

PART I:

ASSEMBLY

ACTIONS

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PART I. DIGEST OF ACTIONS

BETHANY CHRISTIAN SERVICES

1995, p. 170, 23-33, III, 5. 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 by churches and presbyteries, and invite its representative to speak to the Assembly for five minutes at this or a more appropriate time; that in response to the growing crises in our land resulting from the continuing widespread practice of abortion, increases in the number of children born to unmarried parents, increases in the number of children with special needs who await adoptive families, the churches of the PCA be encouraged to commit to special prayer for the protection and honoring of all human life, and be encouraged to participate in ministries of compassion addressing these special needs. *Adopted*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND PUBLICATIONS

CHRISTIAN FAMILY EMPHASIS WEEK

1995, p. 155, 23-24, III, 2. That the Overture 11, from Tennessee Valley Presbytery, be answered in the affirmative. *Adopted*

Therefore Be it Resolved that the Twenty-Third General Assembly designate the week of Father's Day Christian Family Emphasis Week, and that the Christian Education Committee offer bulletin inserts and recommended resources to congregations within the PCA designated to strengthen Christian families.

MESSENGER

1994, p. 217, 22-61, III, 13. That CE&P discontinue the publishing of the *PCA Messenger* with the December 1994 issue and that the staff be thanked for their diligent efforts. *Adopted*

PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH IN AMERICA

1997, p. 172, 25-41, III, 8. That CE&P enter into partnership with Presbyterian Youth of America, a group of PCA pastors, in youth ministry and that prayer for God's blessings be included at the closing of this report. *Adopted*

1998, p. 218, 26-63, III, 8. That Presbyterian Youth of America, a partner in CE/P's ministry, be received as part of CE/P's ministry to youth and that the present board, comprised of PCA Teaching Elders' merge with the current advisory subcommittee on youth. *Adopted*

PSALM SINGING

1994, p. 223, 22-61, III, 29. That Personal Resolution #5, concerning participating in the revision of the primary source of our new Trinity Psalter, be adopted and that TE Terry Johnson be asked to serve in this capacity. *Adopted as amended*

Whereas the RPCNA is currently in the process of revising its primary publication, *The Book of Psalms for Singing (1973)*; and

Whereas this effort is anticipated to be a 10 year process beginning with the translation of the Hebrew text and proceeding through literary, poetic and musical evaluation; and

Whereas *The Book of Psalms for Singing* is the primary source of the PCA Psalmbook, *The Trinity Psalter*,

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Therefore be it Resolved that the General Assembly directs the CE&P Committee to investigate avenues of participation in this process of revision and, if the way be open, to assign qualified individuals to do so.

TRUE LOVE WAITS CAMPAIGN

1994, p. 222, 22-61, III, 27. That the 22nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to endorse the SBC's "True Love Waits" campaign, as amended such that the written covenant reads, "Believing that true love waits and in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, I make a commitment to God, and myself, in view of the future good of my family, those I date, as have other professedly Christian bodies.

Furthermore, the 22nd General Assembly directs its Christian Education and Publications Committee either to seek to gain permission to use the SBC materials of this campaign or to produce our own similar materials for distribution to interested PCA churches and others of similar purposes.

Furthermore, the Assembly urges that this program be implemented in careful conformity to *WCF 22:1-4* (on lawful oaths and vows).

Finally, the 22nd General Assembly directs that CE&P do this as soon as possible so that the churches of the PCA might have this emphasis in the coming year and join their voices of testimony with others for purity and chastity to the glory of God and Christ's Church.

Adopted as amended

COMMUNICATIONS

1984, p. 106, 12-36, III, 17. That a denominational ad hoc committee to study the communications policy of the PCA be appointed. . . The committee will recommend denominational policies and procedures in such areas as publications, a communications office and training in communications. *Adopted*

1986, p. 146, 14-67, III, 4. That the General Assembly approve the **Statement of Philosophy for Communications**, Appendix D, p. 299 in principle, to be used as a guideline. . .

Philosophy Statement

"Because we believe that God has eternally communicated through His Son Jesus Christ and his Word and calls His people to communicate with one another and to the world, we communicate.

Communications of the Presbyterian Church in America, including the whole spectrum of print and electronic media -- publications, direct mail, radio, television, etc. -- should effectively express the God-given purpose and ministries of the Presbyterian Church in America. Communications should forthrightly uphold the truth of God's Word to our culture, accurately reflect the doctrinal position of the denomination, and communicate to internal and external publics what God is doing in and through the Presbyterian Church in America and all of its entities. Communications should encourage understanding of and confidence in the denomination, encourage commitment to its goals and ministries, and promote denominational unity.

The communications of the Presbyterian Church in America should be established, maintained and discontinued on the basis of need: their quality, effectiveness, and conformity to the denomination's philosophy of communications should be evaluated regularly for long-term

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improvement. All that is said and done in the name of the Presbyterian Church in America should seek to reflect the highest ecclesiastical and journalistic standards.

Denominational communications are not the whole work of the church, nor will they reflect complete agreement on all issues. Expressions of editorial opinion are right and wholesome."

1994, p. 223, 22-62. After considerable discussion, this committee is convinced that the Presbyterian Church in America does indeed need an instrument to promote the unity of the entire Church, provide information, news, discussion of issues, instruction in the distinctive doctrines of our Church, and helps for teaching elders, ruling elders and deacons and other Church leaders. Because one publication cannot adequately fulfill all these purposes, the committee believes that a denominational magazine and perhaps one or two companion pieces are needed. We are also agreed upon the necessity for these denominational publications to be produced and funded by the committees and agencies working together by means of a joint sub-committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Therefore, after four years of consultation and study, we recommend the following.

I. That General Assembly create a Joint Sub-Committee of the Permanent Committees and Agencies. This shall be a Joint Sub-Committee for Communication and Information.

Defeated

II. This Joint Sub-Committee will recommend to the 23rd General Assembly (1995) its proposed functions, methods, and strategy for communication and public information, which may but shall not be limited to the following:

- (1) A magazine that is published periodically and is mailed, without subscription costs, to every home - family in PCA.
- (2) A newsletter that is published periodically and is mailed, without subscription costs, to every home - family in the PCA.
- (3) A theological journal that presents varying views on the theological issues, that is published periodically and that charges a subscription price.
- (4) Any other types of communication and information it deems desirable.

Defeated

III. That "the 22nd General Assembly dismiss this Ad Hoc Committee on PCA Publications, effective upon the adjournment of the Assembly."

Adopted

COMMUNION

1998, p. 205ff, 26-55, III, 13. Answer in the negative Overture 24 to amend BCO 58-4 to clarify the Fencing of the Table.

Grounds: See the rationale adopted by the 21st General Assembly set forth below:

- a. In recognition that this is the "Lord's table," 1 Corinthians 10:21, not the table of one church only, BCO 58-4 permits "open communion," that is, allowing members in good standing of any evangelical church to partake; and "close communion," which permits only those members of other churches who have been examined and approved by the Session to partake. (It does not permit "closed communion," the practice of excluding all but members of the particular congregation).
- b. In the judgment of charity, we believe that other evangelical churches have examined and found credible the faith of their members and, on the basis of this

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presumed approval, in "open communion" we invite members of other churches to the Lord's table in our midst. In "close communion," the Session of a particular church itself determines the credibility of a visitor's profession of faith. There is no such available assessment in this life for members of the Invisible Church.

- c. Baptism is into a community of believers, that is a church. Unbaptized people certainly should not be permitted to come to the Table. Of course unbaptized people credibly professing faith in Christ and seeking admittance to the Table should be baptized with all proper speed, and thereupon admitted to the Table. At this point, these communicants are baptized members of a visible church.
- d. One cannot love Christ and eschew His bride. The credible profession of persons unwilling to unite to Christ's Church must be questioned. Any sinful unwillingness to unite with Christ's people should be addressed pastorally (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Those unwilling to unite to Christ's Church are outside the visible body of Christ.
- e. One cannot be subject to Christ and not be subject to the government He has appointed in His Church. Believers become subject to the government of the Church through their covenantal vows of membership (Ephesians 4:11-12; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).
- f. Church discipline is necessary for properly maintaining the Lord's Table; such discipline is unavailable apart from membership in a visible church.
- g. This overture implies that there is no biblical ground for the keeping of a roll of members of the visible church, and therefore of people who may partake of the church's sacrament. However, the clear evidence of Scripture is that the church should keep a roll of members. The supreme model for our membership roll is the membership roll of heaven (Exodus 32:32,33; Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8; 20:12,15). The Biblical pattern is for new believers to be "numbered" or "added to" the rolls of the local church (Acts 2:41,47; 6:7; 1 Timothy 5:9). Members could be taken away from the roll (1 Corinthians 5:2)-this indicates more than being physically barred, since even unbelievers could attend Christian worship (1 Corinthians 14:23)-or reinstated (2 Corinthians 2:6-7); it is impossible to have coherent discipline without such a roll. There was a widow's roll for diaconal purposes (1 Timothy 5:9). Elders are to know their sheep, and are accountable for the care of the flock entrusted to them-this demands knowing who they are; that is, it demands a list or roll (Hebrews 13:7,17-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14; 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28). The apostolic church utilized letters of transfer or commendation (Acts 18:27; Romans 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:1; 8:23-24); examples of these letters include Philemon and 3 John. Interchurch business was conducted by people with reference letters (1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:16-24). We conclude therefore that requiring professed believers to be enrolled as members of an evangelical church as a condition for taking the Lord's Supper is consistent with sound Biblical practice. (*M2IGA* pp. 141-142)

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COMPENSATION FOR COORDINATORS AND DIRECTORS

1994, p. 274, 22-70, III, 24. That the following low, median and high figures be adopted for total compensation guidelines for Coordinators, Presidents and Directors for the budget years 1995-1997:

	<u>LOW</u>	<u>MEDIAN</u>	<u>HIGH</u>
AC	70,000	80,000	90,000
CE&P	70,000	80,000	90,000
MNA	70,000	80,000	90,000
MTW	87,000	97,000	107,000
CC	87,000	97,000	107,000
CTS	70,000	80,000	90,000
IAR	63,000	73,000	83,000
IFBD	60,000	70,000	80,000
PCAF	60,000	70,000	80,000
RH	55,000	65,000	75,000

Adopted

COMPUTERS

1998, p. 215, 26-55, III, 19. Computers and Y2K problem: Approved the following personal resolution.

Whereas, the year 2000 presents potential problems with many computers and computer operated systems, and

Whereas, the Christian and secular media, as well as the General Accounting Office of the federal government, are reporting potential disruptions in financial institutions, local utilities, and national and international transportation, and

Whereas, the Bible exhorts us to prepare for foreseen difficulties by the example of Joseph in Egypt, and through the words of Proverbs 22:3: "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished," and 1 Timothy 5:8: "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever,"

Therefore, the 26th General Assembly encourages the denominational committees and agencies, the presbyteries, and the local congregations of the PCA, to examine this issue, and take whatever steps deemed necessary to be able to continue the ministry of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Adopted

COVENANT COLLEGE

ART EXHIBIT ISSUE

1996, p. 223, 24-40, III, 5. After extended discussion with board members and the President of Covenant College our committee believes the recent art exhibit controversy at Covenant College to be an aberration. We recommend that the General Assembly:

- a) Receive the following statement from President Brock as a suitable response to this incident, and;
- b) Direct the board of trustees to review the current policies and practices regarding visiting speakers and student chapels to further safeguard against recurrence of this kind of incident.

Statement of President Brock:

"The controversy at Covenant College relating to the exhibit and subsequent destruction of certain nude paintings, including some of Christ, involves several complex issues including:

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1. the propriety of portraying nude figures in works of art;
2. the propriety of imaging a person of the Trinity; and
3. the role of chapel in a Christian college, especially as it relates to the issues of worship and education.

All these issues are volatile and the subject of some disagreement within the PCA at large. Because of their complexity this situation has produced unusually sharp criticism and raised questions concerning the college.

I want to answer those who have concerns; I agree that Covenant must be held to unusually high standards. As the Board, administration, and faculty continue to review what has occurred in this recent matter, I want to speak as President and say that we erred in exhibiting the paintings, and I apologize to all who have been offended. I can confidently assure you that the faculty of the college operates and will continue to operate in accordance with the Westminster Standards. The art department does not teach students to make images of Christ.

We will continue to invite to the campus speakers with opinions that differ from our own, in order to serve our students. We will exercise care in all areas to uphold the Biblical and Reformed standards that we sincerely hold.

We pray that those who wish to discuss this matter will do so in an informed, civil and constructive manner that will help advance the college and thereby the denomination." *Adopted*

NEW ERA PHILANTHROPY

1995, p. 164, 23-29, III, 7. That the General Assembly express gratitude to God that, apparently, Covenant College has not been adversely affected financially by its participation in the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy; that the General Assembly pause to pray for the parties involved in this scandal to the ends that the cause of Christ would not be hurt because of this matter and that an equitable arrangement would be swiftly enacted. *Adopted*

STATEMENT OF POLICY RE. CAMPUS SPEAKERS

1997, p. 146, 25-29, III, 4.

Statement of Policy

Our Purpose and Claim:

Covenant College invites to its campus speakers who force or encourage us to think more biblically. Usually, invited speakers will do this on the basis of our common faith. Occasionally, however, it will be our disagreement in perspective or belief that will challenge us to encounter our biblical faith at more depth.

Rationale:

To faithfully pursue our academic calling, faculty and students must engage ideas and beliefs which may be either sincerely and intentionally adhered to or hypothetically offered. Pedagogically, we are bound to see these ideas as clearly as possible. This may allow adherents to speak for themselves, where possible. We must be judicious in such encounters, but encounters with people of opposing beliefs should not be avoided. We must "test the spirits" of our times and seek to understand what is true (I John 4:1).

Explanations of Policy

Givens:

- Covenant College maintains as faculty only those who are committed to Christ, the Westminster Confession, the purposes of the college, and the teaching of students from a

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conscientiously biblical perspective. It remains the responsibility of each faculty member to be discerning, both of the learning potential from speakers within and without the college, and of the mind of Christ which evidences the true faith.

- Faculty members have primary responsibility to engage in analysis and dialogue with outside speakers in timely and effective ways. Faculty will always respond on the basis of our biblical perspective, from within the Reformed tradition, and in answer to the very real challenges of our times.
- Students are also responsible for and encouraged in this engagement, as they are able.
- The Bible is our final authority and - under the Spirit's interpreting action - is adequate to answer all objections. We need not shy away from any encounter.
- Speakers brought to campus are invited guests and should be treated with due respect and civility by all. They should never be invited here merely for the sake of our disagreement, nor should they come under any false pretense or undue censure. It is always our hope to testify to them of Christ, especially where we disagree, to offer them and our students biblical truth winsomely.

Some qualifications:

- Sometimes the challenge to think more biblically comes best from those with whom we disagree theologically, ideologically, or philosophically. However, in no case will "foolish controversies" be promoted (Titus 3:9).
- No invitation to address the college constitutes automatic endorsement of any speaker's views, in whole or part. In fact, at times it is precisely our presumed disagreement that justifies the invitation of a speaker. Those who assume such endorsement by the college are mistaken.
- The presence of any one speaker on any given occasion should not be considered in isolation from the teaching of the Bible and the college as a whole; rather, each speaker should be judged by the overall learning practices of the college. We ask those who want to evaluate the college on the basis of speakers to be willing to consider the entire spectrum of speakers who are invited.
- The college distinguishes between meetings for worship and assembly. When we meet for worship, even though we are not a church, it is our endeavor that every aspect of such a meeting be orthodox. However, when meeting for assembly, it may well be the case that an invited speaker be recognizably heterodox or even non-Christian. This distinction between gatherings for worship or assembly must be maintained and should not be mistaken either within or without the college community, although these are scheduled daily and meet in the building commonly referred to as the "chapel." The chapel is actually the Dora Maclellan Brown Chapel and Fine Arts Building.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1995, p. 163, 23-29, III, 2. That the General Assembly approve the amended Article II - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE of the bylaws.

COVENANT COLLEGE, INC., is a Christ-centered institution of higher education, emphasizing liberal arts, operated by a BOARD OF TRUSTEES elected by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, and exists to provide post secondary educational services to the denomination and the wider public.

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COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY CHAIR OF MINISTRY AND EVANGELISM ESTABLISHED

1998, p. 185, 26-49. TE Chapell referring to a separate action by the Trustees of CTS read a resolution expressing thanks to God for the ministry of TE Kennedy Smartt and establishing a Chair of Ministry and Evangelism in his honor.

RESOLUTION OF PRAISE FOR 40 YEARS SERVICE

1996, p. 167, 24-25, III, 2: Inasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God to raise up Covenant Theological Seminary, and to sustain it for forty years, and

Inasmuch as God has so blessed Covenant Theological Seminary that it has remained faithful to the teachings of Holy Scripture, as articulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and

Inasmuch as God has been pleased to bless His Church through the ministerial labors of many graduates of Covenant Theological Seminary for forty years;

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America hereby offers hearty thanks to God, the great Lord of the harvest and King of the Church, for His rich blessings upon Covenant Theological Seminary for the past forty years, and for His equally rich blessings upon His church through the labors of its graduates. *Adopted*

CREATION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO STUDY

1998, p. 191, 26-55, III, 3. That **Overture 5** from Central Carolina Presbytery be answered in the affirmative with the following resolution; and that **Overture 18** be answered with reference to this answer to **Overture 5**.

Resolved, That the 26th General Assembly erect an *Advisory Committee* to study the exegetical, hermeneutical, and theological interpretations of Genesis 1-3 and *the original intent of the Westminster standards' phrase 'in the space of six days'*. The committee of eleven (11) to be appointed by the Moderator within 30 days of the close of the 26th General Assembly, from nominees submitted to him by the commissioners to the General Assembly. The committee will report, D.V., to the 27th General Assembly its findings, along with its *non-binding advice and counsel*, if any. The committee is to be funded up to \$12,000 by *designated donations to the cause*. *Adopted as amended (521-371)*

DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

(See Judicial Case #100; Position Papers 1973 - 1993, Part V, pp. 182-293

1984, p. 100, 12-31, III, 1.: That **Overture 6** (p. 41) be answered in the **negative**.

Adopted

Grounds: We recognize the crucial moral and spiritual concerns addressed in this overture. It is however, our opinion that those concerns are adequately addressed in such individual studies as are found in Dr. John Murray's book *Divorce* and Dr. Jay Adams' *Marriage, Divorce and Re-Marriage* and in such church studies as were made by the 151st and 152nd Synods of the RPCES, 1973 and 1974. These studies may be found in *Documents of Synod* ed. By Dr. Paul Gilchrist, on pages 199-204.

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Overture 6: From the Presbytery of Illiana

Whereas, there is an increasing number of people, previously divorced on unbiblical grounds, who are requesting PCA ministers to perform marriage ceremonies for them;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Twelfth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America appoint a study committee to address the question of when, if ever, it is permissible for a PCA minister to perform the marriage of persons previously divorced for unbiblical reasons.

Whereas, ministers may be approached by two unbelievers, previously divorced for unbiblical reasons;

Therefore, be it resolved that the study committee specifically address the question of the minister's responsibility in responding to the request for marriage of two unbelievers.

Attested by: Thomas Waldecker, Stated Clerk

Answered in the negative. 12-31. III. 1. p. 101

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ACTIONS, BINDING CHARACTER OF

1982, p. 103, 10-75, III, 25. A. That the Questions in Personal Resolution 5, Ninth General Assembly, (p. 53) on "Confessional Subscription" be answered with the following response:

- Q. 1. Does the second ordination vow require the Presbyterian Church in America church officers to embrace as Bible truth each and every statement in our confessional standards?
- A. When an officer of the Presbyterian Church in America subscribes to the Confessional Standards, he is declaring them to be the confession of his faith with reference to doctrine, worship, and government, recognizing that the Word of God written is the only infallible, inerrant, unamendable rule of faith and practice.
- A. 2. If not, then what statements in the confessional standards are to be regarded as "fundamentals of the system of doctrine," which, if a man should fail to embrace them, would disqualify that man from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America?
- Q. 3. May a man be lawfully received/ordained/installed within the Presbyterian Church in America who rejects either implicitly or explicitly any of the following doctrines, and if so, which?
- a. Any of the so-called "five points of Calvinism."
- b. Sabbath observance as set forth in the Confession.
- c. Baptizing only once.
- A. Answer to Q.2 and Q.3 It would be unwise, improper, and unconstitutional for the General Assembly to determine abstractly apart from the proper processes afforded by our constitutional standards what would disqualify a man from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America. The constitution provides that the standards of our church may be modified if it should be proved from the Word of God, our only inerrant and unalterable guide to faith and practice, that the standards are in any way not in agreement with that Word. Also, as the result of proper judicial processes, judgments may be made which determinately interpret what may or may not be in accord with our standards. Any other procedure of setting forth or compiling a list of essential or nonessential doctrines would, in effect, amend the standards by an unconstitutional method. *The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* are already held by our

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church as “standard expositions of the teaching of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice” (*BCO* 29-1) and all officers and candidates for office in the Presbyterian Church in America are required to adopt our standards sincerely and without mental reservation (*WCF* 22-4) as faithful expositions of Bible truth.

The approval of any man for office belongs, in the first place, to the court of jurisdiction (*BCO* 21-5). The Church has always reserved to herself the prerogative of determining what views shall not be in accord with the standards. No officer should presume to have the right of making a self-evaluation regarding the conformity of his view.

Any exception to the constitutional standards may have the potential of striking at the vitals of religion (see *BCO* 34-5), even one which some may consider to refer to an obscure or very technical point of doctrine. A system of doctrine is made up of constituent parts, so that a variation in one of these parts may logically effect a change in the system as a whole. Any court of jurisdiction should therefore give careful consideration to any exception a man might reveal or take with regard to the constitutional standards before determining that an exception is or is not in conformity to the standards and/or proceeding to receive, ordain, and/or to install him.

- Q. 4. If a man makes known to his session/presbytery a fundamental change in his doctrinal views, what would be the appropriate action or actions of the session/presbytery in the case of a ruling elder, in the case of a deacon, or in the case of a teaching elder?
- A. Should a man make known any changes in his doctrinal views, the procedure which the respective court of jurisdiction should follow would apply equally to a deacon, ruling elder, or teaching elder. The court of jurisdiction should investigate the matter. Then its subsequent actions would be dependent upon the findings of its investigation. If the court should find that the exception is such as to warrant judicial process, the procedure as set forth in the *BCO* (see chapters 27-37) should be followed. Or, if the court of jurisdiction should find that the exception does not warrant judicial process, due minutes of the proceedings should be recorded noting the exception and the action of the court.
- B. And that the Sub-Committee on Judicial Business be instructed to prepare an amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for consideration by the Eleventh General Assembly setting forth a procedure for ordinands as a part of their trials for ordination, to give written declarations of any scruples they might hold with regard to each article of the *WCF* and its Catechisms together with a requirement that presbytery enter into its records its evaluations of each scruple so stated as to its seriousness as a departure from the confessional articles. *Adopted*

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Borrowing

1994, p. 275, 22-70, III, 37 & 38. 37. That the 22nd GA approve a borrowing limit of \$150,000 each for MNA, CE&P, and the AC with the understanding that the loan balance be \$1,000 for 30 consecutive days each year. *Adopted*

Grounds:

When the \$50,000 limit was approved in 1974, there were 60,134 communicant members and 393 churches. The 1992 statistics reported there were more than three times as many, with 195,352 communicant members and 1226 churches.

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The total budgets of the permanent committees in 1975 were \$1,871,128. The total budgets for the committees for 1994 are \$25,732,746, more than 13 times greater than 20 years ago.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that as of December 1993 (for all urban consumers in the south), it would take \$231 to purchase the same goods that cost \$100 in 1977. It seems reasonable to conclude that from 1974 the increase would be up to \$250, or 2 1/2 times as much.

In addition to serving a denomination that is more than 3 times as large, the effects of inflation require 2 1/2 times as many dollars to purchase the same amount of goods and services. The increase to \$150,000 is only 3 times the existing limit.

38. That the 22nd GA approve a borrowing limit of \$350,000 for MTW with the understanding that the loan balance be \$1,000 for 30 consecutive days each year.

Adopted

Grounds:

For MTW, the increase to \$350,000 is 7 times the existing limit, but less than 2.0% of their annual budget for 1994.

Budgets

1994, p. 206, 22-54, III, 13. That the Twenty-Second General Assembly note for information and prayer that the Committee on Mission to the World and the MTW Senior Staff assume responsibility for the conditions leading to its accumulated internal debt of approximately 2.8 million dollars owed to the Restricted Accounts Fund by the unrestricted General Fund. The Committee has addressed this situation by taking the following actions:

- a. Adopt cash flow budget for 1994 designed to substantially eliminate the current operating deficit in the General Fund.
- b. Adopt a departmental budget format, with assigned responsibility to each Senior Staff for financial performance in his department.
- c. Provide monthly financial reports to Senior Staff and CMTW Finance Subcommittee in user friendly format to permit effective monitoring and management of budget.
- d. Resource new fund-raising manpower from ranks of Senior Staff with the assistance of MTW Committee members.
- e. Expand fund-raising effort to develop and maintain 100% support for compensation package and program budget for incoming coordinator, pastor-at-large and 50% of compensation package and program budget for all area directors by the year-end 1995.
- f. Establish a program designed both to pay back the total accumulated General Fund debt over, at most, a seven-year period using money set aside from annual operating funds and also from the development of a long-term fund-raising plan. Included as one part of this program would be a working capital reserve account, equal to one month of the annual General Fund, to be used to smooth out cash flow requirements caused by variations in receipt of income.
- g. Continue budgeting procedures in future years as adopted in 1994.
- h. That MTW Committee communicate in writing to the Sessions of churches participating in MTW budget, giving an explanation of the nature of this

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indebtedness, of how this situation of indebtedness has arisen, and what specific steps are being taken to redress it and to insure that it does not happen again.

Adopted

1995, p. 216, 23-46, III, 21. That in future years the budgets of all boards, committees, and agencies show a comparison in the line item budgets of the previous year's actual expenditures, previous year's budget, and proposed budget.

Adopted

1997, p. 139, 25-24, III, 4. That the 1998 budget [for IAR] be received with the understanding that it is a spending plan and that adjustments will be made during the year, if necessary, by the Trustees.

Adopted

Cost of Standing Committees

1995, p. 214, 23-46, III, 6b. Recommend that the Administrative Committee present annually, beginning with the 24th General Assembly, through its Committee on Commissioners, a financial report reflecting the cost involved in its General Assembly mandated responsibilities which include standing committees (i.e. Nominations, Interchurch Relations, Constitutional Business, Theological Examining, and Review of Presbytery Records), Ad Interim Committees, the Standing Judicial Commission, and the cost of General Assembly.

Adopted

LOCATIONS

1997, p. 198, 25-51, III, 7 & 8. That the 25th General Assembly accept the invitation from Great Lakes Presbytery and approve the meeting in Louisville, Kentucky on June 15-18, 1999.

Adopted

8. That the 25th General Assembly accept the invitation from North Texas Presbytery to meet in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, for the 29th General Assembly in June 2001, subject to suitable facilities being available.

Adopted

1998, p. 62, 26-18, III, 10. That the 26th GA accept the invitation from Evangel Presbytery to host the 30th General Assembly in June 2002 in the Birmingham area subject to available suitable facilities.

Adopted

MODERATOR - HONORARY

1998, p. 47, 26-5 The Assembly elected TE Patterson Honorary Moderator of the 26th General Assembly, and prayer was offered for the Pattersons by TE Paul Settle. It was ordered that this action be communicated to TE Patterson as soon as practical.

PARTNERSHIP SHARES -- formerly ASKINGS

1994, p. 206, 22-54, III, 10. "Whereas: There exists a great deal of confusion about the program of "ASKINGS" across the churches of the Presbyterian Church in America, and

Whereas: The churches have designated their giving to Mission to the World to individual missionaries, thus reducing the undesigned contributions to fund Mission to the World operations, and

Whereas: It is the goal of Mission to the World to obtain and increase alternate funding of its operations in order to reduce or eliminate the administrative surcharge to missionary support accounts, and

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Whereas: There already exists the precedent that certain budget items of the Committees and Agencies of the PCA are excluded from "ASKINGS" because there are sources of revenue outside of the "ASKINGS" program,

Therefore, Be It Resolved: That effective June 1994, the PCA "Askings" for the Committee on Mission to the World as reported by the Administrative Committee include only the portion of the MTW Budget to be funded by Undesignated Gifts (the Unrestricted Fund or General Fund Budget), and that it exclude all items for which donor designated funds are required, including but not limited to Missionary Support, Ministry and Project Budgets, etc."

Adopted

PLANNING: 25th Anniversary Celebration

1997, p. 198, 25-51, III, 9. That the 25th General Assembly accede to the request of the 25th Anniversary Celebration Committee that the 26th General Assembly be designed for a time for renewal and celebration by designing all the worship and inspirational services around the theme of the 25th Anniversary Celebration without reducing time spent on the business of the church.

Adopted

PROGRAMS/ANNUAL ADDRESSES

1995, p. 219, 23-46, III, 30. That the Administrative Committee be reminded of its responsibility to implement the establishment of "a series of annual addresses beginning with the 23rd General Assembly on 'Revival and Reformation in the Presbyterian and Reformed Heritage.'" [M22GA, item III, 35, p. 275]

Adopted

1998, p. 198, 25-51, III, 10. That the 25th General Assembly release the AC from the responsibility to provide yearly addresses based on "Revival and Reformation in the Presbyterian and Reformed Heritage" as mandated by the 22nd General Assembly.

Adopted

REGISTRATION FEE

1995, p. 214, 23-46, III, 5. That the Registration fee for the General Assembly be increased from \$100 per commissioner to \$115 per commissioner for the 24th General Assembly only.

Adopted

1996, p. 241, 24-53, III, 22. That the General Assembly registration fee cover the cost of General Assembly and that the fee for the 1997 General Assembly be set at \$130 per registrant.

Adopted

1997, p. 201, 25-52, III, 27. That the General Assembly continue the policy of reduced registration fees for Honorably Retired and Elder Emeritis Commissioners, which would be 1/3 of the approved registration fee.

Adopted

1998, p. 66, 26-18, III, 26. That the 26th General Assembly set the commissioner registration fee for 1999 at \$140.

Adopted

Grounds:

- The average cost of General Assembly, per commissioner, for the last three years is \$134.
- Costs are higher when held in convention centers and hotels than they are when held in our churches, due primarily to the rental of the meeting spaces and other services. Our scheduled meetings, through 2001, are all in hotels and convention centers.
- The 23rd General Assembly approved including funding of a portion of the unfunded mandates from the General Assembly in the registration fee. The chart reporting the costs of

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the unfunded mandates shows that the prorated costs of the Standing Judicial Commission alone were \$35 per commissioner in 1997.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY COSTS

YEAR	COMMISSIONERS	TOTAL COSTS	COST PER COMM.
1994	1293	166,984	129.14
1995	1117	155,411	139.13
1996	1229	162,084	131.88
1997	1191	156,980	131.81

UNFUNDED MANDATES

1998, p. 66, 26-18, III, 27. That the 26th GA receive the Report of Unfunded Mandates to GA as the acceptable response to the GA requirement for an annual report on the cost of the AC's mandated responsibilities: *Adopted*

AC GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESPONSIBILITIES

DESCRIPTION	1997 TOTAL	PER COMM.
General Assembly (1)	\$156,980	\$132
Standing Judicial Commission (3)	41,968	35
Interchurch Relations	21,212	18
Committee on Constitutional Business	2,810	2
Nominations (2)	1,588	1
Review of Presbytery Records	3,108	3
Theological Examining Committee	2,594	2
TOTALS	\$230,260	\$193

NOTES:

(1) 1191 Registered Commissioners in 1997

(2) AC's 1/9 share of total

(3) Partly included in GA Registration

VENDORS

1998, p. 63, 26-18, III, 12. That Overture 6 from Eastern Carolina Presbytery "Permit Vendors to Sell at GA Booths" be answered in the negative. *Adopted*

Grounds:

1. Monitoring local government requirements for sales taxes and business licenses for exhibitors would be cumbersome for the AC staff.
2. Monitoring the sales items of the exhibitors to ensure that the items offered for sale meet appropriate doctrinal and other standards, and that vendors are not selling the same items as the CE&P Bookstore would be an additional burden for the AC staff.

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HOMOSEXUALITY

1996, 24-37, III, 14, p. 212. That the General Assembly answer Personal Resolution #4 in the negative.

Grounds:

1. The PCA is not in ecclesiastical relationship with the Episcopal Church in the US and therefore has no basis for addressing her.
2. The PCA's position against the evils of sodomy and other sexual perversion has been clearly stated and reiterated in the past.
3. The issue is again being addressed by other personal resolutions to this GA.
4. It is impossible for the PCA to address every deviation from Biblical Christianity within the multiplicity of denominations and churches.
5. A prophetic voice is being raised within the Episcopal Church in the US against this sin. We encourage our members to pray and to support those within the Episcopal Church who are opposing this error.

Personal Resolution 4: TE James A. Smith "Statement to Episcopal Church for Ordination of Homosexuals"

Whereas, on the one hand, it may be unwise to intrude into the affairs of other churches;

Whereas, on the other hand, we do have the responsibility to the Lord to uphold sound doctrine and to admonish one another;

Whereas, a court of the Episcopal Church has handed down a judgement which in our opinion is clearly out of accord with the teaching of Scripture;

Whereas, this decision was made too late for a formal overture from Presbytery to be considered at this General Assembly;

Whereas, the significance of the matter and of meaningful response would suggest that postponing consideration of our responsibilities for a year is probably unwise;

Therefore, we respectfully request the General Assembly to consider the wisdom of making a statement (or some other response that may be considered to be more appropriate) to the Episcopal Church in similar form and spirit to the enclosed letter sent by the Presbytery of New Jersey to the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

Letter sent by Presbytery of New Jersey:

Edmund Browning, Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY

Dear Sir:

The Presbytery of New Jersey, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America, notes with sorrow, the decision of your ecclesiastical court on May 15, 1996, "that there is no core doctrine prohibiting the ordination of a noncelibate, homosexual person living in a faithful and committed sexual relationship with a person of the same sex."

We believe that this decision is a departure from the teachings of Scripture and that noncelibate homosexual activity is incompatible with historic, biblical Christianity. Your decision brings shame on the Church of Jesus Christ.

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It is our prayer that the 1997 General Convocation of the Episcopal Church will revise the canon law of the Episcopal Church to prohibit the ordination of noncelibate homosexuals.

Know of our continued prayer for the faithful expansion of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,
/s/ James A. Smith

1996, 24-58, III, 25, p. 315. That **Personal Resolution 7** by **RE Tom Leopard**, “**Oppose Legalization of Homosexual Marriages**” be answered by reference to previous actions of the General Assembly (e.g., *M5GA*, p. 67-8, *M21GA*, p.129ff) and 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). We also reaffirm our belief in the transforming power of God’s grace and our commitment to ‘speaking the truth in love’ to those in the homosexual community.”

Adopted as amended

1996, p. 319, 24-58, III, 26, p. 319. That **Personal Resolution 6** by **RE Tom Leopard** “**Oppose Disney’s Promotion of Homosexual Lifestyle**” be answered by reference to the Assembly’s action on Recommendation 25 and by the following statement – “We abhor what Disney and other corporations do to promote the homosexual lifestyle.”

Adopted

INSURANCE, ANNUITIES AND RELIEF

POLICY QUESTIONS RE. MEDICAL INSURANCE

1994, p. 181, 22-31. **Recommendations:**

1. The Committee recommends the 22nd General Assembly appoint a study committee comprised of 3 members recommended by the Board of IAR, 3 members of the General Assembly at large appointed by the moderator and an independent chairman appointed by the moderator to pursue the feasibility of changing to an *underwritten* program of medical insurance for our members. The study should include the option of facilitating our congregations in obtaining coverage either through an endorsed program or through local options, including state sponsored pools. The study should carefully examine the options available for the special situations it is aware of. A report should be made to the 23rd General Assembly. The study committee should be authorized to spend up to \$10,000, one half of which would come from IAR. *Adopted*
2. Because of potential unanticipated, undesirable consequences of groups withdrawing, the Committee recommends the General Assembly request its members to defer until the feasibility study is completed any action that would result in reduced participation in the current health insurance program. *Adopted*

TAX-SHELTERED ANNUITY PLAN

1995, p. 177, 23-37, III, 8. That the General Assembly approve the Thirteenth Amendment to the PCA Voluntary Tax-Sheltered Annuity Plan (TSA) (see Appendix Three of

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Appendix G, p. 371) and that the resolution related to this amendment be adopted and included in the Minutes of the General Assembly. *Adopted*

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

BUDGET

1994, p. 198, 22-40, 11. That the 22nd General Assembly approve an additional \$10,000 for the Interchurch Relations Committee to cover WPRF related expenses such as travel, communications and meetings. *Adopted*

CATEGORIES OF ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONS

1997 p. 61, 25-15, III, 10. That the IRC be instructed to bring a report and make recommendations to the 26th General Assembly clarifying and updating the categories of ecclesiastical relations with other churches, particularly for the purpose of refining or revising criteria by which the General Assembly will recognize churches in Fraternal Correspondence, with the understanding that present categorization of churches as being in Fraternal Correspondence carries no official status until such report be received and acted upon. *Adopted*

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH (CRC)

1994, p. 195, 22-40, IV, 4, 5 & 6. The following substitute for items 4, 5, and 6 was presented by TE Henry L. Smith and amended and adopted:

- 1) That the General Assembly decline to adopt the portions of both (all) reports [Section B (p.802-815) and Recommendations 5,6, and 7 (p.820-21) of the Permanent Committee Report and Recommendations 4,5 and 6 (p.827-839) of the Committee of Commissioners Report and Item 4.a. and b. {p.823} of the Minority Report] dealing with the investigation of the CRC;
- 2) That except for examining official acts and pronouncements of the CRC, the General Assembly now terminate all its efforts at an investigation of the CRC, for which there is questionable warrant, and is beyond the scope and competency of a committee of the PCA;
- 3) That should the CRC finalize the process to open the offices of ruling and teaching elder (ministerial and elder) to women, the Interchurch Relations Committee is instructed to bring to the next General Assembly following a recommendation concerning the continuation of fraternal relations with the CRC;
- 4) That we dispatch to the CRC 1994 Synod, without any editorial comment added, the following:

We call upon you to reverse the steps you have taken to open the offices of minister and elder to women, believing that the clear teaching of Scripture reserves these offices to certain qualified men. We plead with you not to be led by the spirit of the age but to lead the age to bow before the truth of God's Word. We pledge ourselves to pray for you that the Holy Spirit will lead you to a continued and renewed faithfulness to Christ and His gospel.

Adopted

1995, p. 167, 23-32, III, 10 thru 12.

10. That the General Assembly direct the IRC to continue to monitor the acts and pronouncements of the CRC Synod (such as decisions regarding the opening of the offices of minister and elder to women) which may create significant conflicts between

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- the faith and order of the CRC and the PCA, and that the Permanent Committee report any developments to the next General Assembly. *Adopted*
11. That the General Assembly instruct the IRC to use all due process afforded to them to remove the CRC from membership in NAPARC, if the CRC does not repent of and rescind the action of the 1995 Synod at the 1996 Synod. *Adopted*
 12. That the 23rd General Assembly of the PCA instruct the Stated Clerk to send the following communication to the CRC:

"We value the relationship we have with the CRC through NAPARC. It is our desire to continue in full fellowship with you. However we are grieved and distressed over the action of the 1995 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to permit women to hold the offices of minister and elder. The action of the Christian Reformed Church is in contradiction to the clear teaching of Scripture and the historic presbyterian and reformed confessions of faith. Furthermore, we have instructed our Interchurch Relations Committee to use all due process afforded them in NAPARC to remove the Christian Reformed Church from membership in NAPARC, if the Christian Reformed Church does not repent of and rescind the action at the Synod. We commend the sizable number in your midst who are working hard to see the CRC remain faithful to Scripture on this issue and pray for God to use this group to prevail at the 1996 Synod."

Adopted as amended

1997, p. 50, 25-11. **COMMUNICATION 1** From the Christian Reformed Church in North America

June 28, 1996

Dear Dr. Gilchrist:

We greet you in the name of the risen and ascended Lord.

Your letter of September 15, 1996, addressed to the Christian Reformed Church in North America, officially conveying the communication adopted by the 23rd General Assembly, meeting in Dallas, Texas, on June 19-23, 1995, was received by the office of the general secretary. Following review and recommendation by the Interchurch Relations Committee, Synod 1996 of the Christian Reformed Church in North America provides you with the following reply.

We appreciate the expressed desire of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) to continue in full fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). We are grateful that you value the relationship we have through the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

The CRCNA does not take lightly its relationship with churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. Our denominations have enjoyed this ecclesial relationship since 1975. In that light we consider seriously your grief and distress over the action of Synod 1995 of the CRCNA to permit women to hold the offices of minister and elder. We also take note of your statements that "the action of the Christian Reformed Church is in contradiction to the clear teaching of Scripture and the historic Presbyterian and Reformed confessions of faith."

As you know, for many years the CRCNA has prayerfully and carefully debated the issue of admitting women to ecclesiastical office. Although synodical decisions in recent years have not always followed a consistent pattern, it must be maintained that in every substantive decision made, the CRCNA put forth a sincere effort to be obedient to the infallible Word of God and to the church's confessional standards. Synod 1995 did not declare that one approach to the matter was right and the other wrong. With respect

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to the issue of whether women are to serve in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist, it allowed that careful Reformed scholarship and obedient discipleship could bring individuals, local churches, and classes to differing perspectives and convictions, both of which honor the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God. Therefore, in the interest of both fidelity to the Scriptures and the unity of the body of Christ, Synod 1995 decided that its classes, responding to local needs and circumstances, may authorize the churches under their jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist (cf. *Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 733).

The CRCNA respectfully disagrees with the PCA call for us to “repent and rescind.” We acknowledge that our denomination has struggled as it has tried to discern the faithful contemporary application of Word and confession in the employment of women’s gifts in the body of Christ. Has this process reached a sinful conclusion? We think not. If some of our classes conclude that it is appropriate to ordain women to the specified offices, a practice followed in various ways by other denominations, the CRCNA questions the consistency of your calling our denomination to repentance while you tolerate such diversity in other denominations with which you have ecumenical relationships.

Furthermore, we believe that a church in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCNA should not instruct its Interchurch Relations Committee to “use all due process afforded them in NAPARC to remove the CRCNA from membership in NAPARC.” The implications of such an act would likely lead to the termination of our formal ecclesiastical fellowship.

The CRCNA would humbly submit that there are not only a “sizable number in [our] midst who are working hard to see the CRC remain faithful to Scripture on this issue” but that this description characterizes the whole CRCNA.

Rather than straining or breaking relationships, let us strive together to understand one another, noting our differences, and let us “exercise . . . mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity” (Provisions of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, *Acts of Synod 1974*, p. 57).

For the Christian Reformed Church in North America
/s/ David H. Engelhard, General Secretary

ATTACHMENT: Church Order Supplements

A listing of synodical regulations, specifically designated by synod for inclusion, pertaining to the implementation of Church Order Articles.

SUPPLEMENT, ARTICLE 3-a

- A. A classis may, in response to local needs and circumstances, declare that the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative, and authorize the churches under its jurisdiction to ordain and install women in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist.
- B. Synod 1995 adopted the following regulations associated with the above declaration:
 - 1. A classis which has decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a is inoperative for its constituent churches shall not have the right to delegate women officebearers to synod.
 - 2. A classis which has decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a is inoperative for its constituent churches shall not have the right to appoint a woman minister to serve as synodical deputy.
 - 3. A classis which has decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a will remain operative for its constituent churches shall nevertheless acknowledge a church’s

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right, in response to local needs and circumstances, to take exception to the decision of classis as it applies to the office of elder. In such a case, the classis shall not exercise its disciplinary authority to enforce compliance, provided that the role of women elders is restricted to the local church in which they hold office.

4. In the consideration of applications for candidacy for the office of minister of the Word submitted by qualified women, both the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary and synod shall ensure that trustees and delegates will not be forced to participate against the dictates of their consciences. In the declaration of candidacy, delegates will exercise their right to abstain from voting without pressure or reprisal.
5. The general secretary shall maintain a list of classes which have decided that the word *male* in Article 3-a of the Church Order is inoperative for their constituent churches, and publish that list annually along with the presentation of candidates for the ministry in *The Banner*.
6. Synodical agencies shall not appoint women as ministers of the Word to any field of labor within their jurisdiction, nor seek to have them installed by a local church.
7. Synodical deputies shall not be asked to participate against the dictates of their consciences in any matter relating to ministers of the Word as provided in Articles 6-18 and 82-84 of the Church Order.

(Acts of Synod 1995, pp. 733-35)

SUPPLEMENT, ARTICLE 4-a

Modification for Churches of Classis Red Mesa

In calling to an office, the council shall present to the congregation a nomination of one or more persons for each position to be filled.

(Acts of Synod 1983, p. 660)

SUPPLEMENT, ARTICLE 5

Form of Subscription

We, the undersigned, servants of the divine Word in the _____ Christian Reformed Church in Classis _____, by means of our signatures declare truthfully and in good conscience before the Lord that we sincerely believe that all the articles and points of doctrine set forth in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort fully agree with the Word of God.

We promise therefore to teach these doctrines diligently, to defend them faithfully, and not to contradict them, publicly or privately, directly or indirectly, in our preaching, teaching or writing.

We pledge moreover not only to reject all errors that conflict with these doctrines, but also to refute them, and to do everything we can to keep the church free from them.

We promise further that if in the future we come to have any difficulty with these doctrines or reach views differing from them, we will not propose, defend, preach, or teach such views, either publicly or privately, until we have first disclosed them to the council, classis or synod for examination.

1998, p. 73, 26-22, III, 7. That the proposal from NAPARC be approved: that the Christian Reformed Church in North America be suspended from membership in NAPARC.

Adopted

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

COMMUNICATION 1 From NAPARC re. CRC

Dear brethren:

- I. At the Twenty-third Meeting of The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council, held in Atlanta on November 18-19, 1997, the following was passed, as found in the minutes of the meeting:

Resolved that NAPARC initiate the process to suspend the Christian Reformed Church in North America from its membership.

After a time of discussion and a short recess for the delegations of member churches to discuss the motion concerning the suspension of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the question was put to the council.

The vote was as follows:

ARPC	Yes	PCA	Yes
CRCNA	No	RCUS	Yes
KAPC	Yes	RPCNA	Yes
OPC	Yes		Approved (6-1)

The council having voted according to the Constitution of NAPARC (Section V.3) the major assemblies of member churches have three years in which to vote on the matter of suspension and should two thirds vote in the affirmative the suspension will be in effect. You are hereby requested to take action on this matter in your major assembly and to inform the Secretary of NAPARC regarding your decision.

- II. A summary review of some of the actions of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council having to do with the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the matter of women in ecclesiastical office is as follows:

From the Minutes of the 19th Meeting of NAPARC (1993)

That the Council express to the Synod of the CRC its renewed concern regarding the proposal of the 1993 Synod to permit women to serve in the office of teaching and ruling elder by sending a similar statement to the one adopted in the 1990 and 1991 meetings of the Council, to wit:

In harmony with the stated "purpose and function" of the NAPARC to "exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention, and propagation of the Reformed Faith (Constitution III:3), the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council calls upon the Christian Reformed Church to reverse the action of the 1990 Synod leading to the opening of the offices of minister and ruling elder to women, as contrary to the Scripture and the Reformed standards which insist that "everything [will] be carried on in the church. . . according to the rule prescribed by Saint Paul in his Epistle to Timothy" (*Belgic Confession of Faith* Article XXX). 1 Timothy 2 and 3, in giving authoritative instruction regarding proper conduct "in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (3:15), the Apostle explicitly disallows to a woman the exercise of teaching or ruling authority over men in the church (2:12), and grounds this command in the divine creation order.

Also from the Minutes of the 19th Meeting of NAPARC (1993)

That NAPARC appoint a study committee consisting of one representative of each church to review the relevant documents of the Christian Reformed Church in North America that give the grounds for the opening of the office of elder to women, such committee to report its findings to the next meeting of NAPARC so the matter may be discussed by the council.

From the 20th Meeting of NAPARC (1994)

The Study Committee reported to the meeting in part as follows:

On the basis of our study and discussion, we have concluded that:

- (1) The decision of the 1991 and 1993 Synods of the Christian Reformed Church to move toward permitting women to be ordained as elders

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is contrary to the teaching of God's Word and contradicts the predominant practice of the Christian Church from apostolic times until now.

- (2) The attempt to support the decision from the Scripture is unpersuasive, resting as it does on faulty exegesis.

Also from the Minutes of the 20th Meeting of NAPARC (1994)

That this meeting of NAPARC express to the Christian Reformed Church in North America its deep thanks to God for the decision to which he led the CRC Synod 1994 to disapprove the ordination of women to ruling and teaching office in the church and to express the devout hope that that position will not change.

- III. Certain officers of NAPARC were requested to formulate, from the actions of major assemblies of the NAPARC churches pursuant to the matter of the ordination of women to ecclesiastical office in the Christian Reformed Church in North America, reasons to be sent to the NAPARC churches with citations from the actions of the major assemblies of the NAPARC churches.

In fulfillment of this mandate we would present the following:

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church:
No formal actions by the Synod. The following was reported:
While the ARPC has not produced a detailed body of official literature on the topic of women's ordination, the arguments pro and con were extensively discussed in the courts and publications of the church. The conclusion of the General Synod seems to have been that the teaching of Scripture is clear on this matter and that a change in the Form of Government (which ministers affirm to be "agreeable to and founded on the Word of God" (FOG X.D.2.g.4) is not warranted.
2. Christian Reformed Church in North America
Opposed the proposed suspension
3. Korean American Presbyterian Church
The Interchurch Relations Committee reported to NAPARC that their "GA voted in unanimity to file a petition with the Secretary of NAPARC that an action be taken that the Christian Reformed Church in North America be terminated in its membership in NAPARC, on the ground that the said Church voted in 1996 to allow women to be ordained to church office, and that that decision was never rescinded in its 1997 synodical Assembly."
4. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
The following statement was made by The Orthodox Presbyterian Church General Assembly to the Christian Reformed Church in North America Synod with respect to their opening of the special "offices of elder, minister and evangelist" to women, declaring their action to be contrary to sound doctrine [*Minutes of the 64th General Assembly* (1997) pp. 49-53].

Grounds:

1. The ordination/installation of women to "the office of elder, minister, or evangelist" is prohibited by Scripture (1 Timothy 2:12). Synod 1995 erred when it set aside a clear Scripture command (1 Tim. 2:12) when it opened the special offices of "elder, minister, and evangelist" to persons biblically prohibited from holding them (*Acts of Synod 1995*, Arts. 75 and 79, pp. 731-736). The inviolability of the passage is particularly incisive. God declares, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over the man." That this prohibition clearly is an abiding prohibition for the church today is apparent from its context. Scripture gives the reasons for that prohibition by declaring, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (v.13). He then states a second reason for the prohibition, namely, "For Adam was not the one

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- deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner” (v.14). Scripture thus grounds its forbidding of women to rule and teach in the church in the account of creation and the fall. And by grounding the prohibition in these events in the history of redemption, the prohibition is removed from the temporary and culturally conditioned to that of abiding requirement for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The final authority in determining whether the special offices of “elder, minister, and evangelist” are open to women is Scripture alone.
 - a. “The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.10)
 - b. “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.9)
 - c. “We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without doubt, all things contained in them. . . .” (*Belgic Confession* V).
 - d. “. . . Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule. . . .” (*Belgic Confession* V)
 3. It is one of the hallmarks of the Reformed church that it has developed a self-conscious hermeneutic, especially in the area of church government and worship. That hermeneutic is the centuries-old Reformed “Regulative Principle,” namely, that there must be positive warrant from Scripture for every element of doctrine, government, and worship in the church, that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence therefrom, is forbidden.
 - a. “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, *is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture*: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that 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.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.6, *emphasis added*)
 - b. “The light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation,

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- or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.”*
(Westminster Confession of Faith XXI.1, emphasis added)
- c. “We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein. For since the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in [Holy Scriptures] at large, it is unlawful for any one, though an Apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures.....” *(Belgic Confession VII)*
 - d. “Question 96: What does God require in the second commandment?
Answer: That we in nowise make any image of God, nor worship him in any way other than he has commanded in his Word.”
(Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 96, emphasis added)
 - b. “Christ orders his church by the rule of his Word; the pattern of officers, ordinances, government, and discipline set forth in Scripture is therefore to be observed as the instruction of the Lord. *Church government must conform to the scriptural pattern and follow the specific provisions revealed in the New Testament*” *(OPC Form of Government 1.3, emphasis added)*
4. Christ has appointed a government in His Church, and governors and ministers thereto, whose authority to govern and minister rests solely upon Christ’s appointment.
- a. “We believe that this true Church must be governed by the spiritual policy which our Lord has taught us in his Word, namely, that there must be Ministers or Pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the Sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors from the council of the Church; that by these means true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine every where propagated, likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means; also that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, according to their necessities. By these means every thing will be carried on in the Church in good order and decency, when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul to Timothy.” *(Belgic Confession XXX, emphasis added)*
 - b. “We believe that the Ministers of God’s Word, and the Elders and Deacons, ought to be chosen to their respective offices by a lawful election of the Church, with calling upon the name of the Lord, and in that order which the Word of God teacheth. Therefore every one must take heed not to intrude *himself* by indecent means, but is bound to wait till it shall please God to call *him*; that *he* may have testimony of *his* calling, and be certain that it is of the Lord...” *(Belgic Confession XXXI, emphasis added)*
 - c. “In the mean time we believe that it is useful and beneficial that those who are rulers of the Church institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the Church; yet they ought studiously to take care that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only master, hath instituted. And, therefore, we reject all human inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner ...” *(Belgic Confession XXXII, emphasis added)*
 - d. “The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of Church officers.....” *(Westminster Confession of Faith XXX.1)*
 - e. “To these officers, the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed...”
(Westminster Confession of Faith XXX.2)

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- f. “There is therefore but one King and Head of the church, the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, who rules in his church by his Word and Spirit. His mediatorial office includes all the offices in his church. It belongs to his majesty from his throne of glory not only to rule his church directly but also to use the ministry of men in ruling and teaching his church through his Word and Spirit, thus exercising through men his own authority and enforcing his own laws. *The authority of all such ministerial office rests upon his appointment*, who has ordained government in his church, revealed its nature to us in his Word, and promised his presence in the midst of his church as this government is exercised in his name.” (*OPC Form of Government* 1.2, emphasis added)
5. It is especially important that those who fill the pulpits in the church be there only by divine appointment.
 - a. “Question: By whom is the word of God to be preached? Answer: The word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office.” (*Westminster Larger Catechism* Q&A. 158).
 - b. “The public reading of the Holy Scriptures [in public worship] is performed by the minister as *God’s servant.....*” (*Directory for the Public Worship of God*, III.2, emphasis added)
 - c. “In the sermon God addresses the congregation by the mouth of his servant [the minister].” (*Directory for the Public Worship of God*, III.3, emphasis added)
6. The qualifications for those who would hold special office in the church are part of the “all things necessary” (in *Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.6, see above), and therefore are elemental...not (merely) circumstantial...to the worship and government of the Church. And Scripture is (as it must be for things which are elemental) sufficiently clear on the matter of whether women may hold the special offices of elder, minister, or evangelist.
7. Synod 1995 erred when it determined to “recognize that there are two different perspectives and convictions, both of which honor the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God, on the issue of whether women are allowed to serve in the offices of elder, minister, and evangelist based on the assertion that numerous presentations to synods have “adduced] good biblical grounds for [the two mutually contradictory] positions” (*Acts of Synod 1995*, Article 75, pages 731-732). Synod 1995’s action does injury to the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture and to the infallible rule of its interpretation.
8. Synod 1995 further erred when it acted to change an element (the qualifications for special office) in the government and worship of the church without positive Scriptural warrant. We note that proponents of arguments proffered in favor of changing a teaching regarding the government and worship of the church which has been the established position of the godliest of saints for almost 2,000 years are themselves willing to claim no more than “rough epistemic parity” for their new interpretation. Such hermeneutic falls far short of the Regulative Principle which has been embraced by Reformed churches since the time of the Reformation itself.
9. As with other actions that violate a command of Scripture, the action of Synod 1995 to relegate an elemental matter (like qualification for special office) to a detail for “regional decision” is inherently destabilizing and unworkable, and ultimately proves to be divisive to the body of Christ. When a duly ordained minister of the Word enters the pulpit, is he there by divine appointment? But what if he is biblically disqualified (or prohibited) from holding that office, is he still divinely appointed to such? Should he be received by those in the congregation as such? Does the King and Head of the church entrust the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven to persons whom he

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has previously barred from holding the office to which the exercise of church keys has been committed?

The action of Synod 1995, by corrupting the biblical qualifications for special office in the church, insinuates itself into the three areas of the church's life (preaching, sacraments, and discipline) that have been cataloged as the marks by which a true church is known.

- a. "...The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing the sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church..." (*Belgic Confession XXIX*).
 - b. "This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular Churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them." (*Westminster Confession of Faith XXV.4*)
5. **Presbyterian Church in America**
The following statement was adopted by the 23rd General Assembly (1995) of the Presbyterian Church in America:
"...we are grieved and distressed over the action of the 1995 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to permit women to hold the offices of minister and elder. The action of the Christian Reformed Church is in contradiction to the clear teaching of Scripture and the historic presbyterian and reformed confessions of faith. Furthermore, we have instructed our Interchurch Relations Committee to use all due process afforded to them in NAPARC, if the Christian Reformed Church does not repent of and rescind the action of Synod." (*M23GA*, p. 168)
6. **Reformed Church in the United States**
The only action of Synod germane to this subject is the declining of "the invitation of the Christian Reformed Church to begin talks toward establishing fraternal relationships between our two denominations" (Recommendation #23, Standing Ecumenical Committee, *1996 Abstract*, P. 71).
7. **Reformed Presbyterian Church North America**
No formal actions by the Synod.

Yours in Christ's service,
/s/ Donald J. Duff, Secretary

COMMUNICATION 2 From the Christian Reformed Church in North America

Dear Friends:

Greetings in the name of the risen and ascended Christ!

This letter is addressed to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) in response to the action that was taken by the North American Presbyterian Reformed Council on November 18-19, 1997, namely to "initiate the process to suspend the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) from its membership."

The action was taken by a 6 to 1 unit vote, with only the CRCNA voting against the motion to initiate suspension. Your delegation voted in favor of the motion.

"....According to the Constitution of NAPARC (section V, 3) the major assemblies of member churches have three years in which to vote on the matter of suspension, and should two thirds vote in the affirmative the suspension will be in effect." Your assembly has therefore been "requested to take action on this matter in your major assembly and to inform the Secretary of NAPARC regarding your decision."

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Following the decision certain officers of NAPARC were requested to formulate, from the actions of major assemblies of the NAPARC churches, reasons for the decision gathered from the actions of member-church assemblies.

Your 23rd General Assembly (1995) voted to instruct your Interchurch Relations Committee to use all due process afforded to them in NAPARC to remove the CRCNA from membership in NAPARC. Incidentally, the reference to PCA action reported in the decisions gleaned by the NAPARC officers and distributed to churches is not a complete statement.

Now you are requested to vote on the matter of suspending the membership of the CRCNA from NAPARC membership.

The Interchurch Relations Committee of the CRCNA earnestly requests that your assembly/synod not vote to suspend the membership in NAPARC of the CRCNA.

Please note the following reasons for maintaining the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC:

- The CRCNA is one of the founding churches of NAPARC.
- The CRCNA adheres to the basis of the council as articulated in NAPARC's Constitution (Section II).
- Although a purpose of NAPARC is to "facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems which divide them as well as on those which they face in common. . ." there has not been substantive conciliar discussion relative to the issue of admitting women to ecclesiastical office. Only between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the CRCNA have there been intensive discussions, initiated by the CRCNA. There has been limited discussion between the Presbyterian Church in America and the CRCNA. The CRCNA is persuaded that the provisions of the Constitution argue for the maintenance of its membership rather than its suspension.

Please note that the above reference to "those issues and problems which divide them as well as. . .those which they face in common. . ." means that we may and should together belong to NAPARC even if we think differently on some issues. Reformed and Presbyterian churches have had a long history of differences on certain issues. We believe that our multilateral relationship through NAPARC should not be suspended or terminated.

We are enclosing a copy of *The Hermeneutics and Theological Method of the CRC Position on Women's Ordination* as prepared for discussions with the OPC by Dr. John Cooper, Professor of Philosophical Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We trust that this material will assist you in taking the opportunity and the time once more to consider the matter from the perspective of the CRCNA.

We regret that the action of NAPARC 1997 suggests that we cannot live in close harmony and in keeping with the prayer of our Lord, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." John 17:23.

In light of the above, we urge you to vote against the suspension of the CRCNA as a member-denomination of NAPARC.

For the Interchurch Relations Committee,

/s/ Leonard J. Hofman, Administrative Secretary

THE HERMENEUTICS AND THEOLOGICAL METHOD OF THE CRC POSITION ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION

By Dr. John Cooper

- I. Principles and methods of exegesis (cf. Louis Berkhof): Identifying the meaning of the text
 - A. Grammatical-literary method
 - B. Historical-contextual method
 - C. Theological method: what the individual text means within the whole of Scripture
- II. Theological method: Identifying the teaching of Scripture as a whole

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- A. Part-whole dialectic: how the parts constitute the whole; how the whole locates and contextualizes the parts
 - B. Scripture as a whole: progressive redemptive-historical revelation of how God in Jesus Christ is redeeming and restoring his fallen creation, especially his covenant people, and how he wishes us to live in relation to him; God's sovereignty in creation and redemption, covenant, and kingdom are the basic themes.
 - C. Specific doctrines: determined by drawing the teaching of all relevant parts of Scripture into a coherent whole — the analogy of Scripture; "let Scripture Interpret Scripture"
 - D. The analogy of Scripture: how Scripture interprets Scripture
 - 1. Redemptive-historical, progressive revelation: e.g. N.T. interprets O.T.
 - 2. Kinds of analogy (both equally strong determiners of doctrine)
 - a. Positive analogy (what Scripture explicitly and repeatedly states)
 - b. General analogy (what Scripture repeatedly implies ["good and necessary inference"], Berkhof's teaching re the abolition of slavery)
 - c. How an analogy of Scripture is strong enough to overturn an apparently clear single text, according to the following rules (Berkhof's example: 1 John 3:6, which seems to say believers don't sin)
 - 3. Rules for weighting texts in formulating doctrine (all texts are not of equal weight)
 - a. Frequent and broadly distributed texts as stronger than a single text or single book
 - b. Univocal stronger than merely similar
 - c. Clear texts stronger than ambiguous or obscure texts
 - d. Apparently contradictory texts: affirm both, trusting ultimate coherence
 - E. Biblical doctrine as an ordered whole
We must not only coherently order all the teachings of Scripture but also discern the relations among them: which are basic and central and how the others derive from those upon which they depend. The true meaning of a doctrine depends in part on its place in the whole body of doctrine.
- III. Application of Scripture to our lives today
- A. All of Scripture is normative for life today, but not all in the same way.
 - B. Much in Scripture is universally normative and applies straightforwardly today.
 - C. Biblical factors imply that not all scriptural directives are literally or universally normative.
 - 1. Grammatical-literacy: literal or figurative, a command or advice, etc.
 - 2. Historical
 - a. Redemptive-historical: fulfillment of some O.T. laws
 - b. Historical-cultural change in Scripture: haircuts, head coverings
 - 3. Accommodations to culture
 - a. Adiaphora: greeting customs, hair length
 - b. Fallen: polygamy, divorce, slavery?
 - 4. Situational instructions: "don't eat blood or strangled meat"
 - D. The key distinction: principle and application of principle.
Using Reformed hermeneutics, exegesis, and theological methodology, we can (usually) determine when Scripture is stating an enduring principle or command and when a biblical instruction, injunction, or command is the application of an enduring principle, which may or may not be explicitly stated.
- IV. Conclusion: one hermeneutical-theological approach to doctrine and life; two results

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Using the above principles, a good case can be made both for the prohibition of the ordination of women and for the permissibility of the ordination of women. While this may involve differing exegeses of such texts as 1 Timothy 2, more than exegesis is involved.

Also involved are different ways of weighting and interrelating, within the corpus of Reformed doctrine, the teachings on the equality of men and women in creation, fall, redemption, and eschaton and the subordination of women to men in marriage and beyond marriage, the nature and relation of office to gifts and anointing by God's Spirit in O.T. and N.T., the meaning of authority, and the like.

These differences in interrelating various doctrines involve a *different weighting of the positive and general analogy of Scripture and a different application of the rules for weighing texts*. As a result, they yield *differing conclusions about what is principle and what is application of principle* in such crucial texts as 1 Timothy 2.

For example, the case for women's ordination views the equality of men and women as theologically-ontologically more basic and enduring than the subordination of women in marriage and sees Paul's main concern in the relevant passages to be the protection of marriage. (Marriage is one specification of the male-female relation in creation, and for Paul marriage is an expression of the oneness we have in the body of Christ. It no longer obtains in the new creation.) So 1 Timothy 2 is, among other things, an application of the principle of the sanctity of marriage. But this means that if women are unmarried or if they are in a cultural setting where marriage is not threatened by female leadership in worship, such leadership does not necessarily violate Paul's principle. And the basic equality of men and women in Christ would move the interpreter toward equal eligibility for leadership where equal giftedness is present. (A theology of office, authority, and gifts also comes into play here.)

The tradition's position against the ordination of women weights the spiritual equality of men and women and the relational subordination of women equally, affirming them both as correlative principles which are coherent because they have different meanings and domains. A crucial idea is that male headship in marriage also obtains in the church so that no woman could have authority over any man. All the texts enjoining or manifesting the subordination of women, including 1 Timothy 2, are taken as reiterating a universal and enduring biblical principle. Equality of giftedness and equality of male and female in the threefold office of Christ are understood as perfectly consistent with this exclusion of women from the offices of the church.

V. Burden of proof? Slippery slope?

- A. Given the church's long tradition, the burden of proof obviously falls on those who favor change.
- B. What must be proven? How heavy is the burden of proof? Consider three levels.
 1. Both positions are exegetically-theologically legitimate and roughly equal in strengths and weaknesses (rough epistemic parity).
 2. The new view is clearly superior exegetically-theologically to the traditional view.
 3. The Bible clearly teaches the new view; the traditional view is demonstrably mistaken.
- C. **The CRC holds V, B, 1 above.**
 1. Two interoperations are possible. This does not mean that Scripture is contradictory. The uncertainty is with our interpretation, not Scripture.
 2. Since two interpretations are possible within the CRC's confessional commitments, the Reformed principle of not binding consciences is appropriately applied. For us this includes how Scripture regulates worship and church government.
 3. Slippery slope? Does the case for permissibility of women's ordination undermine the church's position on other issues, such as euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality, and inclusive language for God? Not at all. The case for

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women's ordination is based on the positive and general analogy of Scripture regarding the equality of men and women in creation and in Christ, an analogy affirmed by both sides in the debate. There is nothing in Scripture which would generate an analogy for killing the innocent, approving homosexuality, or inventing new names for God. Some arguments for women's ordination and for these other positions have used a new hermeneutic, but the CRC case for the permissibility of ordaining women uses the old hermeneutic, which rules out liberal views on other contemporary issues.

1998, p. 73, 26-22, III, 7. That the Christian Reformed Church in North America be suspended from membership in NAPARC. *Adopted*

Response To CRC

1998, p. 91, 26-22, III, 13. That the 26th General Assembly respond to Communication 2 from the Christian Reformed Church as follows:

"Esteemed brethren of the CRC:

Greetings in the name of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

We have come to you in response to your request to reconsider our decision regarding the membership of the CRCNA in NAPARC.

You have favored us with your rationale for the synodical decision which opened the offices of elder and deacon to women in the CRCNA. We appreciate your openness and your readiness to communicate this with us.

After prayerfully discussing the paper of Dr. John Cooper on the Hermeneutics and Theological Method of the CRC position on women's ordination, we humbly submit to you our response with the hope and prayer that you may receive it as a fraternal expression of Biblical thought and exegesis which springs from our hearts, with the prayer that you may re-evaluate your position at the 2000 Synod in this light.

Dr. Cooper maintains that a good case can be made for both the prohibition and the permissibility of the ordination of women.

Can, however, a Biblically based case be made for both? We do not believe a Biblically based case can be made for the permissibility of women in the authoritative offices of the church in the face of what the Apostle Paul states in I Timothy 2:12: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent."

Dr. Cooper's case rests on the philosophical argument that the theological/ontological equality of man and woman requires functional subordination of woman to man only in the realm of marriage. He submits no Biblical evidence for this. The same Apostle who wrote Galatians 3:28, "There is no Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" also wrote I Timothy 2:12 (above). He saw no incompatibility between the spiritual unity in Christ and the functional subordination in church office. Furthermore a good Biblical example of ontological equality and functional subordination is the Holy Trinity. The three Persons of the Trinity are one in essence and being, yet the Son, Jesus Christ submitted Himself to the Father as the Apostle Paul says: "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). The functional subordination of the Son to the Father does not compromise their full equality. Dr. Cooper, however, sees any teaching of functional difference to be in tension with equality.

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Dr. Cooper also believes that the I Timothy passage deals with marriage and the concern to preserve the difference of husband and wife. However, a careful exegesis of this passage in the context of the whole of I Timothy teaches that it deals not with marriage but with worship and the proper order of the church. "Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (I Timothy 3:14, 15).

Dr. Cooper speaks of "weighting" text. One of the principles of Professor Louis Berkhof's hermeneutics is that a positive analogy of Scripture is better than a general analogy. When texts speak directly and explicitly to a particular matter, and when they do so with one voice, then their teaching has clear and compelling authority. This is precisely the case regarding ordination. In those texts which deal directly and explicitly with the point at issue, namely, whether women may serve as an ordained officer of the church, the teaching is uniformly "no." This should be more than enough to settle the issue in a church of the Reformed persuasion.

Professor Berkhof insisted on the organic unity of Scripture and the necessary consistency of its teachings. Nowhere does Professor Berkhof countenance the idea that an appeal to the general or positive analogy of Scripture could sustain two equally valid, yet contradictory conclusions: namely, that of prohibiting and that of permitting the ordination of women. Yet that is precisely what Dr. Cooper wants to do.

Dear brothers in the CRCNA, you have asked us to take the paper of Dr. Cooper and once more consider the matter of women's ordination from the perspective of the CRCNA. We have done this and do not find his argument persuasive. We cannot accept the fact that a Biblically based case can be made for two contradictory positions. To use the venerable Professor Berkhof in defense of this is gross injustice to one of the great pillars of the CRCNA. We sincerely hope that you will consider some of our remarks about Cooper's paper to be helpful to you in order that you may re-evaluate your position, since the whole matter of women's ordination will come up again for review at the 2000 Synod of the CRCNA."

Adopted

ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP: TERMINATION OF

1997, p. 56, 25-15, III, 2. That the General Assembly terminate our recognition of the Christian Reformed Church as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCA effective immediately and the IRC be instructed to initiate conversations with the CRC with a view toward making a recommendation to the 26th General Assembly concerning the future relationship between the two denominations but that presbyteries and sessions be encouraged to develop fellowship with the classes and congregations of the CRC which do not ordain women to ruling office.

Adopted as amended

FRATERNAL DELEGATES - ROTATION

1997, p. 61, 25-15, III, 5. That the General Assembly approve the rotation of Fraternal Delegates speaking at the General Assembly so that we may send and receive fraternal greetings every other year but that we allow denominations who wish to do so send delegates every year.

Adopted as amended

PCA DIGEST

NAPARC

Suspension of CRC

1998, p. 73, 26-22, III, 7. **Communication 1** from NAPARC (See under CRC above, p. 28)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS (NAE)

1997, p. 54, 25-11. **Communication 2** From the President of National Association of Evangelicals:

Greetings to all in attendance at the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Church in America.

We now have statistical evidence of spiritual renewal in the Nation. The percentage of people reporting a born-again experience is up five percent over the previous five years. This is a statistically significant number. Also, this is the first upturn in five years. These statistics were gathered the first three months of this year, so they are current. Be encouraged!

Alister McGrath, in his book, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, concludes that "the Christian vision of the future now seems increasingly to belong to evangelicalism, which is coming more and more to constitute the mainstream of American Protestant Christianity.

"Evangelicalism is a high-octane faith that seems set to continue its upswing into the next millennium. In a 1990 survey of the 500 fastest-growing Protestant congregations in the United States, 89 percent were found to be evangelicals.

"Evangelicalism is one of the powerhouses of the modern Christian church in the Western world. . . . Evangelicalism, once regarded as marginal, has now become mainline, and it can no longer be dismissed as an insignificant sideshow, sectarian tendency or irrelevant."

At a critical time in our nation's history, God brought NAE into existence. For over 55 years, people of Bible-based faith have discovered *cooperation without compromise*. Evangelicals *standing* for biblical truth, *speaking* with a representative voice and *serving* the evangelical church have had a greater impact working together than they would have accomplished/realized individually. Today, NAE includes 49 member denominations, 43,000 churches from 70 denominations, 255 parachurch ministries and educational institutions. We are told that with our affiliates, NAE speaks for approximately 27 million people.

The Presbyterian Church in America has been a vital part of the National Association of Evangelicals.

NAE has been involved in vital areas since you last met. The following are just a few examples:

- Fasting and prayer
- Evangelism
- Racial reconciliation
- Rebuilding of burned Black churches, in partnership with the National Black Evangelical Association and World Relief Corporation
- Leadership on behalf of persecuted Christians around the world

When the Presbyterian Church in America joins with 48 other denominations and thousands of churches through NAE, your impact is multiplied many times.

NAE is a *forum* for evangelical leaders, a *voice* to the church and secular world, and a *resource* for programs that network evangelicals.

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (OPC)

1994, p. 196, 22-40, IV, 8. "That the 22nd General Assembly respond to Communication #1 from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church by referring to the action taken on the matter of union with the OPC by the 20th General Assembly, that

The best way that the PCA can understand the desire of the OPC for union is for the OPC to take their necessary constitutional steps requesting to be received into the PCA, and that the Interchurch Relations Committee continue to be available to the OPC Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations for discussion of matters relating to the joining and receiving process.

noting our own happy experience with the joining and receiving method of union when the PCA and the RPCES became one church in 1982." *Adopted*

"THREE FORMS OF UNITY": PROPOSAL

1997, p. 61, 25-15, III, 6. That the General Assembly refer recommendation #6 of the Permanent Committee back to the IRC to bring to the 26th General Assembly, if the IRC sees sufficient warrant, a fully developed proposal to be sent to the Presbyteries. That brother elders and congregations from Reformed denominations which use the "Three Forms of Unity" as a doctrinal standard considering union with the PCA be encouraged to study the doctrinal standards of the PCA in order to discover the wonderful unity that already exists between our two traditions, with the hope that they will find our doctrinal standards an adequate confession of their faith and sufficient ground for ecclesiastical union. *Adopted as amended*

REFORMED CHURCH U.S. (RCUS)

1994, p. 198, 22-40, IV, 9. "That the IRC present to the next General Assembly their recommendations, with grounds, as to whether or not the Assembly should enter into fraternal relations with the RCUS, as well as whether or not we should encourage our delegates to NAPARC to vote in favor of the reception of the RCUS into that body." *Adopted*

1995, p. 166, 23-32, III, 3. That the IRC be authorized and instructed to enter into discussions with the RCUS concerning the desirability of establishing fraternal relations between the two denominations. *Adopted*

WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WFRC)

1994, p. 198, 22-40, IV, 10. That the Assembly pause to pray for God's leading and blessing on steps being taken toward the formation of the World Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship, and that God would use this fellowship to strengthen the Reformed churches around the world and to further the evangelization of the world, to the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. That the General Assembly instruct the Interchurch Relations Committee to present any formal agreements to the Assembly for ratification which would establish a member role for the PCA in WPRF. *Adopted*

1995, p. 166, 23-32, III, 4 and 5.

4. That the Assembly approve PCA membership in the World Fellowship of Reformed Churches on the basis of the Bylaws and Statement of Faith contained therein, and that the IRC be responsible for keeping the General Assembly informed of developments in WFRC (ref MGA, II Appendix B, 67), and that the IRC be instructed to negotiate with other prospective members of the WFRC the addition of the doctrine of the inerrancy of

PCA DIGEST

Scripture to the doctrinal statement at the appropriate place. And that the Interchurch Relations Committee report to the 24th General Assembly the results of its negotiation.

Adopted as amended

5. That the Assembly pause to pray for God's blessing on WFRC, that He would be pleased to raise up a world network and fellowship of reformed churches committed to reaching the world with the gospel and working in cooperation to strengthen the church for Christ's glory.

Adopted

INVESTOR'S FUND FOR BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

1994, p. 190, 22-39, III, 7. **Recommendation F.** Therefore, the Trustees recommend with the endorsement of the Committee on Mission to North America and the Administrative Committee, the following:

In order to provide the maximum protection to the investors and borrowers of IFBD and the PCA from legal and/or financial entanglements arising from the operation of either IFBD or PCA, and to maintain the original intent of IFBD, it is recommended that the relationship of IFBD to the General Assembly be re-ordered in such a way as to make IFBD a separate, non-integrated supporting organization.

In order to effect this separation and repositioning, the Trustees of the Fund, with the concurrence of MNA and the AC, recommend the following:

1. That the Bylaws of Presbyterian Church in America, A Corporation, be amended to delete Article VI, Section 5 in its entirety and that the subsequent section be renumbered.
2. That RAO 4-3 be amended to delete "Investor's Fund for Building and Development".
3. That RAO 5-1 be amended to change "twenty" to "nineteen" and that reference to "Investor's Fund for Building and Development" be deleted and that the following be renumbered.
4. That RAO 13-1, second paragraph, item 8 be deleted and the subsequent items be renumbered.
5. That the following changes be made to the *Book of Church Order* through the normal process of amendment.
 - a. Amend *BCO* 14-1,12, paragraph 2 to change "twenty" to "nineteen".
 - b. Amend *BCO* 14-1, 12 (b5) to delete Investor's Fund for Building and Development and renumber.

Undertakings.

Subsequent to the approval of the enabling motions and no later than December 31, 1994, the Trustees of the Investor's Fund undertake to:

1. Amend the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and other organizing documents to delete references to any controlling interest in IFBD by Presbyterian Church in America, (A Corporation), or the General Assembly.
2. To notify all investors in a timely way, and in accordance with the Trust Indenture and applicable law of the change of control in IFBD and to provide them with their statutory and contractual remedies.
3. At the earliest practicable date after completion of the mid-year financial compilation to turn over the assets and liabilities of the Five Million Fund, previously transferred to IFBD, to MNA.

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

4. To submit for signature by Presbyterian Church in America, (A Corporation), and Investor's Fund for Building and Development a mutual indemnification agreement and a mutual waiver of liability. *Adopted as amended*

LEGAL AUDIT

1994, p. 269, 22-70, III, 6. "That **Overture 40** from Ascension Presbytery requesting that the Legal Audit be made public and that it be answered in the negative. *Adopted*

Grounds:

- a. The Committees of Commissioners for the various Permanent Committees and Agencies are reviewing the sections of the legal audit and the committees and agencies' responses to the issues raised. In addition, the Committee of Commissioners on Administration is reviewing the entire legal audit.
- b. At present, the legal audit is protected by attorney-client privilege and its contents may not be used against the PCA in a court of law. The very reason for having the legal audit conducted in the first place was to determine whether there are areas of civil vulnerability that should be corrected before being discovered by someone wishing to file suit against us.

Publishing or widely circulating the legal audit (to 1300 commissioners or every PCA church) would very likely destroy its protected status under attorney-client privilege and could lead to it falling into hands of someone who might wish to sue the PCA. The legal audit could provide a road map to any weak spots in our civil structure that could be used against us. An example might be a hiring practice, though perfectly innocent such as asking a prospective employee's age. One or more of our committees or agencies may have had such a practice that was discovered by the legal audit and as a result corrected. Were that fact to be revealed and the legal audit no longer protected by attorney-client privilege, the PCA would be in a severely weakened legal position.

In today's highly litigious society, it is certainly not far-fetched to foresee a situation where someone might very well seek to take one or more statements in the legal audit out of context and use it against the PCA.

- c. At the time of the commissioning of the Legal Audit, the permanent committees and agencies promised, at the request of Gammon and Grange, to limit distribution of the audit to coordinators, senior staff, committee and agency members and trustees, and the appropriate committees of commissioners. Such agreement was required before the firm would undertake the audit. Each person receiving a copy of the audit has agreed to maintain its confidentiality. To make distribution beyond that already made would be a serious breach of our moral obligation.
- d. The legal audit report is copyrighted by the Christian law firm of Gammon & Grange, which has spent years and a significant amount of money developing and refining their proprietary legal audit system. The agreement into which we entered with the law firm prohibits us from making wide spread distribution of the legal audit. To violate this agreement would also breach faith with our brothers in Christ and would inflict substantial financial damage on them.
- e. That the Twenty-Second General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America hereby declares its approval of the decision of its Stated Clerk, Dr. Paul Gilchrist, in his not sending copies of the Legal Audit to all commissioners in the Commissioners Handbook, and in his not sending copies of the Legal Audit to individuals requesting it prior to the General Assembly; and

PCA DIGEST

That the Twenty-Second General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America hereby declares its satisfaction that the Stated Clerk, in so acting, was following the directive of the 21st General Assembly, which had expressly declared that the "entire legal audit and responses be made available to the Committee of Commissioners on AC" (*M21GA*, p. 181); and

That the Twenty-Second General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America hereby declares that the characterization by the *Christian Observer* of the Stated Clerk's actions in this matter as "hiding" the audit is erroneous; and

That the Twenty-Second General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America respectfully requests the editors of the *Christian Observer* to publish this declaration at its earliest convenience.

1994, p. 272 ff, 22-79, III, 9 through 15. That the following be adopted as a prefatory statement to the portion of this Committee's report dealing with the Legal Audit:

In making the following recommendations, this Committee of Commissioners would like to inform the General Assembly that the Legal Audit contained no less than twenty-eight commendations. The Legal Audit identified as exemplary such things as the PCA's meticulous minutes, our thorough and thoughtful adjudicative procedures, our prudent litigation management procedures, our practice of annual financial audits, our comprehensive budget process, our attention to tax-exempt activities and the diligent service of our Committee heads and members.

(No action necessary)

MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA

REFORMED UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES

1996, p. 196, 24-31, 7. That **Overture 17** from Mississippi Valley Presbytery, **Overture 18** from Covenant Presbytery and **Overture 33** from Southeast Alabama Presbytery concerning the constituting of Reformed University Ministries as a separate permanent committee be answered by the following:

The General Assembly believes that constituting Reformed University Ministries as a new permanent committee may have significant advantages and disadvantages for Reformed University Ministries, GA/MNA and for the General Assembly of the PCA. Further, the change proposed has never been formally considered by MNA or by General Assembly.

Therefore, the General Assembly recognizes that GA/MNA Committee has appointed a study committee to study the relationship of Reformed University Ministries and GA/MNA, and awaits the report of its findings and recommendations to the 25th General Assembly, by normal process, through the GA/MNA Committee.

Adopted

1996, p. 242, 24-53, III, 27. That the 24th General Assembly concur with the MNA recommendations regarding **Overtures 17 and 18** which request General Assembly to spin off RUM into a permanent committee of the General Assembly and that MNA add RE William Joseph and TE Bill Fox from the Administrative Committee plus the Stated Clerk (*ex officio*) to the Study Committee which will report to the 25th General Assembly.

Adopted

1997, p. 162, 25-34, III, 13. That the 25th General Assembly delay its answer to **Overtures 17, 18 and 33** (see *M24GA*, 24-31, III, 7, p. 196) until the 26th GA, and that the Campus Study Committee, appointed by the GA MNA Committee March 1996 (3-96-37), after consultation with concerned presbyteries, bring specific recommendations to the 26th GA concerning Reformed University Ministry's relationship with the PCA.

Adopted

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

1998, p. 174, 26-44, III, 12. That the 1996 Overtures 17, 18 and 33 (*M24GA*, 24-31, III, 7, p. 196) "Establish RUM as A Permanent Committee of General Assembly" be answered by the following:

Adopted

That Reformed University Ministries continue its ministry as a component of GA MNA and not as a new permanent committee of the GA at this time.

That MNA Campus Ministries be directed to give highest priority to staffing needs at the national and regional levels, with a view toward establishment as a new permanent committee of GA.

That MNA be directed to continue the Campus Ministries Study Committee to evaluate the feasibility of such new permanent committee status with a report and recommendation made no later than the 29th GA.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR MINISTRY

1997, p. 151, 25-34, III, 7. That the General Assembly commend to the churches these resources and opportunities for ministry available through MNA:

- The opportunity to seek the Lord's leading in church planting, campus ministry or the chaplaincy.
- The opportunity to support church planting (Anglo and Multicultural), campus ministries, revitalization, chaplain ministries (especially through THE CHAPLAIN GUARDIAN CORPS), financially (in addition to Partnership Share/Askings participation) and in prayer.
- The opportunity to build relationships of fellowship and ministry with Korean churches and other ethnic groups within the PCA, as well as with other true believers in our local communities.
- Utilize the resources of Revitalization and Evangelism materials and consultation services.
- Recommend to church members that they subscribe (at no cost) to MNA INTERCESSOR, MULTIPLY, and MNA UPDATE.

Adopted

1998, p. 169, 26-4, III, 8. That the General Assembly commend to the churches these resources and opportunities for ministry available through MNA:

- The opportunity to seek the Lord's leading in church planting, campus ministry or the chaplaincy.
- The opportunity to support church planting (Anglo and Multicultural), campus ministries, church vitality, chaplain ministries (especially through THE CHAPLAIN GUARDIAN CORPS), regional coordinators and movement leaders, financially (in addition to Partnership Share/Askings participation) and in prayer.
- The opportunity to build relationships of fellowship and ministry with Korean churches and other ethnic groups within the PCA, as well as with other true believers in our local communities.
- Utilize the resources of Church Vitality materials and consultation services.
- Recommend to church members that they subscribe (at no cost) to MNA INTECESSOR AND MULTIPLY.

Adopted

PCA DIGEST

VISION 2000

1997, p. 150, 25-34, III, 3. That the General Assembly reaffirm its commitment to establishing 2000 churches and missions by the year 2000, and thank God for the increased church planting that is occurring under local church and presbytery sponsorship and for all PCA church planters, multicultural church planters and missionaries, chaplains, Campus Ministries staff and interns, and International Students Christian Fellowship missionaries. *Adopted*

WORSHIP PRACTICES, PROPOSED INVESTIGATION

1998, p. 176, 26-44, III, 16. That Overture 17 from Central Georgia Presbytery, "Investigate Worship Practices in Mission Churches in Utah", and Overture 28 from Grace Presbytery expressing support for Overture 17 be answered in the **negative** based upon the assurances set forth in the MNA memorandum as follows:

Adopted as amended

June 29, 1998

To: MNA Committee of Commissioners, 26th General Assembly

From: Philip Douglass, 1998-1999 MNA Chairman; Al LaCour, 1996-1998 MNA Chairman; and Cortez Cooper, MNA Coordinator

Over the last several weeks, we have labored to find the best ways to address the issues that arise out of Overtures 10, 16, 17 and 28. Our desire is that MNA faithfully serve the General Assembly.

At the time of our MNA Committee Conference Call on June 1, it appeared that the issues were primarily between Central Georgia Presbytery and MNA/GA, with Grace Presbytery affirming that these issues needed to be addressed. After that, considerably more public attention was brought to the situation. Therefore we seek appropriate ways to respond further.

As MNA Committee Chairmen and Coordinator, we pledge ourselves to take the following actions. In so doing, we speak only for ourselves, since there was not time for the MNA Committee to meet and deliberate further. We pray for the Lord's leading in the challenges before you as a Committee, and we offer to do whatever we can to assist you in the course of your work. In all of this, we pray for a good spirit in dealing with difficult issues together, and we pray for the advancement of the Lord's Kingdom.

Answering the Overture in the negative in no way provides MNA with an evasion of responsibility. Rather, it simply seeks to remand the conflict and confusion to its original sources, so that the process becomes manageable and is dealt with biblically in accordance with Matthew 18. We pledge ourselves to lead the MNA Committee and Staff in doing everything possible with Central Georgia Presbytery to address and resolve the grievances that provoked the overtures. Committee members, as well as Staff, will be directly involved in this process.

MNA requires the adherence of church planters and staff to the following guidelines regarding worship (excerpted from MNA "Church Essentials" document):

"The church is committed to the necessity of biblical worship and the spiritual growth process of its people. The church is led in vital worship that balances the vertical and the horizontal, the transcendence and the immanence of God, and the private and corporate aspects of worship."

This is minimally demonstrated by the following:

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

- The Pastor takes ultimate responsibility for the content and atmosphere of the worship service.
- Due to the high priority of worship in a biblical church, worship is conducted at the “prime time,” that is, on the Lord’s Day.
- The people are encouraged and trained in private and family worship.
- Worship considers the “unchurched” and seeks to make that activity intelligible in order that non-Christians may be drawn towards it.

“These guidelines, as used in submission to the Scriptures and the subordinate standards, are good and sufficient for directing the development of worship in a mission church. We note that the overtures do not spell out specifics about the worship of New Song. We note further that the information most commissioners may have on the worship of New Song has come through a video tape and printed materials that have no standing in the church courts. Nevertheless, based on such reports, it appears that the MNA Committee may not have adequately required New Song’s original church planter to adhere to these guidelines.”

Therefore, we pledge ourselves to devise regular procedures by which mission churches under MNA’s guidance are reviewed periodically as to these guidelines, and to require such remedies as may be necessary to bring them into conformity.

Since New Song Salt Lake is no longer under MNA/GA support or supervision, we cannot perform such a review for New Song. However, we would hope that Northern California Presbytery would do so. We believe the above portion of the MNA “Church Essentials” document provides a helpful guide in working with these mission churches.

We pledge ourselves to reaffirm the following administrative directive to the MNA Staff and to bring to the October 1998 meeting of the MNA Committee a recommendation for reaffirmation of the following: We reaffirm that all of our Staff, Regional Coordinators and Multicultural Movement Leaders (referred to as “MNA Staff” from here on) are servants of MNA/GA and our presbyteries, and possess no authority in themselves as individuals. They have the responsibility to coordinate church planting ministries of presbyteries and MNA/GA. In keeping with our theological belief that the Lord of the Church governs us through a plurality of elders under the authority of the Scriptures and our Confessional statements and not through individuals, MNA Staff are executors of policy determined by presbyteries and MNA/GA, and are not originators of policy. MNA Staff pledge the following, “I am committed to developing a church consistent with the above [MNA “Church Essentials” document] and would welcome periodic evaluation and accountability in that regard.” In addition, MNA Staff are submissive to their ordination vows – including vows of approval of biblical polity and subjection to brothers in the Lord.

In conclusion, we reiterate our desire to submit to the Assembly and our commitment to provide the leadership to the MNA Committee and Staff that is necessary to carry out Assembly policy and direction. This includes giving such guidance to our church planters as is essential to ensure that they conduct worship in a biblical manner. At the same time, we pray that our brothers will not put upon MNA a task that the Assembly itself has been unable to perform, namely, the task of eliminating confusion and conflict as to what biblical worship is or is not. Conflicts and questions related to worship abound in our presbyteries and our General Assembly. We will submit to our brothers, but MNA cannot resolve issues that the Assembly has been unable to resolve. We pray for patience with one another as we seek the Lord’s direction in being faithful to Him in what is surely the crown jewel of our Christian life – the worship of our great God.

PCA DIGEST

Worship Task Force

1996, p. 198, 24-31, III, 12. That the Assembly take note of the fact that the work of the MNA Worship Task Force is concluded, and the report is available from MNA upon individual request. *Adopted*

MISSION TO THE WORLD

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

1997, p. 141, 25-26, III, 5 and 6.

5. That the cooperative agreement with Action International Ministries be approved. (Appendix J, Attachment 1, p. 435) *Adopted*
6. That the cooperative agreement with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America be approved. (Appendix J, Attachment 2, p. 439) *Adopted*

GOAL OF ELIMINATING ADMINISTRATIVE ASSESSMENTS TO CAREER MISSIONARIES

1998, p. 162, 26-35, III, 4. That the proposed budget of MTW, as presented through the Administrative Committee, be approved. *Adopted under the AC report*

The General Assembly encourages congregations to fully support partnership shares of the MTW Committee with the goal of eliminating administrative assessments to career missionaries.

SUPPORT -- MISSIONARIES

1994, p. 209, 22-54, III, 19. "That Overture 41 from the Presbytery of the Ascension be answered in the affirmative with the following:

- a. That MTW will notify the respective presbytery of any changes in the status of TE members.
- b. That MTW's call to missionaries approved by the presbyteries currently includes a salary scale with built-in incremental adjustments. *Adopted*

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

MANUAL

1997, p. 174, 25-43, 1. That the General Assembly authorize the Nominating Committee to develop a Manual of Operations which would seek to include: (1) The purpose and responsibilities of the Nominating Committee; (2) the schedule for the process of submitting nominations; and (3) the actual process and forms for nominating; and that the General Assembly direct the Nominating Committee to submit the proposed manual to the 1998 General Assembly for information as part of its report. (See *M24GA*, 24-54, IV, 1, pg. 267 for precedent involving the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records Manual.) This manual would take effect after the 1998 General Assembly and any subsequent changes to the manual must be reported to the General Assembly for information. *Adopted*

[NOTE: Revised biographical form approved – see *M25GA*, Append. K, Attachment 1, p. 473]

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA FOUNDATION

FUNDING

1994, p. 279, 22-77, III, 3. "That the General Assembly approve modifying the current method of underwriting the Foundation's budget. *Adopted*

We recommend the following sources be used.

1. Undesignated earnings on retained accounts, such as Advise & Consult Funds, and earnings on the Foundation's Endowment Fund shall be used to reduce the budget requirements.
2. A realistic and competitive fee schedule be used for gifts designated outside of the PCA.
3. Ridge Haven, Ministerial Relief and the Administrative Committee would change their method of support. Beginning immediately they would contribute a realistic % of all gifts actually received through the Foundation. Such funds would be used to help underwrite the budget.
4. Mission to the World, Mission to North America, Christian Education & Publications, Covenant College and Covenant Theological Seminary would divide the balance of the budget equally.

NOTE: It should be noted that increasing use of the Foundation will increase fees, undesignated earnings and endowment funds. Thus the financial support of the committees and agencies should be decreasing.

SELF SUPPORTING:

1998, p. 221, 16-65, III, 8. That General Assembly approve the concept of the Foundation becoming self-supporting in the year 2000 and that the Foundation be commended for its desire to be self-supporting. Our goal is to relieve the Committees and Agencies of their financial responsibility by the year 2000, assuming that the Foundation's financial status so permits. *Adopted*

PCA NEWS OFFICE

1997, p. 172, 25-41, III, 7. That the General Assembly approve the following recommendation: That the General Assembly transfer the oversight of the PCA News Office/Information Center from under CE&P to that of the Administrative Committee for the purpose of cultivating information relations with news media and that CE&P be relieved of the responsibility of a PCA News Office. *Adopted*

PCA OFFICE BUILDING

DEEDING OF STREET PROPERTY

1995, p. 217, 23-46, III, 24. That the 23rd General Assembly of the PCA approve deeding of the street property of the PCA Office Building (Atlanta) to DeKalb County of the state of Georgia, pending approval by the owners of the adjacent properties and of DeKalb County. *Adopted*

POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST OF INDIVIDUALS ON NON-PCA CORPORATIONS

1995, p. 218, 23-46, III, 29. That **Overture 38** from Northern Illinois Presbytery (referred by the 22nd General Assembly) be answered by the following excerpt from the report of the Administrative Committee:

PCA DIGEST

"The 22nd General Assembly referred Overture 38 from the Presbytery of Northern Illinois which asked to 'investigate potential Conflict of Interest of individuals on non-PCA Corporations using the PCA Office Building' (M22GA, page 273). The AC adopted the following response:

"There are several corporations affiliated with the PCA which have their mailing address at the PCA Office Building, 1852 Century Place, Atlanta, Georgia. None of these represent Conflict of Interest for the personnel involved. Most of these have been authorized and approved by the General Assembly, for example: Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation), and affiliates: PCA Foundation, Inc. There are also a couple of corporations authorized by the General Assembly for dealing with programs in sensitive areas overseas. [Note: Insurance, Annuities and Relief is a trust rather than a separate corporation.]

"There are a couple of non-PCA organizations which lease office space from the PCA.

"With the move of Investor's Fund for Building and Development out of the building and then becoming Presbyterian Investor's Fund, Inc., the 12 or so for-profit or non-profit corporations have either been dissolved, are being dissolved, or have been relocated. In any case these latter corporations are no longer domiciled at the PCA Office Building, so there is no Conflict of Interest with respect to staff or officers of committees and agencies of the PCA in Atlanta."

Adopted

VACATING SPACE

1998, p. 162, 26-35, III, 7. That the Committee on Mission to the World and the Capital Building Fund Committee and the Administrative Committee meet and develop an amicable solution to the request of MTW to vacate space in the PCA Office Building between now and the end of 1998 with all rents paid. Further, MTW will not decrease its space (as of June 30, 1998) any further until the aforementioned resolution to the problem is resolved.

Adopted

PCA TRADE MARK

1997, p. 201, 25-51, III, 28. That the Assembly direct the Board of Directors to prepare a statement describing what is actually trademark protected so that there may be a clear understanding of what is or is not permissible regarding its usage. This statement is to be distributed to all sessions and ministers of the PCA by the 26th General Assembly. (M24GA, 24-53 III, 26, p. 241)

Adopted

In response to the above motion, at the October 1997 meeting, the Board of Directors received and adopted the following policy:

Preface

Since 1974 the Presbyterian Church in America has used the initials "PCA" to identify various programs and printed materials. In order to prevent confusion from any unauthorized use of the PCA initials, the "service mark" was registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in 1987. Thus, the Presbyterian Church in America has the exclusive right to use the PCA® initials in matters relating to educational services, ministry services and missionary services. The Administrative Committee, which serves as the Board of Directors of Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation), desiring to assist PCA churches in the appropriate use of the PCA® service mark, has adopted the following policy.

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

POLICY

1. Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) grants (either expressly or tacitly) and will continue to grant local churches and presbyteries the right to use its mark **PCA**[®] in connection with the name of the local church for ordinary local church activities (i.e. local advertising of the church's worship services and other activities, ministries in the local church and its community, local church newsletters for its members, etc.).
2. Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) requires that uses of the mark for other than ordinary local church activities be approved in advance by the Administrative Committee at the denominational level. Approval shall not be granted unless the Committee is able to assert sufficient control over the mark's use to assure the mark is only utilized in a manner consistent with the doctrinal tenets, existing ministries, and policies of the denomination.
3. Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation) requires that any incidents of possible trademark infringement be immediately reported to the Administrative Committee at the denominational level. The Committee will determine what appropriate action should be taken to promptly remedy the infringement.

Application

Because it is impossible to anticipate every possible situation when the **PCA**[®] might be used, the following are given only as examples of what is appropriate or inappropriate:

Examples of appropriate uses of the **PCA**[®] mark:

First Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the PCA
PCA Women in the Church
PCA Men's Rally

Examples of inappropriate uses of the PCA mark which imply denominational control or sponsorship:

PCA Publications (when printed by a local church or a presbytery -- implies publication by the denomination); however, "Covenant PCA News" would be appropriate for the newsletter of a local church named Covenant Presbyterian Church in America.

PCA Parking (where a local church rents out its parking lot during the week -- not part of the church's worship services or usual church activities and also not related to the denomination); however, "Westminster PCA Parking" would be appropriate on the sign for the parking lot of Westminster Presbyterian Church in America.

PCA Christian School (implies denominational control or sponsorship); however, "ChristChurch PCA School" would be appropriate for the school operated by ChristChurch PCA.

This policy was distributed to all churches through the Stated Clerk's Letter.

1998, p. 69, 26-18, III, 31. That the 26th General Assembly answer the following Personal Resolution #3 from TE Thomas Wenger in the affirmative as amended:

Adopted as amended

Whereas, Scripture in I Cor. 6:1-8 frowns on Christian brothers contending against one another in the secular courts;

Whereas, the Board of Directors may have to pursue redress through the civil courts against a brother over a very trivial matter;

Therefore, be it resolved that the 26th General Assembly forbid the taking of civil or legal action by the Board of Directors or any other agency and/or employee of

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the Presbyterian Church in America, against any member or congregation of the PCA, relative to the use of the PCA trademark until every ecclesiastical means has been exhausted.

PORNOGRAPHY

1998, p. 69, 26-18, III, 32. That the 26th General Assembly answer the following **Personal Resolution #2** from TE David Longacre in the **negative**. *Adopted*

Whereas, the viewing of pornography is a violation of the seventh commandment (Exodus 20:14), as clarified by our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:27-28;

Whereas, scripture reveals and experience confirms that the viewing of pornography leads to deeper sexual sins, and slavery to sin (Psalm 101:3, NASB);

Whereas, the 13th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, has made a plain statement in opposition to pornography, and, “Urges the members of the churches of our denomination to be involved in various efforts of fighting pornography in our land,” (13th GA, 1985, 13-65, III, 5, p. 133);

Whereas, Insurance, Annuities and Relief, attempts to honor this and other directives of the General Assembly in the investment practices of the PCA;

Whereas, access to in-room pornographic movies is a source of severe temptation to some of the delegates of the General Assembly as evidenced in personal confessions;

Whereas, access to in-room pornographic movies may allow for covenant children to be exposed without willful intent to sinful images and temptations;

Whereas, scripture reveals the principle that tells us to respect the brethren and to be cautious not to cause them to stumble, (I Corinthians 8:13);

Whereas, scripture tells us to “Flee sexual immorality,” (I Corinthians 6:18);

Therefore, I respectfully request the 26th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to instruct the Stated Clerk’s office and any other agencies involved in making arrangements for future General Assembly meetings to not seek business with hotels which provide in-room pornographic movies, or to make all such arrangements in such a way that the hotels are required to turn-off the pornographic movie access to all rooms in the facility being reserved for the Presbyterian Church in America during the time of the assembly and its pre-meetings.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, USA

PROPOSAL TO DECLARE APOSTATE

1984, p. 100, 12-31, III, 2. Answer in the **negative** Overture 11 (p. 41) requesting that PCUSA be declared apostate and that ministers not be received by certificate of transfer or dismissal from PCUSA. (Refer to RPCES Study on Apostasy – see DS, pp. 45)

Overture 11: From the Presbytery of Westminster

Whereas, the word “apostate” (apostasia) is a biblical term used by the Apostle Paul to refer to those who depart from the faith (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1); and

Whereas, we recognize Almighty God as the final judge of men’s hearts, yet we realize this same God has committed unto fallible men the responsibility of discipline wherein the Church must make judgments as to the conformity of the outward actions of men to the Word of God; and

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Whereas, we realize that the application of the word “apostate” to a denomination does not preclude the existence of many true Christians and valid congregations within that denomination; and

Whereas, the union body, the PCUSA, has been so influenced by the neo-orthodox heresy that the Scriptures, the Word of God written, no longer is the supreme authority over the Church, the *only* infallible rule of faith and practice, and therefore the authority of God Himself has been rejected (Deut. 18-20; Is. 8:20; 2 Cor. 6:17; Titus 3:10; 2 John 9-11); and

Whereas, a position of the PCA toward the PCUSA is necessary as a basis in guiding Presbytery’s actions toward ministers and churches seeking admittance to Presbytery either by renouncing jurisdiction or by transfer;

Therefore, be it Resolved that the Twelfth General Assembly of the PCA in humble reliance upon the Triune God, and with recognition of our own sins, does declare the union body, the PCUSA, formerly the separate bodies PCUS and UPUSA, apostate.

Furthermore, a teaching elder should not be received on the basis of a certificate of transfer or dismissal from a PCUSA Presbytery. Nevertheless, in the case of a man called of God as evidenced by his possessing biblical credentials or ordination and the Lord’s approbation of his ministry, his ordination though irregular should be recognized as valid and he need not be re-ordained. Evidence of his ordination should be secured.

Attested by: Larry E. Ball, Stated Clerk
Answered in the negative, 12-31, III, 2, p. 101

PRESBYTERY

BOUNDARIES

1982, p. 324 Attachment C -- As a result of J & R of the RPCES, the Stated Clerk listed all the presbytery boundaries as set by the 10th General Assembly. A map was included.

PRESBYTERY BOUNDARIES DEFINED

Presbytery of the Ascension

All of Ohio east and north of and including the counties of Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, Tuscarawas, Guernsey, Noble and Monroe; Marshall, Brooke and Hancock counties in West Virginia; Garrett and Allegany counties in Maryland, and all of Pennsylvania west and including the following counties: McLean, Elk, Clearfield, Blair and Bedford.

Calvary Presbytery

All of South Carolina.

Presbytery of Central Carolina

The following counties of North Carolina: Surry, Yadkin, Iredell, Catawba, Lincoln, Gaston, Davie Rowan, Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Union, Stokes, Anson, Forsyth, Davidson, Stanley, Montgomery, Richmond, Moore, Lee, Harnett, Hoke, Cumberland, Scotland and Robeson.

Presbytery of Central Florida Presbytery

All of Florida between the western borders of Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, and Dixie counties and the southern borders of Sarasota, Hardee, Osceola and Brevard counties.

Presbytery of Central Georgia

All of Georgia south of and including the following counties: Harris, Talbot, Upson, Lamar, Butts, Jasper, Morgan, Greene, Taliaferro, Wilkes and Lincoln.

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Covenant Presbytery

All of Arkansas, all of Tennessee west of the Tennessee River, and all of Mississippi north of and including the following counties: Washington, Sunflower, Leflore, Carroll, Montgomery, Choctaw, Oktibbeha and Lowndes.

Delmarva Presbytery

All of Maryland east of and including Washington county; all of the State of Delaware; Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson Counties in West Virginia; Washington, D.C.; all of the following counties of Virginia, together with the cities contained in their borders: Accomac, Arlington, Clark, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Northampton, and Prince William.

Eastern Canada Presbytery

All of Canada east of the western border of the Province of Ontario

Presbytery of Eastern Carolina

All of North Carolina east of and including the following counties: Rockingham, Guilford, Randolph, Chatham, Wake, Johnston, Sampson, Bladen and Columbus.

Presbytery of Evangel

All of Alabama north and east of and including the following counties: Lamar, Fayette, Walker, Jefferson, Shelby, Chilton, Augauga, Lowndes, Butler and Covington.

Grace Presbytery

All of Mississippi south of and including the following counties: Claiborne, Copiah, Simpson, Smith, Jasper, and Clarke; and the following parishes in Louisiana: Tangipaho, Washington, and St. Tammany.

Presbytery of the Great Lakes Presbytery

All of Michigan south of and including the counties of Ottawa, Kent, Ionia, Clinton, Shiawassee, Genesee, Tuscola and Huron; all of Indiana except for the following counties: Lake, Vigo, Clay, Owen, Sullivan, Greene, Daviess, Martin, Pike, Gibson, DuBois, Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick and Spencer; all of Ohio west of and including the counties of Lorain, Medina, Wayne, Holmes, Conshocton, Muskingum, Morgan and Washington; all of Kentucky north and east of and including the counties of Breckinridge, Hardin, Larue, Nelson, Washington, Merser, Garrard, Madison, Estil, Wolf, Morgan, Elliott, Carter and Boyd.

Presbytery of the Gulf Coast

Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia counties of Alabama; all of Florida west of and including the counties of Madison and Taylor.

Illiana Presbytery

All of Illinois south of and including the counties of Pike, Scott, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Moultrie, Douglas and Edgar; the following counties of Indiana: Vigo, Clay, Owen, Greene, Sullivan, Daviess, Martin, Pike, Gibson, Dubois, Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick and Spencer; and the following counties in Kentucky: Hancock, Daviess, Henderson, and Union.

Presbytery of James River

All of Virginia south and east of and including the following counties, except for the counties of Accomac and Northampton on the Eastern Shore: Northumberland, Westmoreland, King George, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Culpepper, Rappahannock, Madison, Greene, Albermarle, Neslon, Amherst, Bedford, and Pittsylvania.

Presbytery of Korean Language

A special presbytery authorized to be superimposed on existing presbytery boundaries according to the needs of the Korean Churches. See 10-70, p. 92.

Presbytery of Louisiana

All of the Louisiana except the following parishes: Tangipaho, Washington, and St. Tammany.

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Presbytery of Mississippi Valley

The following counties of Mississippi: Issaquena, Sharkey, Humphreys, Holmes, Attalla, Winston, Noxubee, Yazoo, Madison, Leake, Neshoba, Kemper, Warren, Hinds, Rankin, Scott, Newton and Lauderdale.

Presbytery of New Jersey

All of New Jersey south of and including the counties of Mercer, Burlington and Ocean.

Presbytery of New River

All of West Virginia except for the counties of Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson; the following counties of Virginia: Warren, Shenandoah, Page, Rockingham, Highland, Augusta, Alleghany, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, Giles, Montgomery, Floyd, Franklin, Patrick and Henry.

Presbytery of the Northeast

The following counties in Massachusetts: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden; the following counties in Connecticut: Litchfield, Hartford, Tolland, New Haven, Fairfield and Middlesex; all of New York City and Long Island and the following counties in New York: Warren, Saratoga, Washington, Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady, Albany, Rensselaer, Greene, Columbia, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Westchester and Rockland; all of New Jersey north of and including the counties of Hunterdon, Somerset, Middlesex, and Mommouth.

Presbytery of Northern Illinois

All of Illinois north of and including the counties of Adams, Brown, Cass, Menard, Logan, Macon, Pratt, Champaign and Vermillion and also Lake County in Indiana.

Presbytery of North Georgia

All of Georgia north of and including the following counties, except for the counties of Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, and Murray: Troup, Meriwether, Pike, Spalding, Henry, Newton, Walton, Oconee, Oglethorpe and Elbert.

Presbytery of Oklahoma

All of Oklahoma, except the panhandle.

Presbytery of Pacific

All of California south of and including the counties of San Luis Obispo, Kern and Bernardino.

Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest

All of Washington west of and including the counties of Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Lewis and Skamania.

Presbytery of Philadelphia

The following southeastern counties of Pennsylvania: Centre, Snyder, Schuylkill, Lehigh, Northampton, Bucks, Montgomery, Berk, Lebanon, Doupin, Perry, Juniata, Huntingdon, Fulton, Frank, Cumberland, Adams, York, Lancaster, Chester, Delaware and Philadelphia.

Presbytery of the Siouxlands

The States of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Presbytery of Southern Florida

All of Florida south of and including the counties of Charlotte, DeSoto, Highlands, Okeechobee and Indian River.

Presbytery of the Southwest

The States of Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico.

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Presbytery of St. Louis

The following counties of Missouri: Pike, Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Cole, Osage, Gasconade, Franklin, Jefferson, St. Louis, St. Charles, Warren, Lincoln and Montgomery.

Presbytery of Tennessee Valley

All of Kentucky south of and including the counties of Crittenden, Webster, Mclean, Ohio, Grayson, Hart, Green, Taylor, Marion, Boyle, Lincoln, Rock Castle, Jackson, Lee, Breathitt, Magoffin, Johnson and Lawrence; all of Tennessee east of the Tennessee River to the eastern borders of the counties of Claiborne, Grainger, Hamblen and Cocke.

Presbytery of Texas.

The State of Texas.

Warrior Presbytery

The following counties of Alabama: Pickens, Tuscaloosa, Greene, Hale, Bibb, Sumter, Perry, Choctaw, Marengo, Dallas, Wilcox, Washington, Clarke, Monroe and Conecuh.

Presbytery of Western Carolina

All of North Carolina west of and including counties of Alleghany, Wilkes, Alexander, Caldwell, Burke and Cleveland.

Presbytery of Westminster

All of Virginia west of and including counties of Buchanan, Tazewell, Bland, Pulaski and Carroll; the following counties of Tennessee: Hancock, Hawkins, Greene, Washington, Sullivan, Carter, Unicoi and Johnson.

1985, p. 110 and 242, 13-45, III, 59. The Stated Clerk brought the request of the Frank Church and Newland Church to transfer from Westminster Presbytery to the Western Carolina Presbytery in whose boundary they reside. The advice to the Stated Clerk was as follows: "It is not necessary to wait for the approval of the General Assembly to regularize the situation with the consent of all involved since there is no change in the geographic bounds of the presbyteries. The Committee of Judicial Business would note that Western Carolinas Presbytery would need to examine both the Teaching and Ruling Elders involved (*BCO* 13-6, 13-8)." See Recommendation 30. *Ratified and Adopted*

1988, p. 145, 16-63, III, 22. **Be it Further Resolved**, that Presbytery of MID-AMERICA (or by whatever name it may be called after January 1, 1989) be authorized, effective January 1, 1989, to include the southwestern Missouri counties of Green, Christian, Taney, Lawrence, Stone, Barry, Jasper, Newton and McDonald together with the northwestern Arkansas counties of Boone, Newton, Johnson, Logan, Sebastian, Franklin, Crawford, Washington, Madison, Carroll and Benton.

Adopted at the Called Meeting of the Presbytery of Mid-America, on February 19, 1988 at Tulsa, Oklahoma. *Adopted*

1989, p. 93, 17-56, III, 9. "That the Arkansas counties of Boone, Newton, Johnson, Logan, Sebastian, Crawford, Franklin, Madison, Carroll, Benton and Washington be removed from Covenant Presbytery and added to MID-AMERICA Presbytery." *Adopted*

1989, p. 97, 17-56, III, 20. Overture 21.... to divide the present Pacific Presbytery, to be effective January 1, 1990; and to give each of the Presbyteries the names suggested:

PACIFIC Presbytery to consist of the following counties of California: Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Kern, San Bernardino, and Inyo; and Clark County in Nevada.

SOUTH COAST Presbytery to consist of the following counties of California: San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, and Orange.

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Presbytery of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA to consist of the counties in California north of and including the counties of Atascadero, Monterey, Kings, and Tulare; and the following counties in Nevada: Douglas, Lyon, Carson City, and Storey. *Adopted*

1989, p. 98, 17-56, III, 22. Overture 36...Therefore, be it resolved that the Delmarva Presbytery divide effective January 1, 1990 into two presbyteries, with boundaries as follows:

HERITAGE Presbytery: All of Delmarva peninsula east of the Susquehanna River, except Kent Island, and including Accomac and Northampton counties in VA; and all of chester county, PA, east of a line created by connecting PA Routes 796, 841 and Route 41 and Delaware County, PA, west of Ridley Creek.

POTOMAC Presbytery: All of Maryland west of the Susquehanna River including Kent Island, up to and including Washington county; the following counties in West Virginia: Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson; Washington, DC; and the following counties of Virginia, together with the cities contained in their borders: Arlington, Clark, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, and Prince William. And that Overture 36 from Delmarva Presbytery be answered in the affirmative.

1990, p. 129, 18-56, III, 13. That Overture 6, request from Central Florida Presbytery (supported by the Presbytery of Southern Florida, Overture 19) to divide the Presbytery of Central Florida creating the new Presbytery of SOUTHWEST FLORIDA be approved. New presbytery to include the following 13 counties: Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, Highlands, Hardee, Manatee, Sarasota (from Central Florida), DeSoto, Charlotte, Lee, Glades, Hendry, and Collier (from Southern Florida). *Adopted*

1990, p. 131, 18-56, III, 15. That Overture 18, request from the Presbytery of SOUTHEAST ALABAMA to transfer the territory of Conecuh County, Alabama, presently a part of Warrior Presbytery, to the Presbytery of Southeast Alabama be approved. (Warrior Presbytery supports this overture in Communication 3.) *Adopted*

1991, p. 115, 19-55, III, 9. That Overture 3 from the Presbytery of the SOUTHWEST be answered in the affirmative to allow Southwest Presbytery to be divided and be constituted a Presbytery of the Southwest including the states of Arizona and new Mexico and El Paso and Hudspeth, Culbertson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio, counties of Texas; and the ROCKY MOUNTAIN Presbytery including the states of Colorado and Wyoming. Further, that this be effective in the Stated meeting of "The Presbyteries" in the Fall of 1991. *Adopted*

1991, p. 118, 19-55, III, 12. That the General Assembly respond in principle in the affirmative to the request of the Presbytery of EASTERN CANADA (Overture 26) that its boundaries be revised, but for clarification that the boundaries be defined as follows: that part of Ontario south of the 45th parallel and west of the 77th meridian and the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. *Adopted*

1991, p. 119, 19-55, III, 13. That the General Assembly respond in the affirmative to the request of the Presbytery of SOUTHEAST ALABAMA (Overture 18) for transfer to Escambia County, Alabama, originally assigned to Gulf Coast Presbytery, to become a part of the Presbytery of Southeast Alabama. Gulf Coast Presbytery concurs in this request. *Adopted*

1994, p. 171, 22-26, III, 14. That the GA divide Calvary Presbytery to start FELLOWSHIP Presbytery with an effective date of organization as July 1, 1994, in the affirmative. *Adopted*

Therefore Be it Resolved that . . . the new Presbytery shall consist of that part of Calvary Presbytery in Chester County, South Carolina, all of York and Union Counties in South Carolina and that part of Cherokee County South Carolina East of Broad River from

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State Line to US Highway 29 and all of Cherokee County East of US 29, county Roads 296 and 111 and South Carolina 18 to South County Line.

Be it Further Resolved that the portion of Chester County in Palmetto Presbytery which includes Trinity PCA be included in the boundary of the new Presbytery. *Adopted*
1994, p. 172, 22-26, III, 17. That the GA respond to **Overture 26** in the affirmative. . .

"to extend the geographical boundaries of PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERY to include those counties necessary to include Scranton and Wilkes-Barre and extend to the New York border, namely Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties." *Adopted*

1994, p. 173, 22-26, III, 18. "That the GA respond to **Overture 27** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery to divide. . . "to form NASHVILLE Presbytery to include all of Kentucky south and west of and including the counties of Crittenden, Webster, McLean, Ohio, Grayson, Hart, Green, Adair, Russell and Wayne; and all of Tennessee east of the Tennessee River (between Pickwick Lake and Kentucky Lake) to the eastern borders of the counties of Pickett, Fentress, Putnam, White, Van Buren, Grundy and Franklin and that NASHVILLE Presbytery be enrolled in General Assembly effective July 9, 1994." *Adopted*

1995-p. 171, 23-33, III, 9. **Therefore Be it Resolved** that the SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America overtures the 23rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, meeting in Dallas, Texas, June 20-23, 1995, to extend the geographic boundary of the Susquehanna Valley Presbytery to include Lycoming and Clinton Counties. *Adopted*

1997, p. 151, 25-34, III, 8. That **Overture 3** from Northeast Presbytery requesting formation of a NEW YORK CITY METRO PRESBYTERY be approved with boundary adjustments as proposed by New Jersey Presbytery in **Communication 5**. The effective date of the erection of this new Presbytery shall be the date set for convening by the Convenor (TE Timothy Keller). The boundaries are to include: (1) of the counties of New York: Kings, Queens, Bronx, Richmond, Lower Westchester (south of a latitude line drawn from the corner of the oblong section of CT to the southern border of Sleepy Hollow, NY), Nassau, Suffolk in New York State; (2) all of the counties of New Jersey north of the southern borders of Middlesex and Mercer counties; (3) of Fairfield County, CT "panhandle" south of and excluding Norwalk, New Canaan and Wilton, CT.; (4) (contingent upon the approval of Christ Church, New Haven), the remainder of Fairfield County and New Haven County in Connecticut. *Adopted as amended*

1997, p. 161, 25-34, III, 10. That the boundaries of COVENANT and LOUISIANA Presbyteries be approved: that Covenant Presbytery boundary lines be redrawn in order that Miller, Lafayette, Columbia, and Union Counties be transferred to Louisiana Presbytery. *Adopted*

1998, p. 170, 26-44, III, 9. That **Overture #10** from the NORTHERN CALIFORNIA Presbytery, **Overture #16** from the Central Georgia Presbytery and **Communication #8** from Northern California Presbytery concerning changing the boundaries of Northern California Presbytery to include the State of Utah and additional counties in Nevada be referred to the Inter-Presbytery Committee for Church Development in the West for its consideration and possible subsequent action by the Presbyteries. *Adopted*

Note: Permanent Committee Recommendations #9 [see Appendix I, p. 441] and #16 (p. 444) were considered by the Committee of Commissioners in accordance with the Manual of Operations for Committee of Commissioners III.C.3.c regarding the grouping of similar overtures.

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

Grounds:

The Inter-presbytery Committee is in the best position to determine the expansion of or creation of presbyteries in that thirteen state region. The Committee, approved by General Assembly and in existence for seven years, is comprised of 2 members from each of six Presbyteries of the West (Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain, Southwest, Southcoast, Northern California and Pacific) and has handled such matters in the past.

1998, p. 173, 26-44, III, 10. That **Overture #7** from Central Florida Presbytery requesting division of the presbytery and the formation of the North Florida Presbytery be approved. *Adopted*

Therefore be it Resolved that General Assembly at its July 1998 meeting divide the Presbytery of Central Florida and form the NORTH FLORIDA Presbytery to include all churches and missions found within the borders of Hamilton, Suwanee, Lafayette, Dixie, Columbia, Baker, Union, Alachua, Gilchrist, Nassua, Duval, Bradford, Clay, Putnam, St. Johns, Flagler counties and churches and missions affected are; Christ Church (Jacksonville), Northshore (Jacksonville), Ortega (Jacksonville), Pinewood (Middleburg), Ponte Vedra (Ponte Vedra), Redeemer (Jacksonville), Westminster (Jacksonville), Cross Creek Mission (Fruit Cove), Community (Live Oak), Faith (Gainesville), Good News (St. Augustine), Grace Mission (Palm Coast) and Community (McIntosh, within the borders of Marion county).

GUIDELINES FOR DIVIDING PRESBYTERIES

1998, p. 180, 26-44, III, 17. That the following MNA-GA Permanent Committee response adopted at the June 1, 1998 meeting be approved as the answer to the request from the 25th General Assembly. *Adopted*

That in answer to the request from the 25th GA that MNA/GA work together with the Stated Clerk's office to define a process for dividing or creating new presbyteries which would include the presbyteries and the churches that will be affected by the change in boundaries (*M25GA*, 25-34, III., 11, p.162), proposed Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries were presented to the MNA Committee at its October 1997 meeting. The Guidelines were adopted and presented to the Stated Clerk's office. See Attachment H which follows:

Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries

As presbyteries grow in the number of congregations and membership they include, there may come a time at which division of the presbytery may be helpful. Presbyteries should take care that they do not divide prematurely, causing one or more of the resulting presbyteries to lack the resources necessary for their future growth. On the other hand, a presbytery may become so large that it cannot give adequate attention to the needs of the churches and ministers within its own membership, and may find even its efforts at church planting and other growth in ministry difficult.

The 16th General Assembly (1988) established guidelines for the division of presbyteries, presented below unchanged. These guidelines are sufficient in addressing most situations.

Special care should be taken to ensure that the division of a presbytery is not made in haste or without adequate consideration of the needs of all parties involved. Therefore, at the very earliest stages of discussion of a possible division, those initiating the discussion: (a) should take care to ensure that all churches and teaching elders (including missionaries and other out of bounds members) who will possibly be affected are fully informed of the discussion as early as

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possible; (b) should communicate with the stated clerk of the presbytery, who in turn should communicate with the entire presbytery; (c) should be encouraged to contact General Assembly Mission to North America and the General Assembly Stated Clerk very early in the process as well, for any assistance they may be able to offer in making a smooth transition and in giving advice that may be helpful to the planning process; and (d) should target the first meeting of a presbytery in the summer or fall of the year so that they may be able to fully participate in the nominating process of General Assembly without undue delay.

(Following are Guidelines taken from the *M16GA* 1988, p.143, 16-63, III, 16-17.)

- (1) A presbytery should have a radius of 2 1/2 hours maximum driving distance.
- (2) A presbytery should have a minimum of 10 churches.
- (3) A presbytery should have a total communicant membership of at least 1000.
- (4) Presbytery boundaries should not partition metropolitan areas.
- (5) A presbytery should have regional cohesiveness.
- (6) A presbytery should have at least 3 churches each having a membership of at least 125 communicant members.
- (7) Presbytery boundaries should be such that its member churches have a potential for shared ministries.
- (8) Presbytery boundaries should be such that its member churches have a common commitment to the region within the boundaries and sense their shared responsibility to cover the region with the Gospel.
- (9) When a presbytery reaches 30 churches, it should consider whether subdivision would lead to more effective ministry.

Reasons:

- (i) It is often to the advantage of very large presbyteries to subdivide for more efficient oversight and closer cooperation.
 - (ii) Additional presbyteries are urgently needed in most of the United States, other than the South, and in Canada in order to make the Presbyterian system of government operate efficiently. A presbytery in an area where the PCA is not particularly strong could be viable with as few as ten churches, and even with less. (The first presbytery in this land had but seven.)
- (10) A presbytery should limit its boundaries to that geographic area for which it is able to take meaningful responsibility for evangelism and church development.

Reason: *M12GA*, 12-67, 111,8

- (11) We acknowledge the existence of language presbyteries.
- (12) We recognize the "ideal nature of guidelines such as these and understand that several existing presbyteries do not presently meet all of them."

Approved by the MNA Committee, Oct 97

KOREAN LANGUAGE PRESBYTERIES

1994, p. 170, 22-26, III, 13. "That the 22nd GA respond to **Overture 37 From Korean Southeastern Presbytery**, "Continue Korean Language Presbyteries for Another Ten Years", by reference to Overtures 10, 12, 18, 19 and 20 of the 20th GA and by reference to Recommendation IV.1 of Review of Presbytery Records Committees as follows: *Adopted*
1994, p. 318, 22-79, IV, I. Concerning the Korean Language Presbyteries

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

The 20th General Assembly acted to extend the Korean Language Presbyteries (KLPs) for a period of five years (with the possibility of further five year extensions). Among the rationales cited for this action were:

"Time and energy is needed to bring the Korean churches to a point where they feel a part of the PCA."

"The first two sections of the *BCO* -- the Form of Government and Rules of Discipline -- have been translated into Korean and time is now needed for Korean presbyteries to adjust to the *BCO* standards." (*M20GA*, p. 71)

In making this decision to extend the KLPs for five years, the 20th GA established several conditions, two of which are pertinent to the recommendations of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records regarding the KLPs:

"2. The language used in the presbyteries will be Korean but it will be understood that all presbytery minutes and other documents and correspondence which the General Assembly must read will be translated into English for the benefit of the General Assembly."

"5. ...the Committee of Commissioners recommends encouraging Presbyteries in close geographical proximity to Korean Language Presbyteries to make a concerted effort to have fellowship with Korean Language Presbyteries."

The Committee on Review of Presbytery Records believes that, as a connectional church, we need to value and assist our Korean brothers, that we need to learn from them, and that we need to be faithful to see that all of our presbyteries are conforming to the standards of our Church. If we are one church, then we must operate on the basis of one *Book of Church Order*. (See *BCO* 1-5, 13-10, and 40-1,2.)

The Committee on Review of Presbytery Records believes that the only way that we can meet these goals and fulfill our responsibility to help to ensure a common commitment to our standards is if all records of all presbyteries are submitted in English, and if all presbyteries are participating in the review process. (See *RAO* 7-5a, 14-1 through 9.)

This year five of the KLPs did submit all or some of their minutes in translation. We are grateful for the time and effort that was put forth in that endeavor. Unfortunately, the records we received were incomplete, often unclear, and at points seemed to reflect significant practices not in keeping with the *BCO*. While some of these problems may be the result of the difficulties of translation, it appears that many are due to a lack of understanding and practice with the *BCO* and the review process. Moreover, the KLPs have not sent representatives to the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records for at least the last several years. Such representatives might have helped answer some of our questions.

In light of these problems (and the fact that concerns regarding the review of KLP records have occupied this committee for over a decade - with several different plans being tried) the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records makes the following recommendations to the 22nd General Assembly.

- a. That the 22nd GA gratefully acknowledges the efforts of Korean Capital, Korean Eastern, Korean Southern, Korean Southeastern, and Korean Southwest Presbyteries for supplying some or all of their minutes in translation.
- b. That these records not be reviewed at this Assembly because of concerns over their quality.

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- c. That the General Assembly direct the Stated Clerk to write to all KLPs and member churches, requiring them to obtain and use the Korean translation of the *BCO*.
- d. That the GA direct all the KLPs to supply the 23rd GA with originals of records in the Korean language and with complete, accurate translations of all records required to be submitted to the 22nd and 23rd GAs, which translations are to be made and attested by professional translators. This is necessary to carry out the 2nd condition established by the 20th GA. (See also *M20GA*, p. 263.)
- e. That the cost of this be borne by the KLPs.
- f. Given that the KLPs have had over ten years to adjust to *BCO* standards, that the CRPR be directed each year to develop a list of concerns and serious problem areas to be addressed in the practices and record keeping of the KLPs, with the goal that the actions and records of the KLPs will approach *BCO* standards by the end of the five year period established by the 20th GA.
- g. That the particular areas of concern for this year be the following:
 - 1. Development and provision to the GA of required Directories, Rolls, and Standing Rules.
 - 2. That main motions and other actions be clearly stated in the minutes.
 - 3. That there be a clear recording of examinations including: types of examinations, parts of examinations, and evidence that other requirements for candidacy, licensure, and ordination have been fulfilled; and that these examinations be carried out in conformity with the *Book of Church Order*.
- h. That the 22nd General Assembly, through its moderator, direct each KLP to comply with RAO 7-5 by sending a representative to the CRPR to assist in the review process, help with translation questions, and to help us learn from one another.
- i. That the Administrative Committee be directed to provide a translator during the period when the CRPR is working to help the KLP representatives do their work with the Committee.
- j. That, in keeping with the desire to ensure the conformity of KLPs to *BCO* standards and to develop closer ties between Anglo and Korean presbyteries (see *M20GA*, p. 71), the GA call on the moderators and stated clerks of Anglo presbyteries in close proximity to KLPs to offer assistance to their Korean counterparts in understanding the *BCO*, proper procedures, and proper record keeping; and that the moderators and stated clerks of the KLPs be encouraged to avail themselves of this assistance.
- k. That a meeting between KL moderators and clerks, the officers of CRPR, the Stated Clerk of the GA, the Moderator of the General Assembly (if possible), and representatives of MNA be held at this Assembly (or as soon thereafter as practical) to explore ways in which we can assist the KLPs and especially "...to develop a training program to assist the Korean Language Presbyteries properly to examine candidates." (*M20GA*, p. 263)
- l. That, even as we celebrate our Korean brothers' commitment to the Reformed Faith and the Kingdom of Christ, we remind them of our need to operate under a common polity to the end that brothers may dwell together in unity and all the body may be built up as we edify one another.

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- m. That the General Assembly direct the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records to report annually on the progress of the KLPs toward coming into compliance with the procedures of the *Book of Church Order*. If improved compliance is not forthcoming, it would be our expectation that the Korean Language Presbyteries which do not comply would be discontinued and integrated into Anglo presbyteries.
- n. That the MNA Committee be directed to prepare a Korean language translation of this portion of the report to be sent to all KLPs by the Administrative Committee by October 1, 1994.

1994, p. 320, 22-79, IV, I, o. That the Stated Clerk be directed to dialog with the president of Westminster Theological Seminary to enlist the service of Korean students at the Seminary to assist in the translation of Korean language presbytery minutes that are in arrears, so that they may be submitted in due course to forthcoming General Assembly Review of Presbytery Record Committee meetings. *Adopted as amended*

1995, p. 210, 23-32, VI, f. At the directive of the 22nd GA, the CRPR lists these particular areas of concern, with the goal that the actions and records of the KLPs conform to the PCA standards:

1. development and provision to the GA of required Directories, Rolls, and Standing Rules;
2. that main motions and other actions be clearly stated in the minutes;
3. that there be clear recording of examinations including: types of examinations, the various parts of examinations, with citations from the *BCO*, evidence that requirements for candidacy, licensure, internship and ordination have been fulfilled, and proper charges have been given, and ministerial obligations signed;
4. that calls to particular works and their terms be included in minutes;
5. that sessional records be reviewed annually by the presbytery and reported in the presbytery minutes;
6. that there be record of congregational concurrence in calling pastors or dissolving pastoral relations, and presbytery's action in these matters. *Adopted*

1995, p. 210, 23-32, IV, k. That the GA express warm thanks to Dr. Dan Kim for his considerable assistance to the KLPs through the years, for his translation of all Korean presbytery minutes from 1982-1992, and for a detailed report he prepared at the request of the 20th GA which includes the following items:

1. A brief Korean/English dictionary of church court terms used in Presbytery Minutes;
2. A sample set of Presbytery Minutes in Korean and English and a form for recording minutes;
3. Korean language guidelines for receiving men under care, examinations for licensure, ordination, and admission of TEs, and training and examination for ordination of REs;
4. Dr. Chapell's and Dr. Meek's booklet of sample questions for men preparing for licensure and ordination and a Korean translation of the same;
5. Recommendations of the 20th and 21st GA regarding KLPs;
6. A Korean translation of RAO section on Presbytery Records;
7. Guidelines for reviewing minutes. *Adopted*

MINUTES OF COMMISSION(S) APPOINTED BY PRESBYTERY

1995, p. 209, 23-43, V, 1 and 2.

1. In light of *BCO* 15-1 and RAO 14-10, and the interpretation of the Committee on Constitutional Business (p. 264) with which the CRPR concurs, the Committee does not

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expect the minutes of commissions to be necessarily made a part of the Presbytery's regular minutes but they may be included in an appendix or attachment. Thus the minutes of the commission are still a part of the "full and accurate records of (Presbytery's) proceedings (which the Presbytery) shall send up to the GA annually for review" (*BCO* 13-10).

2. The Committee notes that it does not expect to receive for review the minutes of a commission which is acting as a session, as these minutes would be reviewed at least annually by the Presbytery (*BCO* 13-9b, 15-1).

REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS

1995, p. 208, 23-43, IV, 1. Subcommittee to recommend amendments to RAO section concerning CRPR: That a subcommittee made up of the Committee officers, three clerks of presbyteries, and the Stated Clerk of the GA in an advisory capacity, be established to recommend amendments to the RAO section concerning the CRPR. *Adopted*

CITE SPECIFIC *BCO* REFERENCES FOR EXCEPTIONS TAKEN

1998, p. 191, 26-55, III, 2. That Overture 23 from Tennessee Valley Presbytery be answered in the affirmative with the following revision. *Adopted*

OVERTURE 23 From the Tennessee Valley Presbytery

"Amend RAO 14-9,c,3 to Require Citing Specific *BCO* Reference for Exceptions taken by CRPR"

Whereas, during the proceedings of the General Assembly when Exceptions of Substance are noted without the citation of specific Scriptural or *BCO* references, confusion of interpretation causes a lack of definitive action; and

Whereas, the endorsement of such an Exception to Substance could represent careless activity on the part of the General Assembly;

Therefore we respectfully request that Rules of Assembly Operation 14-9,c,3 be amended to require that whenever Exceptions of Substance are reported to the General Assembly by the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records, the report shall in every case, include the Committee's rationale for the Exception of Substance. In addition, whenever an apparent violation of the Constitution of the PCA is the reason for the Exception of the Substance, the Committee must cite specific Scriptural and *BCO* references. *that RAO 14-7.c.3 be amended by adding after the words "General Assembly," the phrase "which presentation shall include citation of any relevant Scriptural and/or Constitutional references, and provide the Committee's rationale for finding the exception of Substance."*

RIDGE HAVEN

POLICY [re. Women Teaching and Preaching]

1997, p. 179, 25-37, III, 6. That the Board of Directors of Ridge Haven, Inc., review the Ridge Haven policy entitled, "*The Ridge Haven Policy on Women Preaching and Teaching in its Camps and Conferences*" in the coming year and that the Committee of Commissioners of the 26th General Assembly review this policy. *Adopted*

ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE - CHANGE

1995, p. 174, 23-34, III, 6. That the General Assembly approve the following changes in the "Articles of Incorporation of Ridge Haven, Inc.": *Adopted*

Section III, Purposes, (a) "To own and operate a conference, camp and retreat center for the Presbyterian Church in America (A Corporation)."

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

1995, pp. 229-231, 23-49, III. Response to "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" see Position Papers, III, p. 371.

PROPOSAL TO DECLARE APOSTATE

1998, p. 204, 26-55, III, 11. That Overture 20 from Ascension Presbytery be answered in the negative. *Adopted*

Grounds: The General Assembly has provided adequate guidance on this issue in the "Response to 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together'" which was adopted by the 23rd General Assembly. (M23GA, pp. 229-231.)

OVERTURE 20 From the Presbytery of the Ascension

"Declare the Roman Catholic Church to be Apostate"

Whereas, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) does not found itself upon the 66 books of the Bible as its only source of authority but also upon additional books, RCC tradition, and upon papal authority; and

Whereas, the RCC does not teach that salvation is strictly by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone; and

Whereas, there are many errors taught, which result logically from the foregoing statements;

Therefore be it Resolved that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) declares that the Roman Catholic Church is not a true Biblical Christian church; and

Be it further Resolved that the PCA calls upon all members of the RCC who profess the true biblical Christian faith to come out of the RCC and join the PCA or some other similar biblical church.

THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

1997, 25-28. p. 144.

The purpose of the Theological Examining Committee is to determine the Theological soundness and knowledge of first and second level Executives and Agency leaders of the Presbyterian Church in America in regard to the Scriptures, Confessions, Government and History of our Church.

TRADE MARK POLICY (see PCA TRADE MARK, p.52)

UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES

1998, p. 82, 26-22, III, 10. That the IRC be authorized to continue discussions with the United Reformed Churches leading to a possible ecclesiastical relationship.

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WOMEN IN THE MILITARY (COMBAT)

1997, 25-45, III, 6, p. 184 That Overture 13 from Philadelphia Presbytery regarding Women in Combat be answered in the negative.

Grounds:

1. The situation does not justify the Assembly's intervention in a political matter. (*WCF* 31.4)
2. The Biblical arguments provided were not entirely persuasive. (*WCF* 1.6).
3. The Overture calls the General Assembly to repent of negligence and lack of charity, and the Committee is not persuaded that such sins have been manifested.
4. Several unanswered questions arose from the overture (e.g. whether women serving in combat would be subject to discipline by church courts if the overture were adopted).

Adopted. However, a later substitute was adopted as follows:

1998, p. 298, 26-55, III, 16 That the Moderator of the General Assembly appoint within 30 days of the conclusion of this Assembly a privately funded committee of seven Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders to consider the theological and ethical issues raised by women in combat roles and/or military service, to which committee both the overture from the Philadelphia Presbytery and the Report of the Bills and Overtures Committee be referred, requesting said committee to report to the 27th General Assembly in Louisville, KY, -- further asking them to consider the decisions of the Reformed Church in the United States, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, North America, the Southern Baptist Convention, and Communication from the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (relative to Overture 26). (See also Recommendation 16, p. 214.)

YEARBOOK

PRIVATE INFORMATION PUBLISHED IN YEARBOOK

1998, p. 63, 26-18, III, 11 That the 26th GA respond to Overture 8 from Heritage Presbytery "Cease Publishing Private Information in Yearbook" by referring it to the AC with instructions to the Stated Clerk to review with legal counsel and other knowledgeable persons the questions of privacy raised, and to report to the October 1998 meeting of AC in order to implement any appropriate recommendations both for the AC and for other committees and agencies.

Adopted

ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING: GENDER-INCLUSIVE VERSION OF NIV

1997, p. 193, 25-45, III, 8 That Personal Resolution #1 from Julian (Skip) Dusenbury opposing Gender-Inclusive Version of the NIV be answered as follows:

The PCA concurs in the decisions by (NIV) CBT, IBS, and Zondervan Publishing to not pursue their plans to publish a "gender-inclusive" version of the NIV in the United States, believing that such a version is inconsistent with the Biblical doctrine of divine inspiration.

Grounds:

Although the institutions referred to in the overture are not under the jurisdiction of the PCA; and although the General Assembly could not possibly be expected to review the vast amount of religious publications that appear annually, nor to advise publishers on their policies; nevertheless we believe the translation of Holy Scripture to be a matter of public and ecclesiastical interest.

Adopted