

CASE No. 2022-02

TE HERRON & RE BAYSINGER

v.

CENTRAL INDIANA PRESBYTERY

DECISION ON COMPLAINT

April 5, 2023

In the SJC's June 2, 2022 Decision in Case 2021-06 *Herron et al. v. Central Indiana*, the SJC "postponed consideration of all pending (i.e., Cases. 2021-14, 2021-15 & 2022-02) and future Complaints on any matter related to TE Daniel Herron or related judicial matters." Therefore, consideration of this Complaint was postponed until after the final decision was rendered in Case 2022-10 *PCA v. Herron* (trial). Without objection, the SJC ruled that this Complaint be answered and decided by reference to the April 5, 2023 Final Decision in Case 2022-10.

CASE No. 2022-03

TE FRED KLETT et al.

v.

PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERY

DECISION ON COMPLAINT

October 20, 2022

I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

09/15/18 TE Larry Smith came before Philadelphia Presbytery to be examined for transfer from Epiphany Fellowship. Presbytery's Credentialing Committee did not recommend TE Smith to Presbytery because "it was the opinion of the Committee that Larry's views regarding the continuation of the Spiritual gifts of prophecy and tongues beyond the Apostolic era and closing of the canon amount to [*sic*] exception of substance to WCF 1.1 which is out of accord with the fundamentals of the system because it is hostile to the system." TE Smith responded by presenting, at the

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request of the Committee, a paper titled “My Views on Modern Day Prophecy and Tongues.”

TE Smith was examined by Presbytery “as his own man” (i.e., without the support of the Credentialing Committee). A motion to find TE Smith’s views to be “out of accord with the fundamentals of the system because it [*sic*] is hostile to the system” was defeated by a vote of 17-22-0. A motion to approve the theological exam was then passed by a vote of 23-15.

- 11/12/18 TE Daniel Schrock, et al., filed a Complaint against the action of Presbytery arguing that “Presbytery erred in approving TE Smith’s examination, and by failing to determine and record the nature of TE Smith’s stated difference as either an allowable or unallowable exception as required by BCO 21-4.e, f., and RAO 16-3.e.5. Presbytery was required to judge ‘the stated difference(s) [*sic*] to be “out of accord,” that is, “hostile to the system” or “strik[ing] at the vitals of religion” (BCO 21-4.)”
- 01/19/19 Presbytery denied the Schrock, et al. Complaint.
- 10/18/19 The SJC sustained the Complaint of TE Schrock, et al., concluding that Presbytery erred “by failing to judge and record the nature of TE Smith’s views on the continuation of the spiritual gifts of prophecy and tongues beyond the Apostolic era, as required by BCO13-6, 21-4e, f. and RAO 16-3.e.5.” The SJC remanded the matter to Presbytery.
- 01/18/20 Presbytery received the SJC’s decision. In response they appointed an *ad hoc* Commission to craft specific questions for TE Smith. TE Smith was directed to respond to these questions in writing, with the understanding that Presbytery would deliberate on his answers at their May 2020 meeting.
- 03/07/20 The *ad hoc* Commission distributed a report stating that they had completed their work by drafting and sending to TE Smith 18 questions. They also provided presbyters with the specific questions they had developed.

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- 05/06/20 TE Smith provided his written answers to the questions posed to him.
- 05/18/20 The May stated meeting of Presbytery was cancelled.
- 05/28/20 The Moderator of Presbytery e-mailed Presbytery at the request of the Presbytery's Coordinating Committee. This communication to Presbytery also contained a copy of TE Smith's answers to the questions posed by the *ad hoc* Commission.
- 09/19/20 Presbytery heard the report of the *ad hoc* Commission to develop questions and then received TE Smith's answers. At the recommendation of the Coordinating Committee, Presbytery unanimously erected an *ad hoc* Committee "to consider TE Larry Smith's Response to Commission's questions and to provide recommendations to the Presbytery by the January 2021 Stated Meeting on whether TE Smith's views represent differences with the Westminster Standards, and, if so, the degree to which those views differ from the Standards."
- Between The *ad hoc* Committee, consisting of Ryan Egli, Fred Klett, Mark Moser, Daniel Schrock, and RE Dennis Blankenbeckler distributed its report to Presbytery.
- 09/19/20
- 05/09/21 (No date is provided for the report.). The committee voted 3-0-2 to find that TE Smith's views "amount to a doctrinal difference of substance with the Standards that is more than semantic" and that this difference "is out of accord with the fundamentals of our system because it is hostile to the system." The committee also provided a rationale for its decision. One of the members who abstained wrote a "minority report" that concluded that TE Smith's views are not "demonstrably hostile to the Standards" but that those views "'sit uneasily' with the Standards. The author of the minority report said he detected an "'awkward fit' rather than hostility, or open contradiction" with the Standards.
- 05/09/21 TE Smith provided a "Response to Proposed Ruling of Philadelphia Presbytery."

