martin, stated clerk

OVERTURE 13 from Ascension Presbytery (to OC)
“Petition United States Government to End Abortion”

Whereas, the Scriptures forbid murder of human life, as confessed in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church in America under the Sixth Commandment in Larger Catechism 134-136 and Shorter Catechism 67-69, and;

Whereas, The Holy Scriptures recognize human life before birth in the womb (Exodus 21:22-25, Psalm 17:14, Jeremiah 1:5, Isaiah 44:24, Luke 1:41, etc.), and;

Whereas, Christians as far back as the writing of the Didache in the First or Second Century recognized that “you shall not abort a child or commit infanticide.”¹⁸ and;

Whereas, the Reformed tradition has recognized the evil of abortion from the days of the Reformation, with pastors such as John Calvin noting: “...*the unborn, though enclosed in the womb of his mother, is already a human being, and it is an almost monstrous crime to rob it of life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his most secure place of refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy the unborn in the womb before it has come to light.*”¹⁹ and;

Whereas, abortion ends human life in the womb and is legal in the United States of America, and;

Whereas, *Westminster Confession of Faith* 31.4. confesses: “Synods and councils are to handle, or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of *humble petition in cases extraordinary*; or, by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.”²⁰ and;

Whereas, in 1978 the PCA studied the issue of abortion and communicated the following statement to the civil authorities: “God declares in Sacred Scripture that civil government, no less than the Church, is a divine institution and owes its authority to God. The Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will and teaches that the unborn child is a human person deserving the full protection of the Sixth Commandment, “You shall not murder”. We who love our nation, in the name of God who alone is sovereign, call upon you to renounce the sin of abortion, to repent of the complicity in the mass slaughter of innocent unborn children, who are persons in the sight of God, and to reverse the

¹⁸ Didache. 2.2 – as translated by Michael Holmes in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 3rd edition.

¹⁹ See: John Calvin. Commentary on Exodus 21:22 in *Harmony of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Vol 3, page 41-42.

²⁰ *Emphasis added.*

ruinous direction of both law and practice in this area. The obedience to God which places us in subjection to your rightful authority, requires of us to proclaim the counsel of God as it bears upon the same God-given authority.”²¹

Whereas, in 1986 the PCA again communicated its position on abortion to the civil authorities,²² and:

Whereas, since 1986, we have not petitioned the vast majority of the current federal government, as 97 out of the current 100 Senators were not serving, 430 out of the current 435 Representatives were not serving, and 9 out of the current 9 Supreme Court Justices were not serving, and;

Whereas, the legal murder of around 60 million babies since 1973,²³ many disproportionately coming from minority communities, poses a civil rights and biblical justice abomination, and therefore constitutes such an extraordinary case, and;

Whereas, since the PCA’s last formal petition in 1986, tens of millions more innocent human lives have been destroyed through abortion, constituting an ongoing and extraordinary violation of justice,

Therefore Be it Resolved, Presbytery of the Ascension overtures the General Assembly to humbly petition the United States Government as below, to be sent by the Stated Clerk of the PCA:²⁴

Humble Petition to the Honorable President, Members of Congress, and Justices of the Supreme Court

The 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America humbly petitions the President of the United States of America, Members of Congress, and Justices of the Supreme Court to take any and all legal measures to protect the lives of unborn and newly-born babies from the brutality of abortion and infanticide. We support this petition with the following considerations.

²¹ “Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Abortion,” [6th General Assembly (1978), Appendix O, pp. 270 - 281.], <https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2-015.html>

²² Actions of the 14th General Assembly (1986), p. 187, 14-85, III, 2. https://pcahistory.org/pca/ga/14th_pcaga_1986.pdf

²³ https://www.grrtl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Abortion_US.pdf

²⁴ Format and Wording follows the format of a OPC Humble petition of 1993 found here: <https://opc.org/GA/homosexuality.html>

Based on the Word of God and His Law evident in nature, terminating the life of an unborn or newly-born baby without just cause violates God's moral standard and therefore is sin and a great evil. According to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, murder and the unjust taking of another's life is forbidden, as all humans are made in the Image of God (Gen 1:26-27) and therefore taking innocent life is a great sin against God (Genesis 9:6). The particular sin of sacrificing of children, as was done to the false god Molech, is called an abomination and worthy of judgment (Leviticus 20:2-5, 1 Kings 11:7, etc). By the light of nature, moreover, we know that the unborn is human, feels pain from an early stage, has a beating heart from an early stage, and is not some other species but a fellow human. Thus our God-given conscience testifies that inflicting pain, stopping a beating heart, and thereby killing another defenseless, fellow human being is a great evil.

While we are reluctant to address the civil magistrate except in “cases extraordinary,” the legalization of the murder of a helpless class, that disproportionately targets the poor and minorities, has resulted in the loss of around 60 million lives since 1973, and thus the tragedy and evil of the legal extermination of the unborn rises to just such a status, as few events have in the history of our nation. The Scriptures declare that a failure to discharge faithfully our duties to these, our helpless neighbors, would incur the judgment of God, just as it did of the watchmen and shepherds of Israel (Isaiah 56:9-12; Ezekiel 33:1-9; 34:1-10).

The duties of the civil government include the enforcement of laws, as a duty from God, to be a “terror to bad conduct” as you are called to be God's servants (Romans 13:1-7). We implore you to fulfill your divinely granted duty before God and eliminate from our land, by any and all available means, the legal murder known as abortion, and to call our nation to, “Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish” (Jonah 3:8-9).

Therefore, for the honor of Christ and his Church, and the welfare of our nation, we exhort you to remember the words of the wisest magistrate, “Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34) and “Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter” (Proverbs 24:11). We pray for you, your families, and your vocations, and we commend to you the salvation that comes only through Jesus Christ our Lord. We urge all

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

faithful believers to pray for you, as we have been instructed from God's Word: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Very respectfully submitted,
The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America

Adopted by the Presbytery of the Ascension at its stated meeting, January 29, 2022

Attested by /s/ RE Frederick Neikirk, stated clerk

OVERTURE 14 from Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC; to SJC
for *OMSJC* only)

“Change the Composition of the SJC by Amending *BCO* 15-4 and *RAO* 17-1; Amend *OMSJC* 5.1 and 6.1”

Whereas, Presbyterian government is a representative form of church government arising from local congregations; and

Whereas, judicial appeals from presbyteries to the broader church should be appeals to a court representing the entire denomination; and

Whereas, the Standing Judicial Commission is currently composed of 24 members representing about ¼ of the presbyteries in the PCA; and

Whereas, judicial decisions of the highest court in the PCA should accurately represent the denomination as a whole;

Therefore, be it resolved that Westminster Presbytery overtures the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to amend the Book of Church Order, Rules of Assembly Operations, and the SJC manual as follows:

BCO 15-4. The General Assembly shall appoint ~~elect~~ a Standing Judicial Commission to which it shall commit all matters governed by the Rules of Discipline, except for the annual review of Presbytery records, which may come before the Assembly. This commission shall be comprised of one representative from each presbytery elected by the presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be assigned to a class by the stated clerk based on its date of formation. The elders shall serve in

classes of four-year terms, alternating between ruling and teaching elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder of the same class. ~~consist of twenty four (24) members divided into four classes of three teaching elders and three ruling elders in each class. Each class shall serve a four year term and each subsequent Assembly shall declare the Standing Judicial Commission as a whole to be its commission. Nominations and vacancies shall be filled according to BCO 14-1(11), with nominations allowed from the floor. No person may be elected if there is already a member of the commission from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes Presbytery, he may continue to serve his full term. No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly's permanent committees.~~

Rules of Assembly Operations Article 17: Standing Judicial Commission

RAO 17-1. There shall be a Standing Judicial Commission composed of one ruling or teaching elder from each presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America ~~twenty four members~~ in accordance with BCO 15-4. Upon election, each new member of the Standing Judicial Commission, before entering upon the duties of this office, shall sign a printed copy of the following vows; further, if the newly elected member is present, he shall affirm these vows in the presence of the Assembly ~~electing~~ appointing him:

“I do solemnly vow, by the assistance of the grace of God, in my service as a judge in this branch of the church of our lord Jesus Christ, that

1. I will act as before God, my Judge and the Searcher of hearts;
2. I will judge without respect to persons, and if so tempted, will recuse myself from judgment;
3. I will judge not according to appearances, but judge righteous judgment;

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4. I will judge according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, through my best efforts applied to nothing other than the record of the case and other documents properly before me; and
5. If in a given case I find my view on a particular issue to be in conflict with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, I will recuse myself from such case, if I cannot conscientiously apply the Constitution.”

The Standing Judicial Commission shall have oversight of appeals, complaints and judicial references from lower courts. The Standing Judicial Commission will report directly to the General Assembly.

The Standing Judicial Commission shall not be separately funded but administratively will operate as a subcommittee of the Administrative Committee of General Assembly.

RAO 17-3. The Standing Judicial Commission may appoint a judicial panel of not less than three of its members to hear the case in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Discipline in the BCO and these Rules of Assembly Operations. Such panels shall be chosen as follows:

- a. A pool with the names of teaching elder members shall be established, and another pool with the names of ruling elder members shall be established. The chairman of the Standing Judicial Commission shall draw by lot names of panel members and alternates from each pool and notify the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shall notify, immediately, those so chosen.
- b. If a panel member so selected shall be disqualified under Section 2 of the Operating Manual for Standing Judicial Commission, he shall be replaced by the alternate drawn from the pool.

- c. The names of those panel members selected and qualified shall not be returned to the pool until all names therein have been exhausted. The name of an alternate, who does not serve as a panel member, shall be returned to the pool. The names of those members whose terms expire at the next General Assembly shall be withdrawn from the pool on March 1 of that year. Immediately after each General Assembly the name of each new member ~~appointed~~ ~~selected~~ at such General Assembly shall be added to his respective pool.

Operating Manual of the SJC (OMSJC)

5. EXPENSES

5.1 It is recommended that the expenses incurred by members serving on the Commission, ~~its panels, and its members shall be borne~~ be underwritten by the presbytery sending the commissioner. The administrative costs of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary shall be borne by the Administrative Committee of General Assembly. All expenses (including travel expenses) incurred by a party or by the witnesses called by that party shall be borne by that party.

6. QUORUM

6.1 A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Commission shall be 25 ~~13~~ qualified members, composed of at least 10 ~~5~~ teaching elders and at least 10 ~~5~~ ruling elders.

So that BCO 15-4, RAO 17-1, 17-3 and SJC Manual 5.1 and 6.1, as amended, would read:

BCO 15-4. The General Assembly shall appoint a Standing Judicial Commission to which it shall commit all matters governed by the Rules of Discipline, except for the annual review of Presbytery records, which may come before the Assembly. This commission shall be

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

comprised of one representative from each presbytery elected by the presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be assigned to a class by the stated clerk based on its date of formation. The elders shall serve in classes of four-year terms, alternating between ruling and teaching elders. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an elder of the same class. No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly's permanent committees.

Rules of Assembly Operations Article 17: Standing Judicial Commission

RAO 17-1. There shall be a Standing Judicial Commission composed of one ruling or teaching elder from each presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America in accordance with BCO 15-4. Upon election, each new member of the Standing Judicial Commission, before entering upon the duties of this office, shall sign a printed copy of the following vows; further, if the newly elected member is present, he shall affirm these vows in the presence of the Assembly appointing him:

"I do solemnly vow, by the assistance of the grace of God, in my service as a judge in this branch of the church of our lord Jesus Christ, that

1. I will act as before God, my Judge and the Searcher of hearts;
2. I will judge without respect to persons, and if so tempted, will recuse myself from judgment;
3. I will judge not according to appearances, but judge righteous judgment;
4. I will judge according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, through my best efforts applied to nothing other than the record of the case and other documents properly before me; and
5. If in a given case I find my view on a particular issue to be in conflict with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, I will

APPENDIX W

recuse myself from such case, if I cannot conscientiously apply the Constitution.”

The Standing Judicial Commission shall have oversight of appeals, complaints and judicial references from lower courts. The Standing Judicial Commission will report directly to the General Assembly.

RAO 17-3. The Standing Judicial Commission may appoint a judicial panel of not less than three of its members to hear the case in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Discipline in the BCO and these Rules of Assembly Operations. Such panels shall be chosen as follows:

- a. A pool with the names of teaching elder members shall be established, and another pool with the names of ruling elder members shall be established. The chairman of the Standing Judicial Commission shall draw by lot names of panel members and alternates from each pool and notify the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shall notify, immediately, those so chosen.
- b. If a panel member so selected shall be disqualified under Section 2 of the Operating Manual for Standing Judicial Commission, he shall be replaced by the alternate drawn from the pool.
- c. The names of those panel members selected and qualified shall not be returned to the pool until all names therein have been exhausted. The name of an alternate, who does not serve as a panel member, shall be returned to the pool. The names of those members whose terms expire at the next General Assembly shall be withdrawn from the pool on March 1 of that year. Immediately after each General Assembly the name of each new member appointed at such General Assembly shall be added to his respective pool.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OMSJC

5. EXPENSES

5.1 It is recommended that the expenses incurred by members serving on the Commission be underwritten by the presbytery sending the commissioner. The administrative costs of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary shall be borne by the Administrative Committee of General Assembly. All expenses (including travel expenses) incurred by a party or by the witnesses called by that party shall be borne by that party.

6. QUORUM

6.1 A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Commission shall be 25 qualified members, composed of at least 10 teaching elders and at least 10 ruling elders.

Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 12, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE Thomas Rickard, stated clerk

OVERTURE 15 from Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 7 to Disqualify from Office Men Identifying as Homosexual”

Whereas, God created Adam and Eve and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the context for the biblical sexual ethic (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1); and

Whereas, God has established the one flesh sexual union between a husband and wife, as a great mystery in reference to Christ and his Church (Eph. 5:25; 31-32); and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures declare that the sexual union and desire between one man and one woman, in the covenant of marriage, is righteous and holy, and all other sexual activity is unrighteous and sinful, including homosexuality, which the Holy Scriptures describe as “degrading passions” (Rom. 5:18-19; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6 9-11; Eph. 5:3-5; Heb. 13:4, *WCF* 24:1 & 2; *WLC* 138,139); and

Whereas, the application of the 7th Commandment forbids the sins of homosexuality, unnatural lusts, and unclean affections, affirming that homosexual acts and the desires to commit those acts are both sinful (Matt. 5:27-28; *WLC* 139); and

Whereas, the Biblical qualifications for a church officer require him to be “above reproach” and the “husband of one wife,” officers and candidates for office must conform their lives to Biblical sexual ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sexual passions and desires toward anyone to whom they are not married (1 Tim. 3:2); and

Whereas, identification as a “homosexual,” is sinful and against nature itself, is something God detests, and is not fitting for an officer of the Church of Christ (Lev. 18:22; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:5-6); and

Whereas, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he is a “new creation” in Him, his identity cannot be defined by sexual and/any other desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self-conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (Rom 6:1-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:1-5); and

Whereas, the sexual revolution and LGBTQ+ movement are infiltrating many quarters of the Church and causing no small amount of confusion; and

Whereas, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood’s Nashville Statement on biblical sexuality, affirmed by the 47th General Assembly of the PCA as a biblically faithful declaration, states in Article VII, “We deny that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption:”

Therefore, be it resolved that Westminster Presbytery overtures the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to amend *The Book of Church Order* Chapter 7 such that a new clause, *BCO* 7-4, be added, which reads as follows (new words underlined):

7-4. Men who identify as homosexual, even those who identify as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy in that self-identification, are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America.

Adopted by Westminster Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 12, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE Thomas Rickard, stated clerk

OVERTURE 16 from TE Ted Lester (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 25-2 to Require Annual Congregational Meeting
and Reporting Standards”

[This Overture was submitted to Northwest Georgia Presbytery for its stated meeting, August 21, 2021, by TE Ted Lester, commissioner to NW GA Presbytery, and was rejected by the Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 15, 2022 (see *RAO* 11-10).]

Whereas, The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, has established a church government to be administered by Church officers (*WCF* 30.1); and

Whereas, Church officers are called to govern the holy institution of the Church well, promote the purity and peace within the congregations they shepherd, administer the sacraments, and provide for the spiritual well-being of the church; and

Whereas, a Presbyterian system of government prescribes that the men set apart for the sacred charge of Church office are selected and elected by members of a particular church (*BCO* 24); and

Whereas, inherent to a Presbyterian system of government is that the Word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office (*WLC* 158) and that from time to time as need arises by members who “shall, after consultation and deliberation recommend to the congregation” a pastoral candidate who in their “judgment, fulfills the Constitutional requirements of that office and is most suited to be profitable to the spiritual interests of the congregation...” (*BCO* 20-2); and

Whereas, the congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, and they only are entitled to vote (*BCO* 25-1); and

Whereas, the aforementioned vote is how a congregation’s voice is expressed and its will exercised within a particular church; and

Whereas, all members of a particular church have vowed to “support the Church in its worship and work” to the best of their ability, and “study its purity and peace” (*BCO* 57-5);

Therefore, be it resolved that in order to preserve the congregational voice of particular churches in the PCA, and assist members in upholding their membership vows, the *Book of Church Order* 25-2 be amended by adding the underlined text below:

25-2. Whenever it may seem for the best interests of the church that a congregational meeting should be held, the Session shall call such meeting and give public notice of at least one week. No business shall be transacted at such meeting except what is stated in the notice. A stated meeting shall be held at least once annually to consider the affairs of the congregation, which shall include a report on the state of a church's ministry, a disclosure of the financial state of the church, a presentation of the terms of call for teaching elders, and a disclosure of the status or outcome of any judicial actions involving the Session or its members. The Session shall always call a congregational meeting when requested in writing to do so:

- a. by one-fourth (1/4) of the communing members of a church of not more than one hundred (100) such members,
- b. by one-fifth (1/5) of the communing members of a church of more than one hundred (100) and not more than three hundred (300) such members,
- c. by one-sixth (1/6) of the communing members of a church of more than three hundred (300) and not more than five hundred (500) such members,
- d. by one-seventh (1/7) of the communing members of a church of more than five hundred (500) members but not more than seven hundred (700) such members,
- e. by one hundred (100) of the communing members of a church of more than seven hundred (700) such members.

Upon such a proper request, if the Session cannot act, fails to act or refuses to act, to call such a congregational meeting within thirty (30) days from the receipt of such a request, then any member or members in good standing may file a complaint in accordance with the provisions of *BCO* 43.

So that *BCO* 25-2 as amended would read:

25-2. Whenever it may seem for the best interests of the church that a congregational meeting should be held, the Session shall call such meeting and give public notice of at

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

least one week. No business shall be transacted at such meeting except what is stated in the notice. A stated meeting shall be held at least once annually to consider the affairs of the congregation, which shall include a report on the state of a church's ministry, a disclosure of the financial state of the church, a presentation of the terms of call for teaching elders, and a disclosure of the status or outcome of any judicial actions involving the Session or its members. The Session shall always call a congregational meeting when requested in writing to do so:

- a. by one-fourth (1/4) of the communing members of a church of not more than one hundred (100) such members,
- b. by one-fifth (1/5) of the communing members of a church of more than one hundred (100) and not more than three hundred (300) such members,
- c. by one-sixth (1/6) of the communing members of a church of more than three hundred (300) and not more than five hundred (500) such members,
- d. by one-seventh (1/7) of the communing members of a church of more than five hundred (500) members but not more than seven hundred (700) such members,
- e. by one hundred (100) of the communing members of a church of more than seven hundred (700) such members.

Upon such a proper request, if the Session cannot act, fails to act or refuses to act, to call such a congregational meeting within thirty (30) days from the receipt of such a request, then any member or members in good standing may file a complaint in accordance with the provisions of *BCO* 43.

Submitted by /s/ TE Ted Lester to Northwest Georgia Presbytery for its stated meeting, August 21, 2021

Rejected by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 15, 2022 (Attested by /s/ TE David Gilbert, stated clerk)

Submitted by /s/ TE Ted Lester to the 49th General Assembly of the PCA, March 25, 2022

OVERTURE 17 from TE Ted Lester (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 32-3 to Require Open-Proceedings for Trials”

[This Overture was submitted to Northwest Georgia Presbytery for its stated meeting, August 21, 2021, by TE Ted Lester, commissioner to NW GA Presbytery, and was rejected by the Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 15, 2022 (see *RAO* 11-10).]

Whereas, the Lord Jesus Christ turns darkness into light (Is. 42:16; Jn. 8:12); and

Whereas, the Bible, as the written Word of God, is a lamp unto our feet (Ps. 119:105); and

Whereas, to be imitators of Christ, we should also speak openly to the world and speak nothing, especially the rendering of justice by application of God’s Word, in secret (Jn. 18:20); and

Whereas, the Bible commands that we “render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace” (Zech. 8:16); and

Whereas, Biblical authority supersedes that of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, so that the Biblical prescription for open courts overrides the prescription of *Robert’s Rules* or any other subordinate and contradictory source on how to hold and conduct a trial; and

Whereas, the authors of the U.S. Constitution incorporated the Biblical principles of open trials into the nation’s founding documents, ensuring that the accused in civil courts are afforded “the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury” (Amendment VI U.S. Constitution); and

Whereas, church courts seemingly mirror the rights afforded to the accused in civil courts save for the right to a public trial (*BCO* 32); and

Whereas, for church courts to operate in a manner that deprives the accused of this Biblical right is to operate on a lower moral plane than ordered by the Holy Scriptures and afforded by the world at large; and

Whereas, transparency promotes accountability; and

Whereas, open church courts encourage prosecutors to “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15); and

Whereas, open church courts encourage the accused to act “with all humility and gentleness, with patience” bearing with others in love (Eph. 4:2); and

Whereas, exercising church discipline is highly important and necessary, and in proper usage maintains the glory of God, the purity of His

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Church, and the reclamation of disobedient sinners (*BCO 27-3*);
and

Whereas, open church court proceedings assist teaching elders in their charge to instruct the officers and the congregation in discipline (*BCO 27-4*);

Therefore, be it resolved that in order that discipline may be exercised with mercy openly, the *Book of Church Order 32-3* be amended by adding the underlined text below:

32-3. It is appropriate that with each citation the moderator or clerk call the attention of the parties to the Rules of Discipline (*BCO 27* through *46*) and assist the parties to obtain access to them. When a charge is laid before the Session or Presbytery, it shall be reduced to writing, and nothing shall be done at the first meeting of the court, unless by consent of parties, except:

1. to appoint a prosecutor,
2. to order the indictment drawn and a copy, along with names of witnesses then known to support it, served on the accused, and
3. to cite the accused to appear and be heard at another meeting which shall not be sooner than ten days after such citation.

At the second meeting of the court the charges shall be read to the accused, if present, and he shall be called upon to say whether he be guilty or not.

If the accused confesses, the court may deal with him according to its discretion; if he plead and take issue, the trial shall be scheduled and all parties and their witnesses cited to appear. The trial shall not be sooner than fourteen (14) days after such citation. Courts of the church shall ordinarily sit with open doors. In every case, the court shall be without power to sit with closed doors if the accused insists on an open trial. No court may subject the accused to a closed trial against their will.

Accused parties may plead in writing when they cannot be personally present. Parties necessarily absent should have counsel assigned to them.

So that *BCO 32-3* as amended would read:

APPENDIX W

32-3. It is appropriate that with each citation the moderator or clerk call the attention of the parties to the Rules of Discipline (BCO 27 through 46) and assist the parties to obtain access to them. When a charge is laid before the Session or Presbytery, it shall be reduced to writing, and nothing shall be done at the first meeting of the court, unless by consent of parties, except:

1. to appoint a prosecutor,
2. to order the indictment drawn and a copy, along with names of witnesses then known to support it, served on the accused, and
3. to cite the accused to appear and be heard at another meeting which shall not be sooner than ten days after such citation.

At the second meeting of the court the charges shall be read to the accused, if present, and he shall be called upon to say whether he be guilty or not.

If the accused confesses, the court may deal with him according to its discretion; if he plead and take issue, the trial shall be scheduled and all parties and their witnesses cited to appear. The trial shall not be sooner than fourteen (14) days after such citation. Courts of the church shall ordinarily sit with open doors. In every case, the court shall be without power to sit with closed doors if the accused insists on an open trial. No court may subject the accused to a closed trial against their will.

Accused parties may plead in writing when they cannot be personally present. Parties necessarily absent should have counsel assigned to them.

Submitted by /s/ TE Ted Lester to Northwest Georgia Presbytery for its stated meeting, August 21, 2021

Rejected by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 15, 2022 (Attested by /s/ TE David Gilbert, stated clerk)

Submitted by /s/ TE Ted Lester to the 49th General Assembly of the PCA, March 25, 2022

OVERTURE 18 from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, AC)
“Amend *RAO 3-2* by Adding an Administrative Responsibility
for the Stated Clerk’s Office Regarding the Processing of
Allegations.”

Be it resolved that *RAO 3-2* be amended as follows. Underlined wording is to be added.

RAO 3-2. The Stated Clerk shall have the following responsibilities to the General Assembly ...

- s. He shall be the correspondent with the lower courts of the church.
- t. He shall forward all allegations, or suggestions of need for disciplinary attention, to the appropriate court, or shall instruct individuals how they may do so. Ordinarily, the person who is the subject of the allegation or suggestion will also be copied. This responsibility is an administrative one, not a judicial one and the Stated Clerk’s Office should ordinarily avoid expressing any opinion on the merits.
- u. He shall be authorized to make public statements for and on behalf of the denomination only insofar as such statements are warranted on the basis of specific actions of the General Assembly.

Rationale: While this new responsibility would not be limited to specific areas, much of our concern arises from things related to public speech. So, the rationale below focuses on that subject as an example.

1. The Bible requires we portray the message and manner of Christ in our communication. (Ex. 20:16, Matt. 5:22, 1 Cor 6:9-10, Eph. 4:31-32, Tit. 3:1-2, 1 Pet. 2:1)
Note: All Scriptures cited in this Overture are printed later below.
2. The Bible forbids publishing false reports or spreading rumors and suspicions without foundation or confirming the facts with the individuals cited. (Ex. 23:1, Matt. 12:36-37; Matt. 18:15-17, 1 Tim. 5:19)
3. The Bible forbids giving attention to gossip, slander, or malicious speech. (Prov. 17:4, 20:19, 26:20)
4. Our Confessional Standards call us to high standards of truth and charity in reporting the actions and words of others, and in protecting

their reputations against falsehood, unwarranted damage, and suspicion, saying:

The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors,...concealing the truth...; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning,...speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling,...misconstructing intentions, words, and actions...; aggravating smaller faults;...unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports;...evil suspicion;...rejoicing in [others'] disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt...; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name. (WLC #145)

5. The speech and publication practices of secular culture can make believers unaware of, or callous to, these biblical standards.
6. There is a temptation for church leaders to disregard these biblical standards in social media, internet discussions, and news sites that deal with church matters.

Approved by Presbytery's BCO 15-1 Overtures Commission on April 4, 2022

Overtures Commission appointed by Pacific NW Presbytery on February 4, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE Nathan Chambers, stated clerk

Scriptures Cited Above (ESV)

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Ex. 20:16)

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:22)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9, 10)

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph. 4:31-32)

Remind ... to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. (Tit. 3:1-2)

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. (1Pet. 2:1)

You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. (Ex. 23:1)

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matt. 12:36-37)

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. (Matt. 18:15-17)

Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. (1 Tim. 5:19)

An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue. (Prov. 17:4)

Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babblers (Prov. 20:19)

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. (Prov. 26:20)

OVERTURE 19 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 15-2 Regarding Presbytery Commission
Membership and Quorum”

Whereas, *BCO* 15 deals with Ecclesiastical Commissions in the courts of the Church; and

Whereas, the wording in 15-2 paragraph 2, sentence 1 differs from the wording of 15-3, sentence 2; and

Whereas, the difference in wording may lead to misunderstanding about the makeup of a Presbytery Commission;

Therefore, be it resolved that in order to clarify, to insure consistency, and to avoid any future confusion, *BCO* 15-2, paragraph 2, sentence 1, be amended by adding the underlined text below (strike-through for deletions).

15-2. Paragraph 2:

Every commission appointed by Presbytery shall consist of at least two teaching elders and two ruling elders from its members, and the Presbytery at the time of the appointment of the commission shall determine what the quorum shall be. ~~and the quorum shall be one more than half its membership unless otherwise determined by the Presbytery.~~ However, should a Presbytery clothe a commission with judicial powers and authority to conduct judicial process, or with power to ordain or install a teaching elder of the Gospel, the quorum of such commission shall not be less than two teaching elders and two ruling elders. The quorum for a commission appointed as an interim session need not conform to the requirements of a judicial commission, but only to those of a session (*BCO* 12-1). When the ordination of a minister is committed to a commission, the Presbytery itself shall conduct the previous examination.

All other wording of 15-2 shall remain unchanged.

Adopted by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 5, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE David E. Gilbert, stated clerk

OVERTURE 20 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications
for Ordination”

Whereas, the Westminster Standards make a categorical distinction between the “state of sin” and the “state of grace” (*WCF* 9.3-4); and

Whereas, ever since the Fall, man is naturally in the “state of sin” in which he has lost all ability to will and to do any spiritual good and is a slave to the penalty, guilt, and power of sin (*WCF* 9.3); and

Whereas, in the state of sin, his sin defines who he is, and he must rightly conceive of himself and label himself as a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, effeminate, homosexual, thief, drunkard, reviler, and swindler (1 Cor. 6:9-10); in this state of sin, that is how he is to consider himself and identify himself because he is a slave to sin; and

Whereas, when the Holy Spirit works faith in man, uniting him to Christ in his effectual calling, he is translated into the “state of grace” (*WCF* 9.4; *WSC* 30) and partakes of the benefits of justification, adoption, and sanctification (*WSC* 30-32); and

Whereas, in this state, while he does not perfectly or only will that which is good but also that which is evil (due to his remaining corruption), he is freed from bondage to sin and by grace is enabled freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good (*WCF* 9.4); and

Whereas, the conversion from the state of sin to the state of grace is so dramatic and the distinction between the two so vast that the Christian is no longer to conceive of himself and label himself as a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, effeminate, homosexual, thief, drunkard, reviler, and swindler; Scripture says such will not inherit the kingdom of God, “and such *were* some of you” (1 Cor. 6:9-11); in the state of grace, the believer is no longer to identify that way (e.g. as a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, etc.) for “you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11); because of his union with Christ, his specific sins no longer define who he is; and

Whereas, due to remaining corruption, the Christian can still speak of himself as a sinner in the present tense (1 Tim. 1:12-16) as one who continues to experience and battle with the presence and pollution of sin (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-25) and even at times feel

as though he is enslaved to sin (Rom. 7:14); however, the truth is that the believer is no longer a slave to sin, having been freed from slavery to its guilt (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7), its penalty (Gal. 3:13), and its power (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rom. 6:6); and

Whereas, while of course the Christian is (and can *say* he is) a sinner (1 Tim. 1:12-16), he is no longer to identify himself with his specific sins; as Paul says, “Such *were* some of you” (1Cor. 6:9-11), and “Though *formerly* I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent...I received mercy...in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:13-14); and

Whereas, instead of considering himself as a drunkard or an adulterer or a homosexual, the Christian is commanded to have a different self-conception: “You must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11); and

Whereas, the Christian may continue to struggle with the same sins all his life long; such a believer should not *consider* himself a drunkard or an adulterer or a homosexual but rather a Christian who struggles with the temptation to drunkenness, adultery, or homosexuality; and who is repentant if or when he succumbs to such temptations; and

Whereas, *BCO* 16-1 reads, “Ordinary vocation to office in the Church is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God’s people, and the concurring judgment of a lawful court of the Church;” and

Whereas, *BCO* 16-2 reads, “The government of the Church is by officers gifted to represent Christ, and the right of God’s people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church;” and

Whereas, *BCO* 16-3 reads, “Upon those whom God calls to bear office in His Church He bestows suitable gifts for the discharge of their various duties. And it is indispensable that, besides possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, every one admitted to an office should be sound in the faith, and his life be according to godliness. Wherefore every candidate for office is to be approved by the court by which he is to be ordained;” and

Therefore, be it resolved that *BCO* 16 be amended by adding 16-4 as a new paragraph with the following wording (underlining for new wording):

16-4. Those whom God calls to bear office in His Church shall demonstrate maturity of faith and growing conformity to Jesus Christ. While these office bearers will see spiritual perfection only in glory, they will continue in this life doing battle with and confessing remaining sins. Thus, those who identify or describe themselves according to their specific sins, or who teach that it is acceptable for Christians to identify or describe in such a manner, shall not be approved for service by any court of Christ's Church.

Adopted by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 5, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE David E. Gilbert, stated clerk

OVERTURE 21 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 Regarding Timing for
Considering a Complaint”

Whereas, some may seek to apply the *BCO* without fair exception in the timing of finalizing a decision on a complaint, which possibility this overture believes could disadvantage Sessions; and

Whereas, matters of judicial complaint are normally complex and require deliberation (James 1:19); and

Whereas, in fairness both to complainants and lower courts, requiring an immediate decision at the same meeting after a first hearing (Prov. 18:17), if little or no time for consideration or prayer is permitted, may create a burden on Sessions or an unhelpful precedent; and

Whereas, the Clerk's *Handbook* regularly permits presbytery commissions time to deliberate, without requiring an immediate answer to a complaint at the same time as the hearing, as long as it is found in order and heard in a timely manner (Clerk's *Handbook*, Appendix H 11 allows a presbytery commission to “adjourn and reconvene within the next 10 days, as often as necessary”); and

Whereas, this analogy continues with the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC), routinely allowing SJC panels to deliberate for up to 20 days (*OMSJC* 10.10) after oral arguments before finalizing a decision; and

Whereas, the proposed amendment below only affects the timing of the final decision on a complaint, allowing the court not to be pressured to surrender its due deliberation if a complaint were tendered as little as hours before a stated meeting; and

Whereas, this amendment would clarify that Sessions have the same, analogous opportunities for due deliberation as the higher courts for the good of the peace and purity of the church;

Therefore, be it resolved that both *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 be amended to include the common-sensical provision by adding the words “provided that the complaint has been filed with the clerk at least seven (7) days in advance,” such that the *BCO* reads (proposed addition in bold):

43-2. A complaint shall first be made to the court whose act or decision is alleged to be in error. Written notice of complaint, with supporting reasons, shall be filed with the clerk of the court within sixty (60) days following the meeting of the court. The court shall consider the complaint at its next stated meeting, or at a called meeting prior to its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has been filed with the clerk at least seven (7) days in advance. No attempt should be made to circularize the court to which complaint is being made by either party.

43-3. If, after considering a complaint, the court alleged to be delinquent or in error is of the opinion that it has not erred, and denies the complaint, the complainant may take that complaint to the next higher court. If the lower court fails to consider the complaint against it by or at its next stated meeting, provided that the complaint has been filed with the clerk at least seven (7) days in advance, the complainant may take that complaint to the next higher court. Written notice thereof shall be filed with both the clerk of the lower court and the clerk of the higher court within thirty (30) days of notification of the last court’s decision.

Notification of the last court’s decision shall be deemed to have occurred on the day of mailing (if certified, registered or express mail of a national postal service or any private service where verifying receipt is

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

utilized), the day of hand delivery, or the day of confirmed receipt in the case of e-mail or facsimile. Furthermore, compliance with such requirements shall be deemed to have been fulfilled if a party cannot be located after diligent inquiry or if a party refuses to accept delivery.

*Adopted by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 5, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE David E. Gilbert, stated clerk*

OVERTURE 22 from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (CCB, AC)
“Amend *RAO* 3-2.h, Making Statistical Data Digitally Accessible”

Whereas, the Lord Jesus Christ charged Peter with the keys of the kingdom (Matt 16:19) and our confessional standards further outline this important responsibility as being held by Church officers (*WCF*, Ch XXX); and

Whereas, elsewhere in Scripture elders are exhorted to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:2) by exercising “oversight”; and

Whereas, in the past this necessitated close proximity between Church officers and congregants. However, our present time is marked by an increasing transience among all members of society, including those in our denomination; and

Whereas, advancements in digital communications now enable oversight across vast distances; and

Whereas, the number of congregations within the PCA has increased to nearly a thousand throughout North America; and

Whereas, each congregation submits statistical data to the Administrative Committee on a yearly basis for the annual PCA Yearbook; and

Whereas, the Stated Clerk’s office already provides the minutes of the General Assembly in digital format; and

Whereas, the production of minutes and statistics in electronic format will reduce the cost of, and time necessary for their production; and

Whereas, the cost of producing the PCA Yearbook is already accounted for and, therefore, access for fee of a digital version will likely offset, and possibly generate profit;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Presbytery of Northwest Georgia hereby overtures the 49th General Assembly to amend *RAO* 3-2.h by adding the following guidance (additions underlined):

RAO 3-2.h

- h. He shall be responsible for publishing the minutes and statistical reports of the Presbyterian Church in America and periodically updating the digest of the minutes. Likewise, these minutes and statistical reports (i.e. ‘The PCA Yearbook’) shall be made available in digital format (i.e. .pdf, .xlxs, etc.).

Adopted by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 5, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE David E. Gilbert, stated clerk

OVERTURE 23 from Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications for Ordination”

[Note: Only the wording of the second sentence of this overture’s proposed *BCO* paragraph differs from the proposed wording in Overture 20.]

Whereas, the Westminster Standards make a categorical distinction between the “state of sin” and the “state of grace” (*WCF* 9.3-4); and

Whereas, ever since the Fall, man is naturally in the “state of sin” in which he has lost all ability to will and to do any spiritual good and is a slave to the penalty, guilt, and power of sin (*WCF* 9.3); and

Whereas, in the state of sin, his sin defines who he is, and he must rightly conceive of himself and label himself as a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, homosexual, thief, drunkard, reviler, and swindler (1 Cor. 6:9-10); in this state of sin, that is how he is to consider himself and identify himself because he is a slave to sin; and

Whereas, when the Holy Spirit works faith in man, uniting him to Christ in his effectual calling, he is translated into the “state of grace” (*WCF* 9.4; *WSC* 30) and partakes of the benefits of justification, adoption, and sanctification (*WSC* 30-32); and

Whereas, in this state, while he does not perfectly or only will that which is good but also that which is evil (due to his remaining corruption), he is freed from bondage to sin and by grace is enabled freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good (*WCF* 9.4); and

Whereas, the conversion from the state of sin to the state of grace is so dramatic and the distinction between the two so vast that the Christian is no longer to conceive of himself and label himself as a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, homosexual, thief, drunkard, reviler, and swindler; Scripture says such will not inherit the kingdom of God, “and such *were* some of you” (1 Cor. 6:9-11); in the state of grace, the believer is no longer to identify that way (e.g. as a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, etc.) for “you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11); because of his union with Christ, his specific sins no longer define who he is; and

Whereas, due to remaining corruption, the Christian can still speak of himself as a sinner in the present tense (1 Tim. 1:12-16) as one who continues to experience and battle with the presence and pollution of sin (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-25) and even at times feel as though he is enslaved to sin (Rom. 7:14); however, the truth is that the believer is no longer a slave to sin, having been freed from slavery to its guilt (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7), its penalty (Gal. 3:13), and its power (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rom. 6:6); and

Whereas, while of course the Christian is (and can *say* he is) a sinner (1 Tim. 1:12-16), he is no longer to identify himself with his specific sins; as Paul says, “Such *were* some of you” (1 Cor. 6:9-11), and “Though *formerly* I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent... I received mercy... in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:13-14); and

Whereas, instead of considering himself as a drunkard or an adulterer or a homosexual, the Christian is commanded to have a different self-conception: “You must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11); and

Whereas, the Christian may continue to struggle with the same sins all his life long; such a believer should not *consider* himself a drunkard or an adulterer or a homosexual but rather a Christian who struggles with the temptation to drunkenness, adultery, or homosexuality; and who is repentant if or when he succumbs to such temptations; and

Whereas, BCO 16-1 reads, “Ordinary vocation to office in the Church is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God’s people, and the concurring judgment of a lawful court of the Church;” and

Whereas, *BCO* 16-2 reads, “The government of the Church is by officers gifted to represent Christ, and the right of God’s people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable. Therefore no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church;” and

Whereas, *BCO* 16-3 reads, “Upon those whom God calls to bear office in His Church He bestows suitable gifts for the discharge of their various duties. And it is indispensable that, besides possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, every one admitted to an office should be sound in the faith, and his life be according to godliness. Wherefore every candidate for office is to be approved by the court by which he is to be ordained;” and

Therefore, be it resolved that *BCO* 16 be amended by adding 16-4 as a new paragraph with the following wording (underlining for new wording):

16-4. Those whom God calls to bear office in His Church shall demonstrate maturity of faith and growing conformity to Jesus Christ. While these office bearers will see spiritual perfection only in glory, they will continue in this life to confess and to mortify remaining sins. Thus, those who identify or describe themselves according to their specific sins, or who teach that it is acceptable for Christians to identify or describe themselves in such a manner, shall not be approved for service by any court of Christ’s Church.

Adopted by Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its called meeting on March 31, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE Kevin Corley, stated clerk

OVERTURE 24 from Houston Metro Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *RAO* 11-2 and 11-10 to Clarify Who May Submit an Overture”

Be it resolved that *RAO* 11-2 and 11-10 be amended as follows (strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording):

11-2. Communications from individuals shall not be received by the General Assembly, unless they originate with persons

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

who have no other access to the Assembly. If the Assembly desires to receive and consider any such communications, other than as information, the Stated Clerk shall recommend reference to the proper Assembly committee. Letters, telegrams, emails, or telephone calls from communicants or congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America are not proper communications, and are not to be received by the Assembly.

11-10. No overture will be considered by the General Assembly until it first has been presented to a presbytery. If approved by the presbytery, it will come before the Assembly as the overture of that court. An overture requested by ~~an individual communicant~~ a ruling elder commissioner to presbytery, a teaching elder, or a session, but rejected by the presbytery, may be presented to the Assembly, provided ~~the fact that it was rejected by the presbytery is clearly stated with the overture.~~ the overture includes as an attachment a copy of the relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting at which presbytery rejected the overture or correspondence from presbytery's Stated Clerk confirming presbytery's rejection of the overture. Such an overture must be the same overture as that presented to and rejected by the presbytery.

So that *RAO* 11-2 and 11-10 as amended, would read:

11-2. Communications from individuals shall not be received by the General Assembly, unless they originate with persons who have no other access to the Assembly. If the Assembly desires to receive and consider any such communications, other than as information, the Stated Clerk shall recommend reference to the proper Assembly committee. Letters, telegrams, emails, or telephone calls from communicants or congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America are not proper communications, and are not to be received by the Assembly.

11-10. No overture will be considered by the General Assembly until it first has been presented to a presbytery. If approved by the presbytery, it will come before the

Assembly as the overture of that court. An overture requested by a ruling elder commissioner to presbytery, a teaching elder, or a session, but rejected by the presbytery, may be presented to the Assembly, provided the overture includes as an attachment a copy of the relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting at which presbytery rejected the overture or correspondence from presbytery's Stated Clerk confirming presbytery's rejection of the overture. Such an overture must be the same overture as that presented to and rejected by the presbytery.

RATIONALE:

The current provision in *RAO* 11-10 is confusing in that it implies that an individual communicant member of a church may send an overture to the General Assembly. Communications from individuals outside the PCA are to be dealt with in accordance with *RAO* 11-2. Individual PCA members have access to the General Assembly indirectly through their Sessions and Presbyteries. Overtures ordinarily are the request of a Presbytery for action by the General Assembly (*RAO* 11-4, emphasis added).

An individual member does not have the ability to move an overture for consideration by a Presbytery, because unless that individual is a ruling elder commissioner to a Presbytery meeting, he is not a member of the body and therefore does not have the privilege of making motions. Such a member could have another who is a member or a Session make such a motion, but if the motion for an overture is rejected by Presbytery, that other member or Session would need to present the rejected overture to the General Assembly.

The revised language clarifies what is permissible in accordance with the *RAO* and *Robert's Rules*.

Adopted by Houston Metro Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 11, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE Lou Veiga, stated clerk

OVERTURE 25 from Houston Metro Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 to Clarify Role of Presbytery
Commission”

Be it resolved that *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 be amended as follows (strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording):

15-1. A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it, ~~except in the case of judicial commissions of a Presbytery appointed under *BCO* 15-3.~~ A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for the filing requirements of a complaint under *BCO* 43-2., ~~except in the case of a presbytery commission serving as a session or a judicial commission as set forth in *BCO* 15-3.~~ The effective date of dismissal of a commission of session or presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by the highest court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

15-3. ~~Presbytery as a whole may try a judicial case within its jurisdiction (including the right to refer any strictly constitutional issue to a study committee with options listed below),~~ hear a case, with or without process (*BCO* 31-38), a reference (*BCO* 41), an appeal (*BCO* 42), a complaint (*BCO* 43), a *BCO* 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (*BCO* 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit ~~any judicial~~ such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the

APPENDIX W

Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. ~~The Presbytery without debate shall approve or disapprove of the judgment, or may refer, (a debatable motion), any strictly constitutional issue(s) to a study committee. In case of referral, the Presbytery shall either dismiss some or all of the specific charges raised in the case or decide the case only after the report of the study committee has been heard and discussed. If Presbytery approves, the~~ The judgment of the commission shall be final and shall be entered on the minutes of Presbytery as the action the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes. ~~If Presbytery disapproves, it shall hear the case as a whole, or appoint a new commission to hear the case again.~~

So that *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3, as amended, would read:

15-1. A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for the filing requirements of a complaint under *BCO* 43-2. The effective date of dismissal of a commission of session or presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by the highest court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

15-3. Presbytery as a whole may hear a case, with or without process (*BCO* 31-38), a reference (*BCO* 41), an appeal (*BCO* 42), a complaint (*BCO* 43), a *BCO* 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (*BCO* 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. The judgment of the commission shall be the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes.

RATIONALE:

The current provision in *BCO* 15 that requires a Presbytery to ratify the decision of a judicial commission formed under *BCO* 15-3 is an anomaly that has been a source of confusion and misapplication by Presbyteries. Presbyteries have not infrequently violated the *BCO* 15-3 mandate to approve or disapprove of the commission's judgment "without debate."

BCO 15-3 creates an ecclesiastical commission that is unlike any other commission. The actions of such a commission are not final and require ratification. This runs counter to the entire purpose of a commission, which is to "deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it" (*BCO* 15-1). The amendment standardizes the work of all commissions, regardless of the appointing court.

If a Presbytery wishes to have final approval in a judicial matter, it may still do so, by appointing a judicial *committee* to conduct a trial and report back to the Presbytery.

Because there can be confusion as to which entity should hear a complaint against the action of a commission (whether judicial or otherwise), the amendment makes clear that an ecclesiastical commission should not be dismissed before the time for a complaint has run (*BCO* 43-1 and 43-2).

*Adopted by Houston Metro Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 11, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE Lou Veiga, stated clerk*

OVERTURE 26 from Potomac Presbytery (to OC)
 “Statement On Political Violence”

Whereas, the Presbyterian Church in America has not hesitated to speak to pressing moral issues, such as condemning violence against the unborn (1978) and abused children (2014), as well as providing guidelines for non-violent protest (1988); and

Whereas, God has ordained civil governments to be his “servants” and “ministers,” and armed them with the power of the sword to enforce justice and maintain order in a fallen world; and that Christians are to be subject to the governing authorities, at all levels of government (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13; *WCF* 23.1); and

Whereas, the Lord Jesus declared, “blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9); and

Whereas, our Lord commanded his followers to, “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27); and

Whereas on the night of his betrayal, Jesus commanded Peter to put away his sword, “for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52), thus establishing for his Kingdom a spiritual means of conquest; and

Whereas, the Apostle Paul exhorted Christians facing opposition in the capital of the Roman empire, “if possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:18); and

Whereas, the Apostle Paul directed believers, in their speech to those outside the church, to speak with wisdom and grace, with words thoughtfully adapted to the needs of those who hear (Col. 4:5-6); and

Whereas, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* states the duties required in the sixth commandment include “peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior, forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil” (*WLC* 135); and

Whereas, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* states the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment include “all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions” (*WLC* 136); and

Whereas, the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom is clearly affirmed in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (WCF 25.2; 31.4) and the *Book of Church Order* (Preliminary Principles 2.7; 11-2); and

Whereas, the United States has seen an increase in political violence and intimidation in recent years, from across the political spectrum, including arson, assaults on government buildings, and a growing number of personal threats to public officials; and

Whereas, at some of these violent events, Christian symbols have figured prominently, causing confusion to a watching world by an unhelpful conflation of the Kingdom of Christ with unlawful and violent actions; and

Whereas, Christians may be tempted to ignore, excuse, or minimize violence that aids their preferred political views; and

Whereas, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other national and state agencies report they are anticipating more acts of political violence; and

Whereas, many members of the Presbyterian Church in America have served and continue to serve sacrificially in law enforcement and the U.S. military, lawfully bearing arms in order to secure the blessings of liberty, law, and order in our cities, and the peaceful transfer of power, all within the moral obligations of law enforcement and just war as declared by lawful authorities (cf. WCF 21.2); and

Whereas, the Church should seek the peace of the place God has sent us (Jeremiah 29:7) by leading our divided country towards healthy civic discourse; and

Whereas, Scripture teaches that servants of the living and reigning God must disobey any subordinate authority that directs them to do what God has forbidden, or to fail to do what God has required (Exodus 1:15-22; Joshua 2; 1 Kings 18.1-15; Daniel 3 and 6; Acts 5:17-42), and yet Scripture does not warrant private violent resistance in such cases;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America remind our members and neighbors of our allegiance to the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, as "the sole Head of the Church and Law-giver in Zion" (Message to All Churches, 1973); and

Be it further resolved, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America condemn political violence and intimidation in unlawful expressions, especially that which is illicitly done in the name of Christ; and

Be it further resolved, that the Moderator of the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America appoint a commissioner to pray for peace in our nation and that the Church of Jesus Christ would be instruments of that peace; and

Be it finally resolved, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America encourage her members to “seek peace and pursue it” in the public square (Psalm 34:14); to “be subject to the governing authorities” (Romans 13:1); and to pray for peace and for “all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” (I Timothy 2:2).

Adopted by Potomac Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 19, 2022

Attested by /s/s RE Charles D. Robinson stated clerk

OVERTURE 27 from Potomac Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 To Clarify Role of Presbytery Commission”

[Note: This overture is identical to Overture 25.]

Be it resolved that *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 be amended as follows (strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording):

15-1. A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it, ~~except in the case of judicial commissions of a Presbytery appointed under *BCO* 15-3.~~ A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for the filing requirements of a complaint under *BCO* 43-2. ~~except in the case of a presbytery commission serving as a session or a judicial commission as set forth in *BCO* 15-3.~~ The effective date of dismissal of a commission of session or presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by the highest court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

15-3. ~~Presbytery as a whole may try a judicial case within its jurisdiction (including the right to refer any strictly constitutional issue to a study committee with options listed below),~~ hear a case, with or without process (BCO 31-38), a reference (BCO 41), an appeal (BCO 42), a complaint (BCO 43), a BCO 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (BCO 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit ~~any judicial~~ such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. ~~The Presbytery without debate shall approve or disapprove of the judgment, or may refer, (a debatable motion), any strictly constitutional issue(s) to a study committee. In case of referral, the Presbytery shall either dismiss some or all of the specific charges raised in the case or decide the case only after the report of the study committee has been heard and discussed. If Presbytery approves, the~~ The judgment of the commission shall be ~~final and shall be entered on the minutes of Presbytery as the action~~ the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes. ~~If Presbytery disapproves, it shall hear the case as a whole, or appoint a new commission to hear the case again.~~

So that BCO 15-1 and 15-3, as amended, would read:

15-1. A commission differs from an ordinary committee in that while a committee is appointed to examine, consider and report, a commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it. A commission shall

keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to the court appointing it. Upon such submission this record shall be entered on the minutes of the court appointing, the date of the submission being the date of “the meeting of the court” for the filing requirements of a complaint under *BCO* 43-2. The effective date of dismissal of a commission of session or presbytery shall be not before the time allowed for the filing of a complaint or appeal against that commission’s decision has expired. Any complaint or appeal so timely filed, shall be adjudicated by that commission until the matter is settled by the highest court. When a commission is appointed to serve as an interim Session, its actions are the actions of a Session, not a Presbytery. Every commission of a Presbytery or Session must submit complete minutes and a report of its activities at least once annually to the court which commissioned it.

15-3. Presbytery as a whole may hear a case, with or without process (*BCO* 31-38), a reference (*BCO* 41), an appeal (*BCO* 42), a complaint (*BCO* 43), a *BCO* 40-5 proceeding, or a request to assume original jurisdiction (*BCO* 33-1) properly before it, or it may of its own motion commit such a case to a commission. Such a commission shall be appointed by the Presbytery from its members other than members of the Session of the church from which the case comes up. The commission shall try the case in the manner presented by the Rules of Discipline and shall submit to the Presbytery a full statement of the case and the judgment rendered. The judgment of the commission shall be the decision of the Presbytery, and the statement of the case and judgment printed in its minutes.

RATIONALE:

The current provision in *BCO* 15 that requires a Presbytery to ratify the decision of a judicial commission formed under *BCO* 15-3 is an anomaly that has been a source of confusion and misapplication by Presbyteries. Presbyteries have not infrequently violated the *BCO* 15-3 mandate to approve or disapprove of the commission’s judgment “without debate.”

BCO 15-3 creates an ecclesiastical commission that is unlike any other commission. The actions of such a commission are not final and require

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ratification. This runs counter to the entire purpose of a commission, which is to “deliberate upon and conclude the business referred to it” (*BCO* 15-1). The amendment standardizes the work of all commissions, regardless of the appointing court.

If a Presbytery wishes to have final approval in a judicial matter, it may still do so, by appointing a judicial *committee* to conduct a trial and report back to the Presbytery.

Because there can be confusion as to which entity should hear a complaint against the action of a commission (whether judicial or otherwise), the amendment makes clear that an ecclesiastical commission should not be dismissed before the time for a complaint has run (*BCO* 43-1 and 43-2).

Approved by Potomac Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 19, 2022
Attested by /s/ RE Charles D. Robinson, stated clerk

OVERTURE 28 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC, and to
MNA for advice)

“Amend *BCO* 8-7 by Adding Chaplain Endorsement
Requirements and Recommendations”

Whereas, the presbytery has under its care teaching elders and candidates for the ministry (examine, license, receive, dismiss, ordain, install, remove, and judge) (*BCO* 13.9); and

Whereas, the Sixth General Assembly of the PCA (1978) approved the establishment of the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCCMP or PRCC) and assigned the duties of examination, endorsement, and oversight of chaplains through the PRCCMP to Mission to North America; and

Whereas, endorsement verifies a denomination has at a minimum utilized a process to address the following core standards with each endorsee: ministerial and theological competence, good standing and accountability within the denomination, ability to minister within diverse and pluralistic settings, and willingness of the endorsee to maintain communication and theological accountability to the denomination and the endorsing agent; and

Whereas, endorsement is a credential requirement that establishes the legal and ecclesiastical oversight of those chaplains hired for all federal government chaplain positions and many other organizations who educate, certify, or hire chaplains; and

Whereas, the role of MNA Chaplain Ministries and the PRCC is not well known in all presbyteries, and PCA military chaplains have sought endorsement through other agencies not authorized by the General Assembly for such purpose; and

Whereas, the only Department of Defense approved Ecclesiastical Endorser that can insure PCA Presbyteries that their Chaplains have the freedom to preach and teach the Word and can assure that they will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church is the only one authorized by and under the authority of the PCA General Assembly (see proposed *BCO* 8-7 addition below); and

Whereas, the PRCC may be seen in the same light as the work of MTW's (Mission to the World's) role with denomination missionaries (serving under other organizations), this is not the same as religious liberty issues for chaplains at the Federal, State, and local level. Those issues fall outside the church within the sphere of secular society that require timely and accurate information and action the PRCC has garnered and applied for over forty-years; and

Whereas, many of the organizations a teaching elder may serve with as a chaplain (military or civilian, paid or volunteer) fall outside the jurisdiction of a Presbytery, let it be known that MNA Chaplain Ministries through the PRCC is the Reformed subject matter expert on Chaplaincy, and is, therefore, best able to assist Presbyteries in extending ecclesiastical care over its ministers who are chaplains;

Therefore, be it resolved that *BCO* 8-7 be amended by adding the underlined paragraph below:

***BCO* 8-7**

A teaching elder requiring an ecclesiastical endorsement to serve as a chaplain (e.g., military chaplains) after the presbytery's approval shall be endorsed through the denomination's endorsing agency authorized by the General Assembly for such purpose. Teaching elders ministering as paid or volunteer chaplains not requiring ecclesiastical endorsement are highly encouraged to seek and obtain the same endorsement.

So that *BCO* 8-7 as amended would read:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

8-7. A Presbytery may, at its discretion, approve the call of a teaching elder to work with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America, provided that he be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word, that the Presbytery be assured he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church, and that he report at least annually on his work. As far as possible, such a teaching elder shall be a member of the Presbytery within whose bounds he labors. (See *BCO* 20-1.)

A teaching elder requiring an ecclesiastical endorsement to serve as a chaplain (e.g., military chaplains) after the presbytery's approval shall be endorsed through the denomination's endorsing agency authorized by the General Assembly for such purpose. Teaching elders ministering as paid or volunteer chaplains not requiring ecclesiastical endorsement are highly encouraged to seek and obtain the same endorsement.

Adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery at its stated Meeting April 2, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE LeRoy Capper, Stated Clerk

OVERTURE 29 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding 16-4 Regarding Qualifications
for Church Office”

Whereas, our churches are under continual pressure to conform to the standards of the world on sexuality, and Christians in our churches often use the language of the world in minimizing or maximizing certain sin patterns, and

Whereas, the documents of the PCA should, as much as possible, have a timeless character that transcends the specific issues in one particular day, and

Whereas, a previous overture on this topic was passed at General Assembly, and there is wide support for the spirit of that overture, but substantial disagreement on the precision of the language, as well as concern that it is overly connected to current terminology of our society, and

Whereas, there is widespread agreement on the language of the Report by the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality, and

Whereas, the spirit of our Standards (e.g., *WCF XV:4*) is not to single out any category of sin as especially separate from all other types of sin (such as homosexuality or racism, in different eras) but to enjoin us to ongoing repentance of all types of sin, and

Whereas, there is substantial debate as to whether some officers in the PCA use identification with certain categories of sin as a way of downplaying the need for a complete and full sanctification in those areas, which must include repentance not just from the outward practice of sins but also from the inward desire for those sins;

Therefore be it resolved that a new paragraph 16-4 be added to *BCO* 16, which shall read as follows:

16-4 Officers in the Presbyterian Church in America must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. Those who deny the sinfulness of fallen desires, or who deny the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, or who fail to pursue Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions are not qualified for ordained office. Our standard of conduct is always the Word of God, which transcends any culture; whether a sin is especially hated or excused in a particular society shall neither excuse those who are unrepentant nor bar those who are clearly repentant.

Adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 2, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE LeRoy S. Capper, stated clerk

OVERTURE 30 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 6-5, 20-3, 25-1, and 24-3, Allowing
Congregations to Establish Voting Age Restrictions”

Whereas, there is vagueness in the *BCO* that can lead to a discrepancy in practice within the PCA on when and how children should be welcomed into communicant membership of the covenant community of God’s people; and

Whereas, covenant children should be encouraged to profess faith in Christ and their need for him from an early age, and

Whereas, it is the duty of the church, the people of God, to assist in the nurture and admonition of our covenant children, and

Whereas, the Lord’s Supper is a means of grace given by our Lord Jesus Christ for “spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body” (WLC 168), and

Whereas, Jesus said “Let the little children come to me, do not hinder them...” (Matt. 19:14), and

Whereas, our covenant children who have professed a faith of their own should not be hindered in coming to the table of our Lord Jesus, and

Whereas, the Church has historically equated physical, emotional, and mental development with spiritual development, and

Whereas, our Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, fully God and fully man, sinless in all his ways, spiritually mature from birth, had to “increase in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52), and

Whereas, the practice of allowing all communicant members to vote in congregational matters has not been shown by past General Assemblies to be rooted in either scripture or in our confessional language; and

Whereas, it is our denomination’s stated goal to root our faith and practice in the Scripture; and

Whereas, there is strong Reformed tradition limiting voting to those “with authority,” i.e. heads of households; and

Whereas, a similar overture was approved by the 24th General Assembly, approved by more than 2/3 of the Presbyteries, yet failed to be adopted by the 25th General Assembly, and

Whereas, congregational voting on corporate matters requires a legal age of 18 or higher in some states; and

Whereas, the *BCO* allows all communicant members to vote on non-corporation issues even if they are younger than the legal age; and

Whereas, the *BCO* states that “It is expressly recognized that each local congregation or local church shall be competent to function and to take actions covering the matters set forth herein as long as such action is in compliance with the civil laws with which said local congregation or local church must comply, and this right shall never be taken from said local congregation or local church without the express consent of and affirmative action of such local church or congregation” (*BCO* 25-11);

Therefore be it resolved that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America allow individual congregations the freedom to establish minimum voting ages for ecclesiastical and corporate votes by making the following changes to the *BCO*:

1. Add a new paragraph 5 to *BCO* 6 as follows:
6-5. A congregation may, at its discretion by a vote of 2/3, set the minimum voting age for its communing members, provided it is not greater than eighteen (18) years of age. The congregation may also; at its discretion, set a different minimum voting age for different matters provided it is not greater than eighteen (18) years of age.
2. Amend the last sentence in *BCO* 20-3 as follows (~~strike-through~~ for deletion, underlining for new wording):
20-3. When a congregation is convened for the election of a pastor it is important that they should elect a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America to preside, but if this be impracticable, they may elect any male member of that church. The Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer. ~~All communing members in good and regular standing,~~ Communing members in good and regular standing who have the right to vote (*BCO* 6-5), but no others, are entitled to vote in the churches to which they are respectively attached.

so that *BCO* 20-3 reads as follows:

20-3. When a congregation is convened for the election of a pastor it is important that they should elect a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America to preside, but if this be impracticable, they may elect any male member of that church. The Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer. Communing members in good and regular standing who have the right to vote (*BCO* 6-5), but no others, are entitled to vote in the churches to which they are respectively attached.

3. Modify by deletion and addition *BCO* 25-1 as follows:
25-1. The congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, ~~and they~~ but only those given the right to vote (*BCO* 6-5) are entitled to vote.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

So that the new *BCO* 25-1 reads as follows:

25-1. The congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, but only those given the right to vote (*BCO* 6-5) are entitled to vote.

4. Modify by deletion and addition *BCO* 24-3 as follows:
24-3. ~~All e~~Communing members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the churches to which they respectively belong. However, the congregation may, at its discretion, set the minimum voting age for its members (*BCO* 6-5). A majority vote of those present is required for election. (See also *BCO* 20-3.)

So that the new *BCO* 24-3 reads as follows:

24-3. Communing members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the churches to which they respectively belong. However, the congregation may, at its discretion, set the minimum voting age for its members (*BCO* 6-5). A majority vote of those present is required for election. (See also *BCO* 20-3.)

Adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery at its stated meeting of April 2, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE LeRoy S. Capper, stated clerk

OVERTURE 31 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend *BCO* 21-4 and 24-1 by Adding Paragraphs Regarding Requirements for Ordination”

Whereas, the moral character of an officer is of highest importance in Scripture, and not merely theological orthodoxy, and

Whereas, there is great danger to the church if officers of the church practice sins in secret which are scandalous, and

Whereas, in our society there is an epidemic of sexual temptation in particular, which affects all people, and

Whereas, leadership in the church may bring increased temptation as the Devil seeks to destroy those who preach the Word, and

Whereas, some churches have brought shame on the Body of Christ by appearing to hide and tolerate certain types of sin in their leadership, and

Whereas, a uniform standard of examination should be the practice of our denomination, and

Whereas, a previous overture on this topic was passed at General Assembly, and there is wide support for the spirit of that overture, but substantial disagreement on the precision of the language, which could be taken as discouraging men from confessing their sins, and

Whereas, there is substantial concern that some officers of our denomination by confessing their sins and sin temptations publicly may do more harm than good, giving the impression that certain types of sins or sin temptation are not really so bad,

Therefore be it resolved that

1. *BCO* 21-4 be amended by addition of a new sub-paragraph 21-4.e (with subsequent sub-paragraphs 21-4.e-h being relettered to be 21-4.f-i), which shall read as follows:

21-4. Ordination Requirements and Procedures

- e. In the examination of the candidate's personal character, the presbytery shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, officers of the church must exercise great care to not normalize those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus in changing our sin nature (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of the pastoral office, presbyteries are encouraged to empower a committee to

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

conduct detailed examinations of these matters and to give prayerful support to candidates.

2. *BCO* 24-1 be amended by the addition of a new second paragraph which shall read as follows:

24-1 (following 24-1.a-e)

In the examination of each nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, officers of the church must exercise great care to not normalize those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus in changing our sin nature (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of church office, Sessions may empower a committee to conduct detailed examinations of these matters and to give prayerful support to nominees.

The amended *BCO* 24-1 shall thus read as follows:

- 24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the close of the nomination period nominees for the office of

ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall then be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III, The Constitution Defined),
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO* 24-6)

In the examination of each nominee's personal character, the Session shall give specific attention to potential notorious concerns. Careful attention must be given to his practical struggle against sinful actions, as well as to persistent sinful desires. The candidate must give clear testimony of reliance upon his union with Christ and the benefits thereof by the Holy Spirit, depending on this work of grace to make progress over sin (Psalm 103:2-5, Romans 8:29) and to bear fruit (Psalm 1:3, Gal. 5:22-23). While imperfection will remain, when confessing sins and sinful temptations publicly, officers of the church must exercise great care to not normalize those sins in the eyes of the congregation, as though they were matters of little consequence, but rather should testify to the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus in changing our sin nature (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In order to maintain discretion and protect the honor of church office, Sessions may empower a committee to conduct detailed examinations of these matters and to give prayerful support to nominees.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the time and place of a congregational meeting for elections.

If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

*Adopted by Pittsburgh Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 2, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE LeRoy S. Capper, stated clerk*

OVERTURE 32 from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
“Amend RAO 8.4 to Add an Item to the Annual Report of the GA Nominating Committee”

Whereas Article VI of the PCA Corporate Bylaws stipulates that the five denominational agency Boards may ask presbyteries to nominate specific men for their Boards, and then, if so nominated, the Boards may recommend and endorse these men to the GA Nominating Committee (“NC”). Below is the pertinent excerpt from the PCA Bylaws, which is essentially the same sentence for each of the five Boards:

The Board may make requests to the Presbyteries to nominate specific men to the Board and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from the presbyteries.

and

Whereas the five Boards oversee separate corporations:

Bylaw Article V.G. Boards of Agencies - When it is necessary for the handling of civil matters, the General Assembly may authorize one of its committees or

agencies to incorporate and to form a board. The relationship of the board to the Assembly remains as a committee, and the provisions of the corporation charter and bylaws shall be in conformity with the constitution of the Church.

and

Whereas the NC is not obligated to nominate the presbytery nominees recommended by these five Boards, but it would be helpful for the GA to know who those men are. The letters sent by these Boards to the NC are not confidential. In keeping with the NC Operations Manual, these letters are included in the “Rainbow Book” given to NC members, which includes all the nomination forms submitted by the presbyteries; and

Whereas the NC Operations Manual, Part 1 Section 2.a, stipulates three criteria the NC should consider in making its nominations:

- (a) The qualifications of each candidate recommended by the Presbyteries,
- (b) The needs of the individual committees, agencies, and commissions,
- (c) A proportionate representation of all Presbyteries, wherever possible (*BCO* 14-1.9)

It is reasonable to understand this as a *priority* sequence, i.e., qualification is paramount, followed by the needs of the committees or agencies, and lastly, proportional presbytery representation. And ordinarily, it is reasonable to assume the Committees and Boards are the best judges of their needs. For example, here is the first paragraph from the College Board’s February 1 letter to the NC this year:

The Board of Trustees of Covenant College is once again appreciative of the privilege we are afforded as an agency to propose to you a slate of nominees for election as Trustees. The Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees works throughout the year to identify and vet teaching and ruling elders who are well qualified to serve in this role. In addition to screening potential candidates by considering their commitment to the Westminster Standards and to Christian higher education, the Governance Committee also considers the candidates’ capacity to govern wisely, the individual gifts and experiences they might bring to College, and the makeup of the Board as a whole. Therefore, the Committee takes into

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

consideration matters such as presbytery representation, geographical representation, teaching and ruling elder mix, board experience, ethnic diversity, and unique gifts and expertise that candidates might bring.

and

Whereas the PCA Bylaw provisions for these five Boards include some unique features compared to the nine GA Permanent & Special Committees for which NC also presents nominees. For example:

- These five Boards are not subject to any requirement for mathematically equal representation of Teaching and Ruling Elders (i.e., not subject to the requirement of *BCO* 14-1.10). The College Board currently has 11 TEs & 17 REs, the Seminary has 7+17, the Foundation has 3+7, RBI has 3+9, and Ridge Haven has 4+6.
- The RBI and Foundation Boards can include PCA deacons.
- The College Board has 28 members and the Seminary Board and can have between 12 and 32 members. There is no required formula for dividing the members of a class between teaching and ruling elders. Both Boards can include up to four men from denominations with which the PCA is in ecclesiastical fellowship (one in each class) and can have an additional two members from a NAPARC member denomination.
- NC members might not be familiar, for example, with PCA deacons recommended by the Boards of RBI and the Foundation, or with any non-PCA teaching and ruling elders recommended by the Boards of the College and Seminary.

and

Whereas it would be a simple task to add to the annual NC Report the list of presbytery nominees recommended by the five Boards. It might only require an additional half-page; and

Whereas it might also help for the NC to identify, on the preliminary results currently used by NC internally, which of the presbytery nominees have also been recommended and endorsed by the five Boards. While the Rainbow Book ordinarily contains the Board

letters, this annotation would put this important information in an appropriately prominent place, given the prerogative granted to the agency Boards to make these recommendations.

Therefore, be it resolved to amend *RAO* 8-4 by adding the sentence underlined below:

8-4. Nominating Committee: The Assembly's Nominating Committee shall operate under the following guidelines:..

- h. The committee shall present its nominations to the Assembly through the *Commissioner Handbook* or *Supplement*. This presentation shall include a brief statement regarding each nominee. The Report shall also include a list of the presbytery nominees who were recommended by the Boards of Covenant College, Covenant Seminary, PCA Foundation, RBI and Ridge Haven. (See PCA Corporate Bylaws, Article VI.)

Approved by Tennessee Valley Presbytery on April 9, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE Jacob A. Bennett, stated clerk

OVERTURE 33 from Nashville Presbytery (to OC)
"Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Examination,
and Conciliation"

Whereas: In this time of confusion in the culture, and among Christians, about issues related to human sexuality, the Presbyterian Church in America has been encouraged to make a clear statement about qualifications for ordained office; and

Whereas: The Westminster Standards clearly state in Larger Catechism Question 139 that both same-sex sexual activity and same-sex desire are violations of God's law; and

Whereas: The 47th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America approved the constitutionality of *BCO* 59-3, which states, "Marriage is only to be between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24,25; Matt. 19:4-6, 1 Cor. 7:2), in accordance with the Word of God. Therefore, ministers in the Presbyterian Church in America who solemnize marriages shall only solemnize marriages between one man and one woman;" and

Whereas: *BCO* 21-4.c states that trials for the ordination of ministers, “shall consist of: (1) A careful examination as to: (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, *especially his personal character* and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),” and *BCO* 24-1 states that each elder or deacon nominee “shall then be examined in: a. his Christian experience, *especially his personal character* and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9);” and

Whereas: The 48th General Assembly of the PCA declared the *Report of the Ad interim Committee on Human Sexuality* (AIC) as “a biblically faithful declaration.” And, the grounds Calvary Presbytery unanimously adopted in sending up the overture stated, “The PCA ‘Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality,’ is a biblically faithful work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a most useful resource concerning the apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender and sexuality confusion within the PCA and the broader culture.” and;

Whereas: The grounds adopted by the Committee of Commissioners on the Committee on Discipleship Ministries stated, “The report of the ad interim on Human Sexuality is an excellent resource for members and churches who seek to understand the biblical, confessional, and pastoral issues involved with addressing the topics of homosexuality, same-sex attraction, and transgenderism;” and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *sin and temptation* in relation to Same-Sex Attraction (SSA) in Statements 3-6 (p. 7-10) and in its section on “Confessional Foundations” (pp. 14-23), stating, “‘actual’ sin refers not to the reality or non-reality of sin, but to its being an act of the soul as opposed to a *disposition* or *inclination* only. While it is significant that a distinction is made between original and actual sin, the emphasis at this point in the Confession is that original sin, as a disposition or inclination, is truly sin,” (p. 14, line 39-p. 15, line 3), and “when the temptation arises from within, it is our own act and is rightly called sin,” (p. 9, lines 18-19); and the AIC clearly articulates the confessional view of sin and temptation, clarifying that, “There are some temptations God gives us in the form of morally neutral trials, and other temptations God never gives us because they arise from within as morally illicit desires (James 1:2, 13-14). When temptations come from without, the temptation itself is not sin,

unless we enter into the temptation. But when the temptation arises from within, it is our own act and is rightly called sin. Nevertheless, there is an important degree of moral difference between temptation to sin and giving in to sin, even when the temptation is itself an expressing of indwelling sin.” (AIC p. 9, lines 14-22); and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *sanctification* in relation to SSA in Statement 7 (p. 10) and in its sections on “Real Change” (p. 22), “Celebrating Sincere Efforts” (p. 23), and “Discipleship for Believers Experiencing Same-Sex Attraction” (p. 24-25), stating, “to teach that our sinful corruption must be entirely removed from any part of us in order to be considered truly repentant is a spiritually treacherous perversion of the doctrine of repentance,” (p. 22, lines 24-26), and “Someone with homosexual attraction ought not close himself or herself off to the pursuit of, and hope of, real change in those attractions, even if that change is incomplete and mixed,” (p. 22, lines 38-40); and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *repentance* in relation to SSA in Statement 12 (p. 12-13) and in its section on “Confessional Foundations” (pp. 14-23), stating, “Where we have mistreated those who struggle with same-sex attraction, or with any other sinful desires, we call ourselves to repentance. Where we have nurtured or made peace with sinful thoughts, desires, words, or deeds, we call ourselves to repentance,” (p. 12 lines 37-40), and, “We give thanks for penitent believers who, though they continue to struggle with same-sex attraction, are living lives of chastity and obedience. These brothers and sisters can serve as courageous examples of faith and faithfulness, as they pursue Christ with a long obedience in gospel dependence,” (p. 13, lines 2-5); and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates a confessional approach to terminology with regard to *sexual identity and orientation* in relation to SSA in Statements 9-10 (p. 11-12) and in its section on “The Christian’s Identity” (pp. 26-31), stating, “Insofar as the term orientation is used descriptively to articulate a particular set of experiences, namely the persistent and predominant sexual attractions of an individual, it can remain useful as a way of classifying those experiences in contrast to the experiences of the majority of other people. However, insofar as the term orientation carries with it a set of assumptions about the nature of that experience that is unbiblical (e.g., overemphasized rigidity, its

normativity, etc.), then the terminology may require qualification or even rejection in some circumstances,” (p. 30, line 42-p. 31, line 4); and

Whereas: The AIC further addresses the issue of *terminology* on pages 29-30, stating, “We should choose our language carefully with the goal that it expresses the truth and communicates clearly and winsomely in our particular context... language itself is a secondary issue relative to the doctrine it expresses. Sometimes there are disagreements about language even when the underlying doctrinal commitments seem to be the same. Thus, while doctrinal truth is rightly understood as obligating our affirmation, *issues around terminology are more properly understood as issues of wisdom*, necessitating careful Scriptural and pastoral guidance,” (p. 29, lines 11-17). While the AIC does not forbid use of the term “gay,” it still issues caution stating, “the word gay is not a neutral word in our cultural discourse, and Christians should be mindful of these dynamics when considering use of the term,” (p. 30, lines 7-8). Of the term “Gay Christian,” the AIC states, “we believe it is generally unwise to use the language of gay Christian,” (p. 30, lines 28-29). On both terms “gay” and “gay Christian” the report concludes, “we would do well to *seek understanding before imparting advice*. In practical and plain terms, the issue of terminology is more likely *a matter for shepherding in wisdom, and not in and of itself grounds for discipline;*” (p. 30, lines 36-39); and

Whereas: The AIC sets clear boundaries for ordained office in the PCA, stating, “Insofar as such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin struggle automatically to disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-11), (p. 31, lines 29-31)”;

Whereas: All those in leadership in our churches should remember that the Westminster Standards clearly state in Larger Catechism Question 144 that “The duties required in the Ninth Commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth;...a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging

talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers;” and Larger Catechism Question 145 states that “The sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature...speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions;...raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion;” and

Whereas: CDM has already published the AIC report in book form for easy distribution (<https://www.pcabookstore.com/p-6275893-a-body-for-the-lordpca-papers-on-human-sexuality.aspx>), and the PCA History website has all PCA studies available for easy download: (https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2021_human_sexuality_report.pdf).

Therefore, be it resolved:

- A. That the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises all presbyteries and sessions to:
 1. Fulfill the duty to “give due and serious consideration” (*BCO* 14-7) by making careful study of the 2021 *Ad interim Report on Human Sexuality*,
 2. Consider requiring all candidates for ordained office to do the same, and
 3. Utilize said report as a guide in examining the personal character of candidates for ordained office (*BCO* 21-4, 24-1); and
- B. **Be it further resolved:** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises the courts of the church not to use certain terms as mere ‘litmus tests’ for biblical faithfulness or grounds for discipline but to seek understanding before imparting advice, in keeping with the 2021 *Ad interim Report on Human Sexuality*'s statements on terminology (p. 29-30), and the Biblical teaching (e.g. Rom 6-8; Col 3, 2 Cor 5:17) on how believers are to understand, define, and describe themselves in union with Christ as it relates to Christian identity (AIC Statement 9, p. 11); and
- C. **Be it further resolved:** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, in keeping with Westminster Larger Catechism 144 and 145, urges pastors and elders to de-

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

escalate the contentious nature of discourse surrounding issues of human sexuality and identity, particularly online, by extending Christian charity to all members of Christ's church in their public and private discourse and exercising caution and restraint when interacting with the views of another; and

- D. Be it further resolved:** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America exhorts pastors and elders to instruct their congregations on the historic teaching of the Bible and the Christian church on human sexuality, especially as stated in Gen. 2:24,25, Rom. 1:24-32, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Cor. 7:1-28, Westminster Larger Catechism 139, and BCO 59-3; and
- E. Be it finally resolved:** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America encourages presbyteries, sessions, and congregations to seek the Lord in prayer for wisdom to navigate changing cultural contexts faithfully as a church committed to the scriptures, and to earnestly ask "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest fields," (Luke 10:2).

Adopted by Nashville Presbytery at a called meeting on May 3, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE R. Neil Spence, stated clerk

OVERTURE 34 from Metro Atlanta Presbytery (to OC)
"Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Examination,
and Conciliation"

[Note: This overture is similar to but not identical to Overture 33.]

Whereas: In this time of sexual confusion the Presbyterian Church in America needs to make a clear statement about qualifications for ordained office; and

Whereas: The Westminster Standards clearly state in Larger Catechism Question 139 that both same-sex sexual activity and same-sex lust are violations of God's law; and

Whereas: The 47th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America approved the constitutionality of BCO 59-3, which states, "Marriage is only to be between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24,25; Matt. 19:4-6, 1 Cor. 7:2), in accordance with the Word of God. Therefore, ministers in the Presbyterian Church in America who solemnize marriages shall only solemnize marriages between one man and one woman;" and

Whereas: *BCO* 21-4.c states that trials for the ordination of ministers, “shall consist of: (1) A careful examination as to: (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, *especially his personal character* and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),” and *BCO* 24-1 states that each elder or deacon nominee “shall then be examined in: a. his Christian experience, *especially his personal character* and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9);” and

Whereas: The 48th General Assembly of the PCA declared the *Report of the Ad interim Committee on Human Sexuality* (AIC) as “a biblically faithful declaration.” Further, the grounds Calvary Presbytery unanimously adopted in sending up the overture stated, “The PCA ‘Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality,’ is a biblically faithful work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a most useful resource concerning the apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender and sexuality confusion within the PCA and the broader culture.” Further, the grounds adopted by the Committee of Commissioners on the Committee on Discipleship Ministries stated, “The report of the ad interim on Human Sexuality is an excellent resource for members and churches who seek to understand the biblical, confessional, and pastoral issues involved with addressing the topics of homosexuality, same-sex attraction, and transgenderism;” and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *sin and temptation* in relation to Same-Sex Attraction (SSA) in Statements 3-6 (p. 7-10) and in its section on “Confessional Foundations” (pp. 14-24), stating, “‘actual’ sin refers not to the reality or non-reality of sin, but to its being an act of the soul as opposed to a *disposition* or *inclination* only. While it is significant that a distinction is made between original and actual sin, the emphasis at this point in the Confession is that original sin, as a disposition or inclination, is truly sin,” (p. 14, line 39-p. 15, line 3), and “when the temptation arises from within, it is our own act and is rightly called sin,” (p. 9, lines 18-19); and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *sanctification* in relation to SSA in Statement 7 (p. 10) and in its sections on “Real Change” (p. 22), “Celebrating Sincere Efforts” (p. 23), and “Discipleship for Believers Experiencing Same-Sex Attraction” (p. 24-25), stating, “to teach that our sinful corruption

must be entirely removed from any part of us in order to be considered truly repentant is a spiritually treacherous perversion of the doctrine of repentance,” (p. 24, lines 24-26), and “Someone with homosexual attraction ought not close himself or herself off to the pursuit of, and hope of, real change in those attractions, even if that change is incomplete and mixed,” (p. 24, lines 38-40); and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates the confessional doctrine of *repentance* in relation to SSA in Statement 12 (p. 12-13) and in its section on “Confessional Foundations” (pp. 14-24), stating, “Where we have mistreated those who struggle with same-sex attraction, or with any other sinful desires, we call ourselves to repentance. Where we have nurtured or made peace with sinful thoughts, desires, words, or deeds, we call ourselves to repentance,” (p. 14 lines 37-40), and, “We give thanks for penitent believers who, though they continue to struggle with same-sex attraction, are living lives of chastity and obedience. These brothers and sisters can serve as courageous examples of faith and faithfulness, as they pursue Christ with a long obedience in gospel dependence,” (p. 15, lines 2-5); and

Whereas: The AIC clearly articulates the confessional approach to *sexual identity and orientation* in relation to SSA in Statements 9-10 (p. 11-12) and in its section on “The Christian’s Identity” (pp. 26-31), stating, “Insofar as the term orientation is used descriptively to articulate a particular set of experiences, namely the persistent and predominant sexual attractions of an individual, it can remain useful as a way of classifying those experiences in contrast to the experiences of the majority of other people. However, insofar as the term orientation carries with it a set of assumptions about the nature of that experience that is unbiblical (e.g., overemphasized rigidity, its normativity, etc.), then the terminology may require qualification or even rejection in some circumstances,” (p. 30, line 42-p. 31, line 4); and

Whereas: The AIC addresses the issue of *terminology* on pages 29-30, stating, “We should choose our language carefully with the goal that it expresses the truth and communicates clearly and winsomely in our particular context... language itself is a secondary issue relative to the doctrine it expresses. Sometimes there are disagreements about language even when the underlying doctrinal commitments seem to be the same. Thus, while doctrinal truth is rightly understood as obligating our affirmation, *issues around terminology are more properly understood as issues of*

wisdom, necessitating careful Scriptural and pastoral guidance,” (p. 29, lines 11-17). While the AIC does not forbid use of the term “gay,” it still issues caution stating, “the word gay is not a neutral word in our cultural discourse, and Christians should be mindful of these dynamics when considering use of the term,” (p. 30, lines 7-8). Of the term “Gay Christian,” the AIC states, “we believe it is generally unwise to use the language of gay Christian,” (p. 30, lines 28-19). On both terms “gay” and “gay christian” the report concludes, “we would do well to *seek understanding before imparting advice*. In practical and plain terms, the issue of terminology is more likely *a matter for shepherding in wisdom, and not in and of itself grounds for discipline;*” and

Whereas: The AIC sets clear boundaries for ordained office in the PCA, stating, “Insofar as such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin struggle automatically to disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-11), (p. 31, lines 30-31);” and

Whereas: The AIC articulated its interpretation of 1 Cor. 6:9 as follows: “*Paul coined the term arsenokoitai (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10) from the use of two related terms in the Septuagint version of Leviticus 18 and 20. The basic meaning is “man-bedders” or men who have sex with other men.... The combination of arsenokoitai and malakoi, uniquely used in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 6:9, likely refers most directly—as per the ESV footnote—to the active and passive partners in consensual homosexual activity.* For more extended discussion, see Chapter 5 in Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Say About Homosexuality?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015),” (p. 6, note 4); and

Whereas: In a recent decision on a complaint about a minister in Missouri Presbytery, the SJC stated, “If the Complainant had demonstrated, for example, that the minister was *involved in homosexual behavior, cultivated unrepentant lustings, taught that either of those were not sinful, or was not continually seeking to mortify those temptations,* it would have been proper to sustain the Complaint,” (SJC 2020-12, p. 23, lines 27-30) affirming the AIC report and laying out clear boundaries for ordained leadership in the PCA; and

Whereas: The Westminster Standards clearly state in Larger Catechism Question 144 that “The duties required in the Ninth Commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth;...a charitable

esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers;” and Larger Catechism Question 145 states that “The sins forbidden in the Ninth Commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature...speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions;...raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion;” and

Whereas: CDM has already published the AIC report in book form for easy distribution (<https://www.pcabookstore.com/p-6275893-a-body-for-the-lordpca-papers-on-human-sexuality.aspx>), and the PCA History website has all PCA studies available for easy download (https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2021_human_sexuality_report.pdf).

Therefore be it resolved

- A. that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises all presbyteries and sessions to:
 1. Fulfill the duty to “give due and serious consideration” (BCO 14-7) by making careful study of the 2021 *Ad interim Report on Human Sexuality*,
 2. Consider requiring all candidates for ordained office to do the same, and
 3. Utilize said report in examining the personal character of candidates for ordained office (BCO 21-4, 24-1); and
- B. **Be it further resolved** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises the courts of the church not to use certain terms as litmus tests for biblical faithfulness or grounds for discipline but to seek understanding before imparting advice, in keeping with the 2021 *Ad interim Report on Human Sexuality*'s statements on terminology (p. 29-30); and

- C. Be it further resolved** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America exhorts pastors and elders to instruct their congregations on the historic teaching of the Bible and the Christian church on human sexuality, especially as stated in Gen. 2:24,25, Rom. 1:24-32, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Cor. 7:1-28, Westminster Larger Catechism 139, and *BCO* 59-3; and
- D. Be it finally resolved** that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America encourages presbyteries and congregations to seek the Lord in prayer for wisdom to navigate changing cultural contexts faithfully as a church committed to the scriptures, and to earnestly ask “the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest fields,” (Luke 10:2).

Adopted by Metro Atlanta Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 3, 2022
Attested by /s/ TE Randy Schlichting, stated clerk

OVERTURE 35 from North Florida Presbytery (to OC)
“Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Assessment,
and Conciliation”

[Note: This overture is similar to Overtures 33 and 34, but differs in a number of details.]

Whereas, the peace and purity of the Presbyterian Church in America has been disturbed by the sexual confusion prevalent in our culture; and

Whereas, the lower courts of the Presbyterian Church in America would benefit from clear guidance about qualifications for ordained office with reference to complex and culturally contested matters concerning human sexuality; and

Whereas, the Westminster Standards clearly teach that original sin, as a disposition or inclination, is truly and properly sin (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 6.5) and that same-sex sexual lust and same-sex sexual activity are violations of God’s righteous law (*Westminster Larger Catechism* 138 and 139); and

Whereas, *BCO* 21-4.a states that trials for the ordination of ministers require careful examination of a candidate’s “acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),” and *BCO* 24-1 requires the same standards for the examination of ruling elder and deacon nominees; and

Whereas, Calvary Presbytery unanimously adopted an overture commending the report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality (AIC) to the 48th General Assembly on the following grounds: “The PCA ‘Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality,’ is a biblically faithful work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a most useful resource concerning the apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender and sexuality confusion within the PCA and the broader culture;” and

Whereas, the 48th General Assembly of the PCA declared the AIC report to be “a biblically faithful declaration;” and

Whereas, the AIC report articulates the confessional doctrine of sanctification in relation to same-sex attraction, stating, “to teach that our sinful corruption must be entirely removed from any part of us in order to be considered truly repentant is a spiritually treacherous perversion of the doctrine of repentance” (p. 24). Additionally, the report teaches that “someone with homosexual attraction ought not to close himself or herself off to the pursuit of, and hope of, real change in those attractions, even if that change is incomplete and mixed” (p. 24); and

Whereas, the AIC report articulates the confessional approach to terminology in relation to same-sex identity, stating, “Christians ought to understand themselves, define themselves, and describe themselves in light of their union with Christ and their identity as regenerate, justified, holy children of God (Rom. 6:5-11; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Eph. 2:1-10). To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the term “Christian” is inconsistent with Biblical language and undermines the spiritual reality that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)” (pp. 11-12); and

Whereas, the AIC report articulates that “it is generally unwise to use the language of gay Christian” due to the dynamic and diverse uses of the term “gay” in our cultural discourse (p. 30); and

Whereas, the AIC report also recognizes “a difference between speaking about a phenomenological facet of a person’s sin-stained reality and employing the language of sinful desires as a personal identity marker” (p. 11) and that some faithful believers employ the terminology of “gay” merely to describe their sexual attractions

without any “intention to make a definitive statement about identity” (p. 30); and

Whereas, the AIC report concludes that on the use of the terms “gay” and “gay Christian” that “we would do well to seek understanding before imparting advice. In practical and plain terms, the issue of terminology is more likely a matter for shepherding in wisdom, and not in itself grounds for discipline” (p. 30); and

Whereas, the AIC report articulates the confessional approach to sexual orientation in relation to same-sex attraction, stating, “Insofar as the term orientation is used descriptively to articulate a particular set of experiences, namely the persistent and predominant sexual attractions of an individual, it can remain useful as a way of classifying those experiences in contrast to the experiences of the majority of other people. However, insofar as the term orientation carries with it a set of assumptions about the nature of that experience that is unbiblical (e.g., overemphasized rigidity, its normativity, etc.), then the terminology may require qualification or even rejection in some circumstances” (pp. 30-31); and

Whereas, the AIC sets clear boundaries for ordained office in the PCA, stating, “Insofar as such persons display the requisite Christian maturity, we do not consider this sin struggle automatically to disqualify someone for leadership in the church (1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:3-11)” (p. 31); and

Whereas, Westminster Larger Catechism 144 explicitly states: “The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging tale-bearers, flatterers, and slanderers;” and Westminster Larger Catechism 145 states: “The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, out-facing and over-

bearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil ... speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful or equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; mis-constructing intentions, words and actions ... raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion.”

Therefore, be it resolved

- A. That the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises all lower courts to:
 - 1. Fulfill the duty to “give due and serious consideration” (BCO 14-7) to the approval of the 2021 Ad Interim Report on Human Sexuality by the 48th General Assembly by making a careful study of its contents,
 - 2. Consider requiring all candidates for ordained office to do the same, and
 - 3. Utilize the AIC report as a guide to examine the personal character of candidates for ordained office (BCO 21-4; 24-1) and to assess doctrinal or ethical charges brought against any ordained officer on relevant subject matters; and
- B. **Be it further resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America advises the courts of the church to exercise wisdom in weighing matters with regard to the complex issues addressed in the AIC report, especially avoiding hasty judgments based on terminology surrounding same-sex identity and orientation; and
- C. **Be it further resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, in obedience to the ninth commandment, urges pastors and elders to exercise caution, fair judgment, charity, and restraint when interacting with the views of another, especially online, in order to ensure that we honor our fellow elders and the courts that protect the sanctity of our denomination; and
- D. **Be it further resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America exhorts pastors and elders to instruct their congregations on the historic teaching of the Bible and the Christian church regarding human sexuality, especially as stated in Genesis 2:24-25; Romans 1:24-32; 1

Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 7:1-28, Westminster Larger Catechism 138 and 139, and BCO 59-3; and

- E. Be it finally resolved**, that the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America encourages presbyteries and congregations to seek the Lord in prayer for wisdom to navigate changing cultural contexts faithfully as a church committed to the Scriptures and to the Great Commission.

Adopted by North Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting on May 12, 2022

Attested by TE David Burke, stated clerk

OVERTURE 36 from Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to SJC)
"BCO 34-1 Request to Assume Original Jurisdiction
over TE Greg Johnson"

Whereas in his responses to Missouri Presbytery's July 21, 2020, BCO 31-2 investigation of allegations against him, TE Greg Johnson affirmed in some matters he was either unclear, imprecise, or his perspectives have matured over time (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 10, lines 40-45), and

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission's additional questions, TE Greg Johnson affirmed his belief in the Bible's teaching on human sexuality with regard to same-sex attraction (homosexual orientation, inter alia) and qualifications for ordained ministerial office, as summarized in the Westminster Standards (e.g., SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 14; lines 25-30; lines 42-45, pg. 15; lines 1-20, etc.), and

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission's additional questions, TE Greg Johnson specifically denied identifying as a "gay Christian," including using this couplet of words (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 17; lines 42-46, pg. 16; lines 1-11), and

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission's additional questions, TE Greg Johnson affirmed the necessity of a man ordained to ministerial office to be above reproach (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 24; lines 38-46, pg. 25; lines 1-46, pg. 26; lines 1-30), and

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission's additional questions, TE Greg Johnson affirmed that some of his public comments had upset the peace of the PCA, and offered a

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

commitment to repair such harm and work to commit no further harm (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 27; lines 25-34), and

Whereas since the record of the case of the original Missouri Presbytery investigation of him (July 21, 2020), and even subsequent to the Standing Judicial Commission judicial case 2020-12 (October 21, 2021), TE Greg Johnson has made numerous public comments that appear to either contradict or at least offer confusion to his previous affirmations in these matters (see examples in the attached addendum), and

Whereas the Standing Judicial Commission found Missouri Presbytery did err by failing to “do what it needed to do to protect the peace and purity of the broader Church, particularly in light of the responsibilities set forth in *BCO* 11-3, 4” pertaining to Revoice 18 (SJC Judicial Case 2020-05 (March 3, 2022); pg. 11; lines 26-35), and

Whereas TE Greg Johnson uses the same confusing and misleading terminology as Revoice 18 throughout his book, *Still Time to Care: What We Can Learn from the Church’s Failed Attempt to Cure Homosexuality* (Zondervan, 12/7/21) [“homosexual Christian” p. 25, “gay believer” pp. 8, 14, “homosexual believers” pp. 9, 116, “sexual minorities” pp. 33, 221, 230],

Therefore be it resolved that Southeast Alabama Presbytery requests that the General Assembly assume original jurisdiction in the case of the doctrinal error of Teaching Elder Greg Johnson per *BCO* 34-1.

Commission of Southeast Alabama approved to draft and submit this request by Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 22, 2019.

Commission of Southeast Alabama Presbytery voted to submit this request, April 14, 2022.

Attested by /s/ TE Kevin Corley, stated clerk.

Attachment: Addendum, examples of public comments from TE Greg Johnson either contradicting or offering confusion to his affirmations to Missouri Presbytery’s *BCO* 31-2 investigation (July 21, 2020), and the Standing Judicial Commission judicial case 2020-12 (October 21, 2021)

Attachment
(Overture 36 to 49th General Assembly)

Examples of public comments from TE Greg Johnson either contradicting or offering confusion to his affirmations to Missouri Presbytery’s BCO 31-2 investigation (July 21, 2020), and the Standing Judicial Commission judicial case 2020-12 (October 21, 2021)

- 11/05/21 Comments in an article, published in the *Washington Post*, “Traditional ‘Side B’ LGBTQ Christians experience a renaissance,” by Kathryn Post (originally published by Religion News Service, <https://religionnews.com/2021/11/05/traditional-side-b-lgbtq-christians-experience-a-renaissance/>).
- 11/18/21 Comments in a blog post, published on *The Center For Faith, Sexuality & Gender* blog site, “Equivocation and the Ex-Gay Script” (<https://www.centerforfaith.com/blog/equivocation-and-the-ex-gay-script>)
- 12/03/21 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *The Hole in My Heart Podcast*, “Episode 189: The Church Wasn’t Always So Bad at the LGBTQ Conversation with Greg Johnson” (<https://lauriekrieg.com/podcast/the-church-wasnt-always-so-terrible-at-the-lgbtq-conversation-with-greg-johnson/>)
- 12/07/21 Comments in his book, *Still Time to Care: What We Can Learn from the Church’s Failed Attempt to Cure Homosexuality* (Zondervan, 12/7/21).
- 12/22/21 Comments in an article, published in *USA Today*, “I’m a gay, celibate pastor of a conservative church. Here’s a trick for de-escalation.” (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2021/12/22/family-holidays-god-patience-compassion/6496994001/?gnt-cfr=1.>)
- 12/29/21 Comment on Facebook page, “As you consider final year end giving, please support Revoice. No movement has done more to shift conservative Christian thinking from the false hope of ex-gay cures to the great tradition of care for non-straight people committed to living out the biblical sexual ethic within the church. This ministry has meant a great deal to me, and your consideration will be deeply appreciated.”
- 01/02/22 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *The Hopper Podcast*, “41 Greg Johnson, Still Time to Care / Linus in the Resurrection” (<https://podcasts.captivate.>

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- fm/media/4b17fc7d-79da-4c3a-8ab0-74ebf4a0cb92/02-greg-johnson.mp3).
- 01/04/22 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *Conversations About Life*, “Being Gay and Christian w/ Pastor Greg Johnson” (<https://willjackson.com/being-gay-and-christian-w-pastor-greg-johnson/>).
- 01/25/22 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *The Learner's Corner with Caleb Mason*, “Episode 269: Greg Johnson On What We Can Learn From the Church's Failed Attempt to Cure Homosexuality” (<https://podcast.app/greg-johnson-on-what-we-can-learn-from-the-churchs-failed-attempt-to-cure-homosexuality-e202358953/>).
- 02/12/22 Comments in a booklet, *On Mission with the LGBTQ+ Community* (Zondervan, supplement to *Still Time to Care*). ([https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3140676279584649&id=100009269249854&__cft__\[0\]=AZXHombYoEDWNCvkRpzWIYG8mCooDtS2qQk_KzE6Lcn8KadXolEgezT3elg4dvGvKFRISxCyDHC6LcfCIunLwthjBCwexaJKRSz2aABvF0_GC-5IvMsxxmlCyTGwR41H7x0&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R,https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gu0ZH6igfWes0vypOUUnEtnTEMigw9fVu/view](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3140676279584649&id=100009269249854&__cft__[0]=AZXHombYoEDWNCvkRpzWIYG8mCooDtS2qQk_KzE6Lcn8KadXolEgezT3elg4dvGvKFRISxCyDHC6LcfCIunLwthjBCwexaJKRSz2aABvF0_GC-5IvMsxxmlCyTGwR41H7x0&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R,https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gu0ZH6igfWes0vypOUUnEtnTEMigw9fVu/view)).

OVERTURE 37 from Grace Presbytery (to SJC)
"BCO 34-1 Request to Assume Original Jurisdiction over
TE Greg Johnson"

[Note: This overture is almost identical to Overture 36.]

Whereas in his responses to Missouri Presbytery’s July 21, 2020, BCO 31-2 investigation of allegations against him, TE Greg Johnson affirmed in some matters he was either unclear, imprecise, or his perspectives have matured over time (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 10, lines 40-45), and

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission’s additional questions, TE Greg Johnson affirmed his belief in the Bible’s teaching on human sexuality regarding same-sex attraction (homosexual orientation, inter alia) and qualifications for ordained ministerial office, as summarized in the Westminster

APPENDIX W

Standards (e.g., SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 14; lines 25-30; lines 42-45, pg. 15; lines 1-20, etc.), and

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission’s additional questions, TE Greg Johnson specifically denied identifying as a “gay Christian,” including using this couplet of words (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 17; lines 42-46, pg. 16; lines 1-11), and

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission’s additional questions, TE Greg Johnson affirmed the necessity of a man ordained to ministerial office to be above reproach (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 24; lines 38-46, pg. 25; lines 1-46, pg. 26; lines 1-30),

Whereas in his responses to the Standing Judicial Commission’s additional questions, TE Greg Johnson affirmed that some of his public comments had upset the peace of the PCA, and offered a commitment to repair such harm and work to commit no further harm (SJC Judicial Case 2020-12, pg. 27; lines 25-34), and

Whereas since the record of the case of the original Missouri Presbytery investigation of him (July 21, 2020), and even after the Standing Judicial Commission judicial case 2020-12 (October 21, 2021), TE Greg Johnson has made numerous public comments that appear to either contradict or at least offer confusion to his previous affirmations in these matters (see examples in the attached addendum), and

Whereas the Standing Judicial Commission found Missouri Presbytery did err by “failing to do what it needed to do to protect the peace and purity of the broader Church, particularly in light of the responsibilities set forth in *BCO* 11-3, 4” pertaining to Revoice 18 (SJC Judicial Case 2020-05; lines 26-35), and

Whereas TE Greg Johnson uses the same confusing and misleading terminology as Revoice 18, throughout his book, *Still Time to Care: What We Can Learn from the Church’s Failed Attempt to Cure Homosexuality* (Zondervan, 12/7/21),

Therefore, be it resolved that Grace Presbytery requests that the General Assembly assume original jurisdiction in the case of the doctrinal error of Teaching Elder Greg Johnson, per *BCO* 34-1.

Approved by Grace Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 10, 2022

Attested by /s/ RE Samuel J. Duncan, stated clerk

Attachment: Addendum, examples of public comments from TE Greg Johnson either contradicting or offering confusion to his affirmations to Missouri Presbytery’s *BCO* 31-2 investigation (July 21, 2020), and the Standing Judicial Commission judicial case 2020-12 (October 21, 2021)

Attachment
(Overture 37 to 49th General Assembly)

Examples of public comments from TE Greg Johnson either contradicting or offering confusion to his affirmations to Missouri Presbytery’s *BCO* 31-2 investigation (July 21, 2020), and the Standing Judicial Commission judicial case 2020-12 (October 21, 2021)

- 11/05/21 Comments in an article, published in the *Washington Post*, “Traditional ‘Side B’ LGBTQ Christians experience a renaissance,” by Kathryn Post (originally published by Religion News Service, <https://religionnews.com/2021/11/05/traditional-side-b-lgbtq-christians-experience-a-renaissance/>).
- 11/18/21 Comments in a blog post, published on *The Center For Faith, Sexuality & Gender* blog site, “Equivocation and the Ex-Gay Script” (<https://www.centerforfaith.com/blog/equivocation-and-the-ex-gay-script>)
- 12/03/21 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *The Hole in My Heart Podcast*, “Episode 189: The Church Wasn’t Always So Bad at the LGBTQ Conversation with Greg Johnson” (<https://lauriekrieg.com/podcast/the-church-wasnt-always-so-terrible-at-the-lgbtq-conversation-with-greg-johnson/>)
- 12/07/21 Comments in his book, *Still Time to Care: What We Can Learn from the Church’s Failed Attempt to Cure Homosexuality* (Zondervan, 12/7/21).
- 12/22/21 Comments in an article, published in *USA Today*, “I’m a gay, celibate pastor of a conservative church. Here’s a trick for de-escalation.” (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2021/12/22/family-holidays-god-patience-compassion/6496994001/?gnt-cfr=1.>)

APPENDIX W

- 12/29/21 Comment on Facebook page, “As you consider final year end giving, please support Revoice. No movement has done more to shift conservative Christian thinking from the false hope of ex-gay cures to the great tradition of care for non-straight people committed to living out the biblical sexual ethic within the church. This ministry has meant a great deal to me, and your consideration will be deeply appreciated.”
- 01/02/22 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *The Hopper Podcast*, “41 Greg Johnson, Still Time to Care / Linus in the Resurrection” (<https://podcasts.captivate.fm/media/4b17fc7d-79da-4c3a-8ab0-74ebf4a0cb92/02-greg-johnson.mp3>).
- 01/04/22 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *Conversations About Life*, “Being Gay and Christian w/ Pastor Greg Johnson” (<https://willjackson.com/being-gay-and-christian-w-pastor-greg-johnson/>).
- 01/25/22 Comments in a podcast interview, published on *The Learner's Corner with Caleb Mason*, “Episode 269: Greg Johnson On What We Can Learn From the Church's Failed Attempt to Cure Homosexuality” (<https://podcast.app/greg-johnson-on-what-we-can-learn-from-the-churchs-failed-attempt-to-cure-homosexuality-e202358953/>).
- 02/12/22 Comments in a booklet, *On Mission with the LGBTQ+ Community* (Zondervan, supplement to *Still Time to Care*). ([https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3140676279584649&id=100009269249854&__cft__\[0\]=AZXHombYoEDWNCvkRpzWIYG8mCooDtS2qQk_KzE6Lcn8KadXolEgezT3elg4dvGvKFRISxCyDHC6LcfCIunLwthjBCwexaJKRSz2aABvF0_GC-5IvMsxxmlCyTGwR41H7x0&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R,https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gu0ZH6igfWes0vypOUnEtnTEMigw9fVu/view](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3140676279584649&id=100009269249854&__cft__[0]=AZXHombYoEDWNCvkRpzWIYG8mCooDtS2qQk_KzE6Lcn8KadXolEgezT3elg4dvGvKFRISxCyDHC6LcfCIunLwthjBCwexaJKRSz2aABvF0_GC-5IvMsxxmlCyTGwR41H7x0&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R,https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gu0ZH6igfWes0vypOUnEtnTEMigw9fVu/view)).

OVERTURE 38 from Chesapeake Presbytery (to SJC)
“Request for SJC to Assume Original Jurisdiction in
CIP matters re Dan Herron”

Whereas, the Word of God in I Corinthians 6:1-8 is clear in its injunction against Christians suing one another in civil court where there exists an ecclesial court with jurisdiction, and

Whereas, TE Daniel Herron has been credibly accused of impropriety by several members and/or regular attenders of Hope Presbyterian Church (Bloomington, IN), where he served as pastor, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery instituted process against TE Herron on the basis of those accusations and the Presbytery’s finding of a “strong presumption of guilt,” and

Whereas, after the Central Indiana Presbytery found a “strong presumption of guilt” and had instituted process, TE Herron filed suit in the Monroe County (Indiana) Circuit Court against certain of his accusers, claiming that their accusations caused him harm, and

Whereas, TE Herron specifically referenced the likelihood that his accusers’ statements have been and will be “used in Ecclesial Committee Hearings of the Central Indiana Presbytery and/or the Presbyterian Church in America,” as part of the substance of the damages caused, and

Whereas, this constitutes clear evidence of TE Herron’s intention to employ the civil magistrate to prevent his accusers’ testimony against him, and thus preclude or undermine the proceedings of the ecclesial court, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery ruled TE Herron contumacious for his refusal to withdraw the civil suit, suspending him from office and the sacraments, and

Whereas, this action of the Central Indiana Presbytery demonstrates that it recognized the seriousness of TE Herron’s sin in filing suit against his accusers in the first place, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery later removed the ruling of contumacy despite TE Herron’s lack of repentance, after he removed certain documents from the suit’s evidence chain but continued to refuse to withdraw the suit, and

Whereas, this later action of the Central Indiana Presbytery, removing the finding of contumacy without TE Herron repenting of the sin of filing suit, not only demonstrates a refusal to act against a sin previously recognized, but could also be construed as a choice to participate in it with TE Herron, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery, by removing the finding of contumacy absent repentance, has chosen to allow the suit to continue in flagrant violation of I Corinthians 6, refusing to act to discipline TE Herron's sin, bringing disrepute on the name of Christ and undermining both their own authority and the authority of all courts of the PCA generally with respect to the civil magistrate, and

Whereas, public letters written by concerned members of the Central Indiana Presbytery indicate deep division and weariness within the presbytery, considerable concern for the harm that this division has caused the accusers, as well as a resultant lack of belief in the ability of the CIP to conduct an impartial trial, and

Whereas, BCO 34-1 provides mechanism for the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction when "the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal," and

Whereas, allegations concerning the alleged sinful conduct of TE Daniel Herron and Central Indiana Presbytery's handling of the case have been widely reported in public media, resulting in public scandal involving not only the accused, but also the CIP and the Presbyterian Church in America,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Chesapeake Presbytery petitions the 49th General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction of the case against TE Daniel Herron immediately, so as to investigate the accusations thoroughly and to try the matter impartially, for the express purpose of defending the honor of Christ, clearing the public scandal, restoring the peace and purity of Christ's Church, and providing the care of the true Shepherd to TE Daniel Herron and to his accusers.

Adopted by Chesapeake Presbytery at its 91st stated meeting, May 10, 2022

Attested by /s/ RE Timothy M. Persons, stated clerk

OVERTURE 39 from Northern California Presbytery (to SJC)
“Request for SJC to Assume Original Jurisdiction in CIP matters
re Dan Herron”

[Note: This overture is similar to but not identical to Overture 38 from
Chesapeake Presbytery.]

Whereas, the Word of God in I Corinthians 6:1-8 is clear in its injunction
against Christians suing one another in civil court where there
exists an ecclesial court with jurisdiction, and

Whereas, TE Daniel Herron has been credibly accused of impropriety by
several members and/or regular attenders of Hope Presbyterian
Church (Bloomington, IN) where he served as pastor, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery instituted process against TE
Herron on the basis of those accusations and the Presbytery’s
finding of a “strong presumption of guilt,” and

Whereas, after the Central Indiana Presbytery found a “strong
presumption of guilt” and had instituted process, TE Herron filed
suit in the Monroe County (Indiana) Circuit Court against certain
of his accusers,²⁵ claiming that their accusations caused him harm,
and

Whereas, TE Herron specifically referenced the likelihood that his
accusers’ statements have been and will be “used in Ecclesial
Committee Hearings of the Central Indiana Presbytery and/or the
Presbyterian Church in America,”²⁶ as part of the substance of the
damages caused and cause for the civil magistrate to rule in his
favor, and

Whereas, this constitutes clear evidence of TE Herron’s intention to
employ the civil magistrate to prevent his accusers’ testimony
against him, and thus preclude or undermine the proceedings of
the ecclesial court, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery ruled TE Herron contumacious
for his refusal to withdraw the civil suit, suspending him from
office and the sacraments, and

Whereas, this action of the Central Indiana Presbytery demonstrates that
it recognized the seriousness of TE Herron’s sin in filing suit
against his accusers in the first place, and

²⁵ Case #53C01-2106-CT-001359, “Dan Herron v. Kara Million, Abigail
Gschwend-Harris” (accessed at <http://mycase.in.gov>)

²⁶ Case #53C01-2106-CT-001359, “Complaint for Damages and Jury Demand”
(filed 25 June 2021), §§37, 45; “Amended Complaint” (filed 6 December 2021),
§35.

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery later removed the ruling of contumacy despite TE Herron’s lack of repentance, after he removed certain documents from the suit’s evidence chain²⁷ but continued to refuse to withdraw the suit, and

Whereas, this later action of the Central Indiana Presbytery, removing the finding of contumacy without TE Herron repenting of the sin of filing suit, demonstrates not only a refusal to act against a sin previously recognized, but could also be construed as a choice to participate in that sin with TE Herron, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery, by removing the finding of contumacy absent repentance, has chosen to allow the suit to continue in flagrant violation of I Corinthians 6, refusing to act to discipline TE Herron’s sin, bringing disrepute on the name of Christ and undermining both their own authority and the authority of all courts of the PCA generally with respect to the civil magistrate, and

Whereas, allegations concerning the alleged sinful conduct of TE Daniel Herron together with the Central Indiana Presbytery’s handling of the case have been widely reported in public media, resulting in public scandal involving not only the accused, but also the Central Indiana Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church in America, and

Whereas, BCO 34-1 provides mechanism for the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction when “the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal”,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Northern California Presbytery petitions the 49th General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction of the case against TE Daniel Herron immediately, so as to investigate the accusations thoroughly and to try the matter impartially, for the express purpose of defending the honor of Christ, clearing the public scandal, restoring the peace and purity of Christ’s Church, and providing the care of a true shepherd to TE Daniel Herron and to his accusers.

Adopted by the Northern California Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 6, 2022

Attested by /s/ RE Marcel Weiland, Stated Clerk.

²⁷ Case #53C01-2106-CT-001359, “Amended Complaint” (filed 6 December 2021).

OVERTURE 40 from the Northern New England Presbytery (to SJC)
“Request for SJC to Assume Original Jurisdiction in
CIP matters re Dan Herron”

[Note: This overture deals with the same matters as Overtures 38 and 39.]

Whereas, the Word of God in I Corinthians 6:1-8 is clear in its injunction against Christians suing one another in civil court where there exists an ecclesial court with jurisdiction, and

Whereas, TE Daniel Herron has been credibly accused of impropriety by several members and/or regular attenders of Hope Presbyterian Church (Bloomington, IN), where he served as pastor, and

Whereas, the Central Indiana Presbytery instituted process against TE Herron on the basis of those accusations and the Presbytery’s finding of a “strong presumption of guilt,” and

Whereas, after the Central Indiana Presbytery found a “strong presumption of guilt” and had instituted process, TE Herron filed suit in the Monroe County (Indiana) Circuit Court against certain of his accusers,²⁸ claiming that their accusations caused him harm, and

Whereas, allegations concerning the alleged sinful conduct of TE Daniel Herron together with the Central Indiana Presbytery’s handling of the case have been widely reported in public media, resulting in public scandal involving not only the accused, but also the Central Indiana Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church in America, and

Whereas, TE Herron is not under censure for his continued pursuit of civil litigation in the above matter, and

Whereas, *BCO* 34-1 provides mechanism for the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction when “the Presbytery refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal”,

Therefore, be it resolved that Northern New England Presbytery petitions the 49th General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction of the case against TE Daniel Herron immediately, so as to investigate the accusations thoroughly and to try the matter impartially, for the express purpose of defending the honor of Christ, clearing the

²⁸ Case #53C01-2106-CT-001359, “Dan Herron v. Kara Million, Abigail Gschwend-Harris” (accessed at <http://mycase.in.gov>)

public scandal, restoring the peace and purity of Christ’s Church, and providing the care of a true shepherd to TE Daniel Herron and to his accusers.

Adopted by N. New England Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 21, 2022

Attested by /s/ TE C.S. Per Almquist, stated clerk

OVERTURE 41 from the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago
(to OC)

“Declare Critical Race Theory Flawed”

Whereas, in recent years, there has been increased engagement in the discipline known as Critical Race Theory, and

Whereas, Critical Race Theory, though difficult to define, can be roughly understood through the following tenets:

[Tenet 1:] **Racism is a normal part of American life**, often lacking the ability to be distinctively recognized... A CRT lens unveils the various forms in which racism continually manifests itself, despite espoused institutional values regarding equity and social justice.

[Tenet 2:] [Ideas like] liberalism, neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy... camouflage [how] **racial advantage propels the self-interests, power, and privileges of the dominant group.**

[Tenet 3:] CRT gives voice to the unique perspectives and **lived experiences of people of color**... CRT uses counternarratives as a way to highlight discrimination, offer racially different interpretations of policy, and challenge the universality of assumptions made about people of color.

[Tenet 4:] CRT recognizes **interest-convergence**, the process whereby the white power structure ‘will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when they also promote white self-interests’.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[Tenet 5:] **Revisionist History** is another tenet of CRT [which] suggests that American history be closely scrutinized and reinterpreted as opposed to being accepted at face value and truth.

[Tenet 6:] CRT also relies on Racial Realists, or individuals who not only recognize race as a social construct, but also realize that **‘racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status.’**

[Tenet 7:] CRT critiques [claims that]: (a) **[colorblindness]** will eliminate racism; (b) racism is a matter of individuals, not **systems**; and (c) one can fight racism without paying attention to **sexism, homophobia, economic exploitation**, and other forms of oppression or injustice²⁹

Whereas, this discipline has been far more prevalent at a popular level, being weaponized in many social, political, and even religious contexts, and

Whereas, many in the church are wondering how they are to think of and respond to Critical Race Theory, and

Whereas, it would be helpful to speak clearly and decisively on this, and other issues to help disciple our people, and

Whereas, Critical Race Theory is seriously flawed in many respects, and leads to distorted views of race, reconciliation, and sin, and

Whereas, what may be viewed as positive in Critical Theory is able to be found or derived outside of Critical Race Theory, without the need for engaging such a problematic discipline, and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ offers a better, more beautiful, and sufficient way for addressing the issues of racial tension and human flourishing,

Therefore, be it resolved that the 49th General Assembly declare Critical Race Theory to be a seriously flawed, and an overall unhelpful way for addressing the issues surrounding race within the church, and rather point believers to the greater, truly sufficient answer

²⁹ <https://shenviapologetics.com/what-is-critical-race-theory/>. Directly quoting from “Access and Equity for African American Students in Higher Education: A Critical Race Historical Analysis of Policy Efforts.” *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(4), 2009, p. 389-414.

centered on the reconciliation which has been accomplished through the blood of Christ (Galatians 2:11-22).

Submitted by the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago to Chicago Metro Presbytery for its stated meeting, on May 4th, 2022

Rejected by Chicago Metro Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 18th, 2022 (RAO 11-10). (Attested by /s/ TE Michael Kyle Edwards, stated clerk, Chicago Metro Presbytery)

Submitted by the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago to the 49th General Assembly of the PCA, May 19, 2022

OVERTURE 42 from Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago
(to OC)

“Forbid TE and RE Participation in ‘Political Groups’”

Whereas, our denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), has been facing increasing amount of tension within its courts due to several factors, and

Whereas, tensions are only increased when our trust in one another is damaged, and

Whereas, trust has been damaged in previous years due to the revelation of secretive and exclusive political factions working amidst the courts to further their particular agenda, and

Whereas, many are concerned that these efforts have included the manipulation of church courts, and

Whereas, all the Elders of the PCA have taken vows to strive “for the purity, peace, and unity of the church,” and

Whereas, the peace and unity of the church has been disturbed by the actions of secretive and exclusive political groups, which have manipulated church courts to further their agenda, and

Whereas, this disturbance has further increased the tension felt in the PCA, and

Whereas, the purity, peace, and unity of the church is dependent upon a mutual trust and respect of Teaching and Ruling Elders, and

Whereas, it is difficult to have that mutual trust and respect, when it is unclear whether fellow members of presbyteries are acting in good faith in engagement with their brothers, or in accordance with a political agenda established outside of the court by members of a secretive and exclusive political faction, and

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Whereas, it will only hinder the effectiveness of the PCA to have such trust and respect be further disturbed, and

Whereas, the PCA ought to be fully focused on its task to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

Therefore, be it resolved that the 49th General Assembly call all Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to not participate in secretive and exclusive political groups for the purpose of influencing or manipulating the church courts according to a particular agenda, but rather to engage in good faith with the brothers in their own sessions and presbyteries, for the purity, peace, and unity of the church.

Submitted by the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago to Chicago Metro Presbytery for its stated meeting, on May 4th, 2022

Rejected by Chicago Metro Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 18th, 2022 (RAO 11-10). (Attested by /s/ TE Michael Kyle Edwards, stated clerk, Chicago Metro Presbytery)

Submitted by the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago to the 49th General Assembly of the PCA, May 19, 2022

APPENDIX X

TUESDAY EVENING WORSHIP

June 21, 2022,| 6:30 p.m.

- Choral Prelude:** “Who Shall Ascend the Mountain...”..... John Haines
.....Choir and Orchestra
- * **Call to Worship:** Psalm 100..... Rev. Dr. Harry L. Reeder
- * **Hymn of Adoration:** “Holy, Holy, Holy”
- * **Prayer of Adoration:** Rev. Dr. Harry L. Reeder
- * **Hymn of Praise:** “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”
- Scripture Reading:** Galatians 2:11-21..... Rev. Dr. Murray Lee
- * **Hymn of Praise:** “Hail! Thou Once Despised Jesus”
- Prayer of Intercession** Rev. Dr. Murray Lee
- Offering** Rev. Dr. Murray Lee
- Choral Offertory** “Breath and Clay (Only Jesus)” John Haines
Concert Choir, and Orchestra
- Scripture Reading:** Matthew 16:5-12.....Rev. Dr. L. Roy Taylor
- Sermon:** “Christ’s Warning Against Extremes”Rev. Dr. L. Roy Taylor
- Liturgy of the Lord’s Table**..... Rev. Brad Allison
- **Prayer of Confession** (congregation)
 - **Declaration of Forgiveness** (Rev. Brad Allison)
 - **Confession of Faith** (congregation)
 - **Invitation to the Lord’s Table** (Rev. Brad Allison)
 - **Prayer of Humble Access** (congregation)
 - **Prayer of Consecration/Lord’s Prayer** (Rev. Brad Allison and congregation)
 - **Words of Institution** (Rev. Brad Allison)
- Serving of the Bread**..... Rev. Brad Allison
- Hymn of Response:** “How Deep the Father’s Love”J. Haines, Ensemble
- Serving of the Cup**..... Rev. Brad Allison
- Song of Response:** “The Power of the Cross”J. Haines, Ensemble
- * **Hymn of Thanksgiving:** “Let Us Love and Sing...”
- * **Benediction**.....Rev. Dr. L. Roy Taylor
- * Congregation standing.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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PART IV

CORRECTIONS TO PREVIOUS MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Corrections to Minutes of the 48th General Assembly

Correction to p. 135, **Churches Lost to the Denomination in 2019**

Delete 2 churches included in error:

Wisconsin Presbytery

Faith Reformed, Cedar Grove, WI

Gibbsville Reformed, Sheboygan Falls, WI

Note: These two churches were Added in 2019 (p. 135)

Editorial Note regarding Attendance Report, pp. 819ff

Due to printing issues, names of some TEs and REs may have appeared in the wrong column. The final count is correct:

TEs 1499

REs 615

Total 2114

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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PART V

REFERENCES AND INDEX

FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA PRE-ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCKET

Presbyterian Church in America
Birmingham Jefferson Convention Center
Birmingham, AL • June 20-24, 2022
(THIRD DRAFT)

PRE-ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE

Monday, June 20, 2022

- 8:00 a.m.** Commissioner Registration Open
- 10:00 a.m.** Briefing for:
Overtures Committee (Overtures Committee begins immediately after briefing)
- 11:00 a.m.** Briefing for:
Committee of Commissioners
- 12:00 noon** Lunch on your own
- 1:00 p.m.** Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:
Administrative Committee
Retirement and Benefits
Covenant Theological Seminary
Reformed University Fellowship
- 5:00 p.m.** Commissioner Registration Closed
- 7:00 a.m.** Commissioner Registration Opens
- 8:00 a.m.** Briefing for Committees of Commissioners
- 9:00 a.m.** Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:
Committee on Discipleship Ministries
Covenant College
Interchurch Relations

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 21, 2022, Pre-Assembly Schedule, continued

Mission to North America
Mission to the World
PCA Foundation
Ridge Haven

- 10:00 a.m.** Meeting of AC/Board of Directors as needed
Noon Briefing of Floor Clerks
1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Commissioner Welcome Reception in the Exhibit Hall
2:00 p.m. Committee on Constitutional Business (if necessary)
2:30 – 4:25 p.m. Seminars
2:30 - 3:20 p.m. First Session
3:35 - 4:25 p.m. Second Session
4:30 - 5:15 p.m. Pre-Assembly Prayer Meeting
6:30 p.m. Commissioner Registration Closed
Commissioner Registration will reopen for 15 minutes at the close of worship.

**FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PROPOSED DOCKET**

Only the orders of the day and special orders are fixed times in the docket. Other items may be taken up earlier or later in the docket, depending upon the rate at which actions on reports are completed. *Therefore, those who present reports should be prepared to report earlier or later than the docketed times.*

Fraternal Greetings will be made by video at the open and close of sessions of the General Assembly.

- 6:00 p.m.** Musical Prelude
6:30 p.m. Opening Session of the General Assembly
Call to Order by the outgoing Moderator: TE L. Roy Taylor (RAO 1-1)
Worship Service and Observance of the Lord's Supper

DOCKET

Tuesday, June 21, 2022, Assembly Docket continued

8:10 p.m. Assembly Reconvenes

Report on enrollment and determining of quorum
(*RAO* 1-2)
Election of Moderator (*RAO* 1-3, 1-4, 1-5)
Presentation to Retiring Moderator
Presentation and Adoption of Docket (*RAO* 3-2, m.)
Election of Recording and Assistant Clerks
Appointment of Assistant Parliamentarians (*RAO* 3-2, i.)
Appointment by Moderator of a Committee of Thanks

Report of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly,
including:

New Churches Added, Statistics, Overtures (*RAO*
11-4 to 11-11)
Communications (*RAO* 11-1, 11-2, 11-3, 11-11)
Presbytery Votes on Proposed Amendments to *BCO*
Vote on *BCO* proposed Amendments approved by
Presbyteries

Partial Report of the Administrative Committee of
Commissioners on proposed *RAO* Amendments (if
needed)

Partial Report of the Overtures Committee on proposed *RAO*
Partial Report of the Standing Judicial Commission
Cooperative Ministries Committee Report
Committee on Constitutional Business Report
Theological Examining Committee Report

10:00 pm Business recess

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

7:45 am Commissioner Registration Open

8:00 a.m. Assembly-wide Seminar – The Future Glory of the Church: The
PCA We Envision for Christ’s Purposes (Ruling Elder
Perspectives)

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, June 22, 2022, continued

- 9:30 a.m.** Assembly Reconvenes
Report of the AIC on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault
- 10:15 am** Review of Presbytery Records Committee Report
The RPR report may be amended on the floor. Standard rules of debate apply. Minority reports are allowed (RAO 16-7 h.; 19).
- 12 noon** Lunch (on your own)
- 1:30 p.m.** Assembly Reconvenes
Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports
Committee of Commissioners' Reports are not subject to floor amendments. No minority reports are allowed. But alternative proposals passed by a majority of the CoC may be presented. The Assembly votes on the recommendations to approve, disapprove or refer back without instructions (RAO 14-9).
- Interchurch Relations Committee of Commissioners
Report (Fraternal Greetings will be made by video at the open and close of sessions of the General Assembly)
- PCA Retirement & Benefits
Covenant Theological Seminary
Reformed University Fellowship
Ridge Haven Conference Center
PCA Foundation
- 3:30 p.m.** Standing Judicial Commission Report
- 4:30 p.m.** **Deadline for Nominations from the floor to the Nominating Committee at recess (RAO 8-4 i.).**
Meeting of the Nominating Committee
- 4:45 p.m.** Worship Service
Commissioner Registration Closed
- 5:45 p.m.** Recess for Dinner and Fellowship Time
Meeting of Theological Examining Committee (if necessary)

DOCKET

Note on Presentation of New Business:

All personal resolutions are new business (RAO 13-1, 13-2, 11-9) and are to be presented no later than the recess of the afternoon session. A two-thirds majority vote is required. If the Assembly receives the resolution, it will be referred by the Stated Clerk to the proper committee of commissioners.

Thursday, June 23, 2022

- 7:45 am** Commissioner Registration Open
- 8:00 a.m.** Assembly Reconvenes
Minutes of Wednesday Sessions
- 8:00 a.m.** Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports
Committee of Commissioners' Reports are not subject to floor amendments. No minority reports are allowed. But alternative proposals passed by a majority of the CoC may be presented with responses from the permanent Committee or Agency. The Assembly votes on the recommendations to approve, disapprove or refer back without instructions (RAO 14-9).
- Covenant College
Committee on Discipleship Ministries
Mission to the World
Mission to North America
- 9:30 a.m.** **Special Order:** Nominating Committee Report
Administration of vows to SJC members (RAO 17-1)
Declaration of SJC as Assembly's Commission (BCO 15-4)
- 10:30 a.m.** Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports
Administrative Committee
- 10:45 a.m.** Overtures Committee Report
The Report of the Overtures Committee may not be amended on the floor. The Assembly either approves, disapproves or recommits without instructions the recommendations (RAO 15-8 c.). An OC member may not participate in floor debate

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thursday, June, 23, 2022 (continued)

unless he is the designee of the chairman on a specific recommendation (RAO 15-8 f.). A minority report is permitted (RAO 15-6 s.; 15-8 g) if brought by at least three (3) Teaching Elders and three (3) Ruling Elders.

- 12 noon** Lunch Recess
- 1:30 p.m.** Assembly Reconvenes
Overtures Committee Report continued
- 5:30 p.m.** Recess for Dinner
- 7:00 p.m.** Musical Prelude
- 7:30 p.m.** Assembly Reconvenes for Worship Service
- 9:10 p.m.** Reconvene for business if necessary
Minutes of Thursday Session
- 9:15 p.m.** Overtures Committee Report continued
- 10:00 p.m.** Committee on Thanks Report
Appointment of Commission to review and approve final version of minutes
Adjournment (*BCO* 14-8)
Sing Psalm 133
- 10:15 p.m.** Apostolic Benediction (II Corinthians 13:14)

Friday, June 24, 2022

- 8:00 a.m.** Assembly Reconvenes for Business (Optional)
Facilities are available until noon if agenda requires

Only commissioners with badges will be admitted to the floor of the Assembly.

**QUICK REFERENCE:
GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSIONS AND ITEM NUMBERS
DAILY JOURNAL
FORTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

First Session – Tuesday Evening

49-1	Assembly Called to Order and Opening Worship	15
49-2	Assembly Reconvened - Declaration of Quorum and Enrollment	15
49-3	Nominations for Moderator	15
49-4	Docket	16
49-5	Report of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly	16
49-6	Election of Moderator	16
49-7	Election of Clerks, Assistant Parliamentarians, and Committee on Thanks	16
49-8	Commission to Review Final Minutes	17
49-9	<i>BCO</i> Amendments Sent to Presbyteries by 48th Assembly	17
49-10	Vacancies to Be Filled.....	17
49-11	Administrative Committee (AC) Committee of Commissioners Partial Report.....	18
49-12	Overtures Committee Partial Report	18
49-13	Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) Partial Report	18
49-14	Cooperative Ministries Committee (CMC) Report	19
49-15	Procedural Motion to Postpone	19
49-16	Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) Partial Report.....	19
49-17	Motion to Postpone CCB Report.....	19
49-18	Theological Examining Committee (TEC) Report.....	19
49-19	Assembly Recessed	20

Second Session – Wednesday Morning

49-20	Assembly Reconvened and Announcements.....	20
49-21	Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Report	20
49-22	Interchurch Relations Video Presentation from NAE	21
49-23	Review of Presbytery Records (RPR) Committee Partial Report	21
49-24	Administrative Committee CoC Partial Report.....	23
49-25	Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) Informational & CoC Reports.	23
49-26	Order of the Day (Lunch).....	24
49-27	Assembly Recessed	24

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Third Session – Wednesday Afternoon

49-28 Assembly Reconvened 24
49-29 Interchurch Relations Committee Fraternal Greetings Video 24
49-30 Interchurch Relations CoC Report, continued 24
49-31 Review of Presbytery Records Committee Report, continued 25
49-32 Protest Regarding NAE Withdrawal 26
49-33 PCA Retirement & Benefits (RBI) Informational & CoC Reports 31
49-34 Standing Judicial Commission Report 32
49-35 Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) Partial Report 32
49-36 Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS) Informational & CoC Reports . 33
49-37 Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) Informational & CoC Reports. 37
49-38 Ridge Haven (RH) Informational & CoC Reports 40
49-39 PCA Foundation Informational & CoC Reports 42
49-40 Interchurch Relations Committee Fraternal Greetings Video 44
49-41 Assembly Recessed 44
49-42 Worship Service 44

Fourth Session – Thursday Morning

49-43 Assembly Reconvened and Announcements 44
49-44 Interchurch Relations Committee Fraternal Greetings Video 45
49-45 Covenant College (CC) Informational & CoC Reports 45
49-46 Discipleship Ministries (CDM) Informational & CoC Reports 48
49-47 Mission to the World (MTW) Informational & CoC Reports..... 51
49-48 Mission to North America (MNA) Informational & CoC Reports 54
49-49 Administrative Committee (AC) Reports, continued..... 63
49-50 Special Order: Nominating Committee Report 64
49-51 SJC Vows and Declaration to be Judicial Commission of GA..... 64
49-52 Administrative Committee Reports, continued 65
49-53 Protest Denied..... 75
49-54 Overtures Committee Report 76
49-55 Order of the Day (Lunch)..... 79
49-56 Assembly Recessed 79

Fifth Session – Thursday Afternoon

49-57 Assembly Reconvened 79
49-58 Interchurch Relations Committee Fraternal Greetings Video 79
49-59 Overtures Committee Report, continued..... 79
49-60 PCA Foundation Supplemental Report 135
49-61 Committee on Thanks Report 136
49-62 Adjournment and Benediction 136

INDEX

- A -

Abuse	
Victim Protection	78
Ad Interim Committee	
On Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault.....	20; Appendix V, 949
Adjournment	136
Administrative Committee (AC)	
Budget (AC and PCA Building)	215
Budgets, Committee and Agency.....	215
Approval of.....	69
CAO Compensation and Guidelines	201
Celebration (50th) of PCA	73, 203, 209, 216,
Committee of Commissioners' Report	18, 23, 63, 65
Funding	
Administrative Fee for Ministers.....	72, 208
Committee/Agency Contributions.....	72, 208
Presbytery Contributions for GA Host Committees.....	72, 208
GA Registration Fee.....	71, 201
Future Assemblies.....	Inside Front Cover
Historical Center	211
Informational Report.....	63
Overtures Referred to AC	
Overture 1.....	66, 204
Overture 18.....	68, 205
Overture 22.....	68, 205
Partnership Shares.....	206
Permanent Committee Members.....	7
Permanent Committee Report.....	Appendix C, 191
Statistical Records – Reporting.....	73, 209
Statistical Records – Digital Access	205
Study Committees.....	See Ad Interim Committees
Trademarks (PCA).....	74
Unfunded Mandates	70, 201, 207
Agencies of PCA - membership	10
Anniversary (PCA 50th)	153
Appeals	See Judicial Cases
Appointments	
Assistant Parliamentarians	16
.....	See also Elections

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission to Approve GA Minutes 17
 Committee on Thanks 16
Archives..... See Historical Center
Attendance Appendix S, 639
Auditors & Audit Reports
 Capin, Crouse, LLP
 (for CC) 46
 (for CTS) 36
 (for MNA) 56, 206
 (for MTW) 52, 206
 (for PCAF) 42
 (for RBI) ix (after 684)
 Carr, Riggs & Ingram LLP (for RUF) 207
 Robins, Eskew, Smith & Jordan, PC6
 (for AC) 206
 (for CDM) 49, 206
 (for PCA Building) 206
 (for RH) 40

- B -

BCO See *Book of Church Order*
Building (PCA)
 Occupancy Cost 208
Board of Directors Minutes (PCA) Appendix B, 185
Book of Church Order (BCO)
 Amendments Finally Adopted by 49th GA (2ndvote)
 BCO 12-6; 13-4 17, 155
 BCO 20-4; 24-3; 24-4 17, 160
 BCO 22-2 17, 166
 BCO 24-1 17, 168
 BCO 32-20 17, 171
 BCO 38-1 17, 173
 Amendments Adopted by 49th GA (1st vote) and Sent to Presbyteries
 BCO 7-4 100
 BCO 8-8 106
 BCO 15-1, 15-3 103, 106
 BCO 16-4 97, 102, 103, 107
 BCO 21-4, 24-1 108
 BCO 31-10, 33-4 90, 95
 BCO 33-1, 34-1 95

INDEX

BCO 35:1-5..... 92
BCO 38-1..... 91
BCO 38-1, 42-2 90
BCO 42-6..... 91, 95
BCO 43-2, 43-3 102

Translations of
 Korean 216
 Portuguese 216
 Spanish 216

Boundaries See Presbytery Formation and Boundaries

Budgets 215
 Administrative..... 215
 Approvals..... 69
 Building (PCA) 221
 Committee on Discipleship Ministries..... 224
 Covenant College..... 231
 Covenant Theological Seminary..... 237
 Mission to North America 244
 Mission to the World 250
 PCA Foundation..... 258
 PCA Retirement and Benefits, Inc. 265
 Reformed University Fellowship..... 277
 Ridge Haven..... 271

Building (PCA), Occupancy Charge 71
ByFaith (PCA Magazine)..... 73

- C -

Campus Ministries..... See Reformed University Fellowship

CAO Compensation Guidelines 201

CCB See Constitutional Business, Committee on

Chaplain Ministries See also Mission to North America
 Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and
 Military Personnel (PRCC)..... 325
 Report on MNA Chaplain Ministries 333

Christian Education and Publications (CEP)
 See Committee on Discipleship Ministries (CDM)

Christmas Offering..... See Offerings

Church Planting/Church Planters See Mission to North America

Churches Added in 2021 176
Churches Lost in 2021..... 176

Committee on Discipleship Ministries

Budget..... 69, 224
 Committee of Commissioners Report..... 48
 Great Commission Publications (GCP) 287, 291
 Informational Report..... 48
 Love Gift Legacy
 2022..... 287
 Permanent Committee members 8
 Permanent Committee Report..... Appendix D, 283
 Women's Ministry..... 285

Committees and Agencies (Ministries) of GA

Listed 6
 Membership 7
 Resignations..... 17, 151

Committees of Commissioners See Reports, Committees of Commissioners

Communications to GA N/A

Compassion [Relief and Mercy] Offering See Offerings

Compensation Guidelines, CAO 201

Complaints See Judicial Cases

Constitutional Business, Committee on (CCB)

Advice to Stated Clerk..... 426, 428
 Committee Members 428
 Election of Officers..... 427
 Minority Report 32, 435
 Non-judicial References 427
 Overtures, Advice on 419, 430
 Report 19,32
 RAO, Advice on 428
 SJC Minutes Review..... 19, 33, 427, 429, 432,435

Cooperative Ministries Committee (CMC) Report..... 19, 411

Coordinators/Presidents (of PCA Committees and Agencies) 6

Corrections to Previous Minutes..... 1387

Covenant College (CC)

Agency Board Members 10
 Agency Report..... Appendix E, 293
 Budget..... 69, 231
 Committee of Commissioners Report..... 45
 Prayer for Covenant College (Oct. 16, 2022) 46
 Informational Report..... 45

INDEX

Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS)

Agency Board Members 11
Agency Report Appendix F, 299
Budget 69, 237
Committee of Commissioner Report 34
Informational Report..... 33

- D -

Days of Prayer..... See Prayer
Docket 1389
Adoption of 16
Domestic Abuse..... See Ad Interim Committee

- E -

Elections

Committees and Agencies..... See Nominating Committee
Moderator..... 16
Clerks, Assistant Parliamentarians, Committee on Thanks 16
Stated Clerk of PCA General Assembly 66
Electronic Voting (at GA)..... See General Assembly
Enrollment of Commissioners See Attendance

- F -

Fiftieth Anniversary (PCA) 153
Foundation See PCA Foundation
Fraternal Greetings (via video)
Pastor Dwang-Sik Bae, Korean Presbyterian Church, Hapdong 24
Dr. Chad Van Dixhoorn, Orthodox Presbyterian Church 24
Dr. Davi Gomes, Presbyterian Church of Brazil 45
Dr. Walter Kim, National Association of Evangelicals..... 21
Rev. Todd De Rooy, United Reformed Churches of North America 79
Dr. Dean Weaver, Evangelical Presbyterian Church 44
Dr. Dennis Johnson, Rafaki 25
Dr. William Zulu, Reformed Church of Zambia 25
Dr. Clement Mwanza, Reformed Church of Zambia..... 25

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- G -

General Assembly

AC General Assembly Responsibilities (Costs)	70
Committees and Agencies of, membership	7
Costs (Unfunded Mandates)	70
Electronic Voting.....	16, 21, 33
Future GA Locations	Inside Front Cover
Ministries of.....	6
Minutes, Commission for Review of.....	17
Officers of.....	5
Registration Fee for 2023	71
Special Committees of, Membership.....	13
Standing Judicial Commission, Membership	14
Geneva Benefits	See PCA Retirement & Benefits
Great Commission Publications	287, 291

- H -

Historical Center (PCA Archives)	211
Host Presbytery (49th General Assembly)	16

- I -

Informational Reports	See specific Committees and Agencies
Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC)	
Committee Members	13
Committee of Commissioners Report.....	23, 24, i (after 684)
Fraternal Greetings, Video Presentations	21,24,44,45,79
Fraternal Delegates	24,25
Informational Report.....	23, 24
NAE (National Association of Evangelicals)	i (after 684), 412, 414
NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council) ..	412, 414
Overture 3	23, 24, 25, i (after p. 684)
Special [Permanent] Committee Report	Appendix N, 412
World Reformed Fellowship	412, 413, 414

- J -

Journal (Daily Journal of GA)	15; See also Quick Reference, 1395
Judicial Cases	
Cases 2021-06, 2021-09, 2021-10, 2021-11, 2021-13, 2021-14, 2021-15, 2022-01, 2022-02, and 2022-04	In Panel

INDEX

2020-07 Wilbourne v. Pacific PresbyteryCompleted, 687
2020-08 Gendall et al v. Pacific PresbyteryCompleted, 687
2020-09 Ozbalt et al v. Pacific PresbyteryCompleted, 687
2020-06 Gordon v. Southern New England PresbyteryCompleted, 702
2020-14 Myers v. Illiana PresbyteryCompleted, 720
2021-01 Michelson v. Northwest Georgia PresbyteryCompleted, 726
2021-02 Tippins v. Northwest Georgia PresbyteryCompleted, 727
2020-10 Eagle v. Savannah River PresbyteryCompleted, 728
2021-05 Eudaly, et al. v. Southwest Florida PresbyteryCompleted, 728
2021-08 In the matter of Korean Southwest Orange County
.....Completed, 729
2020-12 Speck v. Missouri PresbyteryCompleted, 730
2021-12 Michelson & Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery
.....Completed, 822
2020-02 In the matter of PCA v. Missouri PresbyteryCompleted, 825
2020-05 Speck v. Missouri PresbyteryCompleted, 826
2021-03 DeJong v. Session of Village Seven Presbyterian Church
.....Completed, 864
2021-07 Acree v. Tennessee Valley PresbyteryCompleted, 869
2021-08 Citation of Korean Southwest Orange Presbytery
.....Completed, 870
2021-09 Miller v. Ohio Valley PresbyteryCompleted, 876
2021-10 Williams v. Chesapeake PresbyteryCompleted, 885
2021-13 Dudt v. Northwest Georgia PresbyteryCompleted, 892
2021-06 Herron v. Central Indiana PresbyteryCompleted, 916
2022-01 Eagle, et al. v. Savannah River Presbytery
..... Administratively Out of Order, 934

- K -

- L -

Life-line Children's Services..... 56
Love Gift Legacy..... See Committee on Discipleship Ministries

- M -

Military.....See Chaplain Ministries
Ministers
 Added in 2021 177
 Deceased in 2021 183

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dismissed in 2021.....	181
Removed in 2021.....	182
Ministry Asks	See Partnership Share
Minority Reports .	See Overtures Committee; Review of Presbytery Records
Minutes, GA	
Commission Appointed to Approve	17
Daily Journal.....	15
Mission to North America (MNA)	
Budget.....	69, 244
Chaplain Ministries	See Chaplain Ministries,
Church Planting	322, 324
Church Planters Placed on Field	332
Committee of Commissioners Report.....	55
Informational Report.....	54
Overtures Referred to MNA	
Overture 2021-13	56, 326, 342
Permanent Committee Members	8
Permanent Committee Report	Appendix G, 320
Presbytery Boundaries	See Presbytery Formation and Boundaries
Mission to the World (MTW)	
Budget.....	69, 250
Committee of Commissioners Report.....	51
Global Ministry Highlights.....	345
Informational Report.....	51
Missionaries, listed	
Long-Term	360
Two-Year	363
Retiring.....	34
Prayer, Day of, for the Persecuted Church (November 6, 2022).....	52
Prayer, Month of, for Global Missions (November 2022).....	52
Offering, Compassion.....	52
Permanent Committee Members	9
Permanent Committee Report.....	Appendix H, 343
Statistics.....	354
Moderators	
Election of, RE John R Bise	16
Retiring Moderator, TE L. Roy Taylor.....	16
Succession of	4

INDEX

- N -

NAE (National Association of Evangelicals) See Interchurch Relations
NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council)
..... See Interchurch Relations

Negative Votes

Overture 15 80
Overture 26 87

Nominating Committee

Elections 64
Report 64; Appendix P, 437
Floor Nominations 64; 471
Supplemental Report Appendix P, 469

- O -

Officers, Church, Requirements for See Overtures; *BCO*
Officers, General Assembly 5

Offerings

Offering, Compassion (MTW) 52
Offering, Ministerial Relief ix (after 684)

Overtures Committee

Committee Report 18, 76, 89
Minority Reports (Overtures 8, 15, 26, 42) 117, 125, 129, 131

OVERTURES to 49th General Assembly

OVERTURE 2021-19 (48th GA) from Pacific NW Presbytery (to 49th OC)
"Amend *BCO* 38-1 & 42-2 to Allow Appealing a Censure in a
Case without Process" 77, 90, 1267
OVERTURE 2021-20 (48th GA) from Pacific NW Presbytery (to 49th OC)
"Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 on Pre-trial Non-Disciplinary
Suspensions" 77, 90, 1273
OVERTURE 2021-21 (48th GA) from Pacific NW Presbytery (to 49th OC)
"Amend *BCO* 42-6 on Vote Required for Maintaining Censure
during an Appeal" 77, 91, 1275
OVERTURE 2021-34 (48th GA] from Pacific NW Presbytery (to 49th OC)
"Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Confession Timing for Case Without Process"
..... 77, 91, 1276
OVERTURE 2021-35 (48th GA) from Pacific NW Presbytery (to 49th OC)
"Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Counsel for Case Without Process" ... 77, 91, 1277

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- OVERTURE 2021-40 (48th GA)** from TN Valley Presbytery .. (to 49th OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 32-13 and 35-5 to Allow Victim Protection Provisions
 78, 92, 1281
- OVERTURE 2021-41 (48th GA)** from TN Valley Presbytery (to 49th OC)
 "Amend *BCO* 35-1 to Expand Potential Witness Eligibility"78, 95, 1285
- OVERTURE 1** from Palmetto Presbytery (to AC)
 “Docket Overtures Committee Report as a GA Order of the Day”
 18, 1286
- OVERTURE 2** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 22-3 to Allow Assistant Pastors to file Complaints
 against Sessions” 77, 95, 1286
- OVERTURE 3** from Pee Dee Presbytery (to IRC)
 “Withdraw from the National Association of Evangelicals” . 23, 1287
 Protest..... 25, 26, 27
- OVERTURE 4 - Vacated**
- OVERTURE 5 - Vacated**
- OVERTURE 6** from Nashville Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 31-10 and 33-4 Regarding Suspensions during
 Process or Delay” 77, 95, 1290
- OVERTURE 7** from Nashville Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 42-6 Regarding Suspending Judgment during Appeal”
 77, 95, 1292
- OVERTURE 8** from Houston Metro Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 33-1 and *BCO* 34-1 Establishing Percentage Threshold
 for Original Jurisdiction Requests” 86, 95, 1296
 Minority Report..... 85, 117
- OVERTURE 9** from Calvary Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 34-1 to Establish Percentage Threshold for Original
 Jurisdiction Requests” 77, 97, 1297
- OVERTURE 10** from Southwest Florida Presbytery (to MNA)
 “Restructure Boundary of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida” 1298
- OVERTURE 11** from Korean Capital Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 25-2.e and Add a New Item *BCO* 25-2.f, New
 Percentage Threshold for Calling Large Church Congregational
 Meetings” 77, 97, 1299
- OVERTURE 12** from Hills and Plains Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding a New Paragraph *BCO* 16-4 with
 Wording from the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human
 Sexuality” 77, 97, 1301
- OVERTURE 13** from Ascension Presbytery (to OC)
 “Petition United States Government to End Abortion”.... 77, 98, 1302

- OVERTURE 14** from Westminster Presbytery (to CSCB, OC; to SJC for OMSJC only)
 “Change the Composition of the SJC by Amending *BCO* 15-4 and *RAO* 17-1; Amend *OMSJC* 5.1 and 6.1” 77, 100, 1306
- OVERTURE 15** from Westminster Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 7 to Disqualify from Office Men Identifying as Homosexual” 80, 100, 125, 1312
 Minority Report80, 125
 Negative Votes80
- OVERTURE 16** from TE Ted Lester (to CCB, OC)\n
 “Amend *BCO* 25-2 to Require Annual Congregational Meeting and Reporting Standards” 77, 101, 1314
- OVERTURE 17** from TE Ted Lester (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 32-3 to Require Open-Proceedings for Trials” ... 77, 101, 1317
- OVERTURE 18** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, AC)
 “Amend *RAO* 3-2 by Adding an Administrative Responsibility for the Stated Clerk’s Office Regarding the Processing of Allegations.” 1320
- OVERTURE 19** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 15-2 Regarding Presbytery Commission Membership and Quorum” 77, 101, 1323
- OVERTURE 20** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications for Ordination” 77, 102 1324
- OVERTURE 21** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 43-2 and 43-3 Regarding Timing for Considering a Complaint” 77, 102, 1326
- OVERTURE 22** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (CCB, AC)
 “Amend *RAO* 3-2.h, Making Statistical Data Digitally Accessible” 1328
- OVERTURE 23** from Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding Paragraph 16-4 on Qualifications for Ordination” 77, 103, 1329
- OVERTURE 24** from Houston Metro Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *RAO* 11-2 and 11-10 to Clarify Who May Submit an Overture” 18, 103, 1332
- OVERTURE 25** from Houston Metro Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 to Clarify Role of Presbytery Commission” 77, 103, 1334

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OVERTURE 26 from Potomac Presbytery (to OC)
 “Statement On Political Violence”..... 87, 106, 1337
 Minority Report..... 86
 Negative Votes 87

OVERTURE 27 from Potomac Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 To Clarify Role of Presbytery
 Commission” 77, 106, 1339

OVERTURE 28 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC; to MNA for advice)
 “Amend *BCO* 8-7 by Adding Chaplain Endorsement Requirements
 and Recommendations”..... 77, 106, 1342

OVERTURE 29 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 16 by Adding 16-4 Regarding Qualifications for
 Church Office” 77, 107, 1344

OVERTURE 30 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 6-5, 20-3, 25-1, and 24-3, Allowing Congregations to
 Establish Voting Age Restrictions”..... 77, 108, 1345

OVERTURE 31 from Pittsburgh Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *BCO* 21-4 and 24-1 by Adding Paragraphs Regarding
 Requirements for Ordination” 77, 108, 1348

OVERTURE 32 from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)
 “Amend *RAO* 8.4 to Add an Item to the Annual Report of the GA
 Nominating Committee” 18, 111, 1352

OVERTURE 33 from Nashville Presbytery (to OC)
 “Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Examination, and Conciliation”
 77, 112, 1355

OVERTURE 34 from Metro Atlanta Presbytery (to OC)
 “Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Examination, and Conciliation”
 77, 112, 1360

OVERTURE 35 from North Florida Presbytery (to OC)
 “Use Human Sexuality Report for Study, Assessment, and Conciliation”
 77, 112, 1365

OVERTURE 36 from Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to SJC)
 “*BCO* 34-1 Request to Assume Original Jurisdiction over
 TE Greg Johnson” 1369

OVERTURE 37 from Grace Presbytery (to SJC)
 “*BCO* 34-1 Request to Assume Original Jurisdiction over TE Greg
 Johnson” 1372

OVERTURE 38 from Chesapeake Presbytery (to SJC)
 “Request for SJC to Assume Original Jurisdiction in CIP matters re
 Dan Herron” 1376

INDEX

OVERTURE 39 from Northern California Presbytery (to SJC)
 “Request for SJC to Assume Original Jurisdiction in CIP matters re
 Dan Herron” 1378

OVERTURE 40 from the Northern New England Presbytery (to SJC)
 “Request for SJC to Assume Original Jurisdiction in CIP matters re
 Dan Herron” 1380

OVERTURE 41 from the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago (to OC)
 “Declare Critical Race Theory Flawed” 78, 113, 1381

OVERTURE 42 from the Session of Bethel Christian Church-Chicago (to OC)
 “Forbid TE and RE Participation in ‘Political Groups’” 88, 113, 1383
 Minority Report88, 131

- P -

Parliamentarians, Assistant 16

Partnership Shares (including Ministry Asks) 69, 281

PCA Foundation (PCAF)

 Agency Board Members 11

 Agency Report Appendix I, 365

 Budget 69, 258

 Committee of Commissioners Report 42

 Supplemental CoC Report 135

 Informational Report 42

PCA Office Building

 Budget 221

 Occupancy Cost for Committees and Agencies 71

PCA Retirement and Benefits, Inc. (RBI) – now Geneva Benefits

 Agency Board Members 12

 Agency Report Appendix J, 375

 Budgets 69, 265

 Committee of Commissioners Report 31, viii (after p. 684)

 Informational Report 31

 Offering, Ministerial Relief ix (after 684)

Prayer, Days/Months of

 Covenant College (October 16, 2022) 46

 MTW Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church (November 6, 2022) 52

 MTW Month of Prayer for Global Missions (November 2022) 52

PRCC (Presbyterian and Reformed Commission)
 on Chaplains and Military Personnel) see Chaplain Ministries

Presbytery Formation and Boundaries N/A

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Protest (Overture 3)..... 25, 26
 Signatories 27

- Q -

Quick Reference of GA Sessions 1395
Quorum 15

- R -

RAO See *Rules of Assembly Operations*
RBI See PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.

Reformed University Fellowship (RUF)
 Budget..... 69, 277
 Campus Interns Roster..... 404
 Campus Ministries and Staff..... 392
 Committee of Commissioners’ Report 37
 Informational Report..... 37
 Permanent Committee Members 9
 Permanent Committee Report..... Appendix K, 384
 Presbytery Campus Committees 392

Registration Fee
 2023 General Assembly..... See General Assembly

Reports
 Committees of Commissioners
 Administrative 18, 23, 63, 65
 Committee on Discipleship Ministries 48
 Covenant College..... 45
 Covenant Theological Seminary..... 34
 Interchurch Relations..... i (after 684)
 Mission to North America 55
 Mission to the World 51
 PCA Foundation 42
 PCA Retirement and Benefits, Inc..... viii (after 684)
 Reformed University Fellowship..... 37
 Ridge Haven 40

Permanent Committees and Agencies, Special Committees, and SJC
 Administrative Appendix C, 191
 Committee on Discipleship Ministries Appendix D, 283
 Constitutional Business Committee..... Appendix O, 419
 Covenant College..... Appendix E, 293

INDEX

Covenant Theological Seminary Appendix F, 299
Interchurch Relations Appendix N, 412
Mission to North America Appendix G, 320
Mission to the World Appendix H, 343
Nominating Committee..... Appendix P, 437
PCA Foundation..... Appendix I, 365
PCA Retirement and Benefits, Inc..... Appendix J, 375
Reformed University Fellowship Appendix K, 384
Review of Presbytery Records..... Appendix R, 482
Ridge Haven..... Appendix L, 408
Standing Judicial Commission..... Appendix T, 685
Stated Clerk..... Appendix A, 139
Thanks..... Appendix U, 947
Theological Examining Committee Appendix Q, 479
Retirement & Benefits, Inc. (RBI) See PCA Retirement & Benefits, Inc.
Review of Presbytery Records (RPR)
 General Recommendations 483
 Minutes of Presbyteries, reviewed 486
 Recommendation V.6 – RAO 16-4.c 21
 Recommendation VI.34..... 21, 549
 Recommendation VI.56.e..... 21, 23, 25, 597
 Officers Elected 636
 Report 21, Appendix R, 482
Ridge Haven (RH)
 Agency Board Members 12
 Agency Report Appendix L, 408
 Budget..... 69, 271
 Committee of Commissioners Report..... 40
 Informational Report..... 40
Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO)
 RAO Amendments adopted
 RAO 3-2.h – from AC..... 23, 68
 RAO 11-2 and 11-10 – from Overtures Committee..... 18
 RAO 16-4.c – from RPR..... 21, 485

- S -

Sexuality See Overtures
Special Days See Prayer, Days/Months of
Special Offerings..... See Offerings

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Standing Judicial Commission (SJC)

Commission Members 14
Judicial Cases (listed) 686, 875
Judicial Commission of the Assembly..... 64
Minutes (Review by CCB) 427
Officers for New Year 64
Oath of Office 64
Operating Manual – Changes Adopted..... 18, 871
Protest Denied..... 75
SJC Report..... 18, 32; Appendix T, 685
Supplemental Report..... 875

Stated Clerk (of General Assembly)

Succession of Stated Clerks..... 4
Stated Clerk Elected to New Term 65, 66

Stated Clerk’s Report16; Appendix A, 139

BCO Votes 146, 155
Candidates – referral to Theological Examining Committee..... 148
Legal Matters 152
Interchurch Relations 147
Overtures..... 145
PCA – State of the Church..... 141
Resignations from GA Committees and Agencies 151
Standing Judicial Commission..... 149

Statistics – Five-Year Summary 184

Statistics (2021) 176
Churches Added 176
Churches Lost..... 176
Ministers Added 177
Ministers Dismissed 181
Ministers Removed 182
Ministers Deceased 183

Study Committee See Ad Interim Committee

- T -

Telecommunication Meetings..... See Videoconference Meetings

Thanks (Committee On)

Appointed 16
Resolution of Thanks136; Appendix U, 947

INDEX

Theological Examining Committee

Members 13
Report..... 19; Appendix Q, 479
Translations (of *BCO* and Other Documents 150

- U -

- V -

Video Conference Meetings (Overture 2021-26)..... 155

- W -

Women's Ministry (PCA - CDM)

..... See Committee on Discipleship Ministry (CDM)

World Reformed Fellowship (WRF) 412, 413

Worship Services 15, 44; Appendix X, 1385

- X, Y, Z -

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Notes