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- 05/15/21 Presbytery took up the matter of TE Smith's views. (Apparently the delay in taking up the matter was due to Presbytery's inability to meet due to COVID.) The Moderator presented the *ad hoc* Committee's two motions: 1) do TE Smith's views "constitute a difference with our Standards that is more than symantic"[sic]?; and 2) do those views constitute a difference with the Standards that is "out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine because the difference is' either 'hostile to the system' or 'strikes at the vitals of religion'"?
- The minutes of Presbytery record that after a time of debate "There was a substitute motion." The motion was "The Presbytery expresses its appreciation for the committee's work and the thorough answers given us by Larry Smith. Presbytery now determines that Pastor Smith's views are thoroughly biblical and reformed and well qualify him to be pastor of New Life Philly." The vote on the substitute was 17-21.
- The vote on the first recommendation (to find that TE Smith's views constituted a difference that is more than semantic) was 24-13. The vote the second recommendation (to find that TE Smith's views are out of accord with a fundamental of the system of doctrine) failed by a vote of 11-23.
- Presbytery adopted an additional motion: "Although the views of TE Larry Smith as stated through his answers to the questionnaire provided to the ad hoc committee are atypical for a TE elder in the PCA, we do not find the views of TE Larry Smith to be out of accord or hostile to our system of doctrine. We would also refer to his response to the findings of the ad hoc committee." The vote was 24-10.
- 07/12/21 Four TEs and one RE complained against Presbytery's action in voting down the *ad hoc* Committee's proposed second judgment (that TE Smith's views "amount to a doctrinal difference of substance with the standards that is out of accord with the fundamentals of our system because it is hostile to the system.")
- 09/18/21 Presbytery considered the Complaint. At the recommendation of the Coordinating Committee Presbytery erected an "Ad-interim Committee" of three TEs to prepare a report on the following items:

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- a. Explain what historically is understood by the phrase “hostile to the system of doctrine.”
- b. Develop a statement that provides a rationale or rationales as to why TE Larry Smith’s views might not be considered ‘hostile to the system’ based on TE Larry Smith’s written views and on input from those in the Presbytery who voted that TE Smith’s views were not considered ‘hostile to the system.’”

Presbytery further agreed to consider the report at its January stated meeting, and to vote at that time on whether to affirm or deny the Complaint.

01/15/22 The “Ad-interim Committee” reported to Presbytery. They presented Presbytery with three papers, each authored by a different member of the Committee. The Committee also provided an essay by TE Clair Davis and it provided a link to an essay by TE Vern Poythress titled, “The Boundaries of the Gift of Tongues: With Implications for Cessationism and Continuationism.” The Ad-interim Committee stated that many members of Presbytery had courses from these two men during their seminary training and thus may have been influenced by these essays. The Committee also noted that TE Smith says that “the thinking of Professor Poythress as [*sic*] impacted his own thinking.” The Committee further concluded that “these four essays and the reference to Professor Poythress’ article ... demonstrat[e], at a minimum, that there were sound and reasonable bases for the majority of presbyters at the May 2021 Stated Meeting to have concluded that the Written Views of TE Larry Smith were not out of accord with the fundamentals of the system because they are is [*sic*] ‘hostile to that system.’”

The motion to receive the report as information passed 32-3. Presbytery then voted to deny the Complaint 19-8-4.

02/11/22 Complainants carried their Complaint to General Assembly.

03/19/22 Presbytery appointed TEs David Viehman and Scott Crosby as Respondents.

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- 03/19/22 TE Smith reported to Presbytery that his congregation had taken a straw poll of its membership in February 2022 regarding leaving the PCA. The church planned to take a formal vote to withdraw later in March.
- 05/29/22 In answer to a question posed to him by the Chairman of the Panel, the Clerk of Philadelphia Presbytery shared with the Panel an extract from the unapproved minutes of Presbytery's May 9, 2022, stated meeting. Those minutes record the receipt of a letter from TE Smith's church, dated May 16, 2022 (sic), that states that the congregation voted on March 27, 2022 to leave the PCA. Presbytery voted to acknowledge the departure and to dismiss TE Smith to his particular congregation.
- 07/18/22 The hearing was held via GoToMeeting before a panel, composed of TE Guy Waters, Chairman, TE Paul Kooistra, RE Frederick (Jay) Neikirk, TE Mike Ross (alt) and RE Jack Wilson (alt). Both parties had previously submitted timely filed briefs. The Complainants were represented by TE Fred Klett, TE Maranatha Chung, RE Ron DiGiacomo, and were assisted by TE Dominic Aquila. TEs Viehman and Crosby represented Presbytery.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Did Philadelphia Presbytery err when it judged that TE Smith's views, embodied in his answers to the "Supplemental Questions" from the *ad hoc* Commission, did not constitute a difference with our Standards that is "out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine because the difference is" either "hostile to the system" or "strikes at the vitals of religion" (BCO 21-4.f.)?

III. JUDGMENT

Yes

IV. REASONING AND OPINION

This case involves a teaching elder who asserted that he fully affirms *WCF* 1.1, 1.6, 21.3, and 21.5, while also asserting his belief that a form of revelation exists today through the continuing gifts of prophecy and tongues, and that such gifts should be encouraged in his local congregation and are “appropriate elements of corporate worship.” As a result of the SJC’s decision in case 2019-02, Philadelphia Presbytery was required to judge and record the nature of the teaching elder’s views as stipulated by *BCO* 13-6, 21-4.e, f, and *RAO* 16-3.e.5. Presbytery determined that the teaching elder’s views “amount to a doctrinal difference of substance with the Standards that is more than semantic.” Presbytery then adopted the following motion: “Although the views of TE Larry Smith as stated through his answers to the questionnaire provided to the ad hoc committee are atypical for a TE elder in the PCA, we do not find the views of TE Larry Smith to be out of accord or hostile to our system of doctrine.” The Complaint that gives rise to Case 2022-03 argues that Philadelphia Presbytery erred in that it should have found that “the views expressed by TE Larry Smith amount to a doctrinal difference of substance with the standards that is out of accord with the fundamentals of our system because it is hostile to the system.” For reasons set forth below we agree with the Complainants.

Part I: Doctrinal and Historical Background

Unlike most other Reformed Confessions, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* begins with the doctrine of Scripture. That alone indicates the importance of the Confession’s doctrine of Scripture to the rest of its “system of doctrine.” For the purposes of this Case, the two key paragraphs in Chapter 1 are the following:

“Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and

in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased" (1.1)

"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" (1.6)

The PCA has consistently affirmed its understanding that these paragraphs limit any type of "new revelation." Thus, for example, while urging "a spirit of forbearance among those holding differing views regarding the spiritual gifts as they are experienced today," the Pastoral Letter adopted by the Second General Assembly holds "Any view of the tongues as experienced in our time which conceives of it as an experience by which revelation is received from God is contrary to the finalized character of revelation in Scripture" and "miracles related to revelation have ceased, since revelation was completed with the closing of the Canon in the New Testament era" (M2GA pp. 43-44; 170-175).¹ Similarly, the findings of judicial cases have consistently held that the Constitution of the PCA does not allow for "new revelation" from God,

¹ Note that the Committee that proposed this Pastoral Letter is also the Committee that proposed the language contained in *BCO* 7-1.

even when one argues that such revelation cannot add to Scripture or must be judged by Scripture.²

In reaching these conclusions the General Assembly and its Standing Judicial Commission reflect well the understanding of the Westminster Divines. As Chad Van Dixhoorn has pointed out, two of the main opposing views the Westminster Divines were addressing were Roman Catholicism and the Anabaptists/Enthusiasts.³ What those two views had in common was a belief that extra-biblical revelation continues, whether in the form of the “Tradition of the Church” or as given to individuals.⁴ *WCF* Chapter 1, especially paragraphs I.1 and I.6, is written, at least in part, to respond to those positions by asserting that God has provided His revelation in written form, that “those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people have now ceased,” and that “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His 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.”⁵

² See *Bogue, et al v. The Presbytery of the Ascension* (M8GA pp. 50-51); *Gentry, et al v. Calvary Presbytery* (M14GA, pp. 224-230); *Rayburn, et al v. Missouri Presbytery* (M16GA, pp. 213-220); *Serio v. Palmetto Presbytery* (M16GA, pp. 191-197); Case 91-4, *Hopper v. James River Presbytery* (M20GA, pp. 160-196); and Case 95-11 *Landrum, et al v. Mississippi Valley Presbytery* (M25GA, pp. 80-91 and M26GA, pp. 222-227).

³ Chad Van Dixhoorn, “Unity and Disunity at the Westminster Assembly (1643-1649): A Commemorative Essay,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 79, no. 2 (2001), pp. 111-115; cf., Garnet Howard Milne, *The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Cessation of Special Revelation: The Majority Puritan Viewpoint on Whether Extra-Biblical Prophecy is Still Possible*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), p. 285.

⁴ For more on these views see Milne, *The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Cessation of Special Revelation*; J.V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), p. 72-75, 82-84, and Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), vol 2, pp. 181, 200-201.

⁵ As Milne has pointed out, the Divines understood salvation to mean more than “personal redemption.” “They understood the term to embrace temporal mercies, temporal guidance, and temporal deliverance.” (Milne, p. 286).

Thus, as Complainants argue in their brief, “the written Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule for faith and life is a fundamental point of doctrine to the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Standards. It is a boundary of orthodoxy which marked out the lines between the Reformed over against Roman-Catholicism and the Anabaptists/Enthusiasts. It is a boundary which concerns fundamental points of theological and religious epistemology.” That was the understanding of the Westminster Divines and, as was shown above, it has been the consistent position of the Presbyterian Church in America. It is against this backdrop that we must assess Philadelphia Presbytery’s actions with regard to the views of TE Smith.

Part II - TE Smith’s Views Considered in Light of the Doctrinal and Historical Background

In the course of Presbytery’s examination and subsequent investigations of the theological views of TE Smith, TE Smith declared, in writing, his view that non-general revelation continues in the Church today, at least through the gifts of prophecy and tongues. To understand the nature and significance of TE Smith’s written views, especially in light of the doctrinal understandings set forth in Part I above, three considerations are necessary: 1) TE Smith’s statements regarding some form of continuing revelation; 2) Presbytery’s final action with respect to those views; and 3) TE Smith’s view on the appropriateness of the exercise of those gifts in corporate worship.

First, in affirming the continuation of “modern-day prophecy” (and its “equivalent,” the “interpreted tongue,” TE Smith affirms multiple times his understanding of such prophecy in terms of “revelation.” He expressly distinguishes such prophecy from illumination, “Prophecy starts with a new ‘revelation’ that comes from the Lord. Illumination involves the work of the Spirit to clarify the meaning and/or application of his previously given revelation (Scripture).” TE Smith neither conflates nor confuses the terms “revelation” and “illumination,” since he takes care to distinguish them.

To be sure, TE Smith makes important qualifications to these statements. He is clear that “modern-day prophecy” is not special revelation, and, therefore, not part of the canon of Scripture. He

stresses that “modern prophetic words” must be “distinguish[ed] ... from inscripturated prophecy,” and are “not infallible.” Neither is “modern-day prophecy ... binding on those who hear it.” What TE Smith terms “modern-day prophecy” is said to be “initiated by a revelation ... that comes from the Holy Spirit,” but “is not on par with special revelation because this prophecy is subject to error in how it is understood, interpreted, and applied by the one receiving it.” “The revelation that God gives is pure but it may be misunderstood or misapplied in small ways or large ways by the prophet.” Therefore, “someone speaking prophetically now should not say ‘Thus saith the Lord’ or give the impression that the words of their prophesy [*sic*] are the exact words of God. Speaking in this way would give the impression that their words are on a par with Scripture when indeed they are not!” Furthermore, TE Smith affirms that modern prophetic utterances are subject to the teaching of Scripture, “No prophecy is valid or can be from the Lord that contradicts Scripture.”⁶

These qualifications notwithstanding, TE Smith affirms a category of continuing revelation in the Church today. Although he is clear that it is neither general revelation nor special revelation, “modern-day prophecy,” as Respondents’ Brief aptly summarizes TE Smith’s view, constitutes “a third category of revelation.” While TE Smith understands himself to be in “full agreement with WCF 1.1 and 1.6,” TE Smith’s written views stand at variance with Westminster’s denials of continuing non-general revelation in the Church today.

⁶ It should be recognized that the qualifications offered by TE Smith are virtually identical to those offered in previous cases (see footnote 2) where the General Assembly found that the views in question contradicted the Standards to such an extent that either the man should not have been licensed or ordained, or that Presbytery should have restricted the man’s right to teach and preach his views in this area. (Note that these cases precede the adoption in 2003 of *BCO* 21-4. f, so there was no requirement to determine whether the views were hostile to the system of doctrine. That being said, determining that men should not have been ordained or should not be allowed to teach and preach their views certainly indicates a conclusion that the views in question are not compatible with the system of doctrine.)

A second consideration to understanding the nature and significance of TE Smith's views relates to Presbytery's final action with respect to TE Smith's written views. After Presbytery acted "not [to] find the views of TE Larry Smith to be out of accord or hostile to our system of doctrine," and after a Complaint was filed against that action of Presbytery, Presbytery erected an "Ad-interim Committee" to report to Presbytery on two matters, "1) Explain what historically is understood by the phrase 'hostile to the system of doctrine.' 2) Develop a statement that provides a rationale or rationales as to why TE Larry Smith's views might not be considered 'hostile to the system' based on TE Larry Smith's written views and on input from those in the Presbytery who voted that TE Smith's views were not considered 'hostile to the system.'" The Committee's report to Presbytery consisted of four essays, each of which was "based on [the author's] thinking, the views of others and TE Larry Smith's written views." The Committee offered these essays (and a "reference" to an article) to "demonstrat[e], at a minimum, that there were sound and reasonable bases for the majority of the Presbyters at the May, 2021 Stated Meeting to have concluded that the Written Views of TE Larry Smith were not out of accord with the fundamentals of our system because they are is [*sic*] 'hostile to that system.'"

But, as part of their report, the Committee stated "Each of the essays addresses in varying ways the two main questions that the Presbytery put to this question [*sic*]. While there is some overlap, there is [*sic*] also significant differences of emphasis. Since it is unknown precisely why any presbyter voted as he did at the May 2021 Stated Meeting and it is likely that each one came to his conclusion for somewhat different reasons, the variety demonstrated in these essays likely mirror to some extent the rationale behind the majority of the presbytery voting on that day." Further, the only action that Presbytery took with respect to this Committee Report was to "receive this report as information." Presbytery, therefore, never adopted grounds or a rationale for its May, 2021 action against which Complaint was filed. Presbytery proposed no mitigating considerations or qualifications with respect to TE Smith's views. One is therefore left with TE Smith's written statements themselves.

The third consideration to understanding the nature and significance of TE Smith's written views is that TE Smith has promoted his views in the context of the public worship of the congregation that he serves. TE Smith affirms that "tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and prophecy are appropriate elements of corporate worship..." TE Smith states that he bases this conclusion on I

Corinthians 14 and the fact that “I understand WCF 21.5 to be instructive but certainly not exhaustive regarding the elements of worship.” TE Smith does acknowledge and outline a process by which he and the Congregation’s elders would “handle someone attempting to prophesy during corporate worship.” He states that he and the elders “would discourage tongues or prophecy from becoming a centerpiece of our service,” but that they “want to be open to the leading of the Spirit, in accordance with the guidelines he explicitly gives in 1 Corinthians 14.”

Those cautions notwithstanding, it is clear that TE Smith’s views, then, are neither private nor tentatively held. They are publicly taught and, importantly, practiced in public worship. TE Smith understands tongues and prophecy to be “elements of corporate worship.” TE Smith’s views, therefore, touch not only upon the Westminster Standards’ doctrine of revelation (*WCF* 1), but also upon the Standards’ doctrine of the public worship of God (*WCF* 21, especially 21.5).

Part III - Conclusion and Amends

When viewed in light of these three considerations, TE Smith’s written views concerning extraordinary gifts as they relate to revelation clearly touch on “fundamental(s) of our system of doctrine,” in this case the doctrines of divine revelation and of the worship of God (*BCO* 21-4f.). Furthermore, TE Smith’s written views so impinge the “system of doctrine” as to be “hostile” to it (*BCO* 21-4f.). TE Smith’s belief in a species of continuing revelation and the implementation of that view as an “element” of public worship counters the teaching of the Westminster Standards in such a way as to impair the integrity of the Standards’ system of doctrine (see Part I of this Opinion). Presbytery therefore erred when it did not find TE Smith’s written views to be “out of accord,” that is, “hostile to the system” (*BCO* 21-4f.).

For these reasons, the action of Philadelphia Presbytery on May 15, 2021, stating “we do not find the views of TE Larry Smith to be out of accord or hostile to our system of doctrine” is hereby annulled. There is, however, no action that Presbytery can or should take with regard to TE Smith given that he and his congregation have left the PCA and are no longer under the jurisdiction of the courts of the PCA. This matter is, therefore, concluded.

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Finally, we note our finding in this decision relates only to the set of written views that were presented to Philadelphia Presbytery in the course of its examinations of TE Smith. This Decision “may be appealed to in subsequent similar cases as to any principle which may have been decided” (BCO 14-7), and ought to be construed as precedent only in those matters that meet this Constitutional standard.

The Panel’s Proposed Decision was written by RE Frederick (Jay) Neikirk and TE Guy Prentiss Waters, adopted by the Panel, 3-0, and approved as amended, by the full SJC by vote of 22-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by ^R.

Bankson	<i>Concur</i>	Eggert ^R	<i>Concur</i>	Neikirk ^R	<i>Concur</i>
Bise ^R	<i>Concur</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>	Pickering ^R	<i>Concur</i>
Carrell ^R	<i>Concur</i>	Garner	Absent	Ross	<i>Concur</i>
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>	Sartorius	<i>Concur</i>
Donahoe ^R	<i>Concur</i>	Kooistra	<i>Concur</i>	Terrell ^R	<i>Concur</i>
Dowling ^R	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	<i>Concur</i>	Waters	<i>Concur</i>
M. Duncan ^R	<i>Concur</i>	Lucas	<i>Concur</i>	White ^R	Absent
S. Duncan ^R	<i>Concur</i>	McGowan	<i>Concur</i>	Wilson ^R	<i>Concur</i>

CASE No. 2022-04

TE CRAIG SHEPPARD

v.

HIGHLANDS PRESBYTERY

DECISION ON COMPLAINT

October 20, 2022

I. SUMMARY OF THE CASE

This case came to the SJC on a Complaint filed by TE Craig Sheppard, former Pastor of Arden Presbyterian Church (APC) in Arden, North Carolina, outside Asheville. TE Sheppard is now serving on the faculty for Reformed Theological Seminary in Indonesia. His Complaint stems from how Highlands Presbytery (“HP,” formerly Western Carolina Presbytery) handled allegations raised against him, concerning his Christian character and instances